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# **The Death of Finn mac Cumail**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

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School of Humanities | Sgoil nan Daonnachdan  
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## ABSTRACT

Finn mac Cumhaill (Fionn Mac Cumhaill) has always been a popular figure in Gaelic tradition, coming to full prominence during the Early Modern period, as Fenian stories (tales of Finn and his *fían*, or *fianna*, known as *fíanaigecht* in Old Irish and *fiannaíocht* in Modern Irish) become ever more popular in manuscript form. Despite the popularity that both Finn and the Finn Cycle have enjoyed in Gaelic literature, mentions of Finn's death are scant and tales recounting the event are even rarer. In the extant medieval Irish literature, the pinnacle of the corpus, *Acallam na Senórach*, not only holds the events in relative obscurity but its presentation of the circumstances of Finn's death may even be said to be conflicting. In looking at other tales in the *fíanaigecht* corpus, while we find a number of references to the fact that Finn dies, only a few depict his demise, namely *Aided Finn* and *Tesmolta Cormaic ocus Aided Finn*. To this short list of narratives detailing Finn's death and the events preceding it, we can add the tale designated 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' (henceforth 'The Chase') preserved in a single manuscript, London, British Library, MS Egerton 1782. Although the tale breaks off with Finn still alive, albeit weary and bloodied and standing alone encircled by his adversaries, his death is a logical next element in the narrative, not least because there is repeated mention of a prophecy of his demise throughout the tale. This tale, which spans eight manuscript pages, seems to be the longest engagement with the idea of Finn's death in the medieval and Early Modern Irish corpora, yet has been the subject of very little scholarly investigation to date. This regrettable lacuna in scholarship on Fenian literature is the starting point for this thesis, which presents a three-pronged investigation of 'The Chase'.

Following a fuller introduction to the topic in Chapter 1, the history of the manuscript is examined afresh in Chapter 2 as new evidence, particularly from the works of the scribe Muiris Ó Gormáin, has shed new light on the manuscript's history and on the tale of 'The Chase'. This is then employed to examine the section of the manuscript in which 'The Chase' is to be found, a section consisting of four tales thought to be from the now lost manuscript, *Cín Dromma Snechtai*, and four *fíanaigecht* tales. It is investigated if the unit may be considered a deliberate anthology and whether thematic and/or other concerns motivated the unit's compilation.

Next, the study turns to the tale of 'The Chase' itself, examining its place within a continuum of traditions found in Old, Middle and Early Modern Irish treatments of Finn's

death. Based on my own linguistic work on 'The Chase', a semi-diplomatic edition of which is included as an appendix to this thesis, it is demonstrated in Chapter 3 that the author of 'The Chase' seems to have been aware of several accounts of Finn's death, either those which are now extant or sources akin to them, and sought to bring together many of the elements present in other accounts of Finn's death in a single tale, perhaps in what was intended to be a comprehensive death tale for Finn. The various elements of the tale which resonate with the event of or events leading up to Finn's death, however, have not merely been cobbled together. Rather it is illustrated that the composition skilfully treats of the themes of death, prophecy and youth versus age, making regular allusion to the audience's presumed knowledge of other tales of the Fenian corpus, while adhering to the norms of earlier written *fianaigecht* literature, a trait not always found in Early Modern tales of the Finn Cycle.

The last study which forms part of this thesis, Chapter 4, arose from the recognition that although 'The Chase' appears to be the longest extant engagement with Finn's death, there exists no study that details what material on Finn's death has circulated in the modern period. This section provides a comprehensive overview of modern engagements with Finn's death in post-1650 manuscripts and folklore collections. All the modern accounts that I have found to date in which Finn's death is recounted or in which it is presumed that Finn is dead, which are usually mentions of Finn's grave, are therefore identified, presented, and where applicable, translated. While it becomes clear that no other engagement with Finn's demise across the eleven centuries during which his death excited the Gaelic imagination is as long or as complex as 'The Chase', common or notable motifs in the modern accounts are identified, and similarities between the different treatments of Finn's death in the modern narratives are discussed. It is shown that a small number of the motifs and events treated in the medieval accounts of Finn's death and in 'The Chase' are also treated in the modern tales of his demise, thus indicating some thematic continuity between medieval and modern approaches to relating how Finn died. With this in mind, some further relationships between the modern accounts of Finn's death and other medieval and modern Fenian literature are explored.

## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contributions of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed name: Martina Maher

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AB</i>	<i>Acallam Bec</i>
<i>AEmM</i>	<i>Aided Echach meic Maireada</i>
AFM	Annals of the Four Masters
<i>ÁMF</i>	<i>Áirem Muinntire Finn</i>
<i>AOFF</i>	<i>Anmonna Oesa Fedma Finn</i>
AS	<i>Acallam na Senórach</i> , ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes, ‘ <i>Acallamh na Senórach</i> ’, <i>Irische Texte</i> , 4 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900) 1-438
ASII	<i>Agallamh na Seanórach</i> , ed. Nessa Ní Shaghda, 3 vols., Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1942-45, repr. 2014
AT	Annals of Tigernach
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BL	British Library
BM	British Museum
CELT	Corpus of Electronic Texts < <a href="https://celt.ucc.ie/">https://celt.ucc.ie/</a> >
<i>CMCS</i>	<i>Cambridge (later Cambrian) Medieval Celtic Studies</i>
CSANA	Celtic Studies Association of North America
<i>DF</i>	<i>Duanaire Finn</i>
DIAS	Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies
EN	English Language
<i>FCC</i>	<i>Fotha Catha Cnucha</i>
<i>FTC</i>	<i>Feis Tighe Chónáin</i>
<i>HDGP</i>	<i>Historical Dictionary of Gaelic Placenames</i> , Ó Riain, Pádraig, Diarmaid Ó Murchadha and Kevin Murray, (eds), 5 vols, (London: Irish Texts Society, 2003-2013)
<i>IHKS</i>	<i>Die irische Helden- und Königsage bis zum siebzehnten Jahrhundert</i> , Rudolf Thurneysen, (Halle (Saale): Max Niemeyer, 1921)
IR	Irish Language
ITS	Irish Texts Society
<i>MF</i>	<i>Macgnímrada Finn</i>
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
NFC	National Folklore Commission
NFCS	National Folklore Commission, Schools Collection,
NLI	National Library of Ireland



NLS	National Library of Scotland
PHCC	<i>Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium</i>
PRIA	<i>Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature</i>
RC	<i>Revue Celtique</i>
RIA	Royal Irish Academy
ScG	Scottish Gaelic
SSS	School of Scottish Studies
StFX	St Francis Xavier University
TBC	<i>Táin Bó Cúailnge</i>
TBC <sup>1</sup>	<i>Táin Bó Cúailnge</i> , Recension 1
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
TGSI	<i>Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness</i>
TLS	Todd Lecture Series
TOS	Transactions of the Ossianic Society
UCC	University College Cork
UCD	University College Dublin
ZCP	<i>Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie</i>

### ABBREVIATIONS: LIST OF MANUSCRIPTS

Additional 27946	London, BL, MS Additional 27946
Advocates' XXXII	Edinburgh, NLS, MS 72.1 32, formerly Edinburgh, Advocates' Library XXXII
Book of the Dean of Lismore	Edinburgh, NLS, MS 72.1 37, formerly Edinburgh, Advocates' Library XXXVII
Book of Fenagh	Dublin, RIA, MS 23 P 26 (479)
Book of Lismore	Chatsworth, Derbyshire, MS The Book of Lismore
CDS	<i>Cín Dromma Snechtai</i> , now lost
Egerton 92	London, BL, MS Egerton 92
Egerton 129	London, BL, MS Egerton 129
Egerton 1782	London, BL, MS Egerton 1782
EUL LA.III.475	Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Library, MS La.III.475
Harley 5280	London, BL, MS Harley (or Harleian) 5280
Landsdowne 418	London, BL, MS Landsdowne 418

Laud 610	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Miscellaneous 610
Leabhar ua Maine	Dublin, RIA MS D ii 1 (1225)
LL	<i>Lebor Laignech</i> / The Book of Leinster: Dublin, TCD, MS 1339, formerly MS H. 2. 18
LU	Lebor na hUidre: Dublin, RIA, MS 23 E 25.
Mullingar MS 1	Mullingar, Longford-Westmeath County Library, Gaelic MS 1
NLI G61	Dublin, NLI, MS G 61
NLI G129	Dublin, NLI, MS G 129
NLI G130	Dublin, NLI, MS G 130
NLI G131	Dublin, NLI, MS G 131
NLI G138	Dublin, NLI, MS G 138
NLI G161	Dublin, NLI, MS G 161
NLI G450	Dublin, NLI, MS G 450
NLI G458	Dublin, NLI, MS G 458
NLI G664	Dublin, NLS, MS G 664
NLS 73.1.24	Edinburgh, NLS, MS 73.1.24
O'Curry I	Maynooth, Russell Library, MS 3 a 1, formerly MS O'Curry I
Rawl. B. 487	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B. 487
Rawl. B. 502	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B. 502
Rawl. B. 512	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B. 512
RIA 23 D 22	Dublin, RIA, MS 23 D 22 (33)
RIA 23 H 23 (a)	Dublin, RIA, MS 23 H 23 (a) (340)
RIA 23 N 10	Dublin, RIA, MS 23 N 10 (967)
RIA 23 P 24	Dublin, RIA, MS 23 P 24 (138)
RIA 24 P 5	Dublin, RIA, MS 24 P 5 (93)
RIA 29 P 7	Dublin, RIA, MS 29 P 7
RIA D iv 3	Dublin, RIA, MS D iv 3 (1224)
RIA F v 2	Dublin, RIA, MS F v 2 (35)
RIA F v 3	Dublin, RIA, MS F v 3 (34)
RIA F v 5	Dublin, RIA, MS F v 5 (36)
RIA G vi 1	Dublin, RIA, MS G vi 1 (37)
TCD F. 3. 19	Dublin, TCD, MS F. 3. 19 (673)
TCD H. 1. 13	Dublin, TCD, MS H. 1. 13 (1287)
TCD H. 3. 17	Dublin, TCD, MS H. 3. 17 (1336)
TCD H. 5. 12	Dublin, TCD, MS H. 5. 12 (1384)

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

Finn mac Cumail has always been a popular figure in Gaelic tradition, although he does not come to full prominence until the Early Modern period, as Fenian stories (tales of Finn and his *fian*, known as *fianaigecht* in Old Irish and *fiannaíocht* in Modern Irish) become ever more popular in manuscript form. Despite the popularity that both Finn and the Finn Cycle have enjoyed in Gaelic literature, mentions of Finn's death are scant and tales recounting the event are even more paltry. In the extant medieval Irish literature, the pinnacle of the corpus, *Acallam na Senórach* (AS), not only holds the events in relative obscurity but the circumstances of Finn's death may even be said to be conflicting, leading the modern scholar seeking a more detailed account of the event to look elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> In doing so, while we find a number of references to the fact that Finn dies, there are only a few tales depicting his demise. The earliest detailed account of Finn's death is dated to the tenth century, if we are to follow Kuno Meyer in seeing two fragmentary accounts preserved in the manuscripts Laud 610 and Egerton 92 as forming a single narrative, hereafter called *Aided Finn*.<sup>2</sup> We also find an account of the event related in *Tesmolta*

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<sup>1</sup> See Parsons, 'Breaking the Cycle?'

<sup>2</sup> Ed. and trans. in Meyer, 'The Death'. On the date see Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, p. xxv. On the title *Aided Finn*, Meyer says in a publication for 1883-5 that 'The *Aided Finn* is not lost. There are two different stories that bear this title. [...] *Cath Finntraghá ann so síos .i. Oighe Finn le fianáibh Eirionn 7 bas Duiri Duin rig an domain mor*. However, Finn does not actually die in this fight [...] «]ba marb he asa aithli acht ge do eirig aris» [...] «]he was dead, but that he rose again.» The title *Aided Finn* seems more properly to belong to a story which [...] in Egerton 1782] is headed *Tesmolta Corbmaic ui Cuinn et aighed Finn maic Cumail sunn*: 'Addenda', 189. In 1885, Meyer once more says that the tale known today as *Tesmolta Cormaic ui Cuinn ocus Aided Finn* is the tale 'to which the title *Aided Finn* more properly belongs' (*Cath Finntrága*, p. 72), although by 1910 he anticipated the current practice of using the fuller title *Tesmolta Cormaic ui Cuinn ocus Aided Finn* to refer to that work: *Fianaigecht*, p. xxvi. The two fragments that Meyer presented in 1897 as 'The Death of Finn mac Cumail', however, have come to be known as *Aided Finn*. There are a few contributing factors for this. First, the tale *Tesmolta Cormaic ui Cuinn ocus Aided Finn* had been published in 1892 as 'Teasmolad Corbmaic úi Cuinn ocus Finn meic Cumhaill sunn' in Irish (and 'Here is the Panegyric of Conn's son Cormac and the Death of Finn son of Cumhall' in English), so that title already had some currency: O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, pp. 89-92 and ii, pp. 96-99. Second, Meyer's phrasing, i.e. that the two fragments form 'the beginning and end of an *Aided Finn* story' ('The Death of Finn mac Cumail', 462) and that these two items are 'the fragment of the 'Death of Finn' (*Fianaigecht*, p. xxv) would seem to have been influential. Subsequent scholars, agreeing with Meyer's assessment that the two fragments in Laud 610 and Egerton 92 are part of one tale, use the term *Aided Finn* to refer to them a single tale. Such usage is found in Parsons, 'Breaking the cycle?'. I follow Parsons and use *Aided Finn* to refer to this tale.

*Cormaic ocus Aided Finn*, a narrative dated to approximately the twelfth century.<sup>3</sup> To this list of narratives detailing Finn's death and the event preceding it we can add the tale designated 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' (hereafter 'The Chase').<sup>4</sup> Preserved in a single manuscript, London, British Library, MS Egerton 1782, the tale spans eight manuscript pages (four folios, *recto* and *verso*: fols 20va-24va) as it stands. It is unfinished, the scribe having left a blank column on the ninth page before proceeding to the next tale. The decision to include 'The Chase' in a list of substantial accounts of Finn's death is not uncontroversial, since the tale breaks off with Finn still alive, albeit weary and bloodied and standing alone encircled by his adversaries. The inclusion can be easily justified, however: Finn's death is a logical next element in the narrative, not least because there is repeated mention of a prophecy of his demise throughout the tale. As numerous other prophecies made in the tale come to pass during the course of the narrative,<sup>5</sup> we can agree with Meyer in seeing this as a tale intended to relate the circumstances of Finn's death; indeed, it appears to have been intended to be the fullest exploration of this event in manuscript form.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the fact that 'The Chase' has received very little scholarly attention to date is a regrettable lacuna in scholarship on Fenian literature, which this thesis is designed to fill.

Egerton 1782 was written in the early sixteenth century. The catalogue entry for the manuscript, written by Robin Flower in 1926, is the most complete record we have of this codex. Since Flower's time, however, evidence, particularly from the works of the scribe Muiris Ó Gormáin, has shed new light on the manuscript's history and on the tale of 'The Chase'. The first part of Chapter 2 therefore comprises a history and description of Egerton 1782, incorporating what can be learnt from recent scholarship. Following on from this, the second part of Chapter 2 will examine the section of the manuscript in which we find 'The Chase'. The section in question consists of four tales thought to be from the now lost

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<sup>3</sup> Ed. by Meyer, *Cath Finntrága*, pp. 72-6 and O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, pp. 89-92; trans. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, ii, pp. 96-99.

<sup>4</sup> The tale is untitled in Egerton 1782 and there is, to the best of my knowledge, no other extant manuscript witness to this narrative. Prior to the publication of Meyer's edition of 'The Chase' in 1910, I am unaware of any published mention of, or scholarship on the tale. It would therefore seem that not only was it Meyer's edition and translation which brought it to the attention of scholars of medieval Irish literature, but that it was also Meyer who gave the tale the title by which it is known today.

<sup>5</sup> For discussion, see Chapter 3 below.

<sup>6</sup> Gerard Murphy proposed that a 'truer title would have been "The Slaying of the Pig of Formaoíl and the Death of Finn"' (*DF*, iii, p. 136). This would certainly reflect the events narrated therein more closely as the tale opens with the *fían* hunting around the area of Síd na mBan Finn and Luachair Dedad, but they quickly move on as the chase fails them there. The main chase narrated in the tale is the hunt of the boar of Formáel. However, although 'The Slaying of the Pig of Formaoíl and the Death of Finn' would be the more appropriate title, this tale has been known as 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' for over a century at the time of writing, and I will therefore employ this title to refer to the tale.

codex, *Cín Dromma Snechtai*, and four *fíanaigecht* tales. The only study to date of the inclusion of material in Egerton 1782 of which I am aware is Benjamin Hazard's work.<sup>7</sup> He, however, considers the work as a whole and the section comprising the *Cín Dromma Snechtai-fíanaigecht* complex is not examined in detail. Thus, in the second part of Chapter 2, it is investigated if thematic and/or other concerns motivated the unit's compilation and the inclusion of 'The Chase' in this section of the manuscript.

In Chapter 3 I turn to the tale of 'The Chase' itself. As mentioned above, scholarship on this tale has been scant, with attention solely to this narrative exiguous: to date consideration of it has usually been bound up with discussion of the death of Finn. In his article noting additions to Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville's catalogue of epic Irish literature, Meyer briefly mentions 'The Chase' noting that 'there is a prose version of *Selg Sléibe na m-Ban Finn* in Egerton, 1782, fo. 20 b, 1.<sup>8</sup> Although this shows awareness of the tale, it erroneously makes a connection between the content of the lay *Selg Sléibe na mBan Finn* or 'The Chase of Slieve na mBan', found in *Duanaire Finn (DF)*, the Book of the Dean of Lismore,<sup>9</sup> and MS Additional 27946,<sup>10</sup> and the prose tale of 'The Chase'.<sup>11</sup> Due to the difference in the content of the prose tale and the lay, Gerard Murphy correctly notes that 'Meyer's title has led both himself [...], and others, to imagine a connection between the prose tale and the poem. There is no such connection'.<sup>12</sup> Meyer does not discuss the tale in any detail in his presentation of an edition and translation. Having once again made the fallacious connection between this tale and the lay of much the same name, he goes on to say that the tale's

chief interest lies perhaps in [...] that it concludes with a version of the Death of Finn differing from those mentioned above, XIII, XXVII, and XXXVII. Like all the other versions of Finn's death-story, it is incomplete, breaking off abruptly at the end.<sup>13</sup>

Items XIII, XXVII, and XXXVII referred to here are the poem on the *dindshenchas* of Brug na Bóinne by Cináed ua hArtacáin,<sup>14</sup> *Aided Finn*, and *Tesmolta Cormaic*<sup>15</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Hazard, 'An Irish medieval legacy'; Hazard, 'Gaelic Political Scripture'.

<sup>8</sup> Meyer, 'Addenda', 190.

<sup>9</sup> Murphy, *DF*, iii, p. 135.

<sup>10</sup> O'Grady, *Catalogue*, p. 676.

<sup>11</sup> Versions of 'The Chase of Slieve na mBan' are edited and translated in O'Daly, *Laoithe Fiannuigheachta*, pp. 126-13; Campbell, *Leabhar na Feinne*, pp. 142-4; Murphy, *DF*, poem LVIII, ii, pp. 216-21.

<sup>12</sup> *DF*, iii, p. 136; Flower also noted the erroneous connection (*Catalogue*, ii, p. 269).

<sup>13</sup> Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, p. xxxi.

<sup>14</sup> The quatrain on Finn's death reads: 'Hi Fertai na Fáilenn fand/ is and romaíded in glond:/ mór in gnim n-úalle dorind/ écht Find for fein Lúagne lond.': Gwynn, *Metrical Dindshenchas*, ii, pp. 12-3 3 with emendations from Meyer, 'Erscheinene Schriften'. 'At the Grave of the gentle Seagulls/ it is there was

respectively. Although Murphy knows of 'The Chase', he does not mention it when discussing Finn's death in the Introduction to *DF*.<sup>16</sup> When treating of the poem beginning *Anocht fíordheireadh na fíán* or 'Lament for the Fiana',<sup>17</sup> in which there is a couplet that makes Goll's daughter responsible for Finn's death,<sup>18</sup> Murphy does note that Goll's daughter's only other appearance in a tale concerning Finn's demise is 'The Chase'.<sup>19</sup> He does not further examine the relationship between the two texts, however. Daithí Ó hÓgáin also mentions 'The Chase' at the end of his examination of the death of Finn, giving a very brief summary of the narrative and quoting the final few lines before concluding that 'It is clear that the author [of 'The Chase'] had read one of the earlier references to the killing of Fionn by the sons of Uirghriu, and that he was reproducing that scenario in his elaborate text.'<sup>20</sup> The most comprehensive discussion of Finn's death to date is by Geraldine Parsons, where she examines how Finn's death is treated in *AS* as that tale fashions itself to be the comprehensive body of *fíanaigeacht* material, noting that his death is not treated in any great detail therein.<sup>21</sup> In an appendix to this study, Parsons catalogues the 'thirty-one distinct statements [on the death of Finn] contained in nineteen works.'<sup>22</sup> 'The Chase' appears therein, grouped with other accounts of Finn's 'death at the hands of the Luigne' [= Lúaigne].<sup>23</sup> 'The Chase' is not otherwise discussed in this essay, however. The most recent treatments of 'The Chase' are by Kevin Murray and Joseph Flahive who approach different aspects of the tale. One part of Murray's discussion of 'The Chase' contextualises the work within a wider consideration of Finn's death. He says that 'The Chase'

reworks earlier traditions of Finn's death within a new context, that of the hunting of the great boar of Formáel. For example, characters from older stories, such as Aillén Mac Midna from [*AS*], reappear in it in a friendlier guise. Notable Lúaigne Temrach enemies are named for the first time, such as Fer Taí and his son Fer Lí who play such a pivotal role in this battle.<sup>24</sup>

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boasted the deed-/ great the feat of pride that assigns/ the slaying of Finn to the soldiery of the fierce Luagni.': updated translation based on Meyer's suggestions from CELT, *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, <<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T106500B/text002.html>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>15</sup> Ed. and partial trans. in O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, pp. 89-92 and ii, pp. 96-9.

<sup>16</sup> This discussion appears in *DF*, iii, pp. xli-xlii.

<sup>17</sup> *DF* poem XIX. ed. and trans. in Mac Neill, *DF*, i, pp. 47-9 and pp. 151-3 respectively.

<sup>18</sup> The couplet appears in the following quatrain: 'A ccaí Ollarba gan feall/ a torcáir airdríg Éireann/ dar tuit Fionn tre ingin Guill/ a ccaí Breegda ós Bóuinn.' Mac Neill, *DF*, i, XIX, p. 48; 'In the battle of Ollarba, without deceit,/ there Ireland's monarch fell:/ where Fionn fell through Goll's daughter/ was in the Bregian battle above the Boyne.': *DF*, poem XIX, i, p. 152.

<sup>19</sup> Murphy, *DF*, iii, p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> *Images of the Gaelic Hero*, p. 112.

<sup>21</sup> Parsons, 'Breaking the cycle?'

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 81; the catalogue appears on pp. 91-6.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 91.

<sup>24</sup> Murray, *The Early Finn Cycle*, pp. 127-8.

Murray also addresses Finn's death at the hands of the Lúaigne in a section concerning Finn and Mide, saying that there is 'evidence to suggest [...] that Finn's connection with Mide may not have originated with his emerging role as leader of Cormac mac Airt's fían but may have been traditionally considered a constituent part of his 'biography', particularly in tales concerning his death.'<sup>25</sup> Noting 'the killing of Finn by the Lúaigne is a consistent, if not exclusive, part of Fenian tradition',<sup>26</sup> Murray goes on to reference T. F. O'Rahilly's work in which O'Rahilly says that the Lúaigne were vassal-allies to the Tara monarchy, and were consistently represented as its defenders against its enemies.<sup>27</sup> Thus, he interprets Finn's position as defender of Tara as a usurpation of the position the Lúaigne used to hold, and as a continuation of the opposition between Finn and the Lúaigne that is seen in earlier literature.<sup>28</sup> Finally, Flahive speaks of 'The Chase' when treating of Early Modern romances, saying that it is 'one of the oldest prose Fenian tales after [AS]',<sup>29</sup> and that

This narrative points the direction the prose of the cycle would take in subsequent centuries. Opening with a series of lore recitations by Fionn, and incorporating a plot whose structure is dictated by the geography of the chase, the narration is similar in style to the *Agallamh* tradition. However, this tale dispenses altogether with the Patrician frame and speaks with the external third-person narrator usual to most medieval Irish tales and to later prose romances. It favours an expanded retelling of events known in the earlier tradition, and is narrated as a tale rather than as the reminiscence of an aged survivor (the latter is usual in the lays).<sup>30</sup>

From the above summary, it is clear that the scholarly consensus to date is that 'The Chase' is one of the earliest Early Modern Irish compositions and that it reworks older material in the context of Finn's demise. Yet, there has been never been a full examination of the tale or a thorough analysis of its relationship to other medieval *fianaigeacht* works. In order to examine 'The Chase' within the wider medieval context, then, Chapter 3 will first make note of a few additions to Parsons's catalogue, and it will then be investigated if the author of 'The Chase' was attempting to create a comprehensive narrative which brought together a number of different traditions surrounding Finn's death. It shall be proposed that the tale features a number of thematic strands, chiefly those of death and prophecy, and that the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 89.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 90.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 90 quoting O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology*, p. 391.

<sup>28</sup> Murray, *The Early Finn Cycle*, p. 90.

<sup>29</sup> Flahive, *The Fenian Cycle*, p. 49.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 49.

reworking of certain elements in this tale was intended to recall episodes known elsewhere in the corpus of Old and Middle Irish *fianaigecht* literature. Such an attitude towards earlier tradition, particularly in relation to the narrative goal of the tale, is not always found in Finn Cycle tales composed in the Early Modern Irish period, and that argument will be made by means of a succinct comparison of the treatment of Finn's demise in 'The Chase' to the treatment of the same topic in the tale titled *Cath Finntragha ann so síos .i. oighe Finn le fianaibh Eirionn 7 bas Duiri Duin rig an domain moir* in its earliest extant exemplar.

As well as locating the treatment of the death of Finn in 'The Chase' within a continuum of Old, Middle and Early Modern accounts of the subject, this thesis seeks to compare its depiction to the treatment of the same subject in modern sources. There is no study of Finn's death in the modern period; hence, this study breaks new ground in its provision of a comprehensive overview of modern accounts of Finn's demise in post-1650 manuscripts and folklore collections.<sup>31</sup> In Chapter 4, therefore, I identify, present, and where applicable, translate all the modern accounts I have found to date in which Finn's death is recounted or in which it is presumed that Finn has died. The latter sources usually comprise mentions of Finn's grave, although two of these mention that Finn is in hell. Having identified common or notable motifs in the modern accounts and investigated similarities between those, it becomes clear that a small number of the motifs and events treated in the medieval sources concerning Finn's death and in 'The Chase' are also treated in the modern tales of his demise, thus indicating some thematic continuity between medieval and modern approaches to relating how Finn died. With this in mind, some further relationships between the modern accounts of Finn's death and other medieval and modern Fenian literature have also been explored. For clarity and to be easily understandable when presenting this research, the modern accounts have been grouped according to similarities in the events of or surrounding Finn's death. From the presentation of the material in this chapter we will see that 'The Chase' appears to be the fullest account of a death for Finn in the medieval tradition. As such, the presentation and examination of modern traditions of Finn's death allows us to examine 'The Chase' within the totality of engagements with the idea of a death for Finn, a subject that seems to have excited the Gaelic imagination, as represented in accounts from Ireland, Scotland and Nova Scotia, from the tenth to twentieth centuries.

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<sup>31</sup> Creative adaptations of Finn's death are not included here, nor is pre-1650 manuscript material reproduced after 1650.



This study deals with material spanning eleven centuries, and discusses or makes reference to material in Old, Middle, Early Modern and Modern Irish, as well as in Scottish Gaelic. As we encounter several different orthographic conventions, a standardised form of reference is preferable throughout. Here, it is the Old Irish forms of names and terminology that will be employed when discussed outwith source material, e.g. Finn, *fīan*, and *fīanaigecht*, and not Fionn, *fianna*, and *fiannaíocht*, are used throughout the thesis, including during discussions of the Modern accounts of Finn's death. With regards to Finn's adversaries, the Lúaigne or Luigne of Tara, their appearance in extant Irish manuscripts is rare. O'Rahilly believed that they 'Gaelicized their name as Luigne'.<sup>32</sup> Lúaigne would seem to be the earlier form. Therefore, and as the thesis has emerged from the study of the tale 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' within the traditions of Finn's death, wherein this group appear as the Lúaigne, Lúaigne is the form of the name employed in my own discussions.

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<sup>32</sup> Murray, *The Early Finn Cycle*, p. 90, referencing O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology*, p. 391.

## CHAPTER 2

# The manuscript context of 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn'

### 2.1: Egerton 1782: Description and history

Written mainly in 1517, Egerton 1782 is a vellum manuscript penned by scribes of the Ó Maoilchonaire family<sup>1</sup> of Cluain Plocáin, Co. Roscommon<sup>2</sup> and most likely for Art Buidhe Mac Murchadha Caomhánach, king of Leinster, who ruled 'Low Leinster'<sup>3</sup> from 1512 to his death in 1517.

Analysing the scribal colophons in the manuscript led Robin Flower to the conclusion that the majority of the manuscript was written in the year 1517, but that the work may have commenced the previous year and could have been completed in 1518. The date of 1517 is suggested by a note in the manuscript recording Torna Ó Maoilchonaire's death on Thursday, January 1<sup>st</sup>, and by mentions that both St James' Day, July 25<sup>th</sup>, and Lughnasa, August 1<sup>st</sup>, fell on Saturdays, all of which accord with a dating of 1517.<sup>4</sup> As the Kalend for January 1517 appears in the manuscript, this may imply that production commenced prior to that date. A note beginning in the upper margin of fol. 38<sup>v</sup> and ending in the lower margin of fol. 39<sup>r</sup> tells us that the scribe was in Enniscorthy (which was the seat of the MacMurrough-Kavanaghs)<sup>5</sup> on 'the fast of the first feast of Mary' the previous year.<sup>6</sup> This contributed to Flower's suggestion that the manuscript may have been begun in 1516 and written partially in Leinster,<sup>7</sup> but cannot be taken as conclusive evidence on these points. The reason for suggesting that the manuscript was finished in 1518 is another note, on fols

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<sup>1</sup> This family is referred to as both Ó Maoilchonaire and Uí Maoil Chonaire. I will employ Ó Maoilchonaire throughout.

<sup>2</sup> Flower, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Library formerly British museum*, ii, pp. 259-62. Also discussed in more detail below.

<sup>3</sup> Byrne, 'The trembling sod', p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, pp. 260-62.

<sup>5</sup> Furlong, *A History of County Wexford*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>6</sup> According to Flower (*Catalogue*, ii, p. 261) the fast of the first feast of Mary was Friday, 2 February 1517.

<sup>7</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 262.

3<sup>r-v</sup>, which records the death of Art Buidhe Mac Murchadha Caomhánach on the feast of St Catherine, November 25<sup>th</sup>. This note records the event as happening in 1517.<sup>8</sup>

Although the manuscript is now generally known by its shelfmark, Egerton 1782, the manuscript's first cataloguer in the British Museum (BM), gave it the title 'Leabhar in Caemhnagh.'<sup>9</sup> Thus far this is the only instance I have encountered of this name. The cataloguer's entry continues to say that Egerton 1782 is 'a collection of tales, *etc.*, in prose and verse, in *Irish*, compiled, according to Eugene O'Curry, by the O'Mulconrys for the family of Cavenagh.'<sup>10</sup> It is unclear whether this statement was intended to inform the reader that the information regarding the scribes and patron came from Eugene O'Curry or that O'Curry was his source for both that information and the title given to the manuscript. O'Curry was employed by the BM to catalogue the Irish manuscripts there in 1849<sup>11</sup> but I have found no mention of post-1849 cataloguing for the BM in O'Curry's papers which have survived in the University College Dublin archive.<sup>12</sup> Neither have I found mention of a manuscript with a name similar to 'Leabhar in Caemhnagh' nor a manuscript for the Kavanaghs in O'Curry's papers or published works. If Egerton 1782 was known by this name prior to being acquired by the BM, however, it further suggests that Art Buidhe was its patron and that it would have been in possession of the MacMurrough-Kavanaghs after the time of writing. It is worth mentioning that while the Ó Maoilchonaire, a Roscommon

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<sup>8</sup> This same Art Buidhe Mac Murchadha's death is recorded in 1518 in the Annals of the Four Masters (AFM). RIA 29 P 7, fol. 26<sup>r</sup> and O'Donovan, *Annala Rioghachta Eireann*, v, pp. 1338-9. Although subsequently regarded as authoritative, it may be more likely that the date in our manuscript is the accurate one. Daniel P. McCarthy's consideration of the AFM leads him 'to conclude therefore that, notwithstanding the impressive credentials of the compilers, the wide range of their sources, and the fulsome character of the testimonials, the compilation itself did not accurately reproduce either the content or structure of their sources. In these circumstances it is not surprising that within months a member of the Uí Maoil Chonaire, Tuileagna, should start a campaign to prevent the publication of the work on the grounds of its inaccuracy.' *The Irish Annals*, p. 59. For further discussion see McCarthy, *The Irish Annals*, pp. 56-60, 293-303, 326-41. Summarising the discrepancy of dating between AFM and other sources, Bernadette Cunningham notes that in the sixth century the difference in chronology is up to seventeen years, and that the AD date is almost uniformly wrong down to 1120 (usually two years out from AD913 to 977 and usually one year out from AD980-1020). 'Thereafter, the dating of events in AFM is generally in agreement with other sources.' *The Annals of the Four Masters*, p. 98. That Cunningham says that the dates are 'generally in agreement with other sources' rather than always, however, suggests some discrepancies but the particulars are not discussed.

<sup>9</sup> British Museum, *Catalogue of Additions*, ii, pp. 876-8. Benjamin Hazard has used the terms 'the Book of Art Buidhe Mac Murchadha Caomhánach' and 'the Book of Mac Murchadha Caomhánach' interchangeably to refer to Egerton 1782 in both 'An Irish medieval legacy' and 'Gaelic Political Scripture'. In doing so it is possible that Hazard is following the example of James Carney who says that Egerton 1782 'may be called the Book of Art Buidhe Mac Murchadha Caomhánach' ('Literature in Irish, 1169-1534'). However, if he has done so he does not make the connection explicit.

<sup>10</sup> British Museum, *Catalogue of Additions*, ii, p. 876. Italics reproduced from original.

<sup>11</sup> Kelly, 'O'Curry, Eugene'.

<sup>12</sup> UCD Archives, *Papers of Eugene O'Curry (1796-1862)* – Description of the Collection. UCD Archives, *Papers of Eugene O'Curry (1796-1862)* – Digital Copy of the Papers.

scribal family, were traditionally scribes to the O'Connor kings of Connacht,<sup>13</sup> it would not be unusual for them to carry out work for other patrons as learned families were particularly mobile in medieval Ireland.<sup>14</sup>

The manuscript was written by Ó Maoilchonaire scribes and the primary scribe, designated scribe A, mentions that he was in Cluain Plocáin at the time of writing.<sup>15</sup> Because of this information it is presumed to have been mostly written in Co. Roscommon.<sup>16</sup> As already mentioned, however, some of the manuscript may have been written in Leinster as the same scribe was in Leinster the previous year and that was where the manuscript's patron was located. This may also be suggested by the colophon appearing in A's hand on fol. 24<sup>r</sup> naming Poulmonty, Co. Carlow in 1419 as the time and date of writing. This place, Poulmonty, was also part of the MacMurrough-Kavanagh lands,<sup>17</sup> and although the aforementioned entry is generally accepted to be a discordant one,<sup>18</sup> it may have been copied from the scribe's exemplar, meaning that at least the exemplar for the text in which this colophon appears had a Leinster provenance.

The portion of the manuscript written in the early sixteenth century was the work of four hands, identified by Flower as A, B, C and D. Hand A wrote the bulk of the manuscript with the other three contributing varying quantities of text at different stages – B's contribution is the largest of the three additional scribes, occasionally penning whole columns. C once writes a section of seven folios but his entries are otherwise scarce and

<sup>13</sup> Walsh, *Irish Men of Learning*, p. 34.

<sup>14</sup> See Henry and Marsh-Micheli, 'Manuscripts and Illuminations, 1169–1603', particularly p. 795. The productivity of the Ó Maoilchonaire scribes in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries provides further reason to find one of their number working for a MacMurrough-Kavanagh unsurprising. Amongst works written by or associated with this family in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries we may instance the Book of Fenagh, Harley 5280, Mullingar 1, Rawl. B. 512, RIA D iv 3, and RIA 23 N 10. Ó Maoilchonaire scribes worked on the Book of Fenagh, Mullingar 1, Rawl. B. 512, RIA D iv 3, and RIA 23 N 10, while Harley 5280 was written by Giolla Riabach mac Tuathail Ó Cléirigh in an Ó Maoilchonaire residence in Co. Roscommon. For the catalogue entry on The Book of Fenagh see Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, x, pp. 1284-6. For the catalogue entry on Harley 5280 see Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, pp. 298-323. I am unaware of a catalogue entry for Mullingar 1. For the catalogue entry on Rawl. B. 512 see Ó Cuív, *Catalogue of Irish Language Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries*, pp. 223-54. For the catalogue entry on RIA D iv 3 see Mulchrone, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, xxvi, pp. 3307-13. For the catalogue entry on RIA D iv 3 see Mulchrone, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, xxii, pp. 2769-80.

<sup>15</sup> For the location of Cluain Plocáin, see M. J. Connellan, 'Ballymulconry and the Mulconrys', who convincingly places it in the parish of Kiltrustran. The compilers of the *Historical Dictionary of Gaelic Placenames* also agree with his analysis: see *HDGP, Fascicle 5: Names in C – Clais to Cnucha, Cluain Plocáin*.

<sup>16</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 262.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Hore, 'The Clan Kavanagh, Temp. Henry VIII', pp. 79-80.

<sup>18</sup> See subsequent discussion below. See also, for example, Burnyeat, 'The *Táin*-complex in B.L. Egerton 1782', 290.

short, while D's contribution is minimal, totalling seven lines of the manuscript.<sup>19</sup> Despite Scribe A having contributed the most to Egerton 1782 and the appearance of colophons in his hand, he is not named therein. Scribe B, however, is named and is revealed to be the Scribe A's brother. This can be ascertained from two short entries in the manuscript, namely the obituary for Seaan mac Torna hui Máeilconaire and a note identifying Scribe B as Seaan's sons. The obituary for Seaan mac Torna hui Máeilconaire is written in A's hand, and he, A, has glossed *.i. mo athair* over Seaan's name.<sup>20</sup> Later, after Scribe B writes three columns, A writes a note of thanks, naming not only Scribe B therein but also mentioning that B was the son of Seaan mac Torna hui Máeilconaire. This appears on fol. 53<sup>f</sup> where we find:

*Ar ndighe (id est benedicionis) don fhir dothracht na tri ráimisi dún .i.  
Iarnán mac Seaain meic Thorna hui Máoilconuiri mo derb inbleoghan  
budhessin.*

Our thanks (that is our blessings) to the man who wrote these three columns for us, i.e. Iarnán son of Seaain son of Torna Uí Maolchonaire, my blood brother.<sup>21</sup>

Employing this along with further evidence has led Josephine O'Connell to postulate that Scribe A may have been Sioghraidh Ó Maoilconaire.<sup>22</sup>

Of the texts present in Egerton 1782, all except three seem to have been part of the original manuscript and written by Scribes A, B, C and D. Texts in later hands appear in three locations:

- Fol. 15: This folio contains part of the glossary *Dúil Dromma Ceta*. The folio, and therefore the manuscript, only contains articles D-M.<sup>23</sup>
- Fol. 16: A poem addressed to Aodh mac Seáin Uí Bhroin, who died in 1579,<sup>24</sup> very possibly by the poet 'Ferral m<sup>c</sup>Thomas alias M<sup>c</sup>Keoghe of Donarde, county Dublin [Donard, Co. Wicklow], rhymor', appears on this leaf.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, pp. 261-2.

<sup>20</sup> Egerton 1782, fol. 43<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> See *DIL*, s.v. *inbleoga(i)n*, where this example is cited and the word queried as being employed in general sense of a relative. Kuno Meyer read *mo derb inbleoghan budhessin* as *mo derbmbleoghan budhessin* and took the phrase to mean 'my own foster brother' (*Contributions to Irish lexicography. Vol. I, part I, A—C*, p. 227). Flower maintains Meyer's reading but understands the phrase to mean 'blood brother' (*Catalogue*, ii, p. 266). Access to the manuscript supports the reading *inbleoghan*. Flower's may still be considered the best translation, however, as 'both the scribes concerned were sons of Seán mac Torna Uí Maoilchonaire' (*Catalogue*, ii, p. 266).

<sup>22</sup> O'Connell, 'Airem Muinntari Finn and Anmonna Oesa Fedma Find' pp. 9-12.

<sup>23</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 266.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 267.

<sup>25</sup> O'Rahilly, 'Irish Poets, Historians and Judges in English Documents', 87 and Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 267.

- Fol. 66<sup>v</sup>: Fol. 66 was originally part of the manuscript but the *verso* had been left blank. A poem of 14 quatrains on the nativity was subsequently added.<sup>26</sup> Robin Flower suggested a '16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> cent. hand'<sup>27</sup> for this but based on a comparison with the scribal hand in NLI G61, Nessa Ní Shéaghda suggested the possibility that this poem is in the hand of Micheál Ó Broin (Michael O'Byrne),<sup>28</sup> in whose possession the manuscript was in the early eighteenth century.<sup>29</sup>

The manuscript as it is now bound comprises 125 irregularly cut vellum folios.<sup>30</sup> This number includes the two extra leaves, fols 15 and 16, which seem to have been added to the manuscript later. Most of the folios measure approximately 233 x 155 mm.<sup>31</sup> Due to the tough, poor-quality vellum used to produce the manuscript, the pages are now quite rigid and immalleable.<sup>32</sup> The majority of folios are bi-columnar, the columns themselves measuring between 170 and 120 mm in height and between 50 and 70 mm in width. We do, however, find a number of folios where the text is written in a single column. These single columns measure 165-70 x 110-20 mm.<sup>33</sup> It may be noted that variation between single and double columns is a feature of Ó Maoilchonaire MSS,<sup>34</sup> although here there seems to be no clear reason for fluctuation between single and double columns in Egerton 1782. One indication that this variation may not be significant here is that a series of leaves written in single columns begins on fol. 57<sup>r</sup> and continues until fol. 89<sup>v</sup>. The manuscript then resumes leaves of double columns fol. 90<sup>f</sup>. *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, however, begins on fol. 88<sup>r</sup>. The change in layout therefore occurs mid-text but shows no difference in the treatment of the subject matter.<sup>35</sup> The columns vary between 32 and 54 lines in length.<sup>36</sup> The script, aside from later additions and colophons, is Irish minuscule throughout, written

<sup>26</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 285.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 285.

<sup>28</sup> Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland*, ii (1961), pp. 83-84.

<sup>29</sup> See Flower, *Catalogue*, p. 261-3 and discussion, below.

<sup>30</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 259.

<sup>31</sup> Watson, *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c. 700-1600*, p. 113. In the table detailing foliation and pagination, below, leaves of this size are termed full-sized folios.

<sup>32</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 259.

<sup>33</sup> Watson, *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c. 700-1600*, p. 113.

<sup>34</sup> Of those manuscripts mentioned on p. 18, note 13, above, we find variation between single and double columns in the Book of Fenagh, Harley 5280, Rawl. B. 512, and RIA 23 N 10. RIA D iv 3 is bicolumnar throughout and I have not had the opportunity to examine Mullingar 1 to date.

<sup>35</sup> This may not always be the case, however, and may benefit from further research. RIA 23 N 10, for example, in its current arrangement is not in sequence, meaning that a text therein may be interrupted by leaves from another text and resume later in the manuscript. Where we find a single-column folio immediately followed by a double-column folio, or vice versa, the pages in question contain different texts and as such we do not find the intra-text column fluctuation that can be observed in Egerton 1782.

<sup>36</sup> Flower notes that the length of the columns varied between 32 and 50 lines per column (*Catalogue*, ii, p. 259) and Watson provides the same information (*Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c. 700-1600*, p. 113). However, fol. 20<sup>v</sup> comprises two columns of 54 lines apiece and fol. 21<sup>r</sup> two columns of 52 lines each.

in ink of excellent quality and where the manuscript itself has not suffered any damage, the ink is still dark brown in colour and highly legible.

The manuscript has been foliated in ink in the upper right margin and paginated in pencil in the lower margins. At least one chasm was already present in the manuscript in the early eighteenth century – Ualentín Ua Hanluain (Valentine O'Hanlon), who had the manuscript on loan from Ó Broin, inserted a colophon cursing the individual who cut out a leaf containing part of *Táin Bó Fraích* on fol. 86<sup>v</sup>.<sup>37</sup> This chasm has not been taken into account by the manuscript's foliator or paginator, suggesting a *terminus post quem* for both these features. Neither foliation nor pagination accounts for all twelve gaps of one or more folios. This number includes the folios missing after the final page.<sup>38</sup> The following table presents the reader with an account of the manuscript's foliation, pagination, contents, the sections into which Flower divided the material, and the distribution of scribal hands. Foliation, pagination and related evidence which shed some light on the manuscript's history are further discussed below the table.

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<sup>37</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, pp. 261-2.

<sup>38</sup> See Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 259 for full details of where the eleven lacunae identified by him occur. There is, however, another chasm between fols 34 and 35, which was not noted in Flower's catalogue entry for Egerton 1782 but remnants of vellum in the binding indicate the loss of a folio. See discussion of the manuscript's codicology below.

**User guide:**

**Section:** This refers to the groups into which Flower divided the material (*Catalogue*, ii, p. 262). For ease of reference I have numbered the sections using Roman numerals.

**Article:** This refers to the article number assigned to an individual item. (Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, pp. 263-98).

**Pagination:** [x] indicates that x can be ascertained to be the page number, either because the pagination on the other side of the folio is clear,

or because the text runs continuously and without lacunae from the preceding folio/page or on to the following folio.

(x) indicates a tentative guess that the page number is (x), based on current sequence, but this cannot be said with certainty.

**Scribe:** The distribution of scribal hands follows Flower's identification of these (*Catalogue*, ii, pp. 259-60).

**RF:** Use of 'RF' indicates information ascertained by Flower (*Catalogue*, ii, p. 259-63) and reproduced here.

**Line numbers:** Where the first line of a text is not given, the text begins on line 1 of the page in question.

Section	Article	Type of page	Foliation	Pagination	Contents	Scribe
I	1	full-sized pages	1 <sup>r</sup> -2 <sup>v</sup>	[1], 2, [3], 4	Beginning of commentary on <i>Amra Choluim Chille</i> – introductory passage + poem attributed to Dallán	A
		RF: missing folio(s)	unaccounted for			
		2 slips of vellum	3 <sup>r</sup> -4 <sup>v</sup>	No Page numbers	Necrology for Art Buidhe Mac Domhnaill Riabhaigh	A
I	1	full-sized pages	5 <sup>r</sup> -14 <sup>v</sup>	5-24	5 <sup>r</sup> -14 <sup>v</sup> : <i>Amra Choluim Chille</i> (Incomplete.) 5 <sup>b</sup> : Gratitude of the poets, beginning of the <i>Amra</i> , discussion between Colum Cille and Dallán about the poet's reward 5 <sup>v</sup> a: Introductory prayer 7 <sup>r</sup> a: Introduction to the <i>Amra</i> proper 7 <sup>v</sup> a: The <i>Amra</i> begins	A to f9 <sup>v</sup> b24; B f9 <sup>v</sup> b25-end f10 <sup>r</sup> b; A f10 <sup>v</sup> ; B f11 <sup>r</sup> a1-b7; A f11 <sup>r</sup> b8-13; B f11 <sup>r</sup> b14-23; A f11 <sup>r</sup> b24-f13 <sup>r</sup> a17; B f13 <sup>r</sup> a18-26; A f13 <sup>r</sup> a27-f14 <sup>v</sup> a5; C f14 <sup>v</sup> a5-25; A f14 <sup>v</sup> a25-b12; B f14 <sup>v</sup> b13-21 A f14 <sup>v</sup> b22-44



					(9 <sup>v</sup> a: Tales of Labhraid Loingseach and Labraid Lorc appear in commentary.)		
	RF: missing folio(s)		unaccounted for				
II	2	RF: not originally in MS	15 <sup>r-v</sup>	(25-26)	f15 <sup>r-v</sup> : Articles D-M of glossary <i>Dúil Dromma Ceta</i>	Later hand	
III	3		16 <sup>r-v</sup>	27-28	f16 <sup>r-v</sup> : Religious poem beg. <i>Mairg doni nama da charaid</i> by Ferghal mac Tomais, fl. c. 1549	Later hand	
IV	4	full-sized pages	17 <sup>r</sup> -18 <sup>v</sup>	[29], 30-31, [32]	<i>Baile Bricín</i> (Untitled.)	A	
			19 <sup>r</sup>	33		A	
	5			f19 <sup>r</sup> a27: <i>Forfess Fer Falgae</i>			
	6			19 <sup>v</sup>	[34]	<i>Verba Scáthaige</i>	A
	7					f19 <sup>v</sup> b8: <i>Echtra Chondla</i>	A to f20 <sup>r</sup> a23; D f20 <sup>r</sup> a24-29; A f20 <sup>r</sup> b
				20 <sup>r</sup>	35		
	8			20 <sup>v</sup> -24 <sup>r</sup>	36-43	'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' (Incomplete. 24 <sup>v</sup> <sup>a</sup> left blank except for later scribble on the top. Untitled.)	A
				24 <sup>v</sup>	44		
	9			25 <sup>r</sup>	45	f24 <sup>v</sup> b1: <i>Tesmolta Cormaic ui Cuinn 7 Aided Finn</i> (Originally untitled. Title added by Charles O'Connor, 18 <sup>th</sup> Century.)	A
	10[a]					f25 <sup>r</sup> b34: <i>Áirem muinntiri Finn</i>	A
		25 <sup>v</sup>	46				
	[10b]			f25 <sup>v</sup> a33: <i>Anmonna oesa fedma Find</i> (Untitled.)	A		
V	11	full-sized pages	26 <sup>r</sup> -30 <sup>v</sup>	47-55	<i>Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil</i> (Untitled.)	A to f27 <sup>v</sup> a35; B f27 <sup>v</sup> a35-50; A f27 <sup>v</sup> b-end	
VI <sup>39</sup>	12	full-sized pages	31 <sup>r</sup> -34 <sup>v</sup>	56-61, [62-64]	<i>Imtechta tuaithe Lucra 7 Aged Fergusa</i> (Probably the same as <i>Echtra Fhergusa maic Léti</i> . Rest of f34 <sup>v</sup> a and f34 <sup>v</sup> b are later scribbles. Untitled. Title in colophon on f34 <sup>v</sup> .)	A	
	missing folio		unaccounted for				

<sup>39</sup> According to Flower's identification of the sections, the beginning of article 12 belongs in section V and the remainder in section VI: *Catalogue*, ii, p. 262.

VII	13	full-sized pages	35 <sup>r</sup> -36 <sup>v</sup>	[65], 66-68	<i>Secht n-urgharta Righ Temruch</i> (Long version of <i>Ugarta ocus búada rí Érenn</i> . Prose sections alternate with the relevant quatrains from the poem. Rest of f36 <sup>v</sup> a and f36 <sup>v</sup> b blank except for later scribbles.)	<b>A</b>
	RF: missing folio(s)		unaccounted for			
VIII	14	full-sized pages	37 <sup>r</sup> -40 <sup>r</sup> 40 <sup>v</sup>	[69], 70-75 [76]	<i>Aided Diarmata meic Fergusa Cherrbeóil</i>	<b>A</b> to f38 <sup>r</sup> a12; <b>B</b> f38 <sup>r</sup> a12-24; <b>A</b> f38 <sup>r</sup> a24-29; <b>B</b> f38 <sup>r</sup> a29-33; <b>A</b> f38 <sup>r</sup> b1-end
	15				Miscellaneous material:	<b>A</b>
					(a) f40 <sup>v</sup> b18: Note on battle of Ard Rathain	<b>A</b>
					(b) f40 <sup>v</sup> b24: How Conmac of the Conmacni got the name Eolus	<b>A</b>
					(c) f40 <sup>v</sup> b30: How David slew 250 men at one cast	<b>A</b>
			41 <sup>r</sup>	77	(d) Genealogical note on the Lugna	<b>A</b>
					(e) f41 <sup>r</sup> a9: Poem on the slingstone of the Túatha Dé Danann	<b>A</b>
					(f) f41 <sup>r</sup> a23: List of some vassal peoples of Connacht	<b>A</b>
					(g) f41 <sup>r</sup> a32: Series of descendants of characters of Irish stories	<b>A</b>
					(h) f41 <sup>r</sup> b12: On the three Lents of the year	<b>A</b>
					(i) f41 <sup>r</sup> b14: Descent of Mary and explanation of name Muisi therein	<b>A</b>
					(not recorded, <i>recte</i> j) f41 <sup>r</sup> b17: Genealogical note, now partially illegible on Lughna, fosterer to Cormac mac Airt	<b>A</b>
					(k) f41 <sup>r</sup> b20: Note on analogy between four orders of rulers of Israel and the functions of the deity	
					(l) f41 <sup>r</sup> b32: Descent of Ulick de Burgh, d. 1343	<b>A</b>
			41 <sup>v</sup>	78	(m) Note on Ethan, son of Noah	<b>A</b>
					(n) f41 <sup>v</sup> a12: Note on the kings of Israel and Judah	<b>A</b>
					(o) f41 <sup>v</sup> a25: Descent of Diarmuid ua Duibne (Different to AS version.)	<b>A</b>
					(p) f41 <sup>v</sup> a30: Note on the innovations in the order of the Mass introduced by various popes	<b>A</b>
					(q) f41 <sup>v</sup> b8: The will of Niall son of Eochu Mugmedón	<b>A</b> to 41vb15; <b>C</b> 41vb16-31

			(r) f41 <sup>v</sup> b32: Note saying Batrach told the story of Christ to Conchobar	A
	42 <sup>r</sup>	79	(s) Note on the first physicians of Ireland	A
			(t) f42 <sup>r</sup> a16: Note on Mumain, mother of three saints	A
			(u) f42 <sup>r</sup> a23: Note on the families of Irish saints	A
			(w, <i>recte</i> v) f42 <sup>r</sup> a30: Descent of Fenius Farsa from Gomer son of Japheth	A
			(not recorded, <i>recte</i> w.1) f42 <sup>r</sup> b6: Genealogical note on Calamairia	A
			(not recorded, <i>recte</i> w.2) f42 <sup>r</sup> b6: Genealogical note on descendant of Conaire	
			(x) f42 <sup>r</sup> b9: <i>Dindshenchas</i> of Dún Neachtain Scene	A
			(y) f42 <sup>r</sup> b14: Note on the children of Mágach (Máta) and poem on alternative descent for Mágach	A
	42 <sup>v</sup>	80	(z) f42 <sup>v</sup> a8: Descent of Gallach garblámach Glenna Gaibli	A
			(aa) f42 <sup>v</sup> a14: Note on three kings who don't pay tax to the king of Cashel	A
			(bb) f42 <sup>v</sup> a17: Descent of Anbeith mac Biraig	A
			(cc) f42 <sup>v</sup> a21: Descent of Mobí Clairenech mac Beoin	A
			(dd) f42 <sup>v</sup> a33: Descent of Brain mac Ceinnéig	A
			(ee) f42 <sup>v</sup> b20: Note on the Egyptian ancestors of the Irish	A
			(ff) f42 <sup>v</sup> b31: Two brief notes on historical personages	A
slip of vellum	43 <sup>r</sup>	81	(gg) Prognostications	A
	43 <sup>v</sup>	[82]		
			(hh) f43 <sup>v</sup> 3: Dates in the life of Christ	A
full-sized pages	44 <sup>r</sup>	83	(ii) On the descendants of Eoghan Mór	A
			(not recorded, <i>recte</i> jj) f44 <sup>r</sup> a8: Note on the Lúaigne of Tara	A
			(kk) f44 <sup>r</sup> a9: On the deaths of the seven Maines	A
			(ll) f44 <sup>r</sup> b1: Poem on the periods of the world	A
			(mm) f44 <sup>r</sup> b23: Note on the non-Gaelic tribes of Ireland	A
			(nn) f44 <sup>r</sup> b26: The division of Ireland between Rudraige, Sláinge and Laiglinne	A
			(oo) f44 <sup>r</sup> b33: Note on origin of the name Ulaid	A

	16	44 <sup>v</sup>	84	Prose version of Section 1 of <i>Saltair na Rann</i>	<b>A</b>	
	17			f44 <sup>v</sup> a14: Tale of Ciarnat and the first mill in Ireland	<b>A</b>	
	18	45 <sup>r</sup>	85	(Contains both poetry and prose versions.)	<b>A</b>	
	19			Miscellaneous:		
	20			f45 <sup>r</sup> a6: Note on the three things that ruin kingdoms		
	21			f45 <sup>r</sup> a16: Note on the six necessary functions of a monastery and their qualities	<b>A</b>	
	22			f45 <sup>r</sup> a24: Moral sayings (Extracts from <i>Apgitir Chrábaid.</i> )	<b>A</b>	
	23			f45 <sup>r</sup> b7: Brief tract on canonical hours	<b>A</b>	
	24			f47 <sup>t</sup> b22: Note on improper use of the host	<b>A</b>	
	25	45 <sup>v</sup>	86	f47 <sup>t</sup> b27: Note on Adam's creation and sin	<b>A</b>	
	26			Note on the constituent parts of Adam's body	<b>A</b>	
	27	46 <sup>r</sup>	87	f45 <sup>v</sup> a23: <i>Suidigud Tige Midchurta</i> (Texts relating to disposition of the <i>Tech Midchaurta</i> at Tara.)	<b>A</b>	
	28	46 <sup>v</sup>	88	f46 <sup>t</sup> b20: Poem on Mount Ararat	<b>A</b>	
	29			From Rule of St Mochuda (Rest of f41 <sup>v</sup> a and all of f41 <sup>v</sup> b left blank.)	<b>A</b>	
IX	28	47 <sup>r</sup> -49 <sup>r</sup>	[89], 90-93	Poem between Fintan mac Bóchra and the ancient hawk of Achill	<b>A</b>	
	29	49 <sup>v</sup>	94	f49 <sup>v</sup> a18: Poem of questions on history, mostly Old Testament	<b>A</b> (Glosses by <b>C</b> on f50 <sup>t</sup> a27-36, f50 <sup>t</sup> b29-34)	
	30	50 <sup>f</sup>	95			
	31	50 <sup>v</sup>	96	f50 <sup>v</sup> a25: Poem on the number of angels and the names of archangels	<b>A</b>	
	32			f50 <sup>v</sup> b8: Poem of questions on Irish history	<b>A</b> (Glosses by <b>B</b> )	
	33	51 <sup>r-v</sup>	97-98			
	34	52 <sup>r</sup>	99			
					f52 <sup>r</sup> a20: On the three trees of Athlone	<b>A</b> (Glosses by <b>B</b> )
					f52 <sup>r</sup> a28: Verse from poem which elsewhere begins <i>Uar in lathe do Lumlaine</i>	<b>A</b> (Glosses by <b>B</b> )
					f52 <sup>r</sup> a31: Verse on the seven sons of Mágach slain by Conall Cernach	<b>A</b> (Glosses by <b>B</b> )

	35		f52 <sup>r</sup> b1: Poem beginning <i>Fiana batar in Emain</i>	<b>A</b> (Glosses by <b>B</b> )	
	36	52 <sup>v</sup> -53 <sup>r</sup>	100-101	f53 <sup>v</sup> a24: Poem of questions on the early history of Ireland	<b>A</b>
		53 <sup>v</sup>	102		
	37	54 <sup>r</sup>	103	f54 <sup>r</sup> b10: Poem on the matter of the <i>Lebor Gabála</i>	<b>A</b> to f56 <sup>r</sup> a16; <b>B</b> f56 <sup>r</sup> a17-f56 <sup>r</sup> b16; <b>A</b> f56 <sup>r</sup> b17-end
		54 <sup>v</sup> -55 <sup>v</sup>	104-106		
		56 <sup>r</sup>	107		
	38			f56 <sup>r</sup> b17: Two verses on national characteristics	<b>A</b>
	39			f56 <sup>r</sup> b23: Four quatrains on national characteristics	<b>A</b>
	40	56 <sup>v</sup>	[108]	Poem on qualities of various parts of Ireland	<b>A</b>
	41			f56 <sup>v</sup> b25: Poem on the seats of the passions	<b>A</b>
<b>X</b>	42	57 <sup>r</sup> -65 <sup>v</sup> <sup>r</sup>	109-126	Extracts from annals	<b>A</b>
		66 <sup>r</sup>	127		
	43			f66 <sup>r</sup> [l.]19: Poem on the duties of a <i>file</i>	<b>A</b>
	44	66 <sup>v</sup>	128	Religious poem on the nativity	Later hand
<b>XI</b>	45	67 <sup>r</sup> -69 <sup>r</sup>	129-133	<i>Loinges mac nUisnigh</i>	<b>B</b> to f67 <sup>r</sup> a4; <b>A</b> f67 <sup>r</sup> a5-end
		69 <sup>v</sup>	134		
	46			f66 <sup>v</sup> [l.]10: <i>Vision of Concobar and slaying of Maine Mórgor</i>	<b>A</b>
	47	70 <sup>r</sup>	135	f70 <sup>r</sup> [l.]22: <i>Aislinge Óengusso</i>	<b>A</b>
		70 <sup>v</sup> -71 <sup>r</sup>	136-137		
	48	71 <sup>v</sup>	138	f71 <sup>v</sup> [l.]11: <i>Táin Bó Aingen</i>	<b>A</b> to f73 <sup>r</sup> [l.]2; <b>B</b> f73 <sup>r</sup> [ll.]3-12; <b>A</b> to end
		72 <sup>r</sup> -73 <sup>r</sup>	139-141		
		73 <sup>v</sup>	142		
	49			f73 <sup>v</sup> [l.]17: <i>De Chopur in dá Muccada</i>	<b>A</b>
		74 <sup>r</sup> -76 <sup>r</sup>	143-147		
50	76 <sup>v</sup>	148	f76 <sup>v</sup> [l.]20: <i>Táin Bó Regamna</i>	<b>A</b>	
	77 <sup>r</sup>	149			
	77 <sup>v</sup>	150			

	51		77 <sup>r</sup>		f77 <sup>v</sup> [l.]15: <i>Compert Conchubuir</i>	<b>A</b>
			78 <sup>r</sup>	151		
			78 <sup>v</sup>	152		
	52		79 <sup>f</sup>	153	f78 <sup>v</sup> [l.]5: <i>Compert Con Culainn</i>	<b>A</b>
			79 <sup>v</sup>	154		
XII			80 <sup>f</sup>	155	f79 <sup>r</sup> [l.]19: <i>Compert Con Culainn</i> (Different version to the preceding.)	<b>A</b>
			80 <sup>v</sup>	156		
	53		81 <sup>r</sup>	157	f80 <sup>f</sup> [l.]25: <i>Táin Bó Dartada</i>	<b>A</b>
			81 <sup>v</sup>	158		
	54		82 <sup>f</sup>	159	f81 <sup>r</sup> [l.]24: <i>Táin Bó Regamna</i>	<b>A</b>
			82 <sup>v</sup>	160		
	55		83 <sup>r</sup> , 84 <sup>f</sup>	161	f82 <sup>r</sup> [l.]8: <i>Táin Bó Flidais</i>	<b>A</b>
			83 <sup>v</sup> , 84 <sup>v</sup>	162		
	56		85 <sup>r</sup> -86 <sup>v</sup>	163-166	f82 <sup>v</sup> [l.]21: <i>Táin Bó Fraích</i>	<b>A</b>
	RF: missing folio(s)		unaccounted for		[Missing in early 18 <sup>th</sup> Century when Ua Hanluain had the book on loan from Ó Broin]	
	56	full-sized pages	87 <sup>r</sup>	167	<i>Táin Bó Fraích</i> (continued)	<b>A</b>
			87 <sup>v</sup>	168		
	57				f87 <sup>v</sup> [l.]11: <i>Do Foillsigud Tána Bó Cúailnge</i>	<b>A</b>
XIII	58		88 <sup>r</sup> -98 <sup>v</sup>	169-190	<i>Táin Bó Cúailnge</i>	<b>A</b> to f89 <sup>v</sup> ; <b>C</b> f90 <sup>r</sup> a-f97 <sup>v</sup> b; <b>A</b> f98 <sup>f</sup> a-b
	RF: missing folio(s)		unaccounted for			
XIV	58	full-sized pages	99 <sup>f</sup> -104 <sup>v</sup>	191-202	<i>Táin Bó Cúailnge</i> (continued)	<b>B</b> to f100 <sup>v</sup> a; <b>A</b> f100 <sup>v</sup> b-f101 <sup>r</sup> a; <b>B</b> f101 <sup>b</sup> ; <b>A</b> f101 <sup>v</sup> -f103rb; <b>C</b> f103 <sup>v</sup> a-f104 <sup>b</sup> ; <b>B</b> f104 <sup>v</sup> a1-8; <b>C</b> f104 <sup>v</sup> a9-end
	RF: missing folio(s)		unaccounted for			

	58	full-sized pages	105 <sup>r-v</sup>	203-204	<i>Táin Bó Cúailnge</i> (continued)	<b>C</b>
	RF: missing folio(s)		unaccounted for			
XV	59	full-sized pages	106 <sup>r</sup>	205	<i>Tógail Bruidne Dá Derga</i>	<b>A</b>
			106 <sup>v</sup>	206		
			107 <sup>r</sup>	225		
			107 <sup>v</sup>	[226]		
			108 <sup>r</sup> -109 <sup>v</sup>	229-232		
			110 <sup>r</sup> -113 <sup>v</sup>	233-240		
			114 <sup>r-v</sup>	227-228		
			115 <sup>r-v</sup>	223-224		
	RF: missing folio(s)		unaccounted for			
XVI	59	full-sized pages	116 <sup>r</sup> -123 <sup>v</sup>	207-222	<i>Tógail Bruidne Dá Derga</i> (continued)	<b>A</b> to f122 <sup>r</sup> a5; <b>D</b> f122 <sup>r</sup> a6-14; <b>A</b> f122 <sup>r</sup> a14-f123 <sup>r</sup> b; <b>B</b> f123 <sup>v</sup> a1; <b>A</b> f123 <sup>v</sup> a2-end
	RF: missing folio(s)		unaccounted for			
XVII	60	full-sized pages	124 <sup>r-v</sup>	241-2	Fragments from <i>Imram Curaig Mailedúin</i>	<b>A</b>
	RF: missing folio(s)		unaccounted for			
XVIII	60	full-sized pages	125 <sup>r</sup>	243	Fragments from <i>Imram Curaig Mailedúin</i> (continued)	<b>A</b>
			125 <sup>v</sup>	[244]		
	61		f125 <sup>v</sup> [l.]13: Fragment of a tract on wonders of Ireland	<b>A</b>		
	62		Margins: Number of quatrains, mostly in A's hand, some later.		<b>A</b>	
	RF: missing folio(s)		unaccounted for			

There is much evidence to suggest that neither pagination nor foliation were contemporary with the manuscript. The aforementioned colophon by Ua Hanluain provides evidence that the missing folio of *Táin Bó Fraích* between fols 86 and 87 (henceforth fol. 86<sup>(2)</sup>) was not present in the manuscript in the early eighteenth century, yet neither foliator nor paginator accounts for the lacuna. This note and the current arrangement suggest that this section was bound prior to the time it was in Ua Hanluain's hands. A leaf between fols 36 and 37 has also been lost. This appears to have been cut out after being bound between fols 36 and 37 as part of the folio's margin is still in the manuscript. Neither the pagination nor foliation accounts for this missing folio either (henceforth fol. 36<sup>(2)</sup>).

There are two further cases where a portion of the edge of missing folios are bound between pages still in the manuscript but have not been accounted for in pagination or foliation. One is between fols 34 and 35 (henceforth fol. 34<sup>(2)</sup>). The second is between fols 82 and 85 where two slips of vellum are to be found. These have been foliated as fols. 83 and 84 and are currently bound such that one is above the other and so that they read as a single leaf. The writing indicates that the vellum was cut as it is today at the time of writing, not after its production, because the text accommodates the shape of the vellum slips. The paginator treats the two slips of vellum as forming a single leaf: Fol. 82<sup>v</sup> is p. 160. Fol. 83<sup>r</sup> contains no page number and fol. 84<sup>r</sup>, which is below, is paginated as 161. Fol. 83<sup>v</sup> again contains no page number and fol. 84<sup>v</sup> is paginated as 162. Fol. 85<sup>r</sup> is p. 163. Parts of two further slips of vellum have been cut away but the edges are still bound between fols. 83/84 and 85. These slips of vellum (henceforth fols 83<sup>(2)</sup>/84<sup>(2)</sup>) appear to have been somewhat smaller than those which comprise fols 83/84. It therefore appears that fols 83<sup>(2)</sup>/84<sup>(2)</sup> were cut out after being bound between those two folios.

Another case of note with regards the foliation is fols 3 and 4. There is a chasm between folios 2 and 5. The manuscript does, however, contain two slips of vellum foliated as 3 and 4. An obituary for Art Buidhe Mac Murchadha Caomhánach appears on these leaves, not writing pertaining to *Amra Choluim Chille*, the text on either side of these leaves, and a text in which there is a lacuna. These slips of vellum are not paginated. It is possible then that one of the manuscript's arrangers was aware of the chasm and inserted the two aforementioned slips of vellum to mark his awareness of this, with the leaves becoming known as fols 3 and 4 after the manuscript was foliated. Alternatively, as they do not form part of any text in the manuscript, the paginator may simply have decided not to number the pages.



Further information about the manuscript's foliation can be ascertained from some of Muiris Ó Gormáin's records. Muiris Ó Gormáin (Maurice O'Gorman, c.1710-c.1794)<sup>40</sup> was a professional eighteenth-century scribe, who had a large number of books and manuscripts and who catalogued the items in his possession at least twice: two catalogues are extant in RIA 23 H 23 (a) and NLI G664.<sup>41</sup> The first of these lists, RIA 23 H 23 (a), was written in 1761<sup>42</sup> and contains an entry of interest to us. It reads:

Táin bó cuailnge without a cover bought of Mr Billy Quin who is now in America containing the actions and feats of Congulan <sup>Con culainn</sup>. together with madrað maol. táin bo regamna. táin bo flidiais. táin bo dartada. sgéal esirt do tuata lucra .7 iubdán .7 be bo re linn fergus mic leidi mic Rudraige beir anErmain maça. with several other things too tedious to invest. Ditto. Vellum in quorto containing 120 leaves wrote very well in the year 1419 as in the 4<sup>th</sup> leaf or 7[th] page the last line below, by itself[.]<sup>43</sup>

All indications are that this is the manuscript now known as Egerton 1782: *TBC* forms a significant part of the manuscript; *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil* is untitled in the manuscript but that tale does appear on fols 26<sup>r</sup>-30<sup>r</sup>; *Táin Bó Dartada*, *Táin Bó Regamna*, and *Táin Bó Flidais* appear consecutively, in that order, on fols 80<sup>r</sup>-82<sup>v</sup>; *Imtechta tuaithe Lucra 7 Aged Fergusa* is a later version of the tale *Aided Fergusa mac Léiti* and the characters *Eisirt*, *Iubdán*, and *Be Bó* are present in the text related in Egerton 1782; what is currently fol. 24<sup>r</sup> contains the aforementioned colophon noting that the scribe was writing in the year 1419<sup>44</sup> – it stands alone in the lower margin, or, as Ó Gormáin noted, in 'the last line below, by itself.' This entry therefore provides us with some interesting hints regarding the manuscript's codicology. As it records that the date 1419 is 'in the 4<sup>th</sup> leaf or 7[th] page' it can be ascertained that the manuscript was not in its current arrangement in 1761: that colophon appears on what has now been enumerated as fol. 24<sup>r</sup> or p. 41 by the manuscript's foliator and paginator respectively. It would also suggest that at least some of the manuscript was not arranged coherently. The colophon mentioning 1419 appears under 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn'. 'The Chase', however, begins on the *verso* of the current fol. 20. If the page which is now fol. 24<sup>r</sup> was the 7<sup>th</sup> page when it was in Ó Gormáin's possession the manuscript would have begun on fol. 21<sup>r</sup>, a seventh of the way through the text of 'The Chase' as it currently stands. Furthermore, neither a new

<sup>40</sup> For an account of Ó Gormáin's life and works see Mac Cathmhaoil, *Muiris Ó Gormáin: Beatha agus Saothar Fileata* and Ní Mhunghaile, 'Muiris Ó Gormáin (†1794): Scoláire idir Dhá Chultúr'.

<sup>41</sup> Ní Mhunghaile, 'An eighteenth-century Gaelic scribe's private library' *Muiris Ó Gormáin's books*, 240-3.

<sup>42</sup> Ní Mhunghaile, 'An eighteenth-century Gaelic scribe's private library', 243.

<sup>43</sup> RIA 23 H 23 (a) fol. 8, also reproduced in Ní Mhunghaile, 'An eighteenth-century Gaelic scribe's private library', 252. Transcription is my own.

<sup>44</sup> For more on the date of the manuscript see discussion above.

section of that tale nor a new sentence of the 'The Chase' begins on fol. 21<sup>r</sup>a1 – it is the continuation of a sentence begun on fol. 20<sup>v</sup>b51. It seems likely that foliation or pagination, had they been present, would have been mentioned by Ó Gormáin rather than describing in detail where the colophon appeared. Thus, it seems that the leaves of the manuscript were neither foliated nor paginated before 1761. That the text of 'The Chase' seems to have been split up at some point during the manuscript's lifetime has further implications for the manuscript context and is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Ó Gormáin was still in possession of the manuscript in 1772. The relevant entry in his second catalogue, now in NLI G664 reads:

Tain bo cuailgne. a *quarto* in vellum. beginning with bi bricín tuama. Teasmolaḁ corbmaic ui cuinn. aigid Fhinn mic Cumail. eaḁtra an madaḁ maoil. Bai rig fírbreataḁ ro gabus tar flaitus for clannaib ratmura Ruḁraide .i. Fergus mac leide. Do tuataib luḁra 7 lusraganaḁ. Amra choluim cille. Arsaíd sin a eouin accla. Duan an *coeca* cest. Fingin mac flaind *cecinit*. A fír tall triallus an sgel. Adam atar sruith *ar* sluaḁ *etc.* la da raib suibne mean na gilla acc. the same containing 10 leaves. Cia dia mbui longes mac nusnig. ni *hannsa*. Badar ule ac ol a tig feidlime mac daill scealaige concubar. Bui ailill *acus* meudb aidche samnoi hi rait *cruachain*. Cia dia ta tain bo cuailnge. ni *hannsa*. Tain bo raegamna. Coimpert *conchobair* inso. coimpert con *culainn*. Tain bo dartada incipit[.] tain bo regamnai. tain bo flidais. Fraech mac fliduig dichunnochtuib.<sup>45</sup>

The items mentioned in this entry, in order, correspond to the following articles in the table detailing Egerton 1782's make-up, above: 3, 9, 11, 12, 1, 28, 29, 31, 37, 42, 45, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, illustrating that the manuscript was rearranged at some point between 1761 and 1772. The antiquarian Charles O'Connor of Belanagare<sup>46</sup> left his mark on the book, adding the title 'Tesmolta Corbmaic ui Cuinn et Aighedh Finn meic Cumhail sunn' on fols 24<sup>v</sup>-25<sup>r</sup>, noting the date 'Mart 28 1770,' on fol. 65<sup>v</sup> and inserting some corrections.<sup>47</sup> Although evidently still in Ó Gormáin's possession, that the manuscript was in O'Connor's hands in 1770 and the appearance of the title added by O'Connor in Ó Gormáin's second account of the manuscript would strongly suggest that O'Connor was responsible for the book's rearrangement and that this occurred c. 1770.

<sup>45</sup> NLI G664, fols 4-5.

<sup>46</sup> For discussion of various aspects of O'Connor's life see Gibbons O'Connor, *Charles O'Connor of Ballinagare*. Many of O'Connor's personal letters have also been made available in print in Ward, Wrynn, and Ward, *Letters of Charles O'Connor of Belanagare*.

<sup>47</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 265.

The manuscript's current foliation and pagination do not correspond to its arrangement when it was in Ó Gormáin's possession, neither in the first or second catalogue account. On that basis, it seems to have remained unfoliated and unpaginated until at least 1772. At this point it is useful to return to the BM's first catalogue of Egerton 1782, published in 1877. The cataloguer provides the reader with a brief account of the manuscript's contents – a list comprising 31 items – which provides us with enough information to determine that the manuscript was in its current arrangement in 1877 at the latest.<sup>48</sup> The differences between the 1772 and 1877 arrangement, considered alongside discussion of contents, foliation and pagination above allows us to ascertain how the manuscript changed in the intervening century. After 1772 and before pagination the section containing *Amra Colum Cille* was moved to the beginning of the manuscript and pagination occurred after that section was moved. The pagination would seem to account for all pages that are currently in the manuscript, except fols 3 and 4, discussed above, and no chasms are accounted for in the pagination, even where the edge of a folio remains in the binding, e.g. fols 34<sup>(2)</sup>, 36<sup>(2)</sup>, 83<sup>(2)</sup>/84<sup>(2)</sup>, and 86<sup>(2)</sup>, also discussed above. For this reason, at least eleven of the twelve chasms in the manuscript had already occurred when the manuscript was paginated. It cannot be ascertained if the lacuna after the final folio was present at that stage. There are discrepancies in the pagination and foliation of *TBDD*: pp. 205-206 are now fol. 106<sup>r-v</sup>; pp. 207-222 are now fols 116<sup>r</sup>-123<sup>v</sup>; pp. 223-224 are now fol. 115<sup>r-v</sup>; pp. 225-226 are now fol. 107<sup>r-v</sup>; pp. 227-228 are now fol. 114<sup>r-v</sup>; pp. 233-40 are now fols 110<sup>r</sup>-113<sup>v</sup>. These discrepancies demonstrate that the leaves containing *TBDD* were rearranged after pagination and before foliation. The foliation was added when the manuscript pages were in their current sequence as all leaves present in the manuscript, be they full-sized folios or smaller slips of vellum, are accounted for. Thus, the arrangement in which the manuscript was to be found in 1772 seems to have persisted until the present day with only minor changes in the intermediate period.

The manuscript has a 'nineteenth-century binding of dark green leather'<sup>49</sup> and is gilt-tooled with marbled end-papers. The front and back covers are stamped with the arms of the Egertons and gold lettering on the spine reads BIBLIOTHECA OF PROSE AND VERSE. IRISH. MUS. BRIT. BIBL. EGERTON. 1782. PLUT. DXX.D.<sup>50</sup> A number of other manuscripts purchased at the auction of the antiquarian William Monck Mason's<sup>51</sup> books

<sup>48</sup> British Museum, *Catalogue of Additions*, ii, pp. 876-8. The cataloguer is not named in the catalogue.

<sup>49</sup> Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts in Pre-Cromwellian Ireland*, p. 68.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p. 68.

<sup>51</sup> For further information on Monck Mason see J. T. Gilbert, 'Mason, William Charles Monck (1779-1859)'.

and manuscripts in 1858 are similarly bound in nineteenth-century leather with gilt-tooling and marbled end papers. Examples include NLI G129, NLI G130, NLI G131 and RIA 23 P 24. Together, these factors indicate that the manuscript was acquired by the BM when in the arrangement and binding in which it is found today and that the manuscript was most likely bound when in Mason's possession.

Although most likely bound by Mason, it must be borne in mind that Ua Hanluain's colophon suggests that some sections of the manuscript were nonetheless bound prior to this date, a suggestion bolstered by Flower noting that 'in some cases the leaves were originally pieced together by thin vellum thongs.'<sup>52</sup> The holes through which these vellum thongs were sewn can still be seen on some pages of the manuscript, despite its subsequent rebinding. This feature is not present on all pages but the current binding does not allow one to ascertain with certainty that they are not present at all. Indeed, in the case of the folios on which *TBDD* appears, these holes are also visible. Combined with the difference in pagination and foliation, detailed above, it supports the suggestion that some sections bound by vellum thongs were subsequently unbound, the leaves jumbled and re-ordered before being re-bound. (Implications of such activity for 'The Chase' are discussed later in this chapter.) Flower furthermore notes that the staining and fading present in the manuscript today suggest that the manuscript was circulating as independent sections for a substantial period of time and these features provided him with enough information to suggest which sections were bound together during the time that the manuscript was in circulation as several independent sections rather than the single book.<sup>53</sup>

As most of the manuscript was written by a single scribe, designated Scribe A, on the same vellum and using the same ink, it seems to have been a planned work which was considered a single item despite, most likely, being unbound in 1761. If Mason was indeed responsible for the book's binding, it is relatively certain that he considered it a single book or collection and its acquisition by the BM means that it has been preserved as one volume since that date. These factors combined strongly suggest that Egerton 1782 has been one collection from the time of writing, even if the sections were not always bound together and even if they underwent rearrangement during the manuscript's lifetime. This suggestion is bolstered by the presence of unfinished texts in the manuscript: on occasion a full column or an entire page has been left blank before the beginning of another text, e.g.

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<sup>52</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 259.

<sup>53</sup> For detailed information on these independent sections see Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 262.

'The Chase' ends mid-sentence at the end of fol. 24<sup>1b</sup> and the scribe left a single column blank, fol. 24<sup>v</sup>a, before beginning the next tale on fol. 24<sup>v</sup>b1. Thus, one may reasonably assume that the scribe intended to finish the work at a later date.

To sum up, therefore, the foregoing discussion demonstrates that Egerton 1782 seems to have been a coherent collection of texts from the time of its production, and in its current state contains two folios added at a later date. After production, the arrangement of the manuscript was disrupted as it does not seem to have been foliated, paginated, or organised in its current arrangement prior to 1761. We have reason to believe, however, that some, although not all sections were bound prior to this date. Between 1761 and 1772 the manuscript was rearranged, most likely by Charles O'Connor in or around the year 1770, and the evidence presented above indicates that the 1772 arrangement of the manuscript seems to have persisted with only minor changes to the order of the folios since then. After 1772, *Amra Colum Cille* was moved to the beginning of the manuscript. Subsequently, and with at least eleven of the twelve lacunae already present today already occurring in the manuscript, the book was paginated. Following some rearrangement of the leaves of *TBDD* the manuscript was foliated. When in this order and in when in Mason's possession, the book was bound although it cannot be said which came first, the foliation or the binding. The final chasm, however, had arisen by the time the book was bound. All events appear to have taken place before 1858 when the manuscript came to the BM.

Egerton 1782 passed through many hands between the time of its production and the time it came to be in its present home in the BL. It is unclear when the manuscript first came to Leinster but Flower is of the opinion that it stayed there throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>54</sup> From marginal notes in later hands we can ascertain that the book seems to have been in the possession of the O'Byrnes of Co. Wicklow at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>55</sup> Early in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Ó Broin transcribed some parts of the manuscript. Between 1725-7 he transcribed mostly Ulster Cycle tales and these transcriptions now form part of NLI G130.<sup>56</sup> Another manuscript in Ó Broin's hand, NLI G61, also contains transcriptions from Egerton 1782 and is thought to have been written in 1733.<sup>57</sup> While it was in his possession Ó Broin lent the manuscript to Ua Hanluain,<sup>58</sup> who also transcribed

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<sup>54</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 262.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p. 262.

<sup>56</sup> Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland*, iv, pp. 47-51.

<sup>57</sup> Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland*, ii, pp. 83-90.

<sup>58</sup> See fol. 86<sup>v</sup>, Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, pp. 261-2, and discussion above.

material from the Ulster Cycle. Ua Hanluain's transcriptions are now in NLI G138.<sup>59</sup> In 1746, Aodh Ó Dálaigh (Hugh O'Daly) transcribed some of the manuscript for his patron, Dr Francis Stoughton Sullivan, with these transcriptions now present in TCD H. 1. 13 and TCD H. 5. 12.<sup>60</sup> From the entry in Muiris Ó Gormáin's 1761 catalogue, above, it can be ascertained that at some point between 1746 and 1761 the manuscript was in the possession of Mr Billy Quin who then sold it to Ó Gormáin. Quin does not seem to have been a professional in the Dublin book trade at the time,<sup>61</sup> leaving the possibility that he was either a private collector or a non-Dublin-based professional – I have found no additional information about Quin thus far. Although Charles O'Connor had access to the manuscript in 1770,<sup>62</sup> Ó Gormáin remained in possession of it until at least October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1772. Edward O'Reilly later transcribed some of Egerton 1782's Ulster Cycle material,<sup>63</sup> transcriptions which are extant in NLI G450.<sup>64</sup> The manuscript finally belonged to William Monck Mason before coming to the BM.<sup>65</sup> The journey from Ó Gormáin to Mason is unclear but a distinct possibility is that Mason acquired the manuscript from Edward O'Reilly who in turn obtained the book from Henri Mac an tSaoir in 1794. RIA 23 D 22, RIA F v 2, RIA F v 3, RIA F v 5, and RIA G vi 1 are all copies of Ó Gormáin manuscripts,<sup>66</sup> and were written by a scribe who signed his name 'Henri Mac an tSaoir' in the first of those manuscripts.<sup>67</sup> According to a note by James Hardiman in Egerton 129, Ó Gormáin 'died in the greatest poverty in a ground-cellar in Mary's Lane, Dublin, about 1794; where he was a long time supported by the charity of Mac Entaggart, who was himself a poor man' and left many of his books and manuscripts to the same man when he died.<sup>68</sup> Nicolás Mac Cathmhaoil, however, notes that Macintire may have been the correct English version of the man's name as noted in NLI G458.<sup>69</sup> In 1794 O'Reilly purchased upwards of 100 books and manuscripts of Ó Gormáin's from a man named Wright who was about to emigrate to America and who would seem to be the same person as the Henri Mac an tSaoir/Macintire/Mac Entaggart mentioned above.<sup>70</sup> Two further late MSS,

<sup>59</sup> Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland*, iv, pp. 83-87.

<sup>60</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, pp. 262-63; Abbott and Gwynn, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin*, pp. 40-44, 245.

<sup>61</sup> Quin's name does not appear in Pollard, *A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade 1550-1800*.

<sup>62</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 263.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, p. 263.

<sup>64</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 263; Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland*, x (1987), pp. 30-32.

<sup>65</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, pp. 262-63.

<sup>66</sup> Ní Mhunchaile, 'Muiris Ó Gormáin', p. 225.

<sup>67</sup> O'Rahilly, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, i (1926), p. 104.

<sup>68</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, pp. 597-98.

<sup>69</sup> Mac Cathmhaoil, *Muiris Ó Gormáin*, p. 75, n. 51.

<sup>70</sup> Ní Mhunchaile, 'Muiris Ó Gormáin', p. 225; Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 623; O'Rahilly, (ed.), *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, i, p. 104.

Longford, St Mel's College MSS 9 and 10, are copies of much of the material in Egerton 1782, including *Aislinge Óengusso*, although 'The Chase' does not appear therein.<sup>71</sup> As I have not, however, been able to examine these MSS to date I do not currently have further information on them. Egerton 1782 was sold at auction on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1858 during the sale of Mason's manuscripts when the BM acquired it.<sup>72</sup> Although not part of the original collection of 67 manuscripts donated to the BM by Francis Henry Egerton in 1829,<sup>73</sup> it was acquired using the Bridgewater fund, a sum of £12,000 which was donated by Egerton, 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Bridgewater in order to acquire further manuscripts.<sup>74</sup>

## 2.2: Egerton 1782's *Cín Dromma Snechtai* – *fiánaigecht* complex

'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' appears on fols 20<sup>v</sup>a1-24<sup>b</sup>47 of Egerton 1782. Robin Flower identified these folios as forming part of a discrete section comprising fols 17-25 of the manuscript. However, based on the information regarding the manuscript's arrangement at different times, discussed above, one must first examine whether we may agree with Flower's assessment of the folios forming a discrete section. The first part of the section, fols 17-20<sup>f</sup>, contains *Baile Bricín* and three *Cín Dromma Snechtai* (CDS) texts. *Fíanaigecht* material follows directly on fols 20<sup>v</sup>-25, forming the second part of that section. The entire section is in the hand of the main scribe, with the exception of a relief hand who wrote six lines of *Echtrae Chonnlai* on fol. 20<sup>f</sup>.<sup>75</sup> The following are the texts which make up the section comprising fols 17-25, in the order in which they appear:

*Baile Bricín*

*Forfess Fer Fálgae*

*Verba Scáthaige*

*Echtrae Chonnlai maic Cuinn*

'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn'

*Tesmolta Corbmaic Uí Chuinn et Aided Finn Mic Cumail*

*Áirem Muinntire Finn*

*Anmonna Oesa Fedma Finn.*

<sup>71</sup> My thanks to Kevin Murray for making me aware of these two MSS.

<sup>72</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 263.

<sup>73</sup> Watson, *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c. 700-1600*, p. 13.

<sup>74</sup> British Library, *Detailed Record for Egerton 1782*.

<sup>75</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 260.

(The scribe gives titles for *Forfess Fer Fálgae*, *Verba Scáthaige* and *Áirem Muinntire Finn* in the first line of each of those tales. The title *Echtrae Chonnlai maic Cuinn* appears as a heading in the line immediately preceding the beginning of that text. The title *Tesmolta Corbmaic Uí Chuinn et Aided Finn Mic Cumail* appears in the top margin spanning two facing folios in the eighteenth-century hand of Charles O'Connor.<sup>76</sup> The rest of the texts have no titles in the manuscript.) The first text, *Baile Bricín*, begins the *recto* of a folio, on the first line of Column A. The subsequent three texts all begin mid-folio. The fifth tale, 'The Chase', begins on the *verso* of the folio containing *Echtrae Chonnlai maic Cuinn*, the fourth tale in this section. The next three texts, again, all begin mid-folio. Approximately two thirds of fol. 25<sup>v</sup>b is left blank, following the completion of the final text, *Anmonna Oesa Fedma Finn*, indicating that the scribe had finished what may be considered a discrete physical section of the manuscript. Thus, Egerton 1782 itself presents us with reasons to agree with Flower's assessment, allowing 'The Chase' to be considered alongside these other seven texts in its manuscript context.

Pádraig Ó Macháin's recent study of the location of the *Acallam Bec* (*AB*) in the Book of Lismore has shown that the medieval intelligentsia did not engage with *fíanaigeacht* in a manner suggesting it was only treated as a genre unto itself but rather that the scribes of the Book of Lismore writing in the early modern period would have appreciated the resonances of and connections with a wide range of literature present in the *AB*.<sup>77</sup> Ó Macháin's study, discussed in more detail below, identifies a number of thematic connections that link the *AB* to the other texts in the section in which it appears thus demonstrating why the *AB* would have been included in the anthology he examines. If such connections were clear to the medieval *literati* for one Finn Cycle text, it is reasonable to assume that such relationships with a wide range of earlier and contemporary literature were recognisable in other Fenian tales also. On fols 17-25 of Egerton 1782 we see the *fíanaigeacht* material as part of a grouping of medieval Irish-language literary works also comprising non-Finn Cycle material, thus provoking the question of whether fols 17-25 may be approached as a deliberate literary arrangement within the manuscript as a whole as well as a discrete physical section.

Examination of anthologies, i.e. a group of texts deliberately placed together in a manuscript, of medieval Irish literature have proven elucidatory. Two examples of single

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, pp. 262, 270.

<sup>77</sup> Ó Macháin, 'Aonghus Ó Callanáin', pp. 154-5.



*fíanaigecht* tales anthologised alongside texts from other cycles or genres are Ó Macháin's aforementioned study of the *AB*'s placement in the Book of Lismore<sup>78</sup> and Catherine McKenna's consideration of the placement of *Fotha Catha Cnucha (FCC)* in *Lebor na hUidre (LU)*.<sup>79</sup> Ó Macháin has examined why the *AB* was originally intended to be part of the section comprising fols 132-9 of the Book of Lismore. In this anthology, we find the beginning of *AB* among other texts dealing primarily with kingship. He has brought to light a number of intertextual connections between *AB* and the other texts in that anthology, including the link of the country at peace that is to be found in multiple texts in the anthology. A further connection he identifies is the idea that Caoilte and Fionnchadha are characters from the past whose dialogue reveals details of that past to the contemporary characters in the tale, echoing a similar method of narrative to be found in *Suidiugad Tellaig Temra* and *Airne Fingéin*, two other tales in the anthology discussed by Ó Macháin.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, McKenna illustrates contextual reasons for the inclusion of *FCC* in an anthology which she delineates as comprising pp. 27-50 of LU. This anthology, she argues, was predominantly concerned with Otherworld themes, including the ways and means by which mortals could achieve the transition from this world to another. The text immediately preceding *FCC*, however, *Aided Echach meic Maireda (AEmM)*, treats of the destructive and anti-social power of desire. *AEmM* thus 'acts a hinge' to continue exploration of this theme with *FCC*, a tale which probes the question of sexual desire and its perils, demonstrating that *FCC* is to be understood as a meaningful and intentional inclusion in the anthology present on pp. 27-50 of LU.<sup>81</sup> This kind of deliberate anthologising in medieval Irish literature does not only apply to *fíanaigecht* texts; we can see the same scribal concerns with content present elsewhere and Egerton 1782 is no exception. One example from Egerton 1782 is the *Táin*-complex therein. In this complex a trend towards explicating the *remscél* status of tales is easily detectable and the tale of *Do Fáillsiugad Tána Bó Cúailnge* is fashioned into an introduction to the narrative of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.<sup>82</sup> As it is clear that the scribe(s) of this manuscript are elsewhere consciously selecting and arranging the texts included, this study concerns itself with whether the same is true of the *fíanaigecht* material which appears in Egerton 1782. The question to consider is: can we reasonably conclude that these texts were intentionally grouped together in the manuscript to form an anthology or are they merely an eclectic mixture of texts written into the manuscript, perhaps, as they became available to the scribe?

<sup>78</sup> Ó Macháin, 'Aonghus Ó Callanáin'.

<sup>79</sup> McKenna, 'Angels and Demons in the Pages of Lebor na hUidre', pp. 157-80.

<sup>80</sup> 'Aonghus Ó Callanáin', pp. 155-62.

<sup>81</sup> McKenna, 'Angels and Demons'.

<sup>82</sup> Burnyeat, 'The *Táin*-complex'.

As the subheading 'Egerton 1782's *Cín Dromma Snechtai – fíanaigecht* Complex' suggests, this section in Egerton 1782 is mainly comprised of texts from *CDS* and the *fíanaigecht* corpus. Rudolf Thurneysen first dated *CDS* to the eighth century,<sup>83</sup> later placing it in the tenth century,<sup>84</sup> but scholarly consensus currently agrees with his original assessment and assigns the codex to the eighth century.<sup>85</sup> Kevin Murray has recently discussed the problems associated with dating the early *fíanaigecht* corpus and highlighted the need for many of these texts, which were first dated by Kuno Meyer,<sup>86</sup> to be re-edited and analysed linguistically.<sup>87</sup> The *fíanaigecht* texts present in Egerton 1782 have been assigned dates of the twelfth and fourteenth centuries by Meyer but none have subsequently been re-edited with discussion of dating.<sup>88</sup>

Here follows a more detailed description of the eight texts in this section of the manuscript:

*Baile Bricín* begins the quire on fol. 17<sup>f</sup>. This tells the tale of an angel coming from God to Bricín of Túaim Drecon on the eve of Easter.<sup>89</sup> Upon Bricín's request the angel reveals, in the form of kennings, the identities of all future noteworthy churchmen to him. The angel also mentions at the end what is in store for Bricín and the role St Patrick will play in the fate of the Irish on Judgement Day. There exists no published edition of *Baile Bricín* with corresponding linguistic discussion but Murray has examined the text briefly in relation to *Baile in Scáil* and mentions the possibility of arguing 'for a composition date similar to *Baile in Scáil*, i.e. a textual core from the late old Irish period with later re-working, copying and additions accounting for the Middle Irish evidence.'<sup>90</sup>

*Forfess Fer Fálgae*, on fol. 19<sup>f</sup>, is the second text in this unit and the first of the three texts which derive from *CDS*. The tale is mostly written in rhetoric and its 'narrative catalyst is the arrival of a magical bird from the island [of Fál] who bears a beautiful branch to the stronghold of the Ulster heroes.'<sup>91</sup> The tale tells of Cú Chulainn engaging in battle with the Fir Fálgae, all of whom he kills. He then faces

<sup>83</sup> Thurneysen, *Zu irischen Handschriften*, pp. 23-30.

<sup>84</sup> Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Baile in Scáil', 218.

<sup>85</sup> See Carey, 'On the interrelationships of some *Cín Dromma Snechtai* texts', 71-92.

<sup>86</sup> Meyer, *Fíanaigecht*, pp. v-xxxi.

<sup>87</sup> Murray, 'Interpreting the evidence'.

<sup>88</sup> See discussion of the texts below.

<sup>89</sup> Parish of Tomregan on the border of counties Cavan and Fermanagh. Hogan, *Onomasticon*, s.v. *Túaim dracon* (al. *Túaim Drecon*) and Murray, 'Baile in Scáil and Baile Bricín', 50.

<sup>90</sup> Murray, 'Baile in Scáil and Baile Bricín', 55.

<sup>91</sup> Byrne, 'Archipelagic Otherworlds', p. 164.

the king of the Fir Fálgae, whom he also overcomes. The text tells us that the Fir Fálgae are the men of the Isle of Man, '*fer Falgae .i. fer Manann*'.<sup>92</sup> These events seem to take place on the Isle of the men of Fálgae, which, on the grounds of the previous, may be equated with the Isle of Man, because Cú Chulainn went to hold the nightwatch against them.<sup>93</sup> However, the island in question in this case has a number of otherworldly qualities such as 'the identification of Gét, the king of Man, as one of the supernatural race of the Fomoiri'.<sup>94</sup> This text has not been translated in full but Thurneysen has translated the prose introduction, dating it to the eighth century.<sup>95</sup>

*Verba Scáthaige*, appearing on fol. 19<sup>v</sup>, is next.<sup>96</sup> Another *CDS* text, this is a poem uttered by Scáthach to Cú Chulainn when he has finished his training with her and foretells the events of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, albeit in a somewhat cryptic manner. A later version of the poem is contained in *Tochmarc Emire* but the version here is the older, stand-alone text which P.L. Henry concludes 'may have been composed orally in the seventh or perhaps even the sixth century'.<sup>97</sup>

*Echtrae Chonnlai maic Cuinn*, beginning on fol. 19<sup>v</sup>,<sup>98</sup> is the fourth text in the section, and the third of the *CDS* texts. It tells the tale of an Otherworld woman visiting Connla and inviting him to go with her to the Land of Promise across the sea. Connla eventually follows the woman to her ship and sails away with her to the Land of Women. Kim McCone has placed the composition of *Echtrae Chonnlai* in the eighth century, and probably a little earlier than *Immram Brain* which dates to the first half thereof.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>92</sup> 'isiarom luid CuCul- fiu forfess fer Falchae selaig firu Faal huli argalaib oinfir.' Thurneysen, *Zu irischen Handschriften*, p. 56.

<sup>93</sup> Thurneysen, *Zu irischen Handschriften*, p. 56.

<sup>94</sup> Byrne, 'Archipelagic Otherworlds', p. 164. For further exploration of the otherworldly qualities and connections of the Isle of Man in this and other texts see pp. 159-64.

<sup>95</sup> Translation of the prose introduction to *Forfess Fer Falgae* in Thurneysen, *Zu irischen Handschriften*, p. 55. For discussion of the tale see Hellmuth, 'Zu Forfess Fer Fálgae'. For dating of the tale see Thurneysen, *Zu irischen Handschriften*, pp. 28-9.

<sup>96</sup> P. L. Henry gives diplomatic editions of all four manuscripts of Version A, a reconstructed text and translation of the reconstructed text, in '*Verba Scáthaige*'. According to Henry, Egerton 1782 may be considered the best text for this version of the poem, '*Verba Scáthaige*', 192.

<sup>97</sup> The version contained in *Tochmarc Emire* is designated Version B and is an expanded version of what appears in Version A. Version B's transmission is bound up with that of *Tochmarc Emire*. For discussion see Henry, '*Verba Scáthaige*', 191-4 and Miller, 'The role of the female warrior in early Irish literature', pp. 17-27.

<sup>98</sup> For edition, translation and discussion see McCone, *Echtrae Chonnlai*.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 29-43, 47-8, 106-19.

'The Chase', opening on fol. 20<sup>v</sup>, follows *Echtrae Chonnlai* and is the first of the *fíanaigeacht* narratives. This is the sole extant copy of this tale which relates a *fían*-hunt for the boar of Formaél around Sliabh na mBan Finn. Subsequently, Finn intends to go abroad for a year so that his prophesied death will not come to pass. Instead, he is counselled to stay and arrangements are made for a different noble to host him each night in order to avoid the prophecy.<sup>100</sup> Finn's first host is Fer Lí of the Lúaigne of Tara who promptly conspires to kill Finn. Fer Lí tries to imply wrongful slaughter by Finn's retinue, thus causing the warriors to rise against Finn and his men. The treacherous plot fails but Fer Lí nonetheless engages in battle with Finn the following day. The text ends fragmentarily with Finn's retinue dead and the sons of Uirgriu of the Lúaigne of Tara closing in on Finn who stands alone, weary, injured and losing blood. Fol. 24<sup>v</sup>a has been left blank; the text was not completed. Linguistic analysis and dating has not been carried out to date. A colophon on fol. 24<sup>r</sup> mentions Poulmonty in Co. Carlow as the place and 1419 as the date of writing but the note is in the hand of the main scribe who was writing around the year 1517.<sup>101</sup> This may have been copied verbatim from the scribe's exemplar which may suggest a fifteenth-century date for the tale but Meyer dates it to the fourteenth century in the introduction to *Fianaigeacht* without explanation.<sup>102</sup> Máire Ní Mhaonaigh places this text's date of composition as roughly contemporary with *Acallam na Senórach*.<sup>103</sup>

*Tesmolta Corbmaic Uí Chuinn et Aided Finn Mic Cumail*, starting on fol. 24<sup>v</sup>,<sup>104</sup> is the sixth text in the unit and the second tale from the Finn Cycle. The text praises Cormac as king, speaking of the bountiful crops in his reign and of his righteous rule. Finn is introduced by way of being Cormac's master of hounds, with the text then relating that Finn resided mostly in Alma in his old age and that his wife Smirgat prophesied his demise if he were to drink from a horn (which he avoids). One day he drinks from a well in a place called Adharca Iuchbadh (lit.: 'The Horns of Iuchbadh').<sup>105</sup> Aware of the implications of the toponym, he advances into

<sup>100</sup> For details of the prophecy see pp. 45-6 of this chapter, and pp. 56-7 in Chapter 3.

<sup>101</sup> See discussion above and Flower, *Catalogue*, pp. 260-2.

<sup>102</sup> Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, p. xxxi.

<sup>103</sup> Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Literary Lochlann' p. 28. Ní Mhaonaigh does not go into detail on the dating of the text on this occasion. More recent scholarly consensus assigns a date of c. 1224 to *AS*, for which see Dooley, 'The date and purpose of *Acallam na Senórach*', and Connon, 'The Roscommon locus of *Acallam na Senórach*'.

<sup>104</sup> Edited by Kuno Meyer on pp. 72-6 of *Cath Finntrága*. Edition and translation of the prose (poetry present in the edition but omitted in translation) to be found in O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, pp. 89-92 and ii, pp. 96-9.

<sup>105</sup> For discussion of the toponym see Parsons, 'Breaking the cycle?', p. 88, n. 34.

enemy territory, namely that of Lúaigne of Tara, where he fights the sons of Uirgriu and is killed. Meyer assigns a twelfth-century date to this tale.<sup>106</sup>

*Áirem Muinntire Finn* (ÁMF), beginning on fol. 25<sup>r</sup>,<sup>107</sup> comes next telling of the conditions that must be met to attain membership of the *fián*.

*Anmonna Oesa Fedma Finn* (AOFF), on fol. 25<sup>v</sup>,<sup>108</sup> is the final text to appear in the section in question. It gives the names of Finn's retinue and the number of some of his entertainers.

*Áirem Muinntire Finn* and *Anmonna Oesa Fedma Finn* are sometimes treated as one entity due to Standish H. O'Grady's presentation of the texts.<sup>109</sup> Meyer follows O'Grady, treating the two texts as one when dating the *fiánaigeacht* corpus, and dates them to the twelfth century.<sup>110</sup> Josephine O'Connell, however, outlines the following reasons, with which I agree, for considering them to be two separate texts: First, ÁMF in its Early Modern Irish version appears in three manuscripts, namely Egerton 1782, Harley 5280 and the Book of Lismore.<sup>111</sup> All three seem to derive from a common exemplar.<sup>112</sup> AOFF follows ÁMF in only two of these manuscripts. The Book of Lismore ends the former text with *finit* and does not contain AOFF, yet its omission does not render ÁMF incomplete. Neither does AOFF appear in later manuscripts in which we find a version of ÁMF. Furthermore, both Harley and Egerton separate AOFF from the preceding text, the former by a large initial and the heading 'anmonna oesa fedma find andso síis,' and the latter by the commencement of a new paragraph, and space for a large initial that has not subsequently been added.<sup>113</sup>

Such are the texts on fols 17-25 of Egerton 1782. Benjamin Hazard has discussed the contents of the entire manuscript on two occasions. Hazard's first analysis was in a study of the preservation of medieval Irish vernacular literature where he assessed the significance

<sup>106</sup> *Fianaigeacht*, p. xxvi.

<sup>107</sup> Edition and translation in O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, pp. 92-3 (as far as 'rí Eirenn etc.')

and ii, pp. 99-100 (as far as 'king of all Ireland.').

<sup>108</sup> Edition and translation in O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, pp. 93 (from 'Dá chúlcoimétaidi Finn')

and ii, pp. 100-01 (from 'Finn's two poll-wards').

<sup>109</sup> O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, pp. 92-3 and ii, pp. 99-101.

<sup>110</sup> O'Connell, 'Áirem Muinntari Finn', p. 6.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, pp. 40-8.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, pp. 7-8.

of three sixteenth-century North Connacht manuscripts in their social and historical context.<sup>114</sup> His second analysis focused solely on Egerton 1782 arguing that 'examination of specific content reveals important details of contemporary cultural life and the prevailing political perspective.'<sup>115</sup> He makes only brief mention of the texts considered here. Regarding the *CDS* grouping, Hazard says:

Four related tales [related to *TBC*] ultimately derive from the now lost *Cín Dromma Snechta* [...] The inclusion of these four tales is of great significance, as they form part of the oldest heroic literature in Europe outside the classical world. The content of such works clearly served the contemporary needs of both the hereditary historians and their patrons.<sup>116</sup>

He does not, however, expand on what these contemporary needs were. Of the *fíanaigeacht* material he says 'Three tales concerning Finn mac Cumhaill [...] may have had their uses as political propaganda'<sup>117</sup> but does not go into further detail on this point. Yet he continues to say that

in creating the manuscript for Art Buidhe, the Uí Mhaoil Chonaire inclusion of the different traditions of Finn mac Cumhaill's origin places a special emphasis upon Leinster. In addition, when mentioned in conjunction with Cormac mac Airt, the role of Finn becomes subordinate to that of the king, thereby reflecting the Axis Mundi concept of the ruler as the centre of the cosmos.<sup>118</sup>

His conclusions, across both works, may be summarised in terms of a 'noteworthy sense of unity to this manuscript' which 'suggests that the Uí Mhaoil Chonaire carefully crafted its contents to endorse and amplify the role of Gaelic kingship during the early sixteenth century'<sup>119</sup> and that it contains 'a clear pattern of material relevant to Leinster.'<sup>120</sup>

It is easy to recognise the endorsement of the role of Gaelic kingship and its amplification as concerns in some of Egerton 1782's contents, e.g. *TBC*, of which Hazard correctly notes that 'the nature and character of legitimate kingship is intrinsic,'<sup>121</sup> and in one of the texts in the *Cín Dromma Snechtai* – *fíanaigeacht* complex, namely *Tesmolad Corbmaic*. Detecting this concern in most of the other texts in this section is more difficult. Similarly, the

<sup>114</sup> Hazard, 'An Irish medieval legacy', p. iv.

<sup>115</sup> Hazard, 'Gaelic Political Scripture'.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 158.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 159.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 159-60.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 163.

<sup>120</sup> Hazard, 'An Irish medieval legacy', p. 35.

<sup>121</sup> Hazard, 'Gaelic Political Scripture', 158.

Leinster focus posited may be seen to be partially admissible to the manuscript's overall make up. For example, it is obvious in the material chosen for inclusion in the fragmentary annals<sup>122</sup> but cannot be applied across the board. Many of the texts in the *Cín Dromma Snechtai – fianaigecht* complex being discussed are not set in Leinster nor do they show other explicit concerns with the area: Bricín is in Túaim Drecon, in the territory of the Uí Briúin Bréifne,<sup>123</sup> when the angel appears to him; *Forfess Fer Fálgae* begins with the Ulstermen assembled at Emain and the main part of the action takes place in the Isle of Man;<sup>124</sup> *Verba Scáthaige* is uttered at the end of Cú Chulainn's training and may therefore be confidently placed in Alba;<sup>125</sup> Connla and company are assembled at Uisnech for the first encounter with the Otherworld woman and the location of the second encounter seems to have been a coastal location in the west;<sup>126</sup> the action of the first part of 'The Chase' takes place around Luachair Dedad and Slieve na mBan in Munster, moving on to Connacht before the final part of the action brings the tale to the banks of the Boyne; and *Áirem Muintire Finn* and *Anmonna Oesa Fedma Finn* have no apparent associations with places.

Although written for a Leinster patron, it was members of the Ó Maolchonaire family of Cluain Plocáin, Co. Roscommon who produced this manuscript. We know that they, as one would expect from a scribal family of their calibre, had access to a huge wealth of material, including some of the oldest Irish literature. To name but one example we know of their association with three extant versions of the first recension of *TBC* (*TBC<sup>1</sup>*), i.e. two copies of *TBC<sup>1</sup>* were written by Uí Mhaolchonaire scribes – Egerton 1782 and O'Curry I – and a third, the now lost Advocates' XXXII, was written by the scribe Fíthil mac Flaithrig mic Aodha in the house of Muirgius mac Páidín Uí Maol Chonaire.<sup>127</sup> However, consideration of Egerton 1782's contents as a collection of medieval tales reveals it to be a comprehensive and varied repository, containing alongside the materials already discussed, *Amra Coluim Chille*,<sup>128</sup> *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*,<sup>129</sup> a copy of the first recension of the

<sup>122</sup> See Hazard's discussion in 'Gaelic Political Scripture', 161-2.

<sup>123</sup> Hogan, *Onomasticon*, s.v. *Túaim dracon*.

<sup>124</sup> For locating the Isle of the Men of Fálgae in the Isle of Man see Thurneysen, *Zu irischen Handschriften*, pp. 53-4 and Hellmuth 'Zu *Forfess Fer Fálgae*', pp. 198-9. See also p. 40, and p. 40, n. 94, above.

<sup>125</sup> Alba appears to have meant the whole of the Island of Britain in the Old Irish period, later signifying Northern Britain, then the kingdom of the Scots and finally what is modern-day Scotland. For a discussion and summation of scholarship on this term see Dumville, 'Ireland and Britain in *Táin Bó Fraích*', 176-83 and Broun, 'Britain and the beginning of Scotland'.

<sup>126</sup> McCone, *Echtrae Chonnlai*, pp. 83-4.

<sup>127</sup> Mac Eoin, 'The Interpolator H in *Lebor na hUidre*', pp. 45-6.

<sup>128</sup> Fols 1-2, 5-14.

<sup>129</sup> Fols 106-23.

*Táin*,<sup>130</sup> and *Aislinge Óengusso*.<sup>131</sup> *Aislinge Óengusso* was known to the *literati* from at least the tenth century when it appears in the tale lists.<sup>132</sup> Egerton 1782 contains the only extant copy. This is further indication of the large literary store of the Ó Maolchonaire. It seems evident then that there were a vast number of texts available to the scribe(s) of Egerton 1782. Returning to the section comprising fols 17-25 of the manuscript it seems reasonable to ask if the criteria for selection were more complex than the factors noted by Hazard, namely a Leinster association and/or their portrayal of traditional kingship. It will be proposed below that more explicitly literary concerns underpin the inclusion and arrangement of material, namely the themes and cyclic identities.

It may be argued that this is a thematically driven compilation of texts, linked by the presence of the Otherworld and/or prophetic elements in the tales. The two themes – the Otherworld and prophecy – are often intertwined in these texts and will therefore be treated in tandem in the following discussion. In two of the first four texts, the Otherworld element is a Christian one – the angel in *Baile Bricín* and the Otherworld woman representing benign Christianity in *Echtrae Chonnlai*.<sup>133</sup> In both these tales, we see how the two themes merge as the prophetic element comes about because of the presence of a character from the Otherworld. In *Baile Bricín* the prophetic element is self-evident – at Bricín's request the angel that has appeared to him gives him knowledge of future churchmen of note and in *Echtrae Chonnlai* the Otherworld woman who appears to him foretells the coming of St Patrick.<sup>134</sup> In the absence of a scholarly edition of *Forfess Fer Fálgae*, much of the content in its reitric (stylised, often obscure poetic verse)<sup>135</sup> remains vague. What does seem clear, however, is that the Isle of the Men of Fálgae (= Isle of Man) has strong otherworldly associations because of the connection with the Fomoiré.<sup>136</sup> *Verba Scáthaige* is locatable with ease to Alba. Similar to the island of *Forfess Fer Fálgae*, here we find a known location that has obvious Otherworld connections.<sup>137</sup> An additional thrust of this narrative

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<sup>130</sup> Fols 88-105.

<sup>131</sup> Fols 70-71.

<sup>132</sup> Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland*, p. 51. See also discussion of the tale lists, pp. 66-131.

<sup>133</sup> Carney, 'The deeper level of early Irish literature', 165. For discussion of preceding scholarship and McCone's own contribution to the discourse on the Otherworld woman in *Echtrae Chonnlai*, see McCone, *Echtrae Chonnlai*, pp. 84-6.

<sup>134</sup> McCone, *Echtrae Chonnlai*, pp. 100-04.

<sup>135</sup> 'Verse characterised by obscurity and peculiarities or archaisms of style, syntax and vocabulary': *DIL*, s.v. reitric.

<sup>136</sup> Hellmuth, 'Zu *Forfess Fer Fálgae*', pp. 204-08.

<sup>137</sup> To my knowledge, a study of Alba's character as both a real and supernatural location has not yet been published. It has been noted, however, that in *Compert Con Culainn* 'Cú Chulainn wanders through Alba, a land of dangerous marvels, roughly equivalent to Britain' (Carey, 'Otherworlds and Verbal Worlds in Middle Irish Narrative', 34), that 'Otherworld beings are often depicted as [...] living off the coast' (Carey, 'The Location of the Otherworld in Irish Tradition' pp. 116-7) and that 'The Otherworld is not, properly



is the foretelling of the events of *TBC* in a very short and cryptic manner. In all these narratives then, we can see the strength of both Otherworld and prophetic themes and their intertwining. Furthermore, the Old Irish tales in this section are arranged in such a manner that they are framed by texts associated with the Christian Otherworld.

This sequence of four is followed by two later *fánaigeacht* texts, 'The Chase' and *Tesmolad Corbmaic*. In 'The Chase', again both the Otherworld and prophecy play important roles in the tale. On the first night of the boar hunt, when the *fían* are resting for the evening, Finn's two cupbearers kill one another. As a result, Finn recounts how he came to be in possession of his drinking horn, *midlethan*, namely from a *síd*-warrior called Crónánach. Later in the tale, after the boar of Formaél has been killed, details of a prophecy of Finn's death, uttered by Crónánach, begin to come to light – the killing of the boar seems to be the indicator that he will die within the year. Since Finn wishes to go abroad for a year to avoid it, the prophecy must have said that his death would occur in Ireland or from circumstances arising in Ireland. Later, when preparing for battle, further details of the prophecy are mentioned, i.e. that Láegaire Lúathbéimendach and Cétach Cithach will each kill three hundred warriors; the narrative goes on to depict this. While Finn's death is not recounted in the tale, we may assume that it was indeed intended to form the conclusion of the tale, not only because it is the logical outcome of the preceding events but also because Finn's death is a recurring interest across Egerton 1782. An account of it is given in the tale which follows 'The Chase', *Tesmolad Corbmaic*, and his death is mentioned again later in

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speaking, assigned different locations by the Irish: rather it exists in no definite spatial relationship with the mortal realm.' (Carey, 'Time, Space and the Otherworld', 7), all of which suggest the literary use of Alba being similar to the literary use of Lochlann (for which see Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Literary Lochlann'). Two further studies, by William Sayers and Jimmy P. Miller, also explore elements of Alba as both a real and supernatural location. Sayers contends that the often-extraordinary martial feats found in the Ulster Cycle were originally humanly possible and that later these feats, because of their association with Cú Chulainn, became associated with the supernatural ('Martial feats', particularly 87). Moreover, Sayers sees the use of the feats within the Ulster Cycle as a literary device to create a sense of the supernatural, a feature enhanced by the fact that they originated in the school of Scáthach, which he places in Scotland (ibid). Miller employs this in his study of Rawl. B. 512's *Tochmarc Emire*, in which Cú Chulainn goes to 'Alpi' ('The role of the female warrior in early Irish literature', 36, 92), taken to mean Alba (ibid, 36-37) for martial training. His discussion, however, also examines the supernatural associations or elements of the characters Scáthach, Úathach, Aífe, Dornoll Oildornai, and Domnall Míldemail, as they appear in Rawl. B. 512's *Tochmarc Emire*, to demonstrate the otherworldliness of both those involved and the location (ibid, 36-50). While Miller says that 'it is impossible to fix a definite geography to Cú Chulainn's journey, and that many commentators have understood the quest as a journey to the Otherworld' (ibid, 37, here also referencing 42 Baudiš, 'On Tochmarc Emire,' 101; Rees and Rees, *Celtic Heritage*, pp. 255-8; Mac Mathúna, *Immram Brain*, p. 253), he comes down heavily on the side of northern Britain, saying that 'it is reasonable to assume that the author of our tale [i.e. *Tochmarc Emire*] took into consideration the apparently real early Irish belief that Britain or northern Britain was a place to which one needed to journey in order to obtain special skills. That the narrator envisioned Cú Chulainn's journey as one to northern Britain is bolstered by the fact that the people encountered there – Domnall, Dornoll, Úathach, Scáthach and Aífe and the warriors of their respective camps – all have Gaelic names' ('The role of the female warrior in early Irish literature', 37).

the manuscript in the poem beginning *Fiana batar in Emain*.<sup>138</sup> *Tesmolad Corbmaic* continues the prophetic theme – despite Finn's best efforts to avoid the fate foretold by his wife, i.e. his death, it befalls him after he one day drinks at a place called Adharca Iuchbhadh. Thus, in the themes of prophecy and the Otherworld, there is a running concern that unites the two *fianaigecht* texts to each other and back to the preceding group of four tales.

The suggestion that the theme of prophecy was consciously being explored in this sequence of texts might be strengthened with reference to the previously mentioned colophon on fol. 24<sup>r</sup> of Egerton 1782, the final folio of 'The Chase' as it currently stands. It locates the scribe in Poulmonty in Co. Carlow on the eve of the feast of St Moling in 1419.<sup>139</sup> If, as has been suggested above, this was copied verbatim from the scribe's exemplar it seems to be the only marginal note which originated in this manner; the others are *probationes pennae*, which may be safely ascribed to the penman himself, or notes inserted at a later date.<sup>140</sup> Poulmonty is in the parish of St Mullins, Tech Moling, in Co. Carlow;<sup>141</sup> the mention of Moling in a *fianaigecht* context might be evidence for the scribe's recollection of a famous *fianaigecht* prophecy involving the saint: the *AS* episode where Finn foretells the coming of four notable churchmen to Ireland, the fourth being Moling.<sup>142</sup>

It seems that the material in the section in question may have been chosen as a thematic continuum. This is not incompatible with Hazard's proposal that tales spread throughout the manuscript were designed to 'endorse and amplify the role of Gaelic kingship during the early sixteenth century,'<sup>143</sup> as the presence of texts dealing with traditional kingship in different sections could have served as a unifying element between different parts of the manuscript. At this point, however, the case of the final two texts in our section must be considered. *Áirem Muintire Finn* and *Anmonna Oesa Fedma Finn* do not share in the thematic thread, discussed above, which unites the first six tales of the section. However, a single scribe, designated scribe A, is responsible for writing the entire section of fols 17-25

<sup>138</sup> Fols 52-3; Edition and translation in Whitey Stokes, 'On the Deaths'.

<sup>139</sup> Although the manuscript dates to the early sixteenth century and this suggests an exemplar from the early fifteenth, Meyer counts 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' amongst those he notes as 'thirteenth and fourteenth centuries' in the introduction to *Fianaigecht* (p. xxxi). This he does without discussion of the language in this volume nor in any other published work.

<sup>140</sup> See Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, pp. 259-63.

<sup>141</sup> Hogan, *Onomasticon*, s.v. *Poll in Móintigh*.

<sup>142</sup> Stokes 'Acallamh na Senórach', ll. 2672-87; Dooley and Roe, *Tales*, pp. 81-2.

<sup>143</sup> Hazard, 'Gaelic Political Scripture', 163.

apart from the final 5 lines of *Echtrae Chonnlai*. Thus, we may argue that these two texts are to be seen as deliberate inclusions in the arrangement of texts and that their selection process was no less stringent than that applied to the other narratives. The narratives of *Verba Scáthaige*, *Echtrae Connlai*, *Tesmolad Corbmaic* and (we may assume) 'The Chase' all contain prophetic elements which were understood to have been fulfilled, such as the coming of St Patrick as foretold in *Echtrae Connlai*, the events of *TBC* occur as foretold in *Verba Scáthaige*, Finn's death as anticipated in *Tesmolad Corbmaic*, and it would seem that the conclusion of 'The Chase' is Finn's death as prophesied earlier in that tale. These tales therefore seem to have had significant truth value.<sup>144</sup> Similarly, *Áirem Muinntire Finn* and *Anmonna Oesa Fedma Find* appear to portray information which had a high truth value in literary terms. 'The Chase' may be seen to act as a confluence, featuring both the Otherworld and prophetic elements that are important elements of the first four tales. *Tesmolad Corbmaic* partially continues this trend before completing the section with *Áirem Muinntire Finn* and *Anmonna Oesa Fedma Find* which share a connection to the other texts in the section by means of having significant truth value for their contemporary audience.

This may not be the only reason for the inclusion of *Áirem Muinntire Finn* and *Anmonna Oesa Fedma Find* in this section. Erich Poppe is of the opinion that the majority of medieval Irish narratives 'formed interconnected narrative universes'<sup>145</sup> and has discussed the concept of an 'immanent cycle',<sup>146</sup> a concept where numerous texts are linked without the necessity of all those texts forming a physical sequence in a manuscript<sup>147</sup> as 'the relationship between the texts is virtual and rests on mental connections made by medieval authors, scribes and audiences – as well as by modern literary historians and critics.'<sup>148</sup> In exploring differing presentations of material related to *TBC*, Poppe suggests that 'the

<sup>144</sup> Roy T. Cook has said that 'truth values are [...] ways of representing the different relationships that can hold between a statement and the world' ('What Is a Truth Value and How Many Are There?', p. 194). Marcia Eaton has further explored this idea by considering the truth value of literary statements, i.e. of statements made in a fictitious world. She uses a line from James Jones' novel *The Thin Red Line*, namely 'I've lived with these men two and a half years', as an example to explore the relation of truth to story-telling and literary works ('The Truth Value of Literary Statements', pp. 170-3). Here she concludes that 'The sentence 'I've lived with these men two and a half years' becomes truth-valued when it is put into the context of the novel, and in this case it is true' (p. 171). Thus, we can see that a statement made in a novel, and by extension in a manuscript text or in oral story-telling can be held to be true when considered in context, i.e. within the world of that particular tale/set of tales. This idea of a statement or event being true when considered in context, whether historical or literary, is what is meant here by the use of the phrase truth value.

<sup>145</sup> Poppe, *Of Cycles*, p. 46.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-2.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11. Poppe builds on a similar concept of intertextual cohesion in Hillers, 'The heroes of the Ulster Cycle', pp. 99-101.

difference in format between the Book of Leinster and Egerton 1782 with regard to the arrangement of *remscéla* may reflect a diachronically developing cyclic impulse, which would tie in with the observation that fully-fledged narrative cycles-by-transmission are not found in earlier manuscripts such as the Book of Leinster,<sup>149</sup> and continues that 'it may be no coincidence that Egerton 1782 also contains the only extant copy of the (probably) cyclic third recension of *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*<sup>150</sup> which is 'a treatment of material related to Conaire Mór.'<sup>151</sup> With Poppe's arguments in mind we may realistically infer that the scribe(s) and/or compilers of Egerton 1782 were inclined to systematically organise their material and that cyclic classification played a role in the arrangement of material to be included in the manuscript. Returning to *Áirem Muinntire Finn* and *Anmonna Oesa Fedma Find* then, it is reasonable to assume that cyclic concerns played a role in the decision to include these two texts in the section comprising fols 17-24 of Egerton 1782. Such concerns would also bolster the position of 'The Chase' as a confluence in this section because, as well as being thematically linked to the first four texts of the section on all three levels previously discussed, that tale also serves to place the reader firmly in *fíanaigeacht* territory before continuing the thematic cluster with further *fíanaigeacht* texts.

The appearance of the four Finn Cycle tales in a discrete section of Egerton 1782 alongside four *CDS* tales from a variety of genres demonstrates that the scribe who penned this manuscript was able to, and saw fit to treat Fenian material in numerous different ways, that is, to consider texts as part of the *fíanaigeacht* corpus as well as considering their resonances with other texts, e.g. thematic groupings, much like the *AB*'s connections with a number of other tales in the Book of Lismore.<sup>152</sup> As such it is not surprising that Finn Cycle material also appears elsewhere in the manuscript, nor that at those times the scribe organises his material according to form. For example, fols 41-42 of the manuscript, *recto* and *verso*, are filled with very short notes on a variety of subjects, and there we find a note on the Lúaigne, fol. 41<sup>r</sup>, and a version of the descent of Diarmaid Ua Duibne, fol. 41<sup>v</sup>. The brevity of these items is in coming with all the other material contained on those folios. Later, we find the poem beginning *Fiana batar i nEmain*, fols 52<sup>r</sup>-53<sup>v</sup>. The composition recounts, in brief, the deaths of various Irish heroes, often also giving the location of their graves and one of the deaths mentioned therein is Finn's death. This appears in a section comprised mainly of items in verse, many or all of which may be considered informative,

<sup>149</sup> Poppe, *Of Cycles*, p. 40. See also Burnyeat, 'The *Táin*-complex'.

<sup>150</sup> Poppe, *Of Cycles*, p. 40.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>152</sup> See discussion, *supra*, and Ó Macháin, 'Aonghas Callanáin'.

such as the poem on the number of angels and names of the archangels, fol. 50<sup>v</sup>; poems on Irish history, fols 50<sup>v</sup>-52<sup>r</sup>, and 53<sup>v</sup>-54<sup>r</sup>; verse on the seven sons of Mágach slain by Conall Cernach, fol. 52<sup>r</sup>; and verses on national characteristics, fol. 56<sup>r</sup>.

In conclusion, although we may not be able to determine exactly what texts were available to the Ó Maolchonaire scribes when compiling this manuscript, we do know that their repertoire was vast. It is reasonable to assume then that the selection of material to be included in a volume such as Egerton 1782 would not have been arbitrary. The totality of evidence here and elsewhere does not suggest that scribes simply copied what was available to them but rather that texts were deliberately chosen, and were at least partially chosen for the purpose of conveying a message, e.g. by means of forming thematic groupings. Examples of scribes selecting relevant material for an anthology include the aforementioned studies by Ó Macháin on the Book of Lismore and by McKenna on LU.<sup>153</sup> Additionally, the practice of scribes interacting with their texts, not only in the selection process, but in the make-up of manuscripts and content of texts is evident from at least the twelfth century onwards in Ireland, e.g. in the LL,<sup>154</sup> as well as elsewhere in the medieval world, e.g. the manuscripts of Beowulf.<sup>155</sup> Thus, if Egerton 1782 originally circulated as a number of independent sections before being bound together, it was nonetheless mostly the work of a single scribe and as such it is reasonable to assume that texts chosen to be included in those sections which were not part of a longer homogeneous collection, e.g. tales pertaining to *TBC*,<sup>156</sup> underwent consideration and planning before the scribe proceeded to the task of writing the texts. Like Ó Macháin's and McKenna's studies, it has been argued here that consideration of fols 17-25 in Egerton 1782 shows that section to be a distinct anthology due to there being connections between the texts on multiple levels. Many of the texts share an interest in Otherworld and prophetic themes, two themes which are intermingled as those tales in which the Otherworld plays a role use the Otherworld character as the source of the prophetic information. Further connections are the correlation of texts that may be viewed as having had significant truth-value for their contemporary audience as well as cyclic concerns contributing somewhat to the selection

<sup>153</sup> Ó Macháin, 'Aonghas Callanáin' and McKenna, 'Angels and Demons'.

<sup>154</sup> For discussion see Mac Gearailt, 'The Language of Some Late Middle Irish Texts in the Book of Leinster'; Schlüter, *History or Fable?*, pp. 15-35; and Poppe, *Of Cycles*, pp. 28-31.

<sup>155</sup> To name but one study which shows scribes dynamically interacting with the text of Beowulf see Orchard, *Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-manuscript*, where he demonstrates that the *Beowulf*-manuscript, along with the *Liber monstorum* and *Grettis saga* reveal that characters of the pagan past are becoming intertwined with Christian virtues in Anglo-Saxon England thus transforming and reinterpreting those characters to find new audiences and convey new messages.

<sup>156</sup> Burnyeat, 'The *Táin*-complex'.

of material for this anthology. Additional research as to why such an anthology was included in Egerton 1782 may prove fruitful but is beyond the scope of the current discussion. The section comprising fols 17-25 of the manuscript is not only a stand-alone anthology, however: it also forms part of the larger work of Egerton 1782. The presence of tales pertaining to kingship in many of the sections of the manuscript may be seen to act as a unifying element between different sections. As such, we may conclude that the *Cín Dromma Snechtai – fíanaigecht* complex present in Egerton 1782 was a conscious grouping based on literary concerns but one which also complements the other material found in that manuscript.

## CHAPTER 3

### The place of 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' within the medieval traditions of Finn' death

Having examined why 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' would be included in the discrete section of Egerton 1782 comprising fols 17-25, we now turn our attention to an examination of the tale of 'The Chase' itself. Unlike other *fíanaigeacht* texts, such as *Acallam na Senórach* (AS) or *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne*, not much scholarly ink has been spilled over this tale. In most cases mention of this tale occurs within a broader consideration of the Middle and Early Modern Irish accounts of Finn's death and attention paid to 'The Chase' is usually brief.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to previous studies, in this chapter I will seek to analyse the place of 'The Chase' within the Middle and Early Modern Irish traditions of Finn's death, here collectively referred to as the medieval sources for convenience.

#### Medieval Accounts of Finn's Death

Before embarking upon this task, we should first detail what medieval accounts of Finn's death there are. For a list of accounts pertaining to Finn's death I refer the reader to the appendix contained in Geraldine Parsons' study 'Breaking the Cycle? Accounts of the Death of Finn',<sup>2</sup> many of which are detailed below in the course of the discussion. In her study, Parsons says that she knows of 'thirty-one distinct statements on the death of Finn contained in nineteen works'. I shall first supplement that appendix with the following comments and notice of additional items pertaining to Finn's death and then focus on the place of 'The Chase' in the context of those traditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Ó hÓgáin, *Images of the Gaelic Hero* p. 113; Parsons, 'Breaking the cycle? Accounts of the death of Finn'; Murray, *The Early Finn Cycle*, pp. 127-8.

<sup>2</sup> Parsons, 'Breaking the cycle?', pp. 91-6.

1. Poem beginning 'Meabhair liom an ní do fil' in Nicholas O'Kearney, *The Battle of Gabhra* and the poem beginning 'Raid a Chailti' in AS

Parsons notes that O'Kearney prints a poem beginning 'Meabhair liom an ní do fil' in which it is noted that Finn dies *tré léim baeis* aged about 310,<sup>3</sup> but that she had not located the source of the poem. Kearney terms it 'an ancient poem'<sup>4</sup> and the passage in which we find Finn's death mentioned is the following:

Trí chéad bliadhain com bláithe,  
Deich m-bliadhna acht cen ráithche;  
Saegal Fhinn go bh-fuair a rae;  
Go torcar tré bhéim baeis é.<sup>5</sup>

The source of the majority of the poem 'Meabhair liom an ní do fil' would seem to be the poem beginning 'Ráid a Chailti' in AS, through an intermediary such as *Agallamh na Seanórach* (ASII), because 'The Battle of Gabhra's stanza regarding Finn's death at the age of 310, and the poem more generally, echo ASII's version 'Ráid a Chailti' more closely than they do AS's version. The corresponding stanzas in AS and ASII are:

[AS:] Dá cét bliadan co mblaithe,  
ocus tricha gan tlaithe  
saegal Find, ba fata re,  
co torchair 'ga léim baissi.<sup>6</sup>  
[ASII:] Trí chéad bliadhoin go mbláithe,  
deich mbliadhna acht madh aon-ráithe,  
saoghal Fhinn go bhfúair a ré,  
go ndorchoir 'gā léim baoísi.<sup>7</sup>

'Meabhair liom an ní do fil' in 'The Battle of Gabhra', however, does not reflect the wider evidence to be found 'Ráid a Chailti' as later in that poem, in both AS and ASII, it is stated that Finn's death arose from the seventh (and last) occasion in which he found belief in God:<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Parsons, 'Breaking the cycle?', p. 96: O'Kearney, *The Battle of Gabhra*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>4</sup> O'Kearney, *The Battle of Gabhra*, p. 33-6.

<sup>5</sup> O'Kearney, *The Battle of Gabhra*, p. 36. 'Three hundred years with splendour,/ (And) ten years lacking one month—/ Until he met his fate—/ He lived, and was slain by a mad stroke': *The Battle of Gabhra*, p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Stokes, 'Acallam na Senórach', ll. 2537-38. Two hundred years and splendour/ and thirty without weakness/ was Finn's life, his time was long/ until he died from his leap of folly.: own translation.

<sup>7</sup> Ní Shéaghdha, *Agallamh*, ii, p. 80, ll. 1-4. Three hundred years and splendour/ ten years save only a season/ was Finn's life until his time came to go/ until he died from his leap of folly.: own translation.

<sup>8</sup> Parsons, 'Breaking the cycle?', p. 95.



[AS:] Gu ba shecht do chreid in rí  
 Find mac Cumail Almaini,  
 in sechtmad fecht do bóí ar fás  
 is de thainic a thiugbás.<sup>9</sup>

[ASII:] Go bhā sheacht ro chreid in rí  
 Fionn mac Cumhoill Almhuní:  
 an seachtmhadh feacht, ní fáth fás  
 as ann tānoicc a thuigh-bhás.<sup>10</sup>

This stanza is not to be found in the poem beginning 'Meabhair liom an ní do fil' in 'The Battle of Gabhra'.

## 2. Leabhar Ua Maine

Leabhar Ua Maine is a late fourteenth-century manuscript, written c. 1380,<sup>11</sup> comprising 157 leaves in its current state.<sup>12</sup> It seems however, that the book originally consisted of 386 leaves and there is evidence that the manuscript once contained an account of the death of Finn. In Landsdowne 418 there exists a record of the contents of Leabhar Ua Maine in a more complete state than in which we find it today. Landsdowne 418 summarises the contents of Leabhar Ua Maine ending its description with the 'Sgéul an chroicinn órdha. Oighidh Fhinn meic Cumhaill .i. a bhás. Imthechta Chaoilte 7 Phádraig 7 a n-iomagallaimh .i. colloquium Seniorum, colloquium ceu dialogus Senum. Dinnsheanchus .i. Seanchus cnoc n-Eirionn.'<sup>13</sup> This account does not survive. It is not surprising, however, that a tale of that name was contained in Leabhar Ua Maine given that that manuscript has a number of significant Finn cycle items.<sup>14</sup>

## 3. The Annals of Clonmacnoise

*The Annals of Clonmacnoise being the Annals of Ireland from the Earliest Period to A.D. 1408* is an Early Modern English translation of a now-lost set of medieval Irish-language

<sup>9</sup> Stokes, 'Acallamh', ll. 2583-84. He believed seven times, the king,/ Finn son of Cumall, of Almu/ the seventh time he was a grown man/ from it came his death.: own translation.

<sup>10</sup> Ní Shéaghdha, *Agallamh*, ii, p. 84, ll. 1-4. He believed seven times, the king/ Finn mac Cumail of Almu/ the seventh time it was not a cause for growth/ from it came his death.: own translation.

<sup>11</sup> Flahive, 'The Shield of Fionn', p. 143.

<sup>12</sup> Mulchrone, *Catalogue*, pp. 3314-56.

<sup>13</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 602.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Flahive, 'The Shield of Fionn'.

annals. Connall Mag Eochagáin of Lismoyny, Co. Westmeath translated the text from Irish to English, finishing the work on April 20th, 1627.<sup>15</sup> The original manuscript of Mag Eochagáin's translation is now also lost but at least two manuscript copies survive. One of Tadhg O'Daly's copies, TCD F. 3. 19, was the text used for Denis Murphy's 1896 edition of Mag Eochagáin's translation. Murphy's comment that 'in the book itself there is nothing to show why it should be called by this name [i.e. the Annals of Clonmacnoise]'<sup>16</sup> shows that he found the title in O'Daly's manuscript, making it likely that such was the title given in Mag Eochagáin's manuscript. No dates are given in *The Annals of Clonmacnoise* but an account of Finn's death is given as follows:

Alsoe Finn mcCoyle als O'Boysgne the great Hunter, Cheef head of all the K[ing]'s. forces in Ireland and Defender of the kingdom from foraine invaders was Beheaded by Aihleagh mcDurgrean and by the sons of Wirgrean of the lordship of Lwyne of Tarah at Athbrea on the river of Boyne.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to this translation, Murphy also notes that 'An ancient poem says he was killed at Achleagh by a fisherman with a fishing-gaff, in order to obtain for himself everlasting fame by killing one so illustrious.'<sup>18</sup> We have no such extant medieval source. As I am unaware of any other source, medieval or modern which says that Finn was killed at Achleagh and because of the nineteenth-century date of the source, this note will not be considered here alongside the medieval material, but will be returned to in Chapter 4.

### The place of 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' in medieval traditions of Finn's death

In order to understand how the 'The Chase' fits into the medieval traditions of Finn's death, it would be helpful to first give a detailed summary of the events therein.<sup>19</sup> The tale opens

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<sup>15</sup> Murphy, *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. viii.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. v.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61.

<sup>19</sup> This is a summary of the events in 'The Chase', a diplomatic edition of which appears below in Appendix 1 and an edition and translation of which appears in Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 52-99. As Meyer's edition does not contain a glossary or linguistic analysis, or an explanation for dating it to the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries (*Fianaigeacht*, p. xxxi), the diplomatic edition in this thesis is being used to complete a semi-diplomatic edition with accompanying linguistic analysis in order to suggest a date of composition. For this reason, my familiarity with the text stems from my own editing work on it, which may differ a little, although not greatly, from Meyer's and as such all references to the tale in this thesis will give the semi-diplomatic edition of that which appears in the diplomatic edition below.

with a *fían*-hunt around Sídh na mBan Finn and Luachair Dedad, with the text naming the *fían* that were with Finn on that day, who are named as clanna (the descendants of) Baíscne and clanna Morna and clanna Duib Díthrib and clanna Nemnuinn and clanna Rónáin and clanna Smóil and aicme (the descendants of) Duib Dā Boireann, and all of the ordinary *fían* besides. Following an unsuccessful hunt, the chase is extended to the Shannon and Echtga on the next day but is once again fruitless. After a third day's profitless hunt around Seiscenn na nÁiged, Finn sits on a mound whereupon the *fían* gradually assemble around him and a youth enquires whose grave it is on which they are. Finn replies, informing his audience that it is the grave of Faílbe, one of Finn's *rígfénnidí* who was killed by the great boar of Formáel seven years previous, along with the death of fifty hounds and fifty other men. Finn then decides that they will hunt the boar of Formáel, saying that that is the reason for they have not been successful thus far as it was prophesied that they would do battle with the pig. The *fían* proceed to the fort of Maillé mac Midna where they receive a warm welcome. Noting that Finn's drinking horn, Midlethan, is raised, the tale mentions that Midlethan had two cupbearers who became rich from their cup-bearing duties, however on this particular night a conflict rises between them so that they killed one another. Finn sits sorrowfully for a while, bothered by the incident. He inquires of those around him if they know how or from whom he acquired the drinking horn, and when they do not he recounts the tale. During a hunt one day a dark magical fog rose around Finn, Caílte and Oisín so that they were separated from their fellow *fénnidí*. They entered the forest, however, caught a large quantity of fish and ate their fill. Then they heard *sídh* music, and stayed the night in the forest, returning to their hunting mound the following day to find a churl sitting there. After playing melodious music, he took a beautiful drinking horn from his mantle, and Finn, Oisín and Caílte drank from it. They then saw *fían*-bands coming towards them and the churl enquired of Finn who they were. Having told the churl, the *fían*-bands came to them and all the *fían*-leaders drank from the horn so that they too became merry. As the sun rose the churl transformed into a handsome warrior prompting Goll to ask who he was. He was the Crónánach (*in Crónánach*) from Sídh ar Femen. The manuscript is partly illegible at this point but the Crónánach stayed with Finn for a year and gave him the horn in question. Returning to the tale's present then, the *fían* enjoy the night and rise early to hunt the boar of Formáel. The *fían* split up and head in different directions, and at this time fear-inspiring boar kills a number of *fénnidí* before Finn, Oisín, Oscar and Caílte come to the site of the battle. Oscar becomes so enraged upon seeing the slaughter that the boar has wrought that he attacks it, eventually killing it. Finn makes a lay over the graves of some warriors whom the boar killed, then decides to leave Ireland,

because of the prophecy that the Crónánach had made to him, lest he and the *fían* be slaughtered within a year. The prophecy was given earlier in the tale, when the Crónánach was with Finn for the year, in the aforementioned portion of the tale which is now partially illegible. If the text marked this as a prophecy at that point it is no longer clear to the reader because of the lost text. However, what is clear from the script that remains readable in that section is that some interaction of the horn's cupbearers with each other and Finn's death are related, and are either supposed to happen within a year from one another or in the same year. Due to Finn deciding to go abroad for a year to avoid his fate, however, we may now infer that either the prophecy made clear that his death would occur in Ireland or it could be interpreted as doing due to Finn understanding it as such. Having made the decision to leave Ireland lest he be killed, he recites a lay in which he says that the Lúaigne are destined to win the battle. Finn then communicates his decision to his nobles who say that there are enough *fían*-leaders and landowners to host the *rígfénnid* every night for a year. They all disperse to their own homesteads, and Finn will be hosted by Fer Taí, son of Uaithne Irgalach, of the Lúaigne of Tara that night. At this point the reader is told that Fer Taí's wife was Iuchna Ardmór, daughter of Goll, son of Morna, and that their son, Fer Lí resembled his grandfather, Goll. Upon seeing that Finn is accompanied by a small host, Fer Lí immediately decides to practice treachery on them. He lets Émer Glúnglas, grandson of Garad mac Morna, in on his plan and Émer says it is fitting as Finn is their hereditary enemy for having killed Goll mac Morna, all of the clanna Morna. The decision to slay Finn is then said to be taken by Fer Lí, Émer, and the five sons of Uirgriu of the Lúaigne of Meath and the three Táiblennachs from Fernmag. They plan to scatter the small company with Finn, and send naked men to Fer Taí's fort, the place where Finn would be. They are to say that Finn's men are inflicting slaughter and loss so that the men of the host will grow angry and attempt to kill Finn. In the hostel, Finn recognises 'the bloodthirstiness of kinslaying'<sup>20</sup> on the conspirators that enter the hostel and keeps an eye on them. Soon, the cries of naked men shouting towards the fort are heard whereupon Fer Lí appears quick to take umbrage at the situation. Finn replies that any damage done will be repaid twofold but Fer Lí then claims that Finn is there to kill them like he has killed their fathers and grandfathers before them. He then furiously attacks Finn. During the fray, Fer Taí intervenes and protects Finn but Finn's retinue, were not caught unawares and respond to Fer Lí's attack. Three ninesomes of warriors die in the skirmish before Iuchna Ardmór, Fer Lí's mother, comes in, lets her hair down and bares her breasts. Iuchna reproaches Fer Lí,

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<sup>20</sup> Egerton 1782, fol. 22<sup>b</sup>5-6

calling her son a disgrace, and tells him to leave the hostel. He obeys but announces battle to Finn on his way out. Finn is not particularly happy about the approaching battle as Fer LÍ has not granted him fair play but makes a lay which concludes by telling his followers to drink up and saying that Fer LÍ's grave will be on the Boyne. Finn then says that Fer LÍ is remembering his hereditary feud against them and recalls Garad, son of Morna's actions in the battle of Cronnmóin where Garad fought so fiercely that he cut down thousands and the *fían* did not dare face him. Another lay follows in which Finn says that Fer LÍ and Émer, his two foster sons, will fall by him because they will not grant him justice, also mentioning Garad and Goll in the battle of Cronnmóin. Fer Taí joins Finn, tells him that Fer LÍ has announced battle because he is without a [large] host. Finn denies being so, naming Láegaire Lúathbéimnech and Cétach Cithach as two warriors who will each keep three hundred away from him in battle, and reiterating this in verse. In the morning, Finn sends for his people and a host of 5,000 gather at Áth Brea on the Boyne opposite. At this point, Fer Taí is on his son's side, and Fer LÍ's forces muster on the other side of the river. Although it is said that Fer LÍ's host comprises 'three thousand battle-armed warriors', it is also said that his forces complained about the small number of their opponents. The leaders of Fer LÍ's battalions are called 'the pillars' and they are Fer LÍ, Fer Taí, Émer Glúnglas, the five sons of Uirgriu of the old tribes of Tara, the three Táiblenachs from Fernmag, and the Lúaigne of Tara. Seeing that they are serious about giving battle, Finn send his (female) messenger, Birgat, to offer them terms. Although Fer Taí urges Fer LÍ to accept the terms offered, Fer LÍ refuses. Birgat, returns twice more to offer further terms but on the third, and final offer, Fer LÍ tries to kill her. In what may be an act of defiance, Birgat turns on her heel, hitches her dress up over her rump, and hastens back to Finn thus, and with her tongue quivering. Upon seeing her like that Finn that makes a lay to which Birgat replies, saying that it has long been prophesied that Finn will be in a bloody massacre. Finn answers saying that if the battle goes against the *fían* he will join the fighting. Finn dresses for battle. His warriors do likewise, and make a rush to the other side of the ford. Fer LÍ's forces also prepare and make a rush for Finn's warriors and the two sides engage in battle, fighting so fiercely that the river runs red with blood. Some of Finn's warriors reach the main group of Finns adversaries, 'the pillars'. Here, Láegaire kills three hundred warriors, then Láegaire and Fer LÍ engage in battle. Cétach does much the same, killing three hundred before swashbuckling with Émer. Fer LÍ kills Láegaire, while Émer and Cétach kill one another. Áed Baillderg, another of Finn's warriors, then comes amongst the pillars, killing twenty seven of his opponents and fighting Aichlech Mór mac Duibdreann. Áed falls by Aichlech's hand, whereupon Finn, seeing the champions of the *fían* being cut down,

enters the battle. He makes three circuits of the batallions, maiming, wounding and killing as he goes so that when he is done all of the batallion of the pillars have been killed or have fled except for Fer LÍ, Fer Táí and the five sons of Uirgriu. It would seem that Aichlech is one of those who have been killed in or have fled from this spree as he is not mentioned again. Fer LÍ sees Finn alone, comes to him and reminds him of their enmity. The two engage in single combat until Finn eventually decapitates Fer LÍ. He subsequently duels with Fer Táí, who has come to avenge his son, resulting in Finn overcoming Fer Táí by splitting him in two halves. The five sons of Uirgriu then make for Finn, each planting a spear in him, with Finn replying to all by giving as good as he got. The sons of Uirgriu then see that Finn has been wounded in his previous encounters and is feeble from the loss of blood when the text breaks off.

Now that we are familiar with the events of 'The Chase', we shall first look at what previous scholarship has had to say regarding the place that is occupied by 'The Chase' within the traditions of the death of Finn. Kevin Murray's most recent publication on the Finn Cycle contains the longest analysis of 'The Chase' known to me. When discussing the death of Finn, Murray notes that

The Early Modern Irish text, 'The chase of Síð na mBan Finn', reworks earlier traditions of Finn's death within a new context, that of the hunting of the great boar of Formáel. For example, characters from older stories, such as Aillén mac Midha from [AS], reappear in it in a friendlier guise. Notable Lúaigne Temrach enemies are named for the first time such as Fer Táí and his son Fer LÍ who play such a pivotal role in this battle. The story breaks off incomplete as the five sons of Uirgriu are in the process of slaying Finn at Áth Brea.<sup>21</sup>

The following analysis agrees with and expands upon Murray's brief observations exploring the relationship between 'The Chase' and earlier accounts of Finn's death. It will be demonstrated below that not only is 'The Chase' a part of the tradition of Finn's death, but that it is also arguable that its author was aware of a number of other tales or references to Finn's demise, was drawing on a sizeable number of the other sources of Finn's death, and attempting to compile a text which brought together as many elements of Finn's demise as possible. It will furthermore be argued that in seeking to create what could be seen as a comprehensive death-tale for Finn, the author creates a thematically unified tale,

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<sup>21</sup> Murray, *The Early Finn Cycle*, pp. 127-8.

namely exploring the themes of death, prophecy and youth versus age. This tale is carefully situated within the boundaries of *fíanaigecht* literature and regular allusion is made to the audience's presumed knowledge of other tales of the Fenian corpus therein. It is worth bearing in mind that not all extant Early Modern tales entrenched themselves within written *fíanaigecht* traditions, some preferring to break with the conventions of the cycle. *Cath Finntrága* is one notable example of a work that plays on the fantastical more than working within the established themes and motifs of its predecessors in the written tradition of Fenian literature. 'The Chase', therefore, seems at first glance at least to be notable for its conservatism in terms of adherence to traditional written Finn Cycle convention. Next in this chapter I will detail the other traditions of Finn's death, then explore how the author draws on a number of those traditions. Thematic treatments in the tales will then be discussed, where, included in the discussion of the treatment of prophecy in 'The Chase', it will also be seen that we are right to include this tale amongst treatments of Finn's death in the medieval Irish corpus.

The medieval accounts of Finn's death present the modern scholar with a number of different scenarios about how and where Finn died and concerning the events leading up to that death. Regarding these accounts pertaining to Finn's death, the most popular account is that Finn was killed by members of the Lúaigne of Tara, specifically Aichlech mac Duibdrenn, or by Aichlech and the sons of Uirgriu, with different motivations attributed to his killers and different methods of how Finn was slain being given.<sup>22</sup> Finn is most often depicted as being killed by means of spears and/or by beheading. The Lúaigne, although without an epithet associating them with Tara, are said to be directly responsible for Finn's death in in the poem on the tenth-century *dindshenchas* of Brug na Bóinne:<sup>23</sup>

Hi Fertai na Fäilenn fand,  
is and romaíded in glond:  
mór in gnim n-úalle dorind  
écht Find for fein Lúagne lond.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See Parsons, 'Breaking the cycle?', pp. 91-6, particularly pp. 91-3.

<sup>23</sup> Scholarly consensus assigns a *terminus ante quem* of 1079 to the *dindshenchas* corpus and places its first redactor in the twelfth century. For discussion of dating and recensions see Gwynn, *Metrical Dindshenchas*, especially v; Thurneysen, *IHKS*, pp. 36-46; Bowen, 'A Historical Inventory'; Ó Concheanainn, 'The Three Forms'; and Ó Concheanainn, 'A pious redactor'. The *dindshenchas* of Brug na Bóinne is attributed to Cináed ua hArtacáin (Gwynn, *Metrical Dindshenchas*, ii, p. 95), who died in 975 (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, *The Annals of Ulster*, OR s.a. 975).

<sup>24</sup> Gwynn, *Metrical Dindshenchas*, ii, pp. 12-3 with emendations from Meyer, 'Erscheinene Schriften'. 'At the Grave of the gentle Seagulls—/ it is there was boasted the deed-/ great the feat of pride that assigns/ the slaying of Finn to the soldiery of the fierce Luagni.': updated translation based on Meyer's suggestions

and the twelfth-century poem beginning *Fiana batar i nEmain* as it appears in LL:<sup>25</sup>

Moŋgan ba mind cach dŋne  
 docer la fŋin Cindtire,  
 la fŋin Luagne aided Find  
 oc th Brea for Boind.<sup>26</sup>

Finn is said to have been killed at the spear points of the three sons of Uirgriu (with no mention of Aichlech) because of their treachery in the eleventh-century poem beginning *Annlad anall uile* written by Gilla Cemain:<sup>27</sup>

Secht mbladna cocat cen chrad  
  chath Mucrima na mmal  
 co torchair Find leo, car fell,  
 do rennaib tr mac Urgrenn.<sup>28</sup>

Aichlech appears in association with the sons of Uirgriu in Fragment Two of *Aided Finn*, a tale which Meyer dates to the tenth century.<sup>29</sup> Here, Aichlech is specifically said to have beheaded Finn:

[...] tri maic Uircreann 7 Aicclech mac Duibhreann. Confuaradar sidhe.  
 Concmaing Aicleach a cheann de [...].<sup>30</sup>

It is specified for a second time that Aichlech beheaded Finn in the quatrain at the end of *Aided Finn*:

[Robth] Find  
 ba do gaibh gan ni[ach] guin  
 do[all] Aicleach mac Duibhrens  
 a chenn do mac moctha Muin.<sup>31</sup>

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from CELT, *The Metrical Dindsenchas*, <<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T106500B/text002.html>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>25</sup> This poem is ascribed to Cined ua hArtacin in LL (Thurneysen, *IHKS*, p. 20), however, Thurneysen concluded that the poem cannot be earlier than the first half of the twelfth century (*IHKS*, p. 20).

<sup>26</sup> Stokes, 'On the deaths', 310. 'Mongan was the diadem of every troop:/he fell by the Fian of Cantire./ by the Fian of Luagne was Find's death/ at th Brea on the Boyne.': Ibid, 311.

<sup>27</sup> *Annlad anall uile* comprises 58 stanzas in total. The second part, that in which the death of Finn is to be found, gives the length of time between the deaths of kings and other important figures in Gaelic culture and battles from Christian era until the time of writing, 1072. For discussion of the date of the poem see Smith, *Three Historical Poems*, pp. 32-3.

<sup>28</sup> Smith, *Three Historical Poems*, p. 198. 'Fifty-seven years without affliction/ from the battle of [Mag] Mucrama of the princes/ until Find fell by them – though it was treachery –/ by the spear points of the three sons of Urgriu.': Ibid, p. 199.

<sup>29</sup> Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, p. xxv. For discussion of this and other dates assigned by Meyer see Murray, 'Interpreting the evidence'.

<sup>30</sup> Meyer, 'The Death', 464. 'the three sons of Urgriu, and Aiclech the son of Dubdriu. These found him and Aiclech cut off his head.': Ibid, 465.

<sup>31</sup> Meyer, 'The Death', 465. 'Finn was slain./ 'Twas by spears, without a hero's(?) wound:/ Aiclech son of Duibdriu took off/ His head from the glorious son of Muin.': Ibid, 465.



It should be noted, however, that neither of these two mentions of Aichlech beheading Finn agree with *Aided Finn's* first mention of how Finn died, namely as a result of a leap.<sup>32</sup> This is further discussed below. Another account of Aichlech beheading Finn is to be found in the presumably twelfth-century quatrain beginning 'Rodíchned Find, ba fer tend' in LL.<sup>33</sup>

Rodíchned Find, ba fer tend  
 oaoclaech mac Duib Drend,  
 is robenad de a chend  
 ō maccaib ānaib Urgrend.<sup>34</sup>

Aichlech is named as Finn's killer in the twelfth-century *Tesmolta Corbmaic Ui Chuind ocus Aided Finn Mic Cumuill*,<sup>35</sup> in which Finn meets the Lúaigne, the three sons of Uirgriu, and Aichlech (who is said to be son of the third son of Uirgriu) decapitates Finn after a long, ruthless battle was fought in which the combatants recalled their grievances against one another.<sup>36</sup>

ro-tinóilset Luaighne iarum. ocus trí meic Uirgrend ocus Aichlech mór mac Duibrenn .i. mac in tres fir do macuib Uirgrend. fertar iarum cath amhnas édrócar fortrén ferrda fíchdo feramail aturru. gur chuimnigh cách díb a nanbfolto hi céin ocus hi fogus diaraili ann sin. ag Breaa for Bóinn is ann tucad in cath sin. ocus ro bás co fada isin inguin gur bo mór a nuilc diblínaib. ro sráinedh immorro in cath for Fhind ocus dorochair ann. Aichlech mac Duibrenn is leis do thuit Finn ocus is é rosdíchend é.<sup>37</sup>

Aichlech is furthermore said to be responsible for Finn's death in a gloss on the poem *Fiana batar i nEmain* as it appears in the sixteenth-century manuscript Egerton 1782 although this does not mention how he died:<sup>38</sup> 'i. la Aichlech mac Duibrenn dorochair Find

<sup>32</sup> Meyer, 'The Death', 464-5; Parsons, 'Breaking the cycle?', pp. 85-6.

<sup>33</sup> As there is no evidence to the contrary, this stanza can only be assigned the same date of the manuscript in which it appears, viz. the second half of the twelfth century. On this date see Schlüter, *History or Fable?*, pp. 24-7.

<sup>34</sup> Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, p. xxv. He beheaded Finn, he was a fierce man,/ Aicclech son of Duibdriu/ and he struck his head from him [Finn];/ [Aicclech is] of the great Sons of Uirgriu.: own translation.

<sup>35</sup> Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, p. xx.

<sup>36</sup> O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, pp. 89-92.

<sup>37</sup> O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, p. 91. '[The Lúaigne] gathered now, with Uirgrenn's three sons, and Aichlech More: son namely of Duibrenn, that was third man of the sons of Uirgrenn. Between them is fought an extraordinary and a ruthless battle, manly, masculine and fierce, in which all and several recalled to mind their grievances (whether remote or more immediately touching themselves) that they had the one against the other. At Brea upon the Boyne: that is where that battle came off: they were at the hand-to-hand work for a length of time, and till on both sides their mischiefs were very many. The fight was won against Finn, and he perished in it. Duibdrenn's son Aichlech: by him Finn fell, and he it was that beheaded him': *Silva Gadelica*, ii, pp. 98-9.

<sup>38</sup> Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, p. xxvi-xxvii.

ac Ath Brea os Boaind 7 ni a mBeola Broghoige a Luachair.<sup>39</sup> Later in *Fiana batar i nEmain* in the same manuscript there is a verse, which is not to be found in the other two witnesses of this poem, LL and Laud 610, which says that Finn was killed in a painful slaughter by Aichlech. This time it is said that he killed Finn with spears and that Aichlech decapitated him:

Ro bith Finn [dano], ro bith Finn,  
ba do goeib gomach guin,  
do thall Aicclech mac Duibrenn  
a chenn do mac Murni muin.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, we find that both Aichlech and the sons of Uirgriu are said to have killed Finn in the entries on Finn's death *sub anno* 283 in the Annals of Tigernach (AT) (written c. 1100)<sup>41</sup> the Annals of the Four Masters (AFM) (written in the seventeenth century),<sup>42</sup> and the Annals of Clonmacnoise.<sup>43</sup> AT say that Finn was decapitated by Aichlech and the sons of Uirgriu:

Fínd hua Baiscne decollatus est o Aichleach mac Duibdrenn 7 o maccaib  
Uirgrend do Luaignib Temrach oc Ath Brea for Boínd.<sup>44</sup>

AFM say that Aichlech and the sons of Uirgriu killed Finn with darts:

Fionn Ua Baiscne do thuitim la hAichlech mac Duibhdrenn, & la macoibh  
Uirgrend, do Luaighnibh Temhrach, occ Ath Brea for Bóinn, dia ndebhradh.  
Ro bith Find, ba do ghaibh,  
go ndiach guin,  
do all Aichleach mac Duibhdrend,  
a chenn do mhac Mochtamuin.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Stokes, 'On the deaths', 328. i.e. by Aichlech, son of Duibriu, Find fell at Ath Brea on the Boyne at not in Beola Broghaighe in Luachair.: own translation. This appears as a gloss on the verse 'Moíngan ba mind cach díne/ docer la féin Cindtire,/ la féin Luagne aided Find/ oc Áth Brea for Boínd.': Stokes, 'On the deaths', 310. 'Mongan was the diadem of every troop:/he fell by the Fian of Cantire./ by the Fian of Luagne was Find's death/ at Áth Brea on the Boyne.': Ibid, 311.

<sup>40</sup> Stokes, 'On the deaths', 310; 'Finn then has been slain, Finn has been slain: 'twas by spears, a [painful] slaughter. Aicclech son of Duibriu cut off the head from the neck of Murne's son.': Ibid, 311.

<sup>41</sup> The earliest extant manuscript in which the AT are to be found today is the twelfth-century Rawl. B. 502. However, Daniel McCarthy places their exemplar at c. 1100. McCarthy, *The Irish Annals*, p. 197. For full discussion see pp. 1-60 and 153-97. See also Evans, *The Present and the Past*, pp. 45-66.

<sup>42</sup> See Cunningham, *The Annals of the Four Masters*, p.13.

<sup>43</sup> Murphy, *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp. 61-2, see *supra*.

<sup>44</sup> Stokes, 'The Annals of Tigernach', 21; 'Find, grandson of Baiscne, was beheaded by Aichlech, son of Dubdriu, and by the sons of Uirgriu, of the Luaigni of Tara, at Ath Brea on the Boyne.': Ibid, 21.

<sup>45</sup> O'Donovan, *Annala Rioghachta Eireann*, i, pp. 118, 120. 'Finn, grandson of Baisgne, fell by Aichleach, son of Duibhdreann, and the sons of Uirgreann of the Luaighni Teamhrach, at Ath-Brea, upon the Boinn [Boyne], of which was said: Finn was killed, it was with darts./ With a lamentable wound;/ Aichleach, son of Duibhdreann, cut off/ The head of the son of Mochtamuin.': Ibid, pp. 119, 121.

The Annals of Clonmacnoise say that

[Finn] was Beheaded by Aihleagh mDurgrean and by the sons of Wirgrean of the lordship of Lwyne of Tarah at Athbrea on the river of Boyne.<sup>46</sup>

The other popular motif in the medieval sources' presentation of the death of Finn is that Finn is said to have died by making a leap.<sup>47</sup> A leap to test his agility is given as the specific reason for Finn dying in Fragment Two of *Aided Finn*:

Is ann luidhes [Finn] lasin mBoind sair coráinic a Leim. Rogab iarum idir da charraig cotarrla a etan imon carraig, co mbai a inchinn uimpe, co mbúi marbh etir an da charraig.<sup>48</sup>

Two poems, beginning 'Ráid a Chailti', and 'Is truag in gním', versions of which appear in both the early-thirteenth century *AS*<sup>49</sup> and *ASII*, dated to the fourteenth or fifteenth-century,<sup>50</sup> give Finn's death as arising from a leap. In 'Ráid a Chailti', this is 'a leap of folly' when Finn is aged 230:

[*AS*:] Dá cét bliadan co mblaithe,  
ocus tricha gan tlaithe  
saegal Find, ba fata re,  
co torchair 'ga léim baissi.<sup>51</sup>

[*ASII*:] Trí chéad bliadhoin go mbláithe,  
deich mbliadhna ach madh aon-ráithe  
saoghal Finn go bhfúair a ré,  
go ndorchoir 'gā léim baoísi.<sup>52</sup>

In 'Is truag in gním' Finn dies as a result of 'a warrior leap':

[*AS*:] Do marbad Find na Feinde  
ic tabairt a laechleime,  
is do bris mo craide ar tri

<sup>46</sup> Murphy, *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 61.

<sup>47</sup> For discussion of death by leaping, see Nagy, 'Tristanic, Fenian and Lovers' Leaps'.

<sup>48</sup> Meyer, 'The Death', 464; 'Then he went along the Boyne eastward until he reached his 'Leap'. Thereupon he fell between two rocks, so that his forehead struck against the rock and his brains were dashed about him, and he died between the two rocks.': Ibid, 465.

<sup>49</sup> On this date see Nuner, 'The verbal system'; Dooley, 'Date and Purpose'; and Cannon, 'The Roscommon locus'.

<sup>50</sup> Ní Shéaghda, *Agallamh* i, pp. xxiv-xxxi, p. xxxi in particular.

<sup>51</sup> Stokes, 'Acallam na Senórach', ll. 2537-38. Two hundred years and splendour/ and thirty without weakness/ was Finn's life, his time was long/ until he died from his leap of folly.: own translation.

<sup>52</sup> Ní Shéaghda, *Agallamh*, ii, p. 80, ll. 1-4. Three hundred years and splendour/ ten years save only a season/ was Finn's life until his time came to go/ until he died from his leap of folly.: own translation.

ruc mo nert uile ar nemfní.<sup>53</sup>  
 [ASII:] Ro marbhadh Fionn na Féine  
 acc tabhairt a laoich-léime  
 gan imtheacht ar aon ris  
 croidhe Chaoílte is eadh bhriseas.<sup>54</sup>

Two *AB* poems beginning 'Cnucha chnoc os cind Life' and 'Ingnadh in fhis tarfas dam' give Finn's death as a result of 'a leap of folly':

[AB, 'Cnucha chnoc os cind Life:'] Gé thuit Find na leim baoisi  
 rob uathadh a chomhaoisi;  
 Eocha file, in fer fesa,  
 is Mogh Ruith mac Seinfhesa.<sup>55</sup>  
 [AB, 'Ingnadh in fhis tarfas dam:'] At-bath Find ac leim aisi,  
 cidh edh ro bo reim baoísi;  
 torchair Diarmuit re muic mhir  
 isin charnn ós Gh lind Chomair<sup>56</sup>

Versions of the both 'Cnucha chnoc os cind Life' and 'Ingnadh in fhis tarfas dam' in *ASII*, however, give Finn's death as a result of 'a leap of age':

[ASII, 'Cnucha chnoc os cind Life:'] Co ro thuit Fionn 'na léim aoísi  
 robsad úaithe chomhaoisi,  
 Ocha file an fear feasa  
 is Mogh Ruith mac Soineasa.<sup>57</sup>  
 [ASII, 'Ingnadh in fhis tarfas dam:'] At-báth Fionn gā léim aoísi,  
 ciodh eadh ro budh léim baoísi;  
 torchoir Díarmuid le muic mir  
 isin ccárn ós Ghlionn Comair.<sup>58</sup>

Finally, the extant medieval sources preserve one instance of Finn dying because of the treachery of Goll's daughter. This appears in the *DF* poem beginning 'Anocht fíordheireadh

<sup>53</sup> Stokes, 'Acallamh', ll. 2873-4; 'Finn of the Fíán was killed/ making his warrior-leap/ and my heart broke in three/ it brought all my strength to nought.': Stokes, 'Acallamh', ll. 2583-4 and Parsons, 'Breaking the Cycle?', p. 85.

<sup>54</sup> Ní Shéaghda, *Agallamh*, ii, p. 108, ll. 1-4. Finn of the Fíán was killed/ making his warrior-leap/ not going with him/ it what breaks Caoilte's heart.: own translation.

<sup>55</sup> Kühns, 'The Agallamh Bheag', 70, ll. 1316-19; 'Although Find fell by this foolish leap/ his contemporaries were small in number;/ Eocha the poet, the seer,/ and Mogh Ruith mac Seinfhesa.': Ibid, 138, ll. 1316-19.

<sup>56</sup> Kühns, 'The Agallamh Bheag', 73, ll. 1381-4; 'Find died jumping in old age,/ though that was a silly movement;/ Diarmuit was killed by a mad pig/ on the cairn above Glend Chomair.': Ibid, 140, ll. 1381-4.

<sup>57</sup> Ní Shéaghda, *Agallamh*, iii, p. 178, ll. 21-4. Until Finn fell by his leap-of-age/ these were his contemporaries:/ Ocha, a poet and seer/ and Mogh Ruith mac Soineasa.: own translation.

<sup>58</sup> Ní Shéaghda, *Agallamh*, iii, p. 181, ll. 1-4. Finn died making his leap-of-age/ although that was a leap of folly/ Diarmuid was killed by a mad pig / on the cairn above Glenn Comair.: own translation.

na ffían', dated by Murphy to the thirteenth century.<sup>59</sup> What that treachery was or how Finn died, however, is not specified:

[DF:] A ccaí Ollarba gan feall  
 a ttorcáir airdríg Éireann  
 dar tuit Fionn tre ingin Ġuill  
 a ccaí Bregda ós Bóuinn.<sup>60</sup>

Another element of traditions of Finn's death for which there is conflicting information is where his final demise occurred. There are two strong traditions regarding the *locus*, namely that Finn died at the Boyne or in Luachair Dedad. Finn is said to have died at his Leap on the Boyne in *Aided Finn*,<sup>61</sup> and at 'Fertai na Failenn fand' in the *dindshenchas* of Brug na Bóinne.<sup>62</sup> It is related that Finn died at at Áth Brea on the Boyne in AT,<sup>63</sup> in the poem beginning *Fiana batar i nEmain* in LL,<sup>64</sup> in a gloss on that same poem as it appears in Egerton 1782,<sup>65</sup> in *Tesmolta Corbmaic*,<sup>66</sup> in the poem beginning 'Anocht fíordheireadh na ffían',<sup>67</sup> in the Annals of Clonmacnoise,<sup>68</sup> and AFM.<sup>69</sup> However, there must have been a tradition known to the scribe of Egerton 1782 that Finn died in Beola Broghaighe in Luachair as this is refuted in a gloss on that manuscript's copy of *Fiana batar i nEmain*.<sup>70</sup>

Further Luachair Dedad locations for Finn's death are named as Aill in Bruic in AS:

[']Ocus do bhí Find isin ríghi sin,' ar Cáilte, 'nogu bhfuair bás 7 aidhed a n-Aill in bhruic a Luachair Degadh.<sup>71</sup>

in ASII:

Ro bhaóí Fionn isin ríge sin nō gur básaigheadh é i n-Aill an Bhruic a Luachair Dheaghadh.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Murphy, *DF*, iii, p. 43.

<sup>60</sup> MacNeill, *DF*, i, XIX, p. 48; 'In the battle of Ollarbha, without deceit,/ there Ireland's monarch fell:/ where Fionn fell through Goll's daughter/ was in the Bregian battle above the Boyne.' *DF*, poem XIX, i, p. 152. Murphy suggests (*DF*, iii, p. 43) that the fourth line read 'ag Áth Breä' rather than 'a ccaí Bregda.' I discuss this *infra*, p. 70, n. 89.

<sup>61</sup> Meyer, 'The Death' 465.

<sup>62</sup> Gwynn, *Metrical Dindshenchas*, ii, p. 12; Meyer, 'Erscheine Schriften', 6 (1907) 245-8.

<sup>63</sup> Stokes, 'The Annals of Tigernach', 21.

<sup>64</sup> Stokes, 'On the deaths', 303.

<sup>65</sup> Stokes, 'On the deaths', 328.

<sup>66</sup> O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, pp. 91-2.

<sup>67</sup> MacNeill, *DF*, poem XIX i, pp. 48.

<sup>68</sup> Murphy, *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, pp. 61-2.

<sup>69</sup> O'Donovan, *Annala Rioghachta Eireann*, i, pp. 119-21.

<sup>70</sup> Stokes, 'On the deaths', 328.

<sup>71</sup> Stokes, 'Acallam na Senórach', ll. 1765-7. And Finn held that kingship', said Cálte, 'until he died and was killed at Aill in Bruic in Luachair Dedad.: own translation.

<sup>72</sup> Ní Shéaghdha, *Agallamh*, i, p. 197, ll. 16-18. And Finn held that kingship until he died at Aill in Bruic in Luachair Dedad.: own translation.

in the poem beginning 'Ac so in fert a ngenir Find', versions of which are found in *AB* and *ASII*:

[*AB*:] Bás Find um Broicc ar ndul di  
 escar Daire um Lic nDairi;  
 bás Crimhaill um Loch Dall,  
 taót i cath Chnucha Cumall.<sup>73</sup>

[*ASII*:] Bás Finn i mBroic ar ndul di;  
 feascor nDáire im Licc nDáire;  
 bás Chriomhoill a Loch Dā Dhall:  
 gaott a ccath Cnuca Cumholl.<sup>74</sup>

and a version of the same poem beginning 'Ac so in fód' in *DF*:

[*DF*:] Bás Finn a mBroic ar ndul di  
 do easgar um líg nDoire  
 bás Crimaill a Loch dhā Dhall  
 taoth a ccat Cnuch Cumall.<sup>75</sup>

Further motifs present in accounts of Finn's death are the idea of his death being foretold by a prophecy and of it resulting from the drinking of poison from a horn. These appear in the beginning of Fragment Two of *Aided Finn* which seems to relate a prophecy that Finn will die when he drinks poison from a horn:

Is ed doralá reimhe aníar for Belach n-Gabrain i Maistin. Is ann fuaír an mnaí ag tath an grotha a Maistin [end of first fragment. Second fragment begins:] ...nuic so, 'or F[inn]... ar sisi... [tai]rngaire ... donepelad cones ... neimh a hadhairc'. 'Fir, a chailleach', or se. 'Acso mu dealg duit'.<sup>76</sup>

*Tesmolta Corbmaic* seems to give much the same information:

Táinic in tairrgeri d'Finn. nemed do linn folai dígh;  
 a dul tar sruth ségda slóigh. d'féis le ingin móir meic Lir.

<sup>73</sup> Kühns, 'The Agallamh Bheag', pp. 58-9, ll. 1032-5; 'The death of Find at Broicc after deserting her,/ the fall of Daire at Lic Dairi;/ the death of Crimhall at Loch Dall,/ Cumhall fell in the battle of Cnucha.': Ibid, p. 127, ll. 1032-5.

<sup>74</sup> Ní Shéaghda, *Agallamh*, ii, p. 59, ll. 1-4. The death of Find at Broicc after leaving her;/ the fall of Daire at Líc Daire;/ the death of Criomholl at Loch Dá Dhall;/ Cumall fell in the battle of Cnucha.: own translation.

<sup>75</sup> Murphy, *DF*, poem XLII, ii, p. 110; 'Fionn met his death in Broic after she [*i.e.* Áine] had died: [Dáire's fall occurred by Leac Dáire]: Criomhall met his death in Loch Dhá Dhall/ Cumhall fell in the battle of Cnucha.': Ibid, p. 111.

<sup>76</sup> Meyer, 'The Death', 464; 'So he set out from the west on the high-road of Gowran into Mullaghmast. There in Mullaghmast he found a woman making curds [end of first fragment. Second fragment begins:] ... up to this', said Finn ... said she ... prophecy ... that he would die when he should drink... poison out of a horn.' 'True, o hag', said he. 'Here is my brooch for thee.': Ibid, 464-5.

Neim a hadhairc uathmar sruth. romsáí mo cruth comall nglan;  
 ro derg mo croidhi 's mo crí. is fuil ní fós dam.  
 Adibis digh do'n linn nglais. do ibis neim nuall namnais;  
 is demin lim ó so imach. bidh é in sásad déighinach.<sup>77</sup>

From the information presented above, it is clear that Finn's death at the hands of the Lúaigne was present in the literature from the earliest instance of a narrative about Finn's demise that survives, *Aided Finn*. With regards to this tradition, Murray shows that the opposition of Finn and the Lúaigne pre-dates this tale,<sup>78</sup> as the Lúaigne were traditionally depicted as 'defenders of the Tara monarchy against its enemies'<sup>79</sup> in the medieval sources and so Finn's new role in medieval Irish literature as leader of the *fíán* of the king of Tara may be seen as usurping the earlier literary role of the Lúaigne who were reckoned as the *fénnidi* of Cormac's grandfather, Conn Cétcathach.<sup>80</sup> Further early evidence for the enmity between Finn and the Lúaigne may be seen in a tale found in *Sanas Cormaic* under the lemma 'orc tréith' (often referred to as 'Finn and the Jester (Lomnae)').<sup>81</sup> There, Finn's female companion, a woman of the Lúaigne, sleeps with the *féinnid* Cairpre in secret. When Lomnae, Finn's jester who saw the rendezvous, ensures that Finn discovers the deception, the woman has Cairpre kill Lomnae. Finn later comes upon Cairpre in an empty house where Lomnae's decapitated head has been placed beside the fire. The dead Lomnae speaks as fish is being divided up around him, demanding his share, as Finn arrives and kills Cairpre. While there are other instances of severed heads in the early *fíanaigeacht* corpus,<sup>82</sup> the presence of the talking, severed head of the protagonist beside the fire in an empty house where fish is being cooked and divided up is remarkably similar to the

<sup>77</sup> O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, pp. 91-2. The prophecy came to Finn,/ poison from a pool of blood as a drink/  
 going over the pleasing stream of a host/ to tryst with the great daughter of the son of Lir./ Poison from a  
 dreadful horn of streams,/ it turned my form, a complete fulfilment,/ my heart and my flesh reddened/  
 it is blood that is not still to me [perhaps meaning his blood is no longer pure because of the poison?]/ I drank  
 a drink from the blue pool,/ I drank strong, proud poison,/ I am sure from now onwards/ it will be the final  
 satisfaction.: own translation.

<sup>78</sup> Murray, *The Early Finn Cycle*, p. 90

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p. 90 quoting O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology*, p. 391.

<sup>80</sup> Murray, *The Early Finn Cycle*, p. 90; 'Catháir Mór trí bliadna i rígi Éirenn go torchair a Muigh Agha la  
 Conn Cétcathach 7 la Lúaigni Temtach. Lúaigni Temrach trá curaidh *catha* 7 irgaile iat, ar ro boí rígh-  
 fhianus Éirenn acu géin mháir corus dílgenn Finn mac Cumaill iat iar tain, 7 is iat robo túaíngigh catha la  
 Conn Cétcathach[.]: Dillon, *Lebor na Cert*, p. 168; 'Catháir Mór was for three years in the kingship of  
 Ireland, until he fell at Mag Aga at the hands of Conn Cétcathach and the Lúaigne of Tara. The Lúaigne  
 of Tara were heroes of battle and warfare, for they had the office of military service for the king of Ireland  
 for a long time until Find Mac Cumaill later destroyed them. And it was they who were smiters in battle  
 for Conn Cétcathach[.]: Dillon, *Lebor na Cert*, p. 169.

<sup>81</sup> O'Donovan, *Sanas Chormaic*, pp. 129-31, s.v. *orc tréith*; Russell, 'Poets, Power and Possession', pp. 39-40;  
 Murray, *The Early Finn Cycle*, pp. 90-1.

<sup>82</sup> E.g. *Bruiden Átha Í*, ed. and trans. in Hull, 'Two Tales'. On the topic of severed heads see Powers Coe, 'The  
 severed heads in Fenian Tradition'.

episode found in *Aided Finn*. As the 'Finn and the Jester' narrative, which dates to the ninth century,<sup>83</sup> predates *Aided Finn* as we have it, there is a possibility that it was the source of inspiration for the event in *Aided Finn*. Cairpre, by killing Lomnae and fleeing the *fían*, aligns himself with the woman of the Lúaigne, an action that may be easily interpreted as becoming an associate or ally of the Lúaigne. The use of a motif so reminiscent of the scene in 'Finn and the Jester' in *Aided Finn* could then be reasonably suggested to have been purposefully employed in the latter work to enact poetic justice from the point of view of the Lúaigne.

Returning, however, to the place of 'The Chase' in traditions of Finn's death, as mentioned above, it is arguable that its author was aware of a number of other tales or references to Finn's demise and was drawing on a considerable number of the sources already discussed in this chapter, or indeed other similar sources no longer available in order to create a comprehensive death tale for Finn. We will first consider Finn's death at the hands of the Lúaigne and the events of 'The Chase'. Here, both Aichlech and the sons of Uirgriu, who elsewhere are credited with killing Finn, appear in the tale. Aichlech's role is admittedly small, appearing for the first and only time during the battle itself where he encounters and overcomes Áed Baillderg. His appearance, however, may be significant for the both the plot of 'The Chase' and in the wider context of traditions of Finn's death. This episode appears immediately before the *rígfénnid* decides to enter the fray, and is important to the storyline as it is used to move the action forwards. Although Finn has previously said that he will join the battle if necessary, the fact that Finn seems incited to join the fighting immediately after Aichlech, and not another character, kills one of his champions may point to an existing enmity between the two. If such was the case, the audience would likely have understood this as strengthening Finn's motivation to begin fighting at this point.<sup>84</sup> The other characters often associated with the *rígfénnid*'s death are the sons of Uirgriu who play a much larger role in 'The Chase'. They are party to the conspiracy to incite the warriors in Fer Tai's hostel to fight and hopefully kill Finn. When that fails, they are then leading members of the forces opposing him and Finn can also be said to be in the process of being killed at the spear points of the sons of Uirgriu when the tale breaks off. This is similar to the reason given for Finn's demise in the poem on the *dindshenchas* of Brug na Bóinne, *Annálad anall uile*, and LL's *Fiana batar i nEmain*. By the time the text

<sup>83</sup> On this date see Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, p.xix-xx.

<sup>84</sup> It would be tempting to see a pre-existing enmity as the reason for Aichlech's appearance in association with Finn's death elsewhere but the lack of extant early Finn cycle tales would not allow for such a definitive reading of the material.



breaks off, Finn has been pierced through from one side of his body to the other twice, and each of the five sons of Uirgriu have wounded Finn with spears. The situation is presented as having arisen because of the treachery of the Fer LÍ along with his companions Émer Glúnglas, the five sons of Uirgriu, of the Lúaigne of Tara and the three Táiblenachs from Fernmag. This is analogous to one element of Finn's death as related in the poem *Annálad anall uile*, namely that Finn's demise occurred because of the treachery of the sons of Uirgriu.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, in *Fiana batar i nEmain*, it is related that Finn died in a painful slaughter by spears.<sup>86</sup> This would certainly seem to be the case based on the scene depicted 'The Chase'. Finn has been vigorously swashbuckling with the 'the pillars' before engaging with the five sons of Uirgriu. By the time the text breaks off Finn has at least seven severe spear wounds, one each from Fer LÍ, Fer Taí and the five sons of Uirgriu, and is said to be bloody and weak.<sup>87</sup> Finally, Finn fights his adversaries in a long and ruthless battle of which it is said that both sides called to mind their grievances against the other. This is comparable with the events leading up to Finn's death in *Tesmolta Corbmaic* where it is said of Finn and his foes (said to be the five sons of Uirgriu, which includes Aichlech in *Tesmolta Corbmaic*) that a ruthless battle was fought between them in which 'all and several recalled to mind their grievances'.<sup>88</sup> Considered alone, each of these elements could perhaps be deemed to be incidental but taken as a whole, in unison with other thematic aspects of 'The Chase' they would seem to be deliberate, particularly when considered alongside the appearance of Goll's daughter in 'The Chase'.

In 'Anocht fíordheireadh na ffian' Goll's daughter's treachery is said to lead to Finn's death.<sup>89</sup> As this reason for Finn's death is only extant in one account, unlike Finn's death at

<sup>85</sup> Smith, *Three Historical Poems*, pp. 198, 200.

<sup>86</sup> Stokes, 'On the deaths', 310

<sup>87</sup> See Appendix 1, ll. f41<sup>b</sup>18-48; Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 95-8.

<sup>88</sup> 'fertar iarum cath amhnas édrócar fortrén ferrda fíchdo feramail aturru. gur chuimnigh cách díb a nanbfolto hi céin ocus hi fogus diaraili ann sin.': O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, p. 91. 'Between them is fought an extraordinary and a ruthless battle, manly, masculine and fierce, in which all and several recalled to mind their grievances (whether remote or more immediately touching themselves) that they had the one against the other.': *Silva Gadelica*, ii, p. 98.

<sup>89</sup> *DF*, poem XIX, i, pp. 48. This poem has the events happening 'a ccaí Breä ós Bóáinn' which Gerard Murphy suggests emending to 'ag Áth Breä' (*DF*, iii, p. 43). While this would make sense as Finn's death occurring at Áth Brea on the Boyne is the most popular locus for his death, the depiction of a battle at Áth Brea in 'The Chase' presents us with a number of interesting possibilities. The orthography here would allow for the word play between 'i ccaí Breä'/ac cath Breä' and 'ac Áth Breä', which could have been the composer's intention, or, perhaps it hints at an earlier tradition of a battle, something akin to what can be seen in 'The Chase', in which the Lúaigne, Aichlech and/or sons of Uirgriu kill Finn which, and was misread, accidentally or purposefully, as 'ac Áth Brea' because of the Áth Brea connection with the *rígféinnid's* death. The reading of for 'a ccaí Breä' as 'i cath Breä' or 'ac cath Breä' may be supported by the mention of 'cath Breadh os boind' in Leabhar Ua Maine's 'The Shield of Fionn' (Flahive, 'The Shield of Fionn', p. 152), which is an earlier copy of *DF*, poem XIX.

the hands of Aichlech or the Lúaigne, or resulting from a leap, it is likely that this points to a significantly less widely-known version of the events leading up to Finn's death. The only other tale of which I am aware where Goll's daughter features is 'The Chase'. Here, named as Iuchna, she does not contrive or carry out the treacherous plot against Finn but her son, Fer LÍ does. His father, Fer Taí, while reluctant at first, afterwards supports his son in battle. Fer LÍ and Fer Taí are not known outside 'The Chase', and there is no further evidence of Goll's daughter being called Iuchna.<sup>90</sup> These facts cannot be taken as proof that these characters did not feature in other medieval *fianaigecht* tales, yet that no such records have survived does at least present us with the possibility of these elements being composed specifically for this tale, or indeed purposefully refashioned to fit the narrative aim of 'The Chase'. The other possibility that cannot be ignored, of course, is that 'The Chase' stems from a more comprehensive but now lost *Aided Finn* tale on which all or some the other accounts draw. The fragmentary nature of the early *fianaigecht* material, however, and the subsequent growth of the tradition in which multiple version of the same tale or episode can and do exist,<sup>91</sup> however, would render this the less likelier possibility.

Áth Brea is the battleground in 'The Chase', again featuring the most popular motif found in the surviving medieval accounts of Finn's death. The tale does not begin there, however. The events of 'The Chase' begin in Munster, naming Síd na mBan Finn, Síd ar Femen and 'the slopes of Luachair Dedad' as the places where the initial chase was spread out. The *fíán* then journey westwards towards the Shannon and Slíab Echtga, later to Formáel, and finally to Tara. As the events in the tale are resultant from one another, e.g. the lack of hunting trophies in Munster driving the hunt westwards, it is certainly possible that the tale beginning in Munster and Luachair Dedad territory is no accident. It is possible that the action in the 'The Chase' was fashioned by a composer attempting to unite the Munster and Mide locations associated with Finn's death in a single tale. This would also serve the purpose of facilitating a shifting geographical focus in 'The Chase', thus granting it a principal feature of other giants of *fianaigecht* literature, such as the various versions of the *Acallam* tale and the *macgnímrada*, all of which present narratives that encompass multiple locations in Ireland.

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<sup>90</sup> I am aware of two other instances of the name Iuchna in a *fianaigecht* context, however, in both instances Iuchna is a male. These are in explanations of how Adarca Hua Failgi and Adarca Bó Iuchna came to be so named in the Rennes dindshenchas (Stokes, 'The Prose Tales in the Rennes Dindshenchas', pp. 308-9) and in AS (Stokes, 'Acallamh', ll. 1262-81; Dooley and Roe, *Tales*, pp. 39-40) respectively.

<sup>91</sup> On this topic, see Murray, *The Early Finn Cycle*, Flahive; *The Fenian Cycle*, particularly pp. 1-48, and Murphy, *Ossianic Lore*.

If we are to consider 'The Chase' as conflating a number of traditions surround Finn's demise, the place of the earliest narrative depicting the event, i.e. *Aided Finn* cannot be ignored. Regarding the place of *Aided Finn* in the traditions of Finn's death, Parsons says that:

This slight text unites three elements that recur, singly or in combination, in virtually all accounts of Finn's death; hence it could be argued that most versions of the death of Finn descend from the *Aided Finn* tradition. These are:

1. the leap (that is, Finn's death occurred when he failed to complete a jump across a stretch of water);
2. the Luigne (that is, the Luigne Temra were involved in Finn's death, often decapitating him);
3. the drink (that is, the act of drinking from an *adarc* or of drinking a poisoned drink caused or hastened Finn's death).<sup>92</sup>

Of the three major aspects of *Aided Finn* that Parsons identified, one of those, the leap of death motif, is not present in our tale. Parsons has, however, noted that the leap of death motif 'may have originated in the use of the term *léimm* to refer to the passage from life to death,<sup>93</sup> and, as has already been seen, the leap that causes Finn's death is more commonly said to be the result of a leap of age. Both a warrior's leap (*láech-léim*) and leap of age (*léim aoisi*) are much the same concept, i.e. a feat by which Finn tests his agility.<sup>94</sup> While Finn's leap may not be a part of 'The Chase', the concept of Finn's age being a factor in his downfall is nonetheless present. Finn is old, specifically addressed as *senláech*, 'old warrior', by his opponent, Fer Lí,

"Ní gébamne ní *ar talam acht cath úad ar ní fírecéra in díbinn senláich úd sinni,*" *ar sé* [Fer Lí], "*ar lámach nó ar laechdacht ré comtógbháil catha.*"<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Parsons, 'Breaking the Cycle?', p. 86.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p. 85 citing *DIL*, s.v. *léimm* (c).

<sup>94</sup> Parsons notes that *léimm baoise* (leap of folly) may be a corruption of *léimm aoisi* (leap of age). However, given the appearance of Finn performing a leap in his youth in *Feis Tighe Chónáin* (*FTC*), where, having successfully completed a leap, he is put under a *geasa* to perform the same leap every year until his death (Joynt, *Feis Tighe Chonain*, p. 44; O'Kearney, *Feis Tighe Chonain Chinn-shleibhe*, p. 180), one wonders if this is not a deliberate pun, conflation of traditions, or indeed a motif popular in oral literature earlier than its appearance in *FTC*. The leap in this *FTC* episode, Joseph Nagy notes, 'starts as a whim but becomes rote' ('Tristanic, Fenian and Lovers' Leaps', p. 164). If we consider this to have originally been a *léimm baoisi*, which because of a *geis* becomes a *léimm aoisi* (leap of age) as Finn grows older, particularly on the day he fails to complete the leap and dies, his *léimm aoisi* may still be considered to be a *léimm baoisi*.

<sup>95</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f23<sup>a</sup>3-5; "'we will not take anything on earth except a battle from him for that foul old warrior will not equal us," he [Fer Lí] said, "in skill or in valour during battle muster.": edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 80-1.

Birgat reports the same incident to Finn using the word *senóir*,

"a-deruit is *senóir* díblidhi dolámaigh *thusa*, a Finn," *ar* in *eclech*.<sup>96</sup>

and Finn is again referred to as such by the narrator when he decides to enter the fray:

ro dech in *senóir* *forbthe* fírglic gur búaine *bladh inā* *sáeghal* dó 7 *gur* bferr  
dó bás *dfagháil* nā *maithmighe* do dénum réna *naimdib*.<sup>97</sup>

Furthermore, we find that youth versus age is one of the themes treated in the tale itself. When the boar of Formáel has been found, and when Finn hears of the nobles that have fallen by the pig, he, Oscar, Caflte and the nobles of the *fían* come to look at the boar. Although Finn may be leader of the *fían*, it is Oscar who becomes enraged at the sight of the fallen *fénnidí*. A wrath so powerful rises within him that the reader is told that Oscar did not think it honourable that anyone but he should avenge his fallen comrades:

*Et ot-conairc Osgur ēchtach anglonnach mac Osín in láthair lāech 7 con 7  
fer do thuit lesin muicc ro éirigh fiuchadh fírmór fergi ocus anfadh ard  
anmín uathbásach anaichnigh [i] n-aignidh in airdmílidh ar faigsin in  
chnámchumaigh *tuc* in torc allaidh úrbadhach ar conuib 7 ar feruib 7 ar  
ardtáisechibh na féne ocus nír míadh 7 nír maisi leis in rímílidh, lé hOsgur,  
nech do díghailt a huilc uirri *acht* ē fēn.<sup>98</sup>*

That he does, engaging with the boar so furiously that he succeeds in killing the boar who had previously killed scores of *fían*-warriors:

*Sínis Osgur a dhá dhóid rígdā rōmóra mílita tar in muic ar n-īchtar 7 *tuc* cor  
dísgrí denmnetach di *gur* chuir frāech adroma fritalmáin 7 *tuc* a glún ar n-  
īchtur inte 7 a dá ghlaicc ré a bēl 7 ré a carpat ar n-ūachtur conidh amlaidh  
sin ro tharrngetur forni feróglach na féni a habach 7 a hinathar trīthi síar  
sechtair conidh amlaidh sin do thuit in mórmuc sin le hOsgur hi crich in  
comloinn 7 ro claídedh lechta 7 ferta na fénnidh 7 na feróglach ro marbhadh  
les in muic annsin.<sup>99</sup>*

<sup>96</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f24<sup>a</sup>24-5; "'and they say: you are a decrepit, feeble-handed old man, Finn" said the messenger': edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. 80-1.

<sup>97</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f24<sup>a</sup>30-1; 'the old skilled senior understood that fame would be longer-lasting than life for him and that it would be better for him to die than to be vainglorious before his enemies.': edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. 94-5.

<sup>98</sup> Appendix 1, ll. 21<sup>v</sup>a38-45; 'And when heroic, destructive, valiant Oscar son of Oisín saw the amount of hounds and heroes that had fallen by the swine a boiling wrath of anger and a huge, harsh, horrible fury rose in the mind of the great warrior upon seeing the destruction that the wild ruinous boar wrought upon the hounds and men and great leaders of the *fían* and the royal warrior, Oscar, did not deem it honourable or fitting for anyone to avenge her evil but himself.': edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>99</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f21<sup>v</sup>b17-24; 'Oscar extended his two majestic, large, martial forearms over the pig from below and gave her a hasty destructive blow so that he put the bristles of her back to the ground and he put his knee into her below and his two hands against her mouth and against her palate above so that it was

By avenging his men Oscar is fulfilling the role of *fían*-leader here, and not his grandfather Finn. This portrayal of Oscar as a more fitting *rígfénnid* than Finn is reminiscent of *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne*, wherein the motif finds its most famous expression when Oscar threatens Finn if he does not bring water to heal the dying Diarmaid.<sup>100</sup> Within 'The Chase', this motif functions to show Oscar's ability to supersede Finn in the role of leader, thus anticipating the coming prophecies that Finn will die. A further element which feeds into the youth versus age theme would seem be the use of the question and answer format. This is not infrequent elsewhere in medieval Irish literature, see, for example, *Airne Fíngéin*,<sup>101</sup> but this type of colloquy was popularised by AS within *fíanaigecht* literature. 'The Chase' does not make extensive use of this device, but there are some instances of direct speech of this sort between Finn and his cohort. Two occasions on which we find Finn being asked for information are at the Grave of Faílbe and at Maillé mac Midna's house. At the Grave of Faílbe, the question of whose grave it is is raised.

Is annsin do fíarfaigh oíglach d'fíanaibh hEreinn d'Finn, "Cía in laech dana fert-so ar a fuilmaíd, a Finn?" ar sé. "Atā a fíis sin acom-sa duid-si," ar Find.<sup>102</sup>

Answering this question from the young warrior moves the narrative forward, leading to Finn and the *fían* hunting the boar of Formáel, but – and more significantly for the present discussion - it serves the purpose of juxtaposing Finn's age with those in his company: Finn can answer this because of his greater age and knowledge of Ireland's past.<sup>103</sup> An earlier instance of this question-and-answer format being used occurs at Maillé mac Midna's house. There Finn instigates a request for information that he himself seems to already possess. The *fían* are at the house of Maillé when Finn's two cupbearers kill one another. Finn inquires of those around him if they know where or from whom he got his drinking horn. They do not.

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thus that bands of warriors of the *fían* pulled her entrails and intestines back through her so that it was thus that the great pig fell by Oscar at the scene of the conflict and the graves and mounds of the *fénnidí* and warriors that were killed by the pig were dug there.': edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>100</sup> Ó Cathasaigh, 'Tóraíocht', pp. 30-46.

<sup>101</sup> Ed. by Vendryes, *Airne Fíngéin*; trans. Cross and Brown, 'Fingen's night-watch'.

<sup>102</sup> Appendix 1, f20<sup>v</sup>a40-3; 'It is then that a young warrior of the Fianna of Ireland asked Finn "Who is the warrior whose grave we are on, Finn?" he said. "I can tell you that," said Finn': edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. 54-5.

<sup>103</sup> See Appendix 1, ll. f20<sup>v</sup>a40-b6; see also Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. 54-5.

"Tabraidh in corn cucomsa," ar Finn, ocus tucadar in corn chum Finn. Ocus adubart Finn: "in fetabuir-si, a óga," ar sē, "cia thug in corn-sa dam-sa nó cāit a fuarus hē?" "Nī fetamar, a rífeinnídh, ar síat do fētur-sa," ar Finn.<sup>104</sup>

This leads Finn to recount the tale of a successful hunt after which Finn, Caílte and Oisín heard *síd* music. The following morning leads to an encounter with an at-first-unnamed churl who plays tunes so melodious that wounded warriors or women about to give birth would fall asleep. Finn's story concludes with the churl, now a beautiful warrior and known to be the Crónánach from *Síd ar Femen*, giving Finn the horn, Midlethan, which, when filled with water would appear to turn it into sweet mead.<sup>105</sup> It is striking then that here the question-and-answer format again stresses Finn's age; he knew the origin of the horn not because of any supernatural acquisition of knowledge but because of his age. Finn receiving the horn brings us to two other significant aspects of 'The Chase', that is, the appearance of the characters Maillé mac Midna and the Crónánach. This is the only text of which I am aware in which Maillé is found. The similarity to Aillé mac Midgna, who appears in *AS*, however, is unmistakable.<sup>106</sup> This Aillé comes to Tara every year, plays sweet music to send everyone to sleep before he burns Tara. *AS*'s description of the effects of Aillé's beguiling music is remarkably similar to the qualities attributed to the Crónánach's music in 'The Chase', an event recounted while the *fían* are being hosted by Maillé mac Midna. Compare:

Do éistetar immorro fir Eirenn co táí tostadhach rissin, uair no choidelduis mná co n-idhnaib 7 laeich letairthe risin ceol sirrechtach sidhi 7 risin ngadan [leg. gothán] nglésta nguithbinn do chanad in fer soinemail sídhi no loiscedh Temair gacha bliadna.<sup>107</sup>

Do sinn slithi senma, cuir, ocus puirt 7 adhbuinn dúinn innus co coiteōladh áes gonta nó mnā ré lamnaidh nó ffallaigh galracha nó curaidh crechtnaighthe nó lāeich leóna fris in céol soinemhail do rinne.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f20vb40-4; "'Bring me the drinking-horn," said Finn. And they brought the drinking-horn to Finn. And Finn said: "Do you know, warriors," he said, "who gave me the drinking-horn or where I got it?" "We do not know, *fían*-leader," they said. "I know," said Finn.": edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 56-7.

<sup>105</sup> See Appendix 1, ll. f21<sup>b</sup>47-8. Although now partially illegible, the text seems to suggest that such is the case: 'cid usce línighi f ...dur ann is mid somblasta soblast ... aousl...'. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 62-3.

<sup>106</sup> Stokes, 'Acallamh', ll. 1662-761; Dooley and Roe, *Tales*, pp. 51-4.

<sup>107</sup> Stokes, 'Acallamh', ll. 1699-1703. 'But on hearing this the men of Ireland kept silent, for even women in labour and wounded soldiers fell asleep on hearing the beguiling music of the *síd*, [and] the sweet-voiced, tuneful song sung by the strange man from the *síd* who burned down Tara every year.' Dooley and Roe, *Tales*, p. 53.

<sup>108</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f20<sup>a</sup>22-5; 'He played musical themes, tunes and melodies and songs for us so that wounded people or pregnant women or troubled troops of warriors or wounded heroes would fall asleep

In both these instances the music is said to be so sweet that it can send those who are in pain or discomfort, e.g. women in labour or wounded warriors, to sleep. In *AS*, in order to stay awake, Finn places the tip of a poison spear to his forehead, thereby being able to prevent Tara being set ablaze. He then follows Aillén to Síd Finnachaid, killing him with a poison spear as he enters the *síd*. While the character Aillén who was killed by Finn as a youth might not have been considered an appropriate figure to appear in a story of the *rígfénnid*'s old age, the author of 'The Chase' may have purposefully chosen to allude to this character, and the idea of a death caused by a spear, by changing Aillén's name and role. This episode thus suggests that the author may expect his audience to be aware of a wide range of connotations from earlier tales. The Aillén episode in *AS* recalls the tale *Marbaid Cúlduib* in which Finn encounters Cúldub, ultimately leading him to thrust a spear at Cúldub as he enters Síd Femen.<sup>109</sup> By drawing the reader's attention to the fact the Crónánach is from Síd ar Femen, and that this event is related while in Maillén mac Midna's residence, the author of 'The Chase' can be seen to invoke both of these pre-existing incidents of the *rígfénnid* causing serious injury to or the death of others by use of spears. These connotations of the Maillén Mac Midna/Crónánach episode could, therefore, have been employed to create tension in the tale as they recall other episodes in our protagonist's dossier. Furthermore, the episode also serves to create the exact circumstances leading to Finn's death: Earlier in the tale the *rígfénnid* had said that the *fían*'s other hunts were unsuccessful because it had been prophesied to them to encounter the boar of Formáel. Before they do so, the company spends the night at Maillén's house, during which time Midlethan's cupbearers kill one another. Finn specifically says that he is worried about that which gave rise to their deaths. This leads to the tale of the Crónánach and how Finn acquired Midlethan. The following day the *fían* hunt the boar of Formáel. After the boar is killed Finn recites a lay over the graves of fallen *fénnidi*, and immediately decides to leave Ireland because of the prophecy that the Crónánach had made to him. Thus, it seems that the drinking horn which the Crónánach gave to him played a role in the events that fulfilled parts of a prophecy which are said to lead to Finn's death.

This leads us on to a number of other elements often associated with Finn's death, namely the drink from a horn and/or of poison, and a prophecy concerning Finn's death. Although we do not have full details on what exactly the Crónánach's prophecy was, it seems that

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because of the melodious music' edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 58-9.

<sup>109</sup> Ed. in Meyer, 'Two Tales' 245-9, and Hull, 'Two Tales' 329-33. See also Murray, *The Early Finn Cycle*, pp. 77-9.

there were two parts to it. The first had to do with Midlethan and/or its cupbearers. The second part seems to concern either the defeat of the boar of Formáel and/or the death of Fer Tachim, son of Uaithne Irgalach, over whose grave Finn makes the lay. With the Aillén/Maillén associations mentioned above, the text may have already subtly hinted at poison playing a role in a death. Furthermore, the text seems to tell us that Midlethan itself would turn water into sweet mead. Midlethan's cupbearers, Íarrtach and Athchuingidh, then certainly benefited from their relationship with the cup, as we are told that they became rich as a result of their cup-bearing duties. It could even be called a sweet deal for them. Perhaps we are to interpret their relationship with Midlethan turning sour as representative of the liquid itself turning sour. If such a reading were intended, it would strongly echo another account of poison being used in Finn's death, namely in *Tesmolta Cormaic*, where the poison in the horn is specifically contrasted to the sweet mead given to Finn by various characters.

Neim a hadhairc uathmar sruth. romsáí mo cruth comall nglan:

ro derg mo croidhi 's mo crí. is fuil ní fós dam

Adibis digh do'n linn nglais. do ibis neim nuall namnais:

is demin lim ó so imach. bidh é in sásad déighinach

Dar lim ní hí in deoch do rad. in lá ar brú inbir abrat:

as in escra airgid báin. Aine ingen Manannáin

Ní hí in deoch milis midh cuill. tuc dam ingen meic meic Cuind:

maiden moch ro dergad drech. Diarmada i ninis dairbrech

Ní hí in deoch ler canadh ceoil. dam ar brú shescinn uairbeoil:

diar dáilsit orm buidhnib bann. dá ingen Conáin chualann

Ní hí in deoch gan damna duilb. do rad dam Sadb ingen Buidb:

cona feraib for femin. conamfargaib fó themil

Ní hí an deoch milis medha. in lá ar brú inbir bera:

is demin tánic mo lá. is gním uathmar armothá.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>110</sup> O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, p. 91. Poison from a dreadful horn of streams,/ my form turns me, a complete fulfilment,/ my heart and my flesh reddened/ it is blood that is not still to me [perhaps meaning his blood is no longer pure because of the poison?]/ I drank a drink from the blue pool,/ I drank strong, proud poison./ I am sure from now onwards/ it will be the final satisfaction./ I do not think it is the drink that was given/ the day over Inber Abrat/ from the bright silver vessel/ [by her,] Áine, daughter of Mannanáin./ I do not think it the sweet drink of hazel mead/ that the daughter of the son of the son of Conn gave to me/ early in the morning before the reddening of the face/ of Diaramad in Inis Dairbrech./ It is not the drink with which music was sung/ to me over Seiscenn Uairbeoil,/ which they poured out on me in great amounts,/ the two daughters of Cónán Cualann./ It is not the drink without magical substance/ that Sadb daughter of Bodb gave to me/ with her men on Femen/ so that I was left in darkness./ It is not the sweet drink of mead/ of the day over Inber Béra,/ I am sure my day has come,/ it is a terrible deed besides.: own translation.



One further, although admittedly more tenuous, connection between poison, a drinking-horn, 'The Chase' and Finn's death is that in *Tesmolta Cormaic* Finn drinks from a place called Adarca Iuchba in Uí Fáilge.<sup>111</sup> In *AS* we are told how the place called Adarca Bó Iuchna came to be so called.<sup>112</sup> In this case the Iuchna is a male personal name. If it is possible that both Adarca Iuchba is a form of Adarca (Bó) Iuchna, the appearance of Goll's daughter, called Iuchna in 'The Chase' may have been a deliberate allusion to *Aided Finn* or a similar tale.<sup>113</sup> The present author knows of no other instance where Iuchna is used for a female character in medieval Irish Literature.

With regards to the prophecy in 'The Chase', not only does the tale repeatedly mention the prophecy of Finn's death, but it is also one of the themes of the tale as other prophecies are mentioned therein and come true. As the text breaks off before the narrative finishes, these other instances may be seen to be indicative of the prophecy of Finn's death having been intended to come to pass in the tale. The first prophecy specifically so-called comes after the failed chase and the recitation at the Grave of Fáilbe. Because all other hunting-spoils were denied them, Finn announces that the following morning's chase will have as its quarry the boar of Formáel

*Et "a fíana Erenn," ar Finn, "do-gēnam-ne selg na maidni-sí amāroch ar in muic úd ó do ceiledh selg ocus fíanchosgar ele oruinn ⁊ is uimi doceiledh gach sealg ele oruinn ūair do bí a tairrngerí dúin comracc ris in muic sin ⁊ dī-ghēlum a n-anfolta fuirri."*<sup>114</sup>

When Finn mentions the prophecy that the Crónánach made to him, the details of that prophecy are revealed in both the prose and the stanza which immediately follows it. We find out that Finn would meet death that year, that the *fíana* would be slaughtered,

Do smúain Finn comairle annsin .i. Ére d'fágháil ar égla na fáistine do rinne in Crónánach dō ūair do gab úaman ⁊ imegla é fa ár do thabhairt ar in féin nó fá bás d'fágháil dó féin isin bliadhain sin.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>111</sup> O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, p. 91.

<sup>112</sup> Stokes, 'Acallamh', ll. 1262-81. Dooley and Roe, *Tales*, pp. 39-40. See also p. 70, n. 90, above.

<sup>113</sup> See Parsons, 'Breaking the Cycle?', p. 88, especially n.34 referencing *HDGP*, s.v. *Adharca*; Baumgarten, 'Placenames, etymology, and the structure of *fianaigecht*'.

<sup>114</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f20<sup>v</sup>b6-11; "And, *fíana* of Ireland," said Finn, "we will make tomorrow morning's hunt on that boar because the other chases and hunting-trophies were withheld from us and it is for that reason that every other prey was denied us because it was prophesied for us to do battle with that pig and we will avenge their injustices on her.": edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. 54-5.

<sup>115</sup> Appendix 1, f21vb34-7; Finn thought of a plan then, that is, to leave Ireland for fear of the prophecy that the Crónánach had made to him because terror and dread seized him about bringing destruction to the *fíana*

and that the Lúaigne are destined to win the battle:

Do Luáighni atā i ndán in tres,  
 Ní gnīm ūailli *acht adhbur fras*.  
 Mina fágur cabair ndeis  
 Sgarfat rem fēin fēin a buss.<sup>116</sup>

In a later lay Finn tells us that the prophecy mentions 300 falling by Láegaire:

Mac Duib mic Sál móir na lend,  
 Laegairi lúath nam béimeand  
 Mairfidh tri cét fer ngaili  
 Ní budh brég in fáistini.<sup>117</sup>

which they do:

Is annsin immorro tānic lāech arnaid ainsergach do muintir Finn hi *cath na columan*, .i. Láegaire lúathbéimnach mac Duib mic Sál móir mic rí Fer Fánoll ocus do bris bern cét isin *cath* i n-urcomair a aigthi 7 ro imir a ferg ar Lúaigni Temrach co torcratur cét lāech lasamoin lánghér leis do muintir Fir Lí. [...] Is annsin tāngatur cét lāech lasamuin lánghér do maithibh Fir Lí ar a bēlibh isin irgail 7 torchuirsit in cét lāech sin lé láegairi ar inchuib a tigerna 7 gonuis Láegairi Fer Lí 7 gonuis Fer Lī ēi-sin e comáin a ghona 7 tāngatur cét lāech arnaidh ansergach eili do maithibh Fir Lí ar a inchibh isin ūair sin 7 torcratur in cét sin do lāim Láegairi hi críchaibh in comloinn.<sup>118</sup>

A verse in which it is said that 300 will fall by Cétach Cithach (which is also fulfilled) appears directly after the verse about Láegaire; it can be inferred therefore that Cétach's killing of 300 is also part of the prophecy:

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and about he himself dying in that year.': edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>116</sup> Appendix 1, f21vb45-6; 'To the Lúaigne the battle is destined/ It is not a proud deed but a cause of [the] spilling [of blood]./ If I do not get swift help./ I will part with my own *fian* here.': edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>117</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f22va39-40; 'Son of Dub, son of Sál móir of the cloaks./ Láegaire, of the swift blows./ He will kill three hundred warriors/ The prophesy will not be a lie.': edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 76-7.

<sup>118</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f23<sup>b</sup>31-5, 39-45; 'Then a brutal barbarous warrior of Finn's retinue came into the battle of the pillars, that is Láegaire of the swift blows, son of Dub, son of Sál móir, son of the king of the men of Fánoll and he broke a gap of a hundred [men] in front of him and he exerted his anger on the Lúaigne of Tara until a hundred fierce, intense warriors of Fer Lí's retinue fell. [...] Then a hundred fierce, fiery warriors of Fer Lí's retinue came into the battle before him and those hundred warriors were killed by Láegaire in front of their chief and Láegaire wounded Fer Lí and Fer Lí wounded him in return for his wound and a hundred more cruel, merciless warriors of Fer Lí's nobles came before him then and that hundred were killed at Láegaire's hand at the scene of the conflict.': edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 92-3.

Atā mac rī Lochlann ann,  
 Cétach na comloinn,  
 Tuitfit leis trī cét don íslúagh  
 curata cródha claidhemrúad.<sup>119</sup>

Later in the text and before the battle begins, Finn's messenger Birgat goes to Fer Lí three times to offer him terms. When he refuses these terms for the third and final time (he threatens to kill Birgat if he sees her again), Birgat returns to Finn. Finn recognises that she is in danger and makes a rhetoric. Birgat responds, and in her reply she says that it has long been prophesied that Finn will be in a bloody massacre, and that the Lúaigne alongside Émer and the men from Cooley will fight him:

Ale, a Find, imnedaigh,  
 fada atá ga tharrngere,  
 bíáid tú hi gcosuir cró,  
 tegait chucut Lúaigni  
 's a scéith ar a ngúailib  
 is na fir o Chúailgne  
 is Émer aroen leó.<sup>120</sup>

This too comes to pass. As has already been suggested, in these specific references to a set of prophecies concerning Finn's death, the poetic content of 'The Chase' makes further allusions to prophetic knowledge, e.g. Finn says that his foster sons, Fer Lí and Émer will grant him no justice and will fall by him,

Fer Lí mac Fir Taí gan locht  
 Eimer mór comlann ro chlecht  
 tuitfit mo dá dalta lium  
 dam, dár lium, ní damuit ceartt.<sup>121</sup>

which later happens, Finn says that [some of] Uirgriu's descendants will fall for every wrong he recounts, that his foes will carry their old stories on their lips, which are here

<sup>119</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f22<sup>v</sup>a41-2; The son of the king of Lochlann is there,/ Cétach of the battles,/ They will fall by him, three hundred of the/ warlike, fierce, bloody-sworded host.: edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 76-7.

<sup>120</sup> Appendix 1, f23<sup>b</sup>6-8; Now, troubled Finn,/ Long has it been prophesied:/ you will be in a bloody massacre,/ the Lúaigne will come to you/ with their shields on their shoulders/ and the men from Cúailnge/ and Émer along with them.: edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 84-5.

<sup>121</sup> Appendix 1, f22<sup>v</sup>a15-7; Fer Lí, son of Fer Taí without fault,/ Émer, many a fight he fought,/ my two foster-sons will fall by me:/ to me, methinks, they do not grant justice.: edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 74-5.

understood to be their old grievances something we see occurring later when Fer LÍ reminds Finn of their enmity.

Ot-*conairc* Fer LÍ Finn ina oé<sup>nar</sup> gan amus aca imdeghail ⁊ gan charait ica chúlcoimed tá<sup>nic</sup> hi cend *conuire* dó ⁊ ro chuimnigh a escairdes don rí<sup>féinnidh</sup>. Fregrais Finn Fer LÍ ⁊ isbert: "tuitfir-si féin is na foltaibh sin," ar sé.<sup>122</sup>

This also comes to pass. In addition to all of the aforementioned, the presence of the female envoy Birgat can be seen to support the idea that the tale treats of the theme of prophecy as she may be seen as a multiform of the saint Brigit:

[Birgat may be] a multiform of Brigit, the Irish goddess. The territory of Leinster is a powerful link between Brigit and Finn, each of whose claims to the land stem from their protection of it; similarly, both Brigit and Finn have special claims to the hill of Allen in Leinster. Poetry and divination link the two figures as patroness and practitioner. The name [Birgat] may be a variant of Brigit (d. the name Birgit, a Scandinavian variant of Brigit). The descriptive details given about the messenger reflect the goddess Brigit in several ways: [Birgat] has the power to negotiate the control over territory; she is described as travelling over tribes; she prophesies in poetic form about battle. Moreover, [Birgat] runs with her dress hitched up over her rump (*ro togaib a hetach as meallach a mas*), a style of dress characteristic of the Dagda, Brigit's father.<sup>123</sup>

If we are to accept Birgat as a multiform of Brigit, I would argue that the name alteration was deliberate. Seemingly written shortly after AS,<sup>124</sup> the interweaving elements of Christianity with *fianaigecht* had become a profitable and enduring feature of Finn Cycle literature. The most likely probability is that the author was indeed aware of the *Acallam* tradition that had begun, but seems to be intentionally steering clear of including any Christian elements in the tale, thus the name Birgat can call to mind all of the above associations without interrupting what would appear to be a purely secular tale.

<sup>122</sup> Appendix 1, f24<sup>b</sup>6-9; When Fer LÍ saw Finn alone without an attendant protecting him and without a friend watching his back he came towards him and he reminded the *rí<sup>gféinnid</sup>* of their enmity. Finn answered Fer LÍ and said: You yourself will fall in these feuds," he said.: edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. 94-7.

<sup>123</sup> Powers Coe, 'The Severed Heads in Fenian Tradition', 29, quoting Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. 82-5 and Mac Cana, *Celtic Mythology*, p.66, respectively.

<sup>124</sup> Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Literary Lochlann' p. 28; Flahive, *The Fenian Cycle*, p. 49.

Further exploring the theme of prophecy our tale, we may also see the death of the boar of Formáel in 'The Chase' as anticipating Finn's death. In classical poetry, scores of laudatory metaphors are used to refer to a king, leader or warrior. In a discussion of the poems of Tadhg Dall Ó Huiginn, Eleanor Knott explores the character of the epithets applied to the addressee of the poem. They include the names of quadrupeds, birds and fish, giving 'beithir 'bear'; cú 'hound'; *coiléan* 'whelp'; *damh* 'ox, stag'; *eala, géis* 'swan'; *éigne, eó, maighre* 'salmon, trout'; *leómhan* 'lion'; *coiléan leómhain* 'lion's whelp'; *seabhac* 'hawk'.<sup>125</sup> She goes on to say that 'it is noteworthy here that most of the animals are evidently selected rather for their grace and beauty than for their valorous attributes'.<sup>126</sup> It is not too much of a stretch then to argue that for an audience familiar with the metaphorical use of animals to refer to people, the boar in question would have been reminiscent of Finn, particularly given that the boar lives in the wild much like Finn and the *fíán*. Furthermore, porcine imagery is elsewhere in the corpus paralleled to actions of the *fíán*, e.g. in the *mucc shlánga* episode of *AS*, the distribution of the *mucc shlánga* is understood to be representative of the distribution of the *fíán*'s knowledge.<sup>127</sup> It is therefore reasonable to assume that the audience would have been familiar with the literary motif of animals being representative of leaders in the literature of the time and that a boar could easily be used to be representative of Finn. The boar of Formáel, is presented as a force to be reckoned with because of the slaughter of fifty men at once, and because he kills many of the *fíán* when they encounter him in 'The Chase'.

Cóeco [con] is *coíca* fer  
 luidhsidar leis sunn ar seal.  
 Nocho téirno díb uile  
 ach cú 7 énduine.

Fuaratar bās do beruib  
 ōn muic dísgir druimremuir,  
 ro marb *coin* 7 daoine,  
 torc *forbartach* Formaíle.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Knott, *The Bardic Poems of Tadhg Dall Ó Huiginn*, i, p. liii.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, p. liii.

<sup>127</sup> Nagy, 'Hearing and Hunting', pp. 128-33.

<sup>128</sup> Appendix 1, f20<sup>v</sup>a52-b1; Fifty hounds and fifty men/ went with him once./ Not one of them escaped,/ except for a dog and a single man./ They died from the tusks/ of the wild, stout-backed boar,/ it had killed hounds and men,/ the fully-grown boar of Formáel.: edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 54-5.

We can also reasonably infer that the boar is undefeated because it is still alive. As such, it is plausible that a difficult fight against a large opposing force which ends with victory over the great previously-undefeated boar of Formáel portends the triumph over, and consequently death of, the previously undefeated Finn in a hard-fought battle against the Lúaigne. Thus, as well as treating the theme of prophecy in the tale, this treatment may be used to reasonably agree with Meyer and Gerard Murphy that the tale would have concluded with the fulfilment of the prophecy of Finn's death and a narration of the event itself. The evidence in the tale as we have it demonstrates that the author does not include prophecies or knowledge of events to come and then confound the audience's expectations, rather they are used to create tension for the audience who have some details about what is to happen. Further supporting evidence for the claim that the tale was intended to end with an account of Finn dying are that the defeat of the great boar of Formáel anticipates the *rígfénnid's* defeat and that the final battle between Finn's warriors and Fer Lís's host takes place at Áth Brea on the Boyne, the most popular location for Finn's death in the medieval sources.

A further thematic treatment in 'The Chase' is that the tale treats of the enmity with Clann Morna. This animosity features more than once therein. The first reference is subtle, and appears at the very beginning of the tale where the list of *fíán* hunting with Finn reads very similarly to those listed as being on Finn's side at the Battle of Cronnmóin.<sup>129</sup> The Battle of Cronnmóin is to be found in *Duanaire Finn* and tells of a battle between Goll's and Finn's forces. At the beginning of the lay of the Battle of Cronnmóin, Finn's allies are named as

Clanna Rónáin [...], Clanda Báoiscegne [...], í Daboiriann [...], í  
Duibhdhítribh [...], is Clanna Neamhnainn<sup>130</sup>

which reads very similarly to those who are with Finn at the beginning of 'The Chase', save that Clanna Morna and Clanna Smóil are with Finn also:

clanna Baíscne ocus clanna Morna ocus clanna Duib Dītrib ocus clanna  
Nemnuind ocus clanna Rónáin ocus clanna Smóil ocus aicme Duib Dā  
Boireann 7 in gnáthfían uile ar chena.<sup>131</sup>

This would seem to anticipate that the hostility between Finn and Goll's descendants was the inevitable destination of the hunt that is described in the opening paragraph of 'The

<sup>129</sup> *DF*, i, IV pp. 10-14 and pp. 106-110.

<sup>130</sup> *DF*, i, 10.

<sup>131</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f20<sup>v</sup>a7-10; the descendants of Baíscne and the descendants of Morna and the descendants of Dub Díthribh and the descendants of Nemmann and the descendants of Rónán and the descendants of Smól and the descendants of Dub Dā Boireann and all of the ordinary *fíán* besides.: edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, pp. 52-3.

Chase'. Explicit reference is later made to the Battle of Cronnmóin: After Fer Lí has announced battle to Finn, Finn says that Fer Lí is remembering his (hereditary) feud against him, saying that Garad mac Morna was so wrathful in cutting down *fían* in the Battle of Cronnmóin that the *fían* dared not face him, and that he has also seen Garad in dire straits fighting *fénnidi*,

"Ocus is fír ám," ar sé [Finn], "go facusa Garadh mac Morna a Cath Chrunnmóna ag slaidhi na féne co nár fuilngetur hi n-urchomuir a aigthe re fiuchad fergi incuradh. 7 at-conarcsa ám fós," ar Finn, "in táirsigh hi tenta con féin."<sup>132</sup>

thus showing that the author was drawing on an account of the Battle of Cronnmóin as a source. Further similarity is found during the foray at Áth Brea, where Finn joins the battle with the caveat that he finally understands that fame is longer lasting than life for him (ro dech in senóir forbthe fírglic gur búaine blad inā sáeghal dó),<sup>133</sup> which reminds the audience of the following stanza in the Battle of Cronnmhóin, spoken by one of Goll's followers to Finn as Finn is standing over the sleeping Goll about to smite him:

And adbert in filid sin  
re mac Cumail co faobraç  
gan beit ar tí beinibi  
búaine blad ina sáegal.<sup>134</sup>

Not only does the reference in 'The Chase' recall this episode, it is perhaps also suggesting that although Finn will die, Fer Lí's, and, by extension Fer Tai's, treachery is the reason that those two characters do not feature frequently, if at all, elsewhere in the medieval corpus: practicing treachery does not result in fame, particularly fame beyond one's own life. Eternal, or at least long-lasting, fame, then seems to be a concern in 'The Chase' and elsewhere in the Fenian corpus. Although 'The Chase' is an Early Modern composition, in clearly referencing the Battle of Cronnmóin here, the composer again shows his ability to work within established *fianaigecht* tradition. The scene is set for Finn's demise with Finn being hosted by 'Fer Tai mac Úaithne Irgalaigh rífénnidh Conuilli Murtemne 7 Lúaigne Temrach'.<sup>135</sup> Finn is therefore firmly placed in a location known to be enemy territory,

<sup>132</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f22va9-13; "And it is indeed true," he [Finn] said, "that I saw Garad mac Morna in the Battle of Cronnmóin slaughtering the *fían* so that they could not endure before him because of the warrior's seething wrath. And I saw, furthermore," said Finn, "the veteran in dire straits by the *fían*." edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. 74-5.

<sup>133</sup> Appendix 1, ll. f24<sup>r</sup>a30-1. See also Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. 94-5.

<sup>134</sup> MacNeill, *DF*, poem IV, i, p. 13. "Then spake that poet to Cumhall's son in edged words: not to attempt treachery, fame lasts longer than life.": Ibid, p. 109.

<sup>135</sup> Appendix 1, f22<sup>r</sup>a9-10; "Fer Tai, son of Uaithne Irgalach, the *fían*-leader of Conaille Murthemne and the Lúaigne of Tara.": edited and translated by the present author. See also Meyer, *Fianaigecht*, pp. 68-9.

namely that of the Lúaigne of Tara, but the historical opposition between Finn and the Lúaigne is combined with Finn's more popular enmity with Goll mac Morna by means of making him Fer Lí's maternal grandfather. This allows for the animosity between Finn and Goll to play a part while still adhering to the popular tradition that it was the Lúaigne who killed Finn, thus making textual connections with a variety of other contemporary and older Fenian cycle tales and ensuring his text reads like an established part of the corpus.

This treatment of Finn's death in 'The Chase' can be contrasted with the tale titled *Cath Finntrágha ann so síos .i. oighe Finn le fianuibh Eirionn 7 bas Duiri Duin rig an domain moir* in its earliest exemplar, Rawl. B. 487.<sup>136</sup> Joseph Flahive summarises that the tale 'is built around earlier traditions concerning the conflict at Ventry, which first figures in [AS]. A version of this tale is also preserved in a lay unique to [the Book of the Dean of Lismore], though the details do not match between any of these versions.'<sup>137</sup> 'The Chase' also brings together a number of earlier traditions, however, as has been demonstrated above there are many similarities between the accounts upon which it draws and what appears in 'The Chase'. As mentioned earlier, *Cath Finntrágha* is a notable example of a work that plays on the fantastical more than working within the established themes and motifs of its predecessors in the written tradition of Fenian literature. This comparison will be very brief in order to highlight some of the major differences that appear to exist between 'The Chase' and *Cath Finntrágha*, as consideration of the two in this way prompts some thought on what this may mean for *fíanaigeacht* literature of this period more generally. First, Finn does not die in the tale, as he is simply said to have been dead yet was alive again the next day. Thus, Finn's death seems to be incidental to the tale, rather than the main narrative thrust of it. Furthermore, there is no anticipation the event of his death before it occurs in *Cath Finntrágha*. This anticipation of the event is a feature often found in other tales of the *rígfénnid's* death, and occurs in various scenarios, such as prophecies of his demise, or explicit suggestions that he will die, for instance breaking a *geis*, and breaking this particular *geis*, it is said, will lead to his death. In addition, Finn's opponent in *Cath Finntrágha* is Duire Donn, king of the world, not an enemy with whom he has a long-standing hostility such as the Lúaigne or Goll mac Morna/Clann Morna, both of whom we find in 'The Chase.' The reason given in *Cath Finntrágha* for taking Ireland, and thus fighting and (temporarily) killing Finn, is that when he was in the east doing military service with Vulcan, the king of the Franks, he eloped with both Vulcan's wife and

<sup>136</sup> Meyer, *Cath Finntrágha*, p. vii.

<sup>137</sup> Flahive, *The Fenian Cycle*, p. 58.



daughter. Unlike what we find in 'The Chase', this reason is not specific to Finn's own dossier. In 'The Chase' a series of events led Finn to the house of Fer Taí, and there an old animosity between Finn and Clann Morna which had lain dormant was renewed, thus the event of his demise is caused by circumstances unique to Finn's biography. This inextricable linking of Finn's past with the circumstances surrounding his death is not to be found in *Cath Finntrága*. Moreover, there are a relatively small number of named characters in 'The Chase', most of whom play a part in the action but whose appearance also serve the tale's wider literary aim. Two such examples are Láegaire and Cétach. Not only do the two fall at the hands of 'the battalion of the pillars', an event which serves to show that Finn is not alone and as weak as Fer Lí believes him to be, but their appearance in 'The Chase' is also utilised to demonstrate the reliability of prophecies in the tale. Other instances are Áed Baillderg, Maillén mac Midna, and the list of characters who appear with Finn at the beginning of 'The Chase': Áed Baillderg's combat with Aichlech mac Duibdrenn may be included to hint at an enmity between Aichlech and Finn; staying at Maillén mac Midna's residence is used to introduce an in-tale which informs the reader of the prophecy of the *rígfénnid*'s demise and thus to anticipate some elements of his death; the list of characters who appear with Finn at the beginning of 'The Chase' anticipate the recalling of Garad mac Morna and the events of the battle of Cronnmóin later in the narrative. In contrast, *Cath Finntrága* has a seemingly endless list of names and characters, most of whose appearances are brief and whose purpose seems to be to simply bulk up the numbers fighting, thus the inclusion of many of these characters in the tale can be seen to be solely adding to the body count.

In terms of reasons for the differences between 'The Chase' and *Cath Finntrága*, and what they might mean for the Finn Cycle tales of the Early Modern period, we should first note that 'The Chase' is one of the oldest of the Early Modern Fenian romances,<sup>138</sup> while *Cath Finntrága* is not much older than the first extant MS copy, which dates to the fifteenth century.<sup>139</sup> Alan Bruford has said that the earliest of the Early Modern tales tend to be the most literary and most developed,<sup>140</sup> something we can see in 'The Chase' from the foregoing discussion. *Cath Finntrága*, on the otherhand, plays more fantastical, and reads more like an international tale that could have been told of a hero in any country as it does not draw on events specific to Finn's biography. Thus we can certainly observe a difference

<sup>138</sup> Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Literary Lochlann' p. 28; Flahive, *The Fenian Cycle*, p. 49.

<sup>139</sup> Meyer, *Cath Finntrága*, p. ix.

<sup>140</sup> Bruford, 'Gaelic Folk Tales and Mediaeval Romances'.

in style between 'The Chase' and *Cath Finntrága*. We shall turn for a minute to another genre of Irish literature at this period in order to consider further possibilities. When analysing courtly love poetry of the Classical Irish period Seán Ó Tuama has said that the European influences on the Irish material reached Ireland at various stages by way of books, manuscripts, and through the movement of people, e.g. *chansonniers*, and 'a large number of Irish students studied in Montpellier and in Oxford; there was constant traffic of priests, friars, and soldiers between Ireland, England and the continent.'<sup>141</sup> This steady stream of interaction with ideas, and consequently literature from England and the continent would likely have created a familiarity with and perhaps even appetite for tales different to the literature in Ireland at the time, although of course we must not forget that Ireland was never isolated in terms of its interaction with other literatures, and that cultural and literary traditions in Ireland were developing and evolving in their own right also. This interaction over time with a variety of literatures, as well as Irish literature's own internal evolution, would have contributed to changes in the style of Early modern tales, *fíanaíocht* tales being no exception. Both may have contributed to the originator(s) of *Cath Finntrága* composing a tale that reads more like an international tale, than something more similar in style to the older Finn Cycle narratives. Although tales composed at different times in the Early Modern period differ in style and character, the earlier texts were still in circulation and still popular, as evidenced by the 'The Chase' being chosen for inclusion in an early sixteenth-century manuscript. This therefore demonstrates that in later part of the Early Modern Irish period there was simultaneously a demand for and appreciation of different styles of *fíanaíocht* literature and that the various strands had come to be considered as different parts of a wide and diverse tradition.

Before concluding, one final question to consider is how the 'The Chase' fits into the genre of *aideda*, medieval Irish death tales. Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin has examined the death tales of a number of kings and heroes, namely Cormac mac Airt, Diarmat mac Cerbaill, Muirchertach mac Erca, Conaire Mór, Cú Chulainn, Oscar, Caílte, Finn, and Cairpre Lifechair, and identifies a number of elements that are present in many or all of these tales.<sup>142</sup> These motifs are the presence of a woman, although she does not actively participate in the king's/hero's death, that a drink often features in the tale, usually water, alcohol or milk products, and that, in the deaths examined in her study, 'the landscape from Rath Lugh to Tara, later known as the Gabhra valley, through which the River Gabhra

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<sup>141</sup> Ó Tuama, *Repossessions*, p. 171

<sup>142</sup> Ní Bhrolcháin, 'Death tales of the early kings of Tara'.

runs, and the wider area stretching as far as Newgrange and the River Boyne, is the main theatre for the action of the death tales under consideration'.<sup>143</sup> Of Finn, Ní Bhrolcháin says that he 'returns to the Boyne to die on the banks of the river, where he attained his mantic abilities, at the mysterious location of Áth Breá'.<sup>144</sup> While many traditions concerning Finn's death have been re-worked to create the narrative of 'The Chase', it nonetheless retains many of the key elements identified by Ní Bhrolcháin as appearing in the medieval Irish death tales, most obviously the Gabhra valley location. The presence of Birgat acting as envoy before the battle may mean that she is present at Finn's death, although 'off-stage' at the moment it happens, and that Finn and the *fian*'s carousing has led them directly to the point of Finn's death can be understood as a drink playing a role in his death, although not immediately. Looking elsewhere, Hugh Fogarty has also noted characteristics usually shared by *aideda* in his examination of the originality of *Aided Guill meic Carbada* 7 *Aided Gairb Glinne Rige* within the death-tale genre and questions of intertextuality in that tale. A common feature of these texts, in which 'the protagonist's untimely, often violent and/or tragic death'<sup>145</sup> is related, is that 'the eponymous hero-victim meets his end after (and usually as a direct or indirect result of) committing some offence in violation of the social or cosmic order to which he belongs.'<sup>146</sup> Thus, while 'The Chase' differs somewhat from other accounts of Finn's demise, it would still appear to have all the trappings associated with a hero's death tale and the *aided* genre.

## Conclusion

To conclude, as we have seen, above, there are many links between 'The Chase' and other accounts of Finn's death known to us, suggesting the author of 'The Chase' was familiar with these or other, similar, traditions and was drawing upon them in this composition in order to create a comprehensive death tale for Finn. Some of the traditions on which it draws are popular motifs associated with Finn's death, such as his demise at the spear points of the Lúaigne of Tara, while others, e.g. the appearance of the daughter of Goll mac Morna in the events leading up to Finn's death, would seem to be less well-known in the medieval sources. Moreover, although Finn can only die in one way and in one place, it has been demonstrated that the author of 'The Chase' nonetheless incorporates other

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p. 48.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

<sup>145</sup> Fogarty, '*Aided Guill meic Carbada* 7 *Aided Gairb Glinne*', p. 191.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, p. 192.

traditions in this tale, combining the Áth Brea and Luachair Dedad locations associated with Finn's death in one continuous tale for instance. It would also seem that a drinking horn plays a role in the prophecy of Finn's death in the 'The Chase' as well as the possible connotations of poison we find therein. It has been shown that in incorporating the various elements associated with a death for Finn in other traditions known to the composer, these elements are presented in a fashion which adhering to themes popular in written *fíanaigeacht* tales, e.g. the author treats of the themes of death, prophecy and youth versus age. It has been demonstrated above that the 'The Chase' most likely concludes with Finn's death at the hands of the Lúaigne. However, in treating prominently of the theme of youth versus age within the tale, the author of 'The Chase' also concerns himself with one of the central concerns found in tales or references to Finn dying as a result of a leap, namely that Finn's age, and by extension his ability to lead the *fíán*, plays a prominent role in his demise. Additionally, there are allusions to further works of the Fenian corpus, some of which we have already dealt with, e.g. Oscar's actions are reminiscent of his character in *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne*, references to *AS*, and *Marbad Cúlduib*, and references to the Battle of Cronnmóin, which testify to the composer presuming a knowledge of other tales in the *fíanaigeacht* corpus on the audience's part. That the references to Finn's death in medieval Irish sources are so fragmented, and that they are brought together in this tale, may indicate the situation was similar when the author of 'The Chase' put quill to vellum. An alternative, or contributing, motivating factor could have been the deliberate obfuscation of the *rígfénnid's* death in *AS*, which appears to deny much of the pre-existing traditions of Finn's demise.

## CHAPTER 4

### Modern Accounts of Finn's Death

#### 4.1: Introduction

'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' is the last extant account of Finn's demise in the medieval material. Although its composition was not contemporaneous with the manuscript in which it now survives, the appearance of that and other accounts or references to Finn's death in the same codex nonetheless reveals that the scribes and compiler(s) of Egerton 1782 were engaging with questions of how Finn died in the early 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Thereafter, from the Modern Irish period, we have a wealth of modern Fenian tales and *seanchas* but there is, to my knowledge no printed source which presents extant modern material regarding Finn's death. This thesis, therefore, affords us an opportunity to collate and consider such accounts in order to examine the treatment of accounts of the death of Finn across the whole spectrum of Gaelic tradition. With specific reference to 'The Chase' we will examine whether this narrative had any impact on traditions or accounts of Finn's death or whether it points the direction of how Finn's death is treated thereafter. In order to do this, in this chapter I will trace and discuss motifs in the modern accounts relating to Finn's death, as well as note and explore some similarities between the medieval and modern accounts. We should note at this point that it is not envisaged that conclusions regarding the pre-1650 manuscript material can be drawn from the modern material and as such the following discussion will not attempt to do so.<sup>1</sup> It is also worth mentioning that while some of the pre-1650 tales were in circulation in print during the time at which some of the modern accounts were collected, the content of the modern accounts presented here generally does not echo what we find in the pre-1650 accounts of Finn's death closely enough to warrant examining the specific influence of medieval material available in print post-1650 on the modern accounts of Finn's death and

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<sup>1</sup> An example of drawing such conclusions could be to say that there are more accounts of Finn's grave than his death in the modern period and to therefore conclude, without evidence, that this was a result of a medieval tradition of Finn's grave (without an accompanying narrative of his demise) being stronger than the tradition relating how Finn died.

consequently will not be discussed here. Here I will first detail the extant modern accounts of Finn's death. This will be followed by a discussion of those sources. The sources themselves are reproduced at the end of this chapter.

## 4.2: Defining the source material

This chapter discusses modern Fenian tales and *seanchas* that are found in archival sources. It is useful to define our terminology before proceeding. Archival sources are here defined as accounts to be found in post-1650 manuscripts or accounts collected (recorded or transcribed) from oral sources, i.e. folklore. The term *seanchas* can be applied to either the corpus of folklore as a whole, or to short snippets of information which are not considered to be full tales or stories. Here, the latter is the intended usage. Admittedly, in terms of some of the short accounts below, it may be difficult to decide if they constitute *seanchas* or tales, the question of where the dividing line should be drawn has little bearing on what follows. Some Fenian material from archival sources has been made available in print, but very few publications contain accounts of Finn's death. J. F. Campbell's *Leabhar na Feinne* gives two accounts which are reproduced in full below with my own translations. Nineteenth- to twenty-first-century publications of pre-1650 manuscript material will not be treated here.<sup>2</sup> The following are the archival sources searched for unpublished accounts of Finn's death:<sup>3</sup> Harvard University, Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature, Donegal Fieldwork Collection; National Library of Ireland's un-catalogued manuscripts noted as containing 'Ossianic material'; National Library of Scotland, J.F. Campbell Collection; School of Scottish Studies (SSS) Collections, including Calum Maclean Collection of Gaelic Oral Narrative, Donald John MacDonald MSS, Kenneth Jackson Collection, Lady Evelyn Stewart Murray Collection, MacLagan Manuscripts; St Francis Xavier University (StFX), Cape Breton Folklore Collection; StFX, Celtic Department's Collections, including John Shaw Collection; University College Dublin, National Folklore Collection, main manuscript collection, schools' manuscripts and sound

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<sup>2</sup> Such publications range from scholarly editions and translations (e.g. Stokes, 'Acallamh na senórach') to popular translations (e.g. Dooley and Roe *Tales of the Elders of Ireland*) and updated re-productions of texts (e.g. Ó Domhnaill, *Seanchas na Féinne*) which are to be found in manuscripts written in the Early Modern Irish period or earlier, and scholarship on those pre-1650 manuscript texts.

<sup>3</sup> Sources for material from any of the following collections will be cited as used in this thesis. As part of her doctoral thesis, Natasha Sumner catalogued much of the twentieth-century Fenian folklore corpus: 'The Fenian Narrative Corpus, c.600–c.2000: A Reassessment'. I would like to thank Dr Sumner for allowing me access to this while still a work in progress as it enabled me to find useful material which she had already catalogued and subsequently focus my efforts on searching un-catalogued material.

archive; University of Glasgow, McLagan Manuscripts; University of Edinburgh, Alexander Carmichael papers. The following digital collections have also been searched:<sup>4</sup> Am Baile, Doegan Records Web Project, Gael Stream / Sruth nan Gaidheal, The Association for Cultural Equity online database, The Charles William Dunn Collection of Scottish Gaelic Fieldwork Recordings from Gaelic Canada, Tobar an Dualchais / Kist o Riches.

The archival accounts relating to Finn's death that I have found are presented in what follows. This material is from manuscript and recorded sources, in Modern Irish [IR], Scottish Gaelic [ScG] and English [EN]. Sections A and B provide accounts that describe Finn's death. In Sections C and D I turn to accounts which presuppose that Finn is dead but which do not relate the circumstances of his death. Such accounts are usually mentions of Finn's grave. There is, however, one Irish and one Scottish Gaelic account mentioning Finn in hell. One English-language item from the archival sources mentions Finn's 'resting place'. In context, however, it is ambiguous whether the account intends to convey that it was Finn's resting place while hunting or if it was indeed the site he chose for his grave.<sup>5</sup> This account has therefore not been included below. The following accounts constitute the source material therefore:

A. Accounts of Finn's death, Ireland:

- A1 Na Finn [IR]
- A2 Diarmad 7 Gráinne [IR]
- A3 Gleann na Léime [EN]
- A4 Old Irish Tales [Henceforth Old Irish Tales/Roscommon] [EN]
- A5 Untitled [Henceforth Slievenamon] [EN]

B. Accounts of Finn's death, Scotland:

- B1 Eachdraidh mar a Chaidh Fionn a Mharbhadh [ScG]
- B2 Bàs Fhinn le Taoileach [ScG]

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<sup>4</sup> There is some overlap between the material contained in the digital and archival sources mentioned here. However, all the material in the archival sources is not available in the digital sources, nor is all the material available in the digital collections available in the collections mentioned in archival sources. This is best illustrated by an example, for which we will use the School of Scottish Studies and Tobar an Dualchais. Much of the material on Tobar an Dualchais comes from the SSS, however Tobar an Dualchais also contains additional material which is not available in the SSS. The SSS also contains much additional material that is not available on Tobar an Dualchais.

<sup>5</sup> NFCS 211: 280; Patrick Doran, Sheffield, Letrim. 48. Collector: Annie Keane, Sheffield, Coill Chláir [National School], Kiltubrid, Liathdruim, Co. Liathdroma, 1937-1939. Teacher: Treasa Ní Oibeacáin. 'It was Fionn Mac Cumhail who won the battle and there was a cave near where the battle was fought. Fionn Mac Cumhail said "as it was at this cave I won the battle with Oscar I will make it my resting place anymore."'

B3 Fionn agus Loch Lurgainn [ScG]

B4 Fingal's Murder and Ossian's Grave [EN]

C. Accounts which presuppose Finn's Death, Canada:

C1 Fionn Mac Cumhail agus am Buailtein [ScG]

D. Accounts which presuppose Finn's Death, Ireland:

D1 Untitled [Henceforth Shee-Mór and Shee-Beag] [EN]

D2 Twenty-second Story by H. M'Cann [EN]

D3 Finn M'Cool's Grave [EN]

D4 Ordnance Survey Letters: Mayo. II. TS. p. 181 [Henceforth OSL Mayo II] [EN]

D5 Untitled [Henceforth Carn Saoide Finn] [IR]

D6 Historic [EN]

D7 Mo Ćeantar Féin [IR]

D8 Untitled [Henceforth Na Fianna in Ifreann] [IR]

D9 My Home District [Henceforth My Home District/Limerick] [EN]

D10 Giants [EN]

D11 A Cromlech [EN]

D12 Hidden Treasure [EN]

D13 Brollac [IR]

D14 Historic Fincarn [EN]

D15 The Giants' Graves at Lackafin and Manowar's Grave [EN]

D16 Local Place-Names [EN]

D17 My Home District [Henceforth My Home District/Monaghan] [EN]

D18 Finn Mac Coole and the Giant [EN]

D19 Old Irish Tales [Henceforth Old Irish Tales/Cavan1] [EN]

D20 Untitled [Henceforth Finn Mac Cool on Murmod Hill] [EN]

D21 Old Irish Tales [Henceforth Old Irish Tales/Cavan2] [EN]

D22 The Giant's Grave in Drumeague [EN]

To be added to the list above are four further references that are of interest as evidence of further modern traditions concerning the death of Finn although they survive outwith archives. In chronological order, these are mentions of Finn's death by Nicholas O'Kearney, Denis Murphy, Donald Sinclair, and Daithí Ó hÓgáin. Three of these, those by O'Kearney, Murphy and Ó hÓgáin, are only available in the printed source in which they



appear, and I have not found source material which would allow me to determine whence they came. In Sinclair's case, we now only have a reference to material rather than the account itself.

The first of these is O'Kearney writing in 1854. In a note to Finn's encounter with Donait, a *sídh*-woman, in *Feis Tighe Chonain (FTC)* and his subsequent leap to woo her, O'Kearney mentions that

There is a tradition extant which ascribes the cause of Fionn's death to his neglect of performing that annual rite or duty, and another which records his death in attempting to leap over the dark, terrific chasm, after having neglected to do so till after the expiration of a year and a day. There is a deep glen called *Gleann Dealgain* the (Glen of the river Dealgan), in the county of Waterford, about three miles distant from the town of Dungarvan, on the Waterford road, where it is traditionally related that Fionn Mac Chumhaill made an extraordinary leap on every May-day morning. The stupendous depth of the place is fearful to behold when compared with the narrow expanse at the top; and it is said that Fionn was under a *geasa* (pledge) to leap this Glen forwards and backwards before sunrise on the mornings of May-day; but that on a certain morning, as he was on his way to make the leap, he met a red-haired woman milking cows on the way-side, from whom he asked a drink, which she sternly refused, not knowing who it was that asked her for it. When Fionn found his request refused, he foresaw that his days were numbered, and he cursed the red-haired woman; but nevertheless he made towards the glen, which he leaped forward; but in leaping it backwards he fell into the glen, and the imprint of his hands, knees, &c., are still visible on a greenish stone, which lies in the bottom of the glen.<sup>6</sup>

Next, in 1896, Denis Murphy, the editor of the translation of *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, adds a note to the account of Finn' death contained therein saying that 'An ancient poem says he was killed at Achleagh by a fisherman with a fishing-gaff, in order to obtain for himself everlasting fame by killing one so illustrious.'<sup>7</sup> We have no such extant medieval source, leaving us with three possibilities: that what Denis Murphy says is true and this

<sup>6</sup> O'Kearney, *Feis Tighe Chonain Chinn-shleibhe*, p. 131.

<sup>7</sup> Murphy, *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*, p. 61. This has been discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, pp. 54-55 above.

account is from 'an ancient poem' albeit not one that is now extant; that Murphy, or his source, had confused the details of a medieval source or sources, e.g. that Finn was killed by Aichlech and has rendered that personal name as a place-name; or that the account referred to was indeed available to Murphy but that it was not as old as he believed it to be. I am unaware, however of any other source, medieval or modern which says that Finn was killed at Achleagh, or indeed of any place called Achleagh, or variations thereof.<sup>8</sup> That there is no extant written record, medieval or modern of a place called Achleagh seems to suggest that the account Denis Murphy was one in which the personal name Aichlech was taken as a place-name. That Denis Murphy mentions a fisherman may further suggest that his account was something akin to what is found in *Aided Finn*, although the brevity of the account means that we still cannot speculate on whether the poem was indeed 'ancient' or was simply claimed to be so by Denis Murphy or his informant.

According to an entry to the SSS catalogue, Donald Sinclair of Tiree had an account of 'Bàs Fhinn agus crìoch na Fèinne', which was 'learned from books – according to himself'.<sup>9</sup> SSS, however, has no item with the call number given in the catalogue.<sup>10</sup> While no date of collection is given, it is likely to have been in 1968, the date given in the SSS catalogue for other items collected from Sinclair.

Finally, it can also be noted that Daithí Ó hÓgáin, in 1988, mentions that

[An account of the death of Finn] based on folklore was already current in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, was still common until recent times in oral tradition. According to this he had once been challenged by an otherworld woman to leap backwards and forwards across either the Boyne river or from one cliff to another in Luachair Deaghadh (south-east Kerry) The woman enjoined on him to do this jump once every year, and when he grew old and attempted it he fell and was killed.<sup>11</sup>

I, however, have been unable to find any account of Finn making a leap that caused or led to his death at the Boyne in the archives searched.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the account of which Ó hÓgáin

<sup>8</sup> See *HDGP: Fascicle 1: (Names in A-)* and Government of Ireland, *Logainm.ie* <<https://www.logainm.ie/ga/>> [accessed 15 August 2017]; Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum*.

<sup>9</sup> SSS, Card catalogue.

<sup>10</sup> According to the SSS, Card catalogue entry, the call number is RL2187/B6.

<sup>11</sup> Ó hÓgáin, *Myth, Legend and Romance*, s.n. Fionn mac Cumhaill, p. 218.

<sup>12</sup> Neither, it would seem, was Kevin Murray able to do so. Murray notes Ó hÓgáin's comments (as cited above), yet only makes reference to an episode in *Feis Tighe Chónáin* in the attendant footnotes and does not give any modern source for the leap at the Boyne. *The Early Finn Cycle*, p. 128. See Joynt, *Feis Tighe Chónáin*, p. 125, and O'Kearney, *Feis Tighe Chónáin Chinn-shleibhe*, pp. 128-33. Also discussed *infra*.

was aware has perhaps not been preserved or it has not been recorded in any of the archives which have been searched, or perhaps at the time of writing Ó hÓgáin was mistakenly mapping his knowledge of the medieval material on to the modern material.

### 4.3: Discussion and analysis

#### 4.3.1 FINN'S FATAL LEAP

The primary source material presents us with nine modern accounts of how Finn died. Of these nine accounts, the most popular motif to be found therein is that his death is in some way associated with a leap – sometimes a warrior's leap but more often a lover's leap. What is important to note, however, is that the leap itself is more often the prelude to Finn's death rather than its cause. Finn dies while leaping in one of the five Irish accounts, 'Na Finn' (A1), and another sees Finn dying as an indirect consequence of the leap, 'Gleann na Léime' (A3). Two of the five Gaelic accounts, 'Eachdraidh mar a Chaidh Fionn a Mharbhadh' (B1) and 'Bàs Fhinn le Taoileach' (B2), present us with an account of Finn, successfully making a leap, failing to make the return leap, and consequently being decapitated. Ó hÓgáin viewed the idea that Finn was killed by his enemies as the older and more learned tradition, believing the motif of Finn's fatal leap to have been a folkloric development but that it nonetheless seems to have been known from at least the tenth century where it is found in *Aided Finn*.<sup>13</sup> However, as Geraldine Parsons has shown,<sup>14</sup> and as has been discussed in Chapter 3,<sup>15</sup> the leap was in fact the initial cause given for Finn's death in the tale *Aided Finn* and is one of the common motifs associated with Finn's death in the medieval sources, appearing frequently in the *Acallam* tradition.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, we saw how 'The Chase', which does not feature Finn dying as a result of a leap, nonetheless integrated the same concerns as those accounts in which he does by that means, namely concerns about the *rígfénnid's* age.<sup>17</sup> 'The Chase' is not coeval with the manuscript in which it appears, Egerton 1782, yet neither is the other tale in that manuscript which deals with Finn's death, *Tesmolta Corbmaic Ui Chuind ocus Aided Finn Mic Cumuill*. That narrative also treats of Finn's age in being a factor leading to his death:

<sup>13</sup> Ó hÓgáin, *Images of the Gaelic Hero*, p. 111.

<sup>14</sup> See Parsons, 'Breaking the Cycle?', 85-6.

<sup>15</sup> See pp. 64-5.

<sup>16</sup> The leap associated with Finn's death may have fallen away from the written tradition between the accounts after *Aided Finn* and re-emerged in *AS* as none of the extant sources for the intermediary period mention a leap connected to Finn's demise.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 3, pp. 72-5.

Is ann imorro is mó ro búi airisim Finn a nAlmuin laigen. iar luighi imorro fhoirbtecho agus arsaidhechta ar Find agus ar ndíth Corbmaic do bídh ina gnáthcomnaidhe i nAlmuin acht mina thísadh do tadhall eisti.<sup>18</sup>

Thus we can see both that Finn dying as a consequence of a leap, and its attendant concerns regarding his age and/or agility, appear frequently in the medieval traditions, with the latter being present in the last pre-1650 manuscript which contains an account of his death. In light of these, then, we shall first examine the two oldest of the modern accounts of Finn's death, both Gaelic accounts, namely 'Eachdraidh' (B1) and 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2).

#### 4.3.1.1 '*Eachdraidh mar a Chaidh Fionn a Mharbhadh*' (B1), '*Bàs Fhinn le Taoileach*' (B2), and '*Fingal's Murder and Ossian's Grave*' (B4)

'Eachdraidh' (B1) is part of a collection of Archibald Fletcher's poetry, written down from his recitation, at his own request, by various scribes between 1750 and 1760.<sup>19</sup> Fletcher had learned the poetry he knew in Argyllshire and these poems were collected from him in Glenorchy, Glenfalloch, Breadalbane and Glendochart.<sup>20</sup> 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2) comes from a collection made by Dr Irvine from various informants, between 1800 and 1808 in Rannoch, Kintail, Loch Tayside, Glenlyon and Dunkeld.<sup>21</sup> In these two accounts, although the depth of detail and the source length are different, the same narrative core is to be found: Finn trysts with the fairy lover of a character called Taoileachd mac Chuiligeadan. When Taoileachd discovers this, rather than having the two come to blows, the fairy lover makes a judgment that whoever best performs a leap will be the man she chooses. Both accomplish the forward leap and Taoileachd then challenges Finn to make the leap back. Taoileachd accomplishes the leap but Finn does not. Finn falls into the lake whereupon Taoileachd decapitates him. 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2) differs from 'Eachdraidh' (B1) by the presence of these four elements: a) The *fían* say that they will avenge Finn's death otherwise it will be an insult to them, b) the poetry detailing the questioning and torture of Taoileachd is narrated in the first plural form, c) Taoileachd is beheaded in the end, and d) the account ends with the *fían* carrying Finn's head back to his body. The two accounts

<sup>18</sup> O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, i, p. 91. 'Where Finn's abiding was mostly was in *Almha* of Leinster; but when decrepitude and old age weighed on him (Cormac also being now gone) he dwelt in *Almha* permanently; unless that he might have occasion to make some passing excursion out of it.': *Silva Gadelica*, ii, p. 98.

<sup>19</sup> Campbell, *Leabhar na Feinne*, p. xvi.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. xvi. Most of Fletcher's collection was made before James MacPherson's Ossianic publications in the 1760s.

<sup>21</sup> Campbell, *Leabhar na Feinne*, pp. xxv-xxvi. Campbell says that these items seem to have been collected orally and 'from the recitations of farmers, farm-servants, fox-hunters, &c., and from the diction of at least one man who could not read': p. xxvi. This collection is post-Macpherson and contains '236 lines, which belong to Mac Pherson's Ossian of 1759' (*ibid*) and '3,450 lines which are *not* in Mac Pherson's text' (*Ibid*). The account of the death of Finn, however, does not appear to have been influenced by MacPherson.

therefore appear to belong to the same tradition. Here, again, we see a leap closely connected with Finn's death. It would seem, however, that any associations with his old enemies, the Lúaigne of Tara, who were present in 'The Chase' and in other accounts of his death, have been lost but the name of the individual who decapitates Finn is of interest in that regard. There is a similarity between the names Aicclech in the older material and Taoileachd/Tailech in these two Scottish Gaelic accounts of Finn's demise, a similarity which is more striking if Aicclech was thought to be or etymologised as a noun at some point, i.e. *int aicclech*, *an t-aicclech*, a phenomenon to be seen elsewhere in the modern Fenian corpus, e.g. with Oscar.<sup>22</sup> It is therefore worth considering if there are other similarities between 'Eachdraidh' (B1) and 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2) and the medieval accounts of Finn's death. In order to do so, we need look elsewhere at the Scottish Gaelic corpus to examine whether there is a relationship between modern Scottish Gaelic oral tradition and material we know was in circulation in the Middle and Early Modern Irish period, and ascertain what implications this has for the modern accounts of the death of Finn.

Donald Meek has studied the development of Gaelic ballads, also known as (Fenian) lays, as they survive in Irish and Scottish Gaelic oral tradition. Noting that 'the original language of the majority of surviving ballads, composed in the period c.1200 to c.1600, was Classical Common Gaelic,' Meek goes on to say that it is

evident from [... the] language and structure of the Gaelic ballad that, from a technical point of view, it was the poor relation of the bardic poem. Yet in its less esoteric nature lay much of the secret of its survival. When the bardic poem showed itself to be largely incapable of existing without the life-support system of the bardic schools, the ballad continued to breathe, and found a welcome home among the ordinary people of Gaelic Ireland and Gaelic Scotland.<sup>23</sup>

Keeping this in mind, one lay that has been of interest to scholars treating the question of the relationship of these works to the medieval (prosimetric) tradition has been 'The Lay of the Smithy' which appears in *Duanaire Finn (DF)*. According to Gerard Murphy, who dated the poems of *DF*, the language of *DF*'s 'Lay of the Smithy' suggests that it was written about 1400.<sup>24</sup> John MacInnes has looked at a Scottish Gaelic ballad of much the

<sup>22</sup> See Ó Cróinín, 'Sé Scéalta Fiannaíochta' for an example of Oscar's name appearing as both 'Oscar' and 'an tOscar'

<sup>23</sup> Meek, 'Development and Degeneration', 136.

<sup>24</sup> Murphy, *DF*, iii, p. 85. Edition and translation of the poem to be found in Murphy, *DF*, poem XXXVI, ii, pp. 2-15 and discussion in *DF*, iii, pp. 85-9. See Murphy's general comments about ability of *DF* lays to reflect oral poems in circulation much earlier than date of writing and their possible relationship to

same title, 'Duan na Ceàrdaich', and its relationship to *DF*'s 'The Lay of the Smithy'.<sup>25</sup> Speaking of the existence of Fenian ballads in Gaelic culture from the twelfth to twentieth centuries, MacInnes notes that this is undeniably a 'remarkable instance of cultural continuity and survival' but recognises that 'so far as textual transmission goes, this is true only in a broad general sense',<sup>26</sup> meaning that although the gist of the tale survives, the expression of the twentieth-century accounts cannot be seen to reflect that of the Middle Irish accounts. Thus, although much modified in its 'Duan na Ceàrdaich' form, MacInnes takes 'the *Duanaire Finn* text to be the original of the oral version: comparison of the Gaelic texts leave little doubt that they are ultimately derived from it.'<sup>27</sup> A total of eight versions of the Scottish Gaelic lay recorded between 1750 and 1872 have been collated in *Leabhar na Feinne*'s 'Duan na Ceardaiche' and a brief examination of the Campbell's versions of 'Duan na Ceardaiche' alongside MacInnes' 'Duan na Ceàrdaich' show the versions to be very similar.<sup>28</sup> Thus, a relationship between the content of some items now printed in *Leabhar na Feinne* and a lay composed c.1400 can be demonstrated, which encourages us to think about further connections between modern lays and Fenian material present in the Middle and Early Modern Irish period. The relationship of Scottish Gaelic ballads to oral accounts of Fenian tales in modern Scottish Gaelic are specifically of interest in terms of Campbell's consideration of 'Eachdraidh' (B1) and 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2). That those two sources had different versions of the same account of Finn's death led Campbell to conclude of the common core that 'it certainly was a current story',<sup>29</sup> also saying that the two accounts seem like 'broken poetry'.<sup>30</sup> If a much changed albeit still recognisable version of 'The Lay of the Smithy' survived into eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Gaelic Scotland, and continued to exist in the repertoire of Gaelic bards in mid-twentieth century Scotland, it certainly leaves room for the possibility that a composition which drew on the tradition of Finn's death occurring as a result of or in connection with a leap, and him being decapitated, perhaps something akin to what is found in *Aided Finn*,

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medieval works, *DF*, iii, ix-cxxi. See also Carey, 'Remarks on Dating', particularly Section II. Having concluded that a date not later than the eleventh century, and possibly towards the end of the tenth century should be assigned to 'Sleep-song for Diarmaid' (*DF*, poem XXXII) for which Murphy had suggested a date of c. 1150 (Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, pp.160-5, 237-8). Carey provisionally adds that 'a preliminary look at the other poems which Murphy dated assigned to the twelfth century suggests that the possibility of similarly early dates may exist in the case of many, if not most, of these as well.' 'Remarks', 11. Furthermore, having reexamined 'Lament for the Fiana' (*DF*, poem XIX), to which Murphy assigned a probable thirteenth-century date (Murphy, *DF*, iii, p. 42) Carey concludes that 'the balance of evidence seems [...] to point to a date in the twelfth century for this poem' 'Remarks', 13. See also Parsons, *Review of Duanaire Finn: Reassessments* for some important implications that derive from this.

<sup>25</sup> MacInnes, 'Twentieth-Century Recordings', 109-16.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 103.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 110.

<sup>28</sup> Campbell, *Leabhar na Feinne*, pp. 65-7.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 195.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 195.

was in circulation in late medieval and/or Early Modern Gaelic culture for a number of years. If we are to follow Campbell in seeing this as broken poetry, one possible scenario is that a bardic composition was the fore-runner to these versions of the death of Finn. This could well mean that their presence in the repertoires of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tradition-bearers was due to continuous performance over a number of years.

Another aspect of 'Eachdraidh' (B1) and 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2) worth noting in exploring the interrelationship between those two accounts is the use of both accounts to explain why Cill Fhinn (Killin), is so named. When discussing 'Eachdraidh' (B1) William J. Watson said that it 'has all the marks of a very old tale, with one exception, namely the explanation of Cill Fhinn as "Fionn's burial place." *Cill* in the sense of "burial place" is modern; the old meaning is always "church."<sup>31</sup> He goes on to say that he has not 'met *Taileachd*'s name elsewhere.<sup>32</sup> Writing approximately a decade later, William Alexander Gillies concluded that the primary purpose of 'Eachdraidh' (B1) was onomastic: 'It is evident that while these tales are very old they appear to have been invented in order to explain the meaning of such placenames as [...] *Ath Chinn*, the Ford of the Head, *Cill Fhinn*, the Cell of Fionn.'<sup>33</sup> Although Gillies seems to understand the place name to mean church, and not the modern meaning of burial place,<sup>34</sup> popular tradition has also etymologised Killin as Cill Fhinn, 'Finn's burial place'.<sup>35</sup> Keeping Watson's and Gillies' comments in mind, it is useful to be aware of parallels between motifs present in a number of medieval accounts of Finn's death and the two Scottish Gaelic accounts in question ('Eachdraidh' (B1) and 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2)) and the medieval material. We should also keep in mind the similarity between the names *Taileachd* and *Aicclech*, the character associated with Finn's death in *Aided Finn* and other medieval sources. Together, perhaps this information is useful in determining the onomastic character of the tale. That Finn dies by beheading is not uncommon in the medieval sources,<sup>36</sup> and is furthermore convenient for explaining the origin of the place name Killin. If an Early Modern or Modern bardic composition was the fore-runner to what we have in these two accounts, it would seem likely that this was the work of a Scottish Gaelic speaker who localised the composition in the district in which it was

<sup>31</sup> Watson, 'The Place-names of Breadalbane', p. 278.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 278.

<sup>33</sup> Gillies, *In Famed Breadalbane*, p. 337.

<sup>34</sup> For the frequency of the use of *cill* as burial place see *Corpus na Gàidhlig* <<https://dasg.ac.uk/corpus/>>

<sup>35</sup> One such example is Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park's signage entitled 'Breadalbane: A land of giants'. The sign notes that 'Fingal, the giant-slayer of Celtic legend, rests in his grave in Killin' (June 2011).

<sup>36</sup> For discussion see Chapter 3, pp. 60-4, above.

composed or told, using the account to explain local place-names, a practice common throughout Gaelic culture up until the twentieth century.

Having discussed the relationship between 'Eachdraidh' (B1) and 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2), we will now consider if there is a relationship between those two accounts and 'Fingal's Murder and Ossian's Grave' (B4), an English-language account collected in Killin in 1964. Although 'Fingal's Murder' (B4) does not feature the leap motif, and neither is it as long nor as detailed as the two Scottish Gaelic accounts that we have been discussing, there are nonetheless some notable similarities in the content of all these three Scottish accounts. 'Fingal's Murder' (B4) sees Finn beheaded by an enemy, the head removed from the body and Finn buried in Killin. In this case the *locus* is the same as in that found in 'Eachdraidh' (B1) and 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2), namely Loch Dochart, and the account also explains the reason for the name Killin. These can clearly be seen to be the most important events in 'Eachdraidh' (B1) and 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2) in the area around Killin and Loch Dochart as they are those which locate the tale in that region. As such it is possible that 'Fingal's Murder' (B4) should be considered to be a part, although a much later part, of the same tradition as 'Eachdraidh' (B1) and 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2). At the time that 'Fingal's Murder' (B4) was collected, there was little Gaelic spoken around the area of Killin.<sup>37</sup> It is assumed that usually goes hand in hand with the tales and characters of Gaelic folklore not being well-known and such folklore not being actively cultivated by the community. Thus, the lack of detail may be unsurprising and would not speak against 'Eachdraidh' (B1), 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2) and 'Fingal's Murder' (B4) being part of the same tradition.

#### 4.3.1.2 'Na Finn' (A1), 'Gleann na Léime' (A3)

Let us return now to the motif of Finn dying as a result of leaping and turn to two Irish accounts in which Finn dies as a result of this action. The first is 'Na Finn' (A1), an account collected from Peats Cotters near Dungarvan in Co. Waterford in 1936. Here, Finn jumps over a glen in order to gain a wife but dies when the woman insists that he leap it backwards to impress her. Looking at all of the information available in the account, the informant gives a summary of three Fenian tales and does not go into much detail for any of the three. Taking one of the other two accounts mentioned by Cotters, the tale of Oisín going to Tír na nÓg and returning 300 years later, we know this to have been in widespread circulation at the time and that many other accounts give greater detail on this

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<sup>37</sup> Duwe, *Siorrachd Pheairt & Sruighlea*, p. 25.



tale.<sup>38</sup> This could be indicative of the informant not having an in-depth knowledge of the tales. Even if such was the case, the account may nonetheless be suggestive of there being an account of Finn's death current around Dungarvan for approximately eighty years due to the similarities between Cotters' account in 1936 and what O'Kearney printed in 1854. There are some differences between Cotters' and O'Kearney's accounts, however. Cotters' account has Finn make the leap in order to be able to marry the woman he meets, whereas O'Kearney's account says that Finn was under a *geis* to make the leap over the glen forwards and backwards every Mayday morning, and also shows Finn breaking another *geis* by meeting a red-haired woman milking cows en route who refuses to give him a drink, thereby signalling his impending death. The differences in the two accounts possibly illustrate changes to the story over time. Related to the leaping motif while expressing a different take on it from A1, and sharing some similarities with the account O'Kearney had is 'Gleann na Léime' (A3), an account collected in Duagh, Co. Kerry in 1950, in which Finn races a young woman from Kildare to Kerry and which sees Finn successfully complete the leap over a glen. While Finn was making the leap, however, his toe touched the young woman he had been racing, causing her to lose all her magic, be turned into an old hag and fall down into the glen. Finn then dies when he jumps into the glen to see the woman, his footprints remaining in the rock. 'Gleann na Léime' (A3) is similar to O'Kearney's account in that Finn's leap or fall into the glen has caused Finn's death and resulted in his limbs leaving their mark on a stone at the bottom of the glen. As well as both 'Na Finn' (A1) and 'Gleann na Léime' (A3) sharing some features with the account of Finn's death that O'Kearney had, the three accounts are reminiscent of the *FTC* episode in which the young Finn encounters a group of otherworld women who have gathered to see the King of Munster make a leap in order to win one of the otherworld women as a lover. Completing the leap himself, and leaping backwards also, Finn is accepted as a lover by one of these women but she then places a *geis* on him so that he must repeat the leap every year until his death.<sup>39</sup> In Maud Joynt's introduction to her edition of *FTC*, she notes that the language of the manuscripts is a mix of Early Middle Irish and later forms,<sup>40</sup> and opines that the tale is 'probably a later imitation of the *Acallam*, Conán of the [Túatha Dé Danann] being substituted for S. Patrick and Find for Caoilte,' and that 'on the whole, [*FTC*] seems to represent a more popular side of the Finn saga than the *Acallam*.<sup>41</sup> If *FTC* is indeed a representation of the more popular tradition it also suggests that this is the more well-

<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of varying accounts of how Oisín survived his fellow *fénidi*, and how he journeyed to Tír na nÓg and suggested origins of the accounts see Ó Briain, 'Some Material on Oisín'.

<sup>39</sup> Joynt, *Feis Tighe Chonain*, p. 44; O'Kearney, *Feis Tighe Chonain Chinn-shleibhe*, p. 180.

<sup>40</sup> Joynt, *Feis Tighe Chonain*, p. vii

<sup>41</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, p. 335.

known tradition. Accounts of Finn's death being caused by or immediately preceded by a leap are known from the tenth-century onwards but the sparsity of accounts relating the event may have meant that the event of Finn's demise was not well known. If that were the case, despite *FTC* not relating Finn's death, the appearance of the leaping motif in a context which explicitly mentions his death may be significant in pointing to the popularity of that tradition from the Middle and Early Modern Irish periods onwards, potentially pointing to a continuous tradition that lasted until the twentieth century due to the evidence found in O'Kearney's account in the mid-nineteenth century, and 'Na Finn' (A1) and 'Gleann na Léime' (A3) in the first half of the twentieth century.

Before moving on, the onomastic character of 'Gleann na Léime' (A3), as well as its concern with Finn's age should be noted. With 'Eachdraidh mar a Chaidh Fionn a Mharbhadh' (B1), 'Bàs Fhinn le Taoileach' (B2), and 'Fingal's Murder and Ossian's Grave' (B4) we saw that the event of Finn's death also served an onomastic purpose. This can also be seen clearly in 'Gleann na Léime' (A3). A similar, although not the same, account of Gleann na Léime can be found in another account collected nearby:

Mr. Wm. McElligott [...] told me that Gleann na Léime was so called from Finn Mac Cumhal who used to hunt in that district with his Feana. It is said he jumped from one side of the glen to the other, a distance of 500 feet & that he attempted to jump it back again but failed & fell in the rocks between the two hills. His foot prints are still to be seen six inches deep in the solid rock. He then threw a stoen 2 tons in weight, and it alighted in a meadow  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile away in a field in Mr. McElligott's farm. That meadow is still called Rockfield.<sup>42</sup>

Interestingly, McElligott's account differs from 'Gleann na Léime' (A3) with respect to both Gleann na Léime and Rockfield (which is given in (A3) as the place where Finn's landed having flown off when he landed in the bottom of the Glen after the hag), demonstrating the variety of situations to which such placenames could lend themselves. Second, the consideration of Finn's age playing a role in his death, which we saw in 'The Chase' as well as other medieval accounts of Finn's death, but which we did not find in 'Eachdraidh' (B1), 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2), or 'Fingal's Murder' (B4), is again present in both

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<sup>42</sup> NFCS 412: 50. Mr William McElligott, 65, Glenoe. Collector: Margaret Shanahan, Lixnaw, Co. Kerry. Clandouglas National School, Clandouglas, Lic Snámha, Co. Ciarraí. Teacher: Bean Uí Sheanacháin. Available at UCD, NFC, *Dúchas.ie* <<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4666596/4665378/4667699?ChapterID=4666596>> [accessed 15 January 2018].

'Gleann na Léime' (A3) and McElligott's explanation of why Gleann na Léime is so named, above. In 'Gleann na Léime' (A3) it appears thus:

[Finn mac Cumail and a pretty woman were racing around Ireland when Kiaran, one of the Fianna] sighted Fiúnn and the lady at Foynes [...] and the lady leading and Kiaran was very close to um coming for Gleann na Léime and she went to jump the glen and Fiúnn was kind of nervous jumping it.

"Fiúnn, you cripple," says Kiaran behind him, "you are failing. You are afraid to jump."

He spurred Fiúnn with his talk and Fiúnn made a run for the glen and leapt and in the leap crossing the glen he touched the lady with his toe and the moment he touched her all her magic left her and she fell down a scrawny old witch to the bottom of the glen below.

Fiúnn landed on the other side of the glen,

"Now," says Fiúnn to Kiaran, "you said I was failing and now you are afraid to jump it yourself."

"I'm not afraid to jump it but I'd prefer not. Come on home," says he to Fiúnn.

Fiúnn to show his activity jumped it backwards then and when he landed on Kiaran's side he looked [p.237] down and he saw the scrawny old witch in the glen. He jumped down and he landed on a rock below and the print of his two feet are in the rock to the present day.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4.3.2 OTHER ACCOUNTS OF FINN'S DEATH

The other accounts of Finn's death are 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' (A2), 'Old Irish Tales/Roscommon' (A4), and 'Slievenamon' (A5), 'Fionn agus Loch Lurgainn' (B3) and 'Fionn Mac Cumhail agus am Buailtein,' (C1). These accounts are diverse in their presentation of the causes of Finn's death as well as length and style of narration. Each will be discussed separately here, except for 'Old Irish Tales/Roscommon' (A4) which will be discussed in section 4.3.4: Finn's grave and the *fíán* as giants, below.

##### 4.3.2.1 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' (A2)

The account 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne', collected from Beartla Ó Conaire in Ros Muc in 1940, spans 66 pages, giving a full and detailed account of the two lovers pursued by Finn. Following its narration of Diarmaid's death on the penultimate page, the tale goes on to

<sup>43</sup> NFCS 1169: 235-7; See Chapter 4, Appendix 1, below.

account for Finn's death, telling how when Gráinne's children grew up, they kept a constant watch on Finn as they sought revenge, an ending which recalls the conclusion of some earlier modern versions of *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Gráinne*.<sup>44</sup> Finn, who escapes the much sought-after revenge because of his tooth of knowledge, is finally killed by a fisherman as he himself is fishing:

Ac bí sé ina lá tuas annsin ag a' tSionann ag iascaic lá 7 cé a tiocfadh ánn ac iascaire 7 níor airi' sé ariam gur buail sé go claibe é 7 gur marb sé Fíonn. Ac ba sin é an bás a fuair Fíonn mar ní féadfadh sé deag bás fáil dá mbeaí sé gan rud ar bít a deana ac a' cleas a rinne sé ar Diarmaid, 7 ba sin é an deire a bí lé Diarmad 7 a' deire a bí lé Fíonn mac Cúmail.<sup>45</sup>

The fact that this scene is immediately preceded by the statement that Gráinne's children were seeking revenge would at first seem to imply that the fisherman is enacting the children's plan. However, upon further consideration we know that Finn was always able to circumvent the efforts of Diarmaid and Gráinne's children because of his tooth of knowledge, thus the fisherman's act may be intended to be understood as a spontaneous, not premeditated, event. I am unaware of other versions of *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Gráinne* which encompass an account of Finn's death. This development is of interest to us for a number of reasons. First, Gráinne imploring Diarmaid's children to take revenge on Finn appears in the oldest manuscript account of the *Tóruigheacht*.<sup>46</sup> Yet, neither that version of the tale nor any others extant result in Finn's death – rather, following Nessa Ní Sheaghda's suggestion that this should be read in conjunction with *Éuchtach inghen Díarmatta*, it is Diarmad's daughter who dies. The presence of a fisherman at Finn's death is also reminiscent of older tales about his demise, particularly *Aided Finn* where Aicclech, who came upon his head, decapitated him.<sup>47</sup> As Finn died at the River Shannon when fishing it is unmistakable that his death occurred at a body of water. The location recalls Finn's death occurring at a river in the medieval sources, albeit the river Boyne and the role played by liquid, although usually imbibed, in the event.<sup>48</sup> Diarmaid and Gráinne's children waiting until they are grown up to seek revenge, meanwhile, echoes other elements of the tradition where Diarmaid's children, who have been away, return and Diarmaid's weapons

<sup>44</sup> See Ní Sheaghda's introduction to *Tóruigheacht*, particularly p. xiv where she says that 'There are at least forty one copies [of *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Gráinne*], and with the exception of one they range in date from 1718 to 1850. The exception, the oldest extant copy, is RIA 24P9 written in 1651.'

<sup>45</sup> NFC 712: 544. 'But one day he was at the Shannon fishing and who came there only a fisherman and he didn't notice anything until he hit him with a sword and killed Fíonn. But that was the death that Finn got because he couldn't get a good death if he hadn't done anything except the trick he had played he on Diarmad and that was the end of Fíonn mac Cumhaill.'

<sup>46</sup> Ní Sheaghda, *Tóruigheacht*, pp. 102-5.

<sup>47</sup> See Chapter 3, p. 61, above.

<sup>48</sup> For accounts of the role that liquid plays in Finn's death see Chapter 3, above.

are divided between them so that they may seek revenge.<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, we have here a modern Irish account from 1940 which would seem to echo two elements in the account of which Denis Murphy was aware approximately half a century earlier, i.e. that Finn was killed by a fisherman. It would be tempting to speculate that a tale or tales in which Finn's death occurred at the hands of a fisherman at a river were still in circulation in the twentieth century and that there was a glimmer of continuity between the medieval accounts and modern accounts of Finn's death in Ireland. However, given the uncertainty of whether Murphy's account was 'ancient' or modern, further evidence would be required to support such a claim.

Finn's death in 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' (A2) furthermore reminds us of Finn's association with water. In *Macgnímartha Finn* (MF) Finn's first *fíán*-hunt occurs in an aquatic location, that is when he makes a cast at ducks on a lake,<sup>50</sup> and one of his first encounters with society proper is also in a watery context, namely after twice joining the boy troop at Mag Life in a game of hurling, Finn returns a week later whereupon the boys, who are swimming in a lake, challenge Finn to come in and try to dunk them.<sup>51</sup> With these in mind, Joseph Nagy sums up Finn's aquatic connections as reinforcing the 'impression of a paradox, a human who lives and acts so freely in water is truly remarkable, a "hero" in the sense of a powerfully anomalous superhuman (or perhaps subhuman) being.'<sup>52</sup> Thus, Finn's early survival of the dangers of water may be suggestive that his demise will ultimately be in a watery context. Indeed, as *Aided Finn* is dated to the tenth century<sup>53</sup> and *Macgnímrada Finn* to the twelfth,<sup>54</sup> we could invert this and speculate whether Finn's death on the Boyne in *Aided Finn* had an influence of Finn's early survival of aquatic dangers in the *Macgnímrada*, although on that particular point at this moment we can do no more than speculate. 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' (A2) is also reminiscent of the salmon of knowledge episode in other treatments of the boyhood of Finn. In some of these tales, the fisherman plans to kill Finn or Finn, having tasted the salmon, kills the fisherman in revenge for killing his father.<sup>55</sup> The story of Finn's boyhood was highly productive in the modern period, and the fisherman killing Finn in 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' (A2) appears to echo this tradition, suggesting that this ending was influenced by or specifically intended to be reminiscent of the salmon of knowledge episode. Thus, with all these watery associations present,

<sup>49</sup> See Ní Shéaghdha, *Tóruigheacht*, pp. xvii-xviii, 102-5.

<sup>50</sup> Nagy, *Wisdom*, p. 211.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>53</sup> Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, p. xxv.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxviii.

<sup>55</sup> Bruford, 'Oral and Literary Fenian Tales', 46-8.

'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' (A2) may be seen to reflect a conflation of different aspects of the corpus regarding Finn's life and death. Alternatively, or complementary to this, it may be read as an appropriate end to Finn's life in the oral Fenian tradition more generally. In many oral accounts of Finn's birth he accidentally or purposefully ends up in water and survives, often reappearing with a fish or eel in one or both hands.<sup>56</sup> Nagy reads this event as Finn emerging as an aquatic creature who not only avoids but masters the alien environment, i.e. water.<sup>57</sup> The watery end for Finn presented in 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' (A2) can be interpreted as bringing Finn's life full circle as the element into which he was essentially born is ultimately the same element that causes his demise. Furthermore, in the context of concluding a version of *Tóruigeacht Diarmada agus Gráinne*, where Diarmaid's death is caused by a lack of water, water that Finn himself does not need but purposefully withholds, constitutes an excess, and here an excess of water causes Finn's death.

That Finn's death is an addition to the general account of the pursuit of Diarmaid and Gráinne is of great significance. The tale of Diarmaid and Gráinne is arguably one of the best-known tales in the modern period, more popular perhaps than any single account focusing on Finn and his deeds. It may be that at some point in the tradition, it was recognised that the Diarmaid and Gráinne narratives left Finn's demise unaccounted for and that this was considered a fault to be remedied in the storytelling *milieu* of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries where good and bad deeds often brought just rewards to those performing the actions.<sup>58</sup> The popularity of the *Tóruigeacht* and that story's presentation of clear wrong-doing by Finn may therefore have been seen as an ideal opportunity for a *seanchaí*, either the informant for this account, Beartla Ó Conaire, or an earlier tradition bearer from whom the tale was passed down to him, to explain Finn's death. If so, this opportunity has been well utilised. 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' details the circumstances of Finn's death while also providing a moral justification for Finn dying in that way, i.e. that Finn could not die well given the trick he played on Diarmaid. If the tradition-bearer who added this detail to the current version of the *Tóruigeacht* was unaware of any other version of Finn's death, Finn's concentrated efforts to kill Diarmaid as presented in 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' also seem to have served the function of providing a

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<sup>56</sup> Nagy, *Wisdom*, p. 111.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p. 111.

<sup>58</sup> It would be laborious to list copious examples of tales in which such incidents occur here, however, one well-known example shall suffice to illustrate this, namely the selkie woman. In such tales the selkie's seal coat is hidden by a human male, forcing her to stay on land. The selkie woman, who is now forced to stay ashore against her wishes, usually bears this man children but is unhappy because she is unable to return to the sea, which she longs to do. Later in the tale, when she finds her seal coat she returns to the sea, normally never to be seen again.

reason as to why a heroic death was not in store for Finn, and may consequently have been intended to imply that his death was not worthy of a tale unto itself.

#### 4.3.2.2 'Fionn agus Loch Lurgainn' (B3)

Similar to 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' (A2), an intermingling of different elements of the Fenian corpus is to be found in 'Fionn agus Loch Lurgainn' (B3). Here, Finn, carrying his mother on his back/shoulders, runs so fast that he loses her and when he stops to rest he realises that all he is carrying is her shins. These he throws in to the lake, begetting the name Loch Lurgainn ('Shin Lake'). This onomastic tale is popular in folkloric accounts of Finn in Ireland and Scotland. Here, a second place is named in the tale. Loch Droma ('Back Lake') is the name given to the spot where Finn picked up his mother and put her on his back. Although Finn's mother appears in B3, this is a tale which is usually told of Finn's foster mother.<sup>59</sup> In this account, there is also mention of Cumall's enemies who would be after Finn if they knew who he was, recalling the story of *MF*; these enemies, however, are called *sitheanan* (fairies) in 'Fionn agus Loch Lurgainn' (B3), unlike Cumall's enemies in *MF* who are other *fénnidi*. The account concludes with Finn's death in an undescribed battle. 'Fionn agus Loch Lurgainn' therefore does not treat of the concerns that we have so far seen playing a role in Finn's death the medieval or modern accounts, i.e. a leap, Finn's age being a contributing factor, nor an imbibed drink or poison featuring therein. It does, however, merge a number of different elements which are not often found together in the Fenian corpus, including Finn's death occurring at a body of water. The watery connections here are that the location of the action is mostly given using names of lochs: Loch Bad a' Ghaill, Loch Osgaig, Loch Droma/Loch an Druim, Loch Lurgainn, and Asainte Bheag (which is at one end of Loch Assynt), and Loch Inver, all of which are geographically close to one another. The final battle seems to have happened at Asainte Bheag (Little Assynt) but here, unlike the other Scottish accounts where Finn riles up his opponent in a love triangle, we find Cumall's enemies looking for and killing Finn. There is no great detail about Cumall's enemies, nor the reason for the enmity, except to say that they are *sitheanan*, an element that may be present due to the popularity of tales or people of the *síth* in folklore.

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<sup>59</sup> Nagy, *Wisdom*, p. 111.

#### 4.3.2.3 'Slievenamon' (A5)

'Slievenamon' (A5) relates how many women race in order to win a place as Finn's wife, a tale often found in modern oral tradition.<sup>60</sup> The tale ends curiously, however, with Finn and his new wife drinking poison after the other three contenders for the position of the Finn's wife have been killed by the unnamed king. This is not found in other accounts of races which take place to ascertain who will become Finn's wife, and while we find poison associated with Finn's death in medieval sources, this account is the only mention of such in the modern accounts. This, however, may call to mind the poisonous bristles on the back of the boar that kills Diarmaid in some versions of the *Tóruigheacht* story, perhaps suggesting further links between Diarmaid's and Finn's death, although the evidence as it stands is too scant to do more than postulate.

#### 4.3.3 FINN'S DEATH AND THE SLUMBERING *FÍAN* TALE

Before moving on to accounts in which Finn's grave is mentioned, we will briefly consider the relationship of the accounts of Finn's death discussed above to another version of the end of Finn's life. An alternative, albeit temporary ending to his life is the idea of the *fían* who are asleep in caves but who will rise up when needed. This is commonly known as *An Fhèinn air a h-Uilinn* in Scotland where the motif is more often associated with the *fían*. The same tale appears in Ireland, although the character said to be asleep in the cave or mountain is usually said to be another, local hero. Ó hÓgáin, who has studied occurrences of the tale in Ireland notes that he only knew of one account, in Co. Leitrim, where Finn was the hero said to be slumbering.<sup>61</sup> Let us turn, then, to instances of *An Fhèinn air a h-Uilinn* in Scotland. Interestingly there are, to my knowledge, no versions of this tale which identify the location of the *fían*'s slumber as being in the area around Killin and Loch Dochart, the region which appears in sources containing the motifs of Finn's lover's leap and/or Finn's death by beheading. The named locations in which the *fían* are said to be asleep in extant accounts are geographically wide-ranging: Craig a' Chobha (Craigiehowe), Munloch, the Black Isle; Creag a' Ghobha, Isle of Skye; Glenorchy, Argyll; Tomnahurich, Inverness; Uamh Shomhairle, Glen Nevis, Lochaber; and possibly

<sup>60</sup> Further examples of this are to be found in NFCS 564: 39-41 (Miss H. Noonan, 70, Cloneen, Fethard; Collector: Unknown. Mágh Glas (Fethard), Mágh Glas 7 Cill Náile, Co. Tiobraid Árann. Teacher: Labhrás Ó Núnáin. Available at UCD, NFC, *Dúchas.ie* <<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5162114/5155409>> [p. 39, accessed 15 January 2018]; <<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5162114/5155410>> [p. 40, accessed 15 January 2018]; <<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5162114/5155411>> [p. 41, accessed 15 January 2018]) and NFCS 774: 41-2 (Collector: William Pearse, Kilkenny. Heweston [School], Clane, Co. Kildare. Teacher: Sean Crawford. Available at UCD, NFC, *Dúchas.ie* <<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4742164/4741223>> [p. 41 accessed 15 January 2018] and <<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4742164/4741224>> [p. 42 accessed 15 January 2018]).

<sup>61</sup> For studies of this tale type see Ó hÓgáin, 'An É an tAm Fós É?', and Ó hÓgáin, "Has the Time Come".



Choinneachain Hill at the Loch Turret Reservoir.<sup>62</sup> If we are to accept 'Eachdraidh' (B1), 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2) and 'Fingal's Murder' (B4) as part of the same tradition, that, combined with the lack of evidence for the tradition that Finn is still alive, albeit asleep awaiting to be awoken, in sources from around Loch Dochart may suggest that an account of Finn's death was current in the region from the early nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. Neither is there an account of Finn's death around Ullapool, where 'Fionn agus Loch Lurgainn' (B4) was collected, nor around the areas mentioned in that tale. Although an account described as 'An Fhéinn 'nan cadal' in the SSS Catalogue was collected from Donald Sinclair in Tíree, this is not an account of *An Fhèinn air a h-Uilinn*. In this account 'the Fingalians heads were pinned to an oak board while they slept. An old woman freed them all, except one. He left some of his hair and skin on the board. This happened in Tíree.<sup>63</sup> As we find neither another account of Finn's death nor an account of *An Fhèinn air a h-Uilinn* in Tíree, or by Sinclair, it may be that he was easily able to incorporate the account of Finn's death that he found in books into his repertoire as it did not conflict with any of the tales he knew from oral tradition. This may provide further evidence that the two conflicting ends to Finn's life that were current in folklore were localised in different places, and that in the oral tradition two conflicting accounts were not known in one area.

#### 4.3.4 FINN'S GRAVE AND THE *FÍAN* AS GIANTS

The remainder of the accounts generally share a focus on Finn's burial place, which seems to be most often integrated with large stone features of the landscape, and therefore connected to the idea of the *fían* as giants. The idea that the *fían* are particularly large appears in *AS*.<sup>64</sup> Their size is not regularly commented upon in medieval tales outside of the *Acallam*; however, this is a feature which is prevalent in many modern folklore tales, e.g. that Finn created the Isle of Man by picking up the piece of land where Lough Neagh now is and throwing it into the sea, or that Finn created the Giant's Causeway. Their giant nature also became associated with large, often stone, features in the landscapes such as caves, mounds, Megalithic and Neolithic monuments, as well as summits of hills.<sup>65</sup> This is the case in the final account we have of Finn's death, 'Old Irish Tales/Roscommon' (A4),

<sup>62</sup> For a detailed description of the tales in which these places are said to be locations in which the *fían* are asleep, see Innes, '*Dùsgadh na Féinne* (1908)'. Here Innes also notes that the motif is 'a version of the international 'Sleeping Hero' AT [Aarne-Thompson] 766 type, 'which is 'also referred to as 'King in the Mountain' or 'Sleeping Army'".

<sup>63</sup> SSS, 'Criomag dhen sgeulachd 'Fionn ann an Taigh a' Bhlàir Bhuidhe', *tobarandualchais.co.uk*. Available at <<http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/58531/54>> [Accessed 15 August 2017].

<sup>64</sup> For discussion, see Roe, '*Acallam na Senrach*: The confluence of Lay and Clerical Traditions', particularly pp. 331-46.

<sup>65</sup> As such the *fían* fit a well-established international pattern concerning the depiction of giants: See Cohen, *Of Giant*. Geraldine Parsons is currently preparing a publication on the *fían* as giants.

and most of the accounts for which it must be presumed that Finn is dead but that do not relate the event of his death. We find that Finn is killed by a band of men who steal into his cave while he is away in 'Old Irish Tales/Roscommon' (A4). They then throw his body in a hole, heaping stones over it. 'OSL Mayo II' (D4) also gives the place of Finn's internment as a cave, one which runs from Lisadoo, Co. Mayo to Doonard, Co. Galway.

Places where Finn's grave is associated with a megalithic tomb, or cairn, are numerous. In 'The Giant's Grave in Drumeague' (D22) the grave is said to be said to be in Drumeague, Co. Cavan.<sup>66</sup> 'Giants' (D10) and 'A Cromlech' (D11) reference the same tradition and we find that Finn is supposed to be buried in a Cromlech on top of a hill, which is in a field called Lios Dubh, in Co. Louth. The same type of location is given for Finn's grave in 'My Home District/Limerick' (D9) where we are told that he is buried on Cromhill, a toponym here said to be derived from Cromlech, which is on Suidhe Finn in Co. Limerick. The site of Finn's grave is also said to be a cairn on Seefin in Co. Galway in 'Carn Saoide Finn' (D5). Fincarn in Co. Monaghan is given as the burial place in five accounts: 'Historic Fincarn' (D14), 'The Giants' Graves at Lackafin' (D15), 'Local Place-Names' (D16), 'My Home District/Monaghan' (D17), and 'Finn Mac Coole and the Giant' (D18). Fincarn is the name of the hill itself in these accounts with most explaining that 'cairn' means grave or that the hill got its name from Finn's grave. Two of the accounts, 'Graves at Lackafin' (D15), 'Local Place-Names' (D16), mention standing stones present at the site that is supposed to be his grave, and 'Finn Mac Coole and the Giant' (D18) names Fincarn as a location to which Finn is said to have thrown stones. What is interesting to note about these is that two accounts, D15 and D16, although part of the NFCS, actually come from a newspaper, *The Dundalk Examiner*. The extracts reproduced here were both published in 1932, approximately two years and one year, respectively, prior to their reproduction in the NFCS accounts D15 and D16. As such it is difficult to say whether the tradition was so popular because of its recent media attention or if it had been current for a long time.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Megalithic Monuments of Ireland, *megalithicmonumentsofireland.com*  
 <[http://www.megalithicmonumentsofireland.com/COUNTIES/CAVAN/Drumeague\\_WedgeTomb.html](http://www.megalithicmonumentsofireland.com/COUNTIES/CAVAN/Drumeague_WedgeTomb.html)>  
 [accessed 15 August 2017].

<sup>67</sup> Niall Ó Ciosáin has discussed different types of collective memory, distinguishing between three categories, namely local, popular and national. Popular memory, he argues, constitutes popular representations of something within a predominantly oral culture. He contends that popular memory can migrate to local memory (collective memories within a small community which are usually known because of a connection to the local area, e.g. through a connection a person or place in the locality) or national memory (a level of memory which is abstract and which probably derives from written, even academic accounts, i.e. something consciously disseminated and learned): 'Famine memory and the popular representation of scarcity'. What we may be seeing here is the widespread circulation of the 'Graves at Lackafin' (D15), 'Local Place-Names' (D16) in *The Dundalk Examiner* may have brought the idea of Finn's

Finn is said to be buried atop Suidhe Finn, Co. Mayo, with no specification of a cairn, in 'Mo Céantar Féin' (D7). 'Brollac' (D13) is an account from the school in Monaghan which reproduced the two articles from the *Dundalk Examiner*, although 'Brollac' (D13) would seem to indicate another location for Finn's grave, beside Aghnafarcán National School. In this account we are told that 'what causes them to say that [great men who could subdue hundreds used to live here long ago] is because of the artefacts of the place, and the amount of warriors whose bones are pushing up daisies in the area.' Another location of Finn's grave is said to be the mound atop Murmod Hill in Co. Cavan in 'Twenty-second Story' (D2), 'Finn M'Cool's Grave' (D3), 'Finn Mac Cool on Murmod Hill' (D20), and 'Old Irish Tales/Cavan2' (D20). Although all brief, two of these accounts (D3 and D20) also mention Finn throwing stones (always understood to be large stones, rocks or boulders), and one (D21) mentions that a little height of sods in the ditch show where Finn's thumb is. 'Shee-Mór and Shee-Beag' (D1) says that Finn is buried atop a mountain, this time Shee Beag in Co. Limerick, where a giant lived and in which giants throwing stones feature, while 'Old Irish Tales/Cavan1' (D19) informs us that Finn is supposedly buried under a stone on Ardkill Mountain, but because 'he is supposed to have been buried under so many stones that it is hard to say which he is buried under.' The account 'Hidden Treasure' (D12), which treats of the area of Newbridge, Co. Kildare, only speaks of hidden treasure, saying that after it was dug up and subsequently dropped in a hole it was kept hidden by 'the power of Fionn.' This seems to form part of a tradition that was noted by Captain H.E. de Courcey-Wheeler in connection with the Hill of Allen, Co. Kildare, a little more than two decades earlier. Discussing contemporary excavations of the hill, he says that workers came upon a number of large human bones, 'thought to have belonged to a giant', and that the skeleton in question was believed to have belonged to Finn mac Cumail.<sup>68</sup> Taken together, therefore, all these accounts attest to the association of large stone features with Finn's grave and are often mentioned in combination with tales in which it is mentioned that Finn and/or the *fíán* were giants. This interest in graves of the *fíán*, is by no means surprising, as it is a feature of *fíanaigeacht* from the medieval period. This specific interest in the deaths and graves of the *fíán* is evident from a poem put in the mouth of Finn, *Lige Ghuill i mMaig Raigni*,<sup>69</sup> from tales such as the *Acallam*, and indeed also in 'the Chase', above where we saw Finn reciting a lays over the graves of Fáilbe and Fer Taichim. This same type of *seanchas* is applied much more frequently to the grave of an unnamed giant

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grave at Lackafin to the attention of the people of the area, or, it may have reinvigorated an existing tradition.

<sup>68</sup> de Courcey-Wheeler 'The Tower on the Hill of Allen', 413.

<sup>69</sup> Ó Murchadha, *Lige Guill*.

in the modern period, and does not have as detailed an accompanying narrative as those we have seen in 'The Chase' or as appear in *AS*. Because of the frequency of this type of *senchas* with an unnamed giant in the modern folklore, it is possible, and that the tradition of the graves of the *fíán* had largely fallen away from popular culture at this period, and that some of those locations which were regarded as being the graves of giants became associated with Finn because of his popularity and due to the *fíán* being thought of as giants. The location of the grave is sometimes combined with a feature of the landscape known as Suidhe Finn or Seefin, a placename for a hill or high ground in which hunting is usually good; such sites are readily associated with Finn, the *fíán*, and their hunting exploits in literature and folklore.<sup>70</sup> Association of elevated places called Suidhe Finn may have led to the association of further hills and mountains with the *fíán*, as we see above with Murmod hill, or the stone features which were easily incorporated into giant lore may have been the original reason for such associations. Both could have easily played a role in these places becoming associated with Finn's grave.

#### 4.3.5 FINN IN HELL

Another motif we find in works that imply that the death of Finn has taken place, although much more rarely, is the idea of Finn in hell.<sup>71</sup> This is to be seen in one Irish account from the NFCS, 'Na Fianna in Ifreann' (D8), collected in Bantry, Co. Cork in 1938, and in the account from Canada 'Fionn Mac Cumhaill agus am Buailtein' (C4), collected in the late 1970s or early 1980s, in Boisdale County, Nova Scotia. In 'Na Fianna in Ifreann' (D8) Oisín returns from Tír na nÓg, asks Patrick where the *fíán* are and Patrick replies with a brief account mentioning that Oscar, Finn, Goll, Diarmaid, and Conán are in hell. As such this tale may represent an extension of the tradition of Oscar being in hell: the well-known account of Oscar keeping demons away with a flail in hell is given a new twist here in that he is tired of the flail,<sup>72</sup> perhaps once intended to anticipate or be complementary to an event we find elsewhere in the modern Fenian corpus, namely Finn's request for Oscar to be brought out of hell. In 'Fionn Mac Cumhaill agus am Buailtein' (C4) the flail is transferred to Finn, a narrative element that is not paralleled elsewhere. This item comes from the Cape Breton Gaelic Folklore Collection, in which items were recorded between 1977 and 1982 in Nova Scotia,<sup>73</sup> although no exact date is given for the collection of this

<sup>70</sup> See Fitzpatrick, 'Formaioil na Fiann'.

<sup>71</sup> See Innes, 'Fionn in Hell' on late medieval and early modern accounts of Fionn in hell, in both Ireland and Scotland.

<sup>72</sup> See Ó hÓgáin, 'Magical Attributes', pp. 231, 235-6.

<sup>73</sup> StFX, 'About this collection', *Gaelstream*, Available at <<http://gaelstream.stfx.ca/greenstone/cgi-bin/library.cgi?site=localhost&a=p&p=about&c=capebret&l=en&w=utf-8>> [Accessed 07 August 2017].

item. As Fenian tales were a favourite of Canadian Gaelic-speaking communities, they were considered to be the domain of story-telling specialists.<sup>74</sup> This status which was accorded them, and the presumable reluctance of those who did not consider it their position or within their ability to recount Fenian lore as a consequence, may well account for the small number of Fenian tales in this collection. This, in turn, may provide us with a reason for appearance of Finn in a tale which was known in Ireland and told of Oscar during the first half of the twentieth century: perhaps because the reciter was not used to telling this tale, or perhaps because of his passive knowledge of a tale due to hearing rather than recounting it, he had confused or conflated the details in his own mind before this telling, or possibly had done so simply at the time of the recording of this item.

#### 4.4: Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has investigated a number of motifs in the modern accounts of Finn's death, as well as possible relationships between the modern accounts of Finn's death and earlier Fenian tales, and whether the concerns present in the last extant containing a narrative of Finn's death, that is Egerton 1782, which contains 'The Chase' and *Tesmolta Cormaic*, are indicative of the concerns of those treating of the *rígfénnid's* demise thereafter in the modern period. The clearest relationship between the medieval and modern accounts of Finn's death is in the dearth of tales about such an event and the obscurity in which that event generally seems to have been kept across the Gaelic-speaking world. Mention of Finn's death was already fragmentary and short in the medieval accounts, perhaps due to the fact the medieval *fianaigeacht* literature was cultivated from a number of early traditions which were later conflated to become the Fenian Cycle,<sup>75</sup> which could have been the reason for the conflicting information regarding this episode in Finn's biography. Accounts of his death are even more fragmentary in the modern accounts. Yet, from the sources discussed in this chapter, both the accounts of Finn's death and those items which presuppose that Finn is dead, what is immediately clear is that the tradition of narratives treating of a death for Finn does have a long and varied history in Gaelic literature and folklore.

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<sup>74</sup> Shaw, 'Introduction', p. xxviii.

<sup>75</sup> On this topic, see Murray, *The Early Finn Cycle*, Flahive; *The Fenian Cycle*, particularly pp. 1-48, and Murphy, *Ossianic Lore*.

As this study was prompted by the examination of whether 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn', the longest extant narrative to engage with the event of Finn's death in the medieval period, had any impact on the traditions of the death of Finn that came after we shall first deal with that question. The narrative of 'The Chase' does not seem to be known outwith the manuscript in which it is written, and does not appear to have influenced later tales of Finn's death. The inclusion of 'The Chase' in a manuscript written in 1516, however, does illuminate questions regarding his death with which the scribes of that manuscript were engaging near the end of the Early Modern Irish period, and these we have seen in Chapter 3. The extensive engagement there does not point the direction considerations of Finn's demise would later take, but we do find that many elements featured therein also feature in later accounts of Finn's death either singly or in smaller groups, e.g. that his death occurred as a consequence of or was closely associated with a leap, that he was decapitated, that he died at a river or other body of water, and that his age played a role in the event.

Due to the similarities of 'Eachdraidh' (B1) and 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2) with some of the earlier material, it is possible that there are some elements of continuity with the medieval tradition of Finn's death (more generally than 'The Chase') to be seen here. The accounts are also localised by the use of place names, a practice common across the Gaelic world. The same tradition may last into the twentieth century if we take 'Fingal's Murder' (B4) to be part of the same tradition. Whether the seeming continuity between 'Eachdraidh' (B1), 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2), and older accounts can be accounted for by a composition which evolved and changed over time, like 'Duan na Ceàrdaich', or whether it was specifically composed in the modern period based on knowledge of some other material regarding Finn's death is impossible to determine.

In 'Eachdraidh' (B1), 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2) and 'Gleann na Léime' (A3) we find Finn's death associated with a leap, although that is not the immediate cause of his death while in the account that O'Kearney had from Dungarvan, and 'Na Finn' (A1) Finn dies directly as a result of a leap. In 'Na Finn' (A1), 'Gleann na Léime' (A3) and O'Kearney's account, the appearance of a leap in many of these is reminiscent of the leap associated with Finn's death in the medieval accounts. However, it is also possible that this was due to or further influenced by the popularity of the leap motif elsewhere in Fenian folklore, perhaps particularly the mention of Finn's death in the context of a leap in *FTC*.

Something we see in 'Eachdraidh' (B1), 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2), and 'Gleann na Léime' (A3), is the appearance of a woman in the context of Finn's leap. It is possible that the fairy lover in 'Eachdraidh' (B1), 'Bàs Fhinn' (B2), and 'Gleann na Léime' (A3) are akin to the character Donait for whom Finn makes the leap in *FTC*. It is also possible, however, that the fairy lover in 'Eachdraidh' (B1) and 'Bàs Fhinn' was intended as just one of the fairies who appear in folklore tales much more often than the *sídh* appear in medieval *fíanaigeacht* and have worked their way into a number of tales about Finn, e.g. the *sitheanan* who are said to have killed Finn's father 'Fionn agus Loch Lurgainn' (B3) and subsequently Finn, and the beautiful woman who turns into a hag as we see in 'Gleann na Léime' (A3), or vice versa, is popular in many modern folktales, Fenian and non-Fenian alike.

In the other modern accounts of Finn's death, what we usually see is the grouping together of a number of different Fenian motifs, e.g. in 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' (A2), 'Slievenamon' (A5), and 'Fionn agus Loch Lurgainn' (B3). In the case of other motifs associated with Finn's death, such as the event being associated with a body of water, this is something that is part of Finn's life elsewhere in folklore, e.g. when he is purposefully placed in or accidentally falls into a body of water soon after his birth, and the episode relating how Finn acquired knowledge from the salmon of knowledge. These echo material found in the medieval accounts but are also motifs which continue to be highly productive in the modern period. What we find in 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' (A2) and perhaps 'Slievenamon' (A5) is that Finn's death is linked with Diarmaid's, perhaps due to the popularity of the *Tóruigheacht* in the modern period.

In the items in this chapter where Finn's death is taken as having occurred, but the events of his death not related, what we usually find are items of *seanchas* in which the idea of the Finn and the *fían* as giants is very prevalent, something found abundantly in contemporaneous folkloric accounts on other aspects of the life of Finn and the *fían*. We also find the occasional mention of Finn in hell, something that has pre-modern precursors in both Ireland and Scotland.

What we find in the modern accounts which recount Finn's death, therefore, is that the prevailing tradition associates Finn's death with a leap, while the most popular account of Finn's grave where there is no accompanying narrative clearly demonstrates the popularity of the *fían* as giants and forms part of that tradition. There may be some elements which perhaps suggest a continuity of the leap motif of Finn's death. In other cases, the

similarities between the medieval and modern accounts are more likely to be incidental. Nonetheless, modern accounts of the death of Finn can be said to play on motifs which were popular in medieval *fíanaigecht* and continued to be so in the modern period.



## 4.2: Source Material

The following comprises material in English, Irish, and Scottish Gaelic, from both manuscript and audio sources, as well as one transcription from a printed source, ranging from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. All transcriptions of manuscript and audio source material are my own. In the audio material transcribed, there are always two speakers, the informant and collector. Both are identifiable and as such their names, and not their roles, are given in the transcription. Audio material in Scottish Gaelic has been rendered in accordance the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions in transcription.<sup>76</sup> All translations are my own.

### *Editorial policy:*

All material has been reproduced faithfully. Word spacing, capitalisation and punctuation have been silently added on occasion. Unnecessary capitalisation has also been silently rendered in lower case. In order to stay as faithful as possible to the source material, none of the manuscript material has been normalised to An Caighdeán Oifigiúil<sup>77</sup> for Irish or to the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions for Scottish Gaelic. Neither have length marks been inserted or removed. For audio transcriptions, ellipsis, not enclosed in square brackets, is used to indicate that the speaker trails off without finishing the sentence. Although used sparingly, additions to the accounts by me are noted in square brackets, e.g. 'But they brought him [Diarmaid] up there' in A2, below. Much of the NFC Schools' collection is now online. In order to be consistent MS page numbers have been added to all NFC accounts and where the source material is available online, foototes to the page numbers direct the reader to the online resource. Where a transcription differs from the manuscript for any other reason, the manuscript reading is given in a footnote.

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<sup>76</sup> Scottish Qualifications Authority, *Gaelic Orthographic Conventions*.

<sup>77</sup> Tithe an Oireachtais, *Gramadach na Gaeilge: An Caighdeán Oifigiúil*.

## A. ACCOUNTS OF FINN'S DEATH, IRELAND

A1 NFC 152: 335-6; PEATS COTTER (73), PENSIONER, CILL NA BHFRAOCHÁN, DÚN GARBHÁN, CO. WATERFORD. COLLECTOR: NIOCLÁS BREATHNACH, 6 JANUARY 1936

[p.335] NA FINN

D' aire me tráct ar Oisín ner a cúa' sé go Tír na n-Óg. Shíl sé ná raib ac ceirte huairé 'n cluig ann leis<sup>78</sup> na ceolta breáta' a d' aire se. Bí sé trí céad bliain ann ner a táine sé ó Tír na n-Óg.<sup>79</sup> Ner a cúa sé abaile ní raib ao' rud roimig<sup>80</sup> ac sean oiraça is seaça is an Finn go léir imite. Bí fear a' góilt a' bótar go' tuit mála mine uaig le hasal. Rug sé ar a' mála mine cun é caiteam isteaç sa çairt ner a táine sé anuas den asal. Bí sé an áirde [p.336] asal. Do tuit sé dá çrion, sin é an uair a bí sé tréis trí céad bliain do tabairt i dTír na n-Óg. Çuaig Fionn a' Cúil, cúa' sé do léim iar gleann. D'iarha sé den mbean an raib sí cun é pósa, a' raib sé muintearia léi. Well go bí,<sup>81</sup> sin an léim is breáta a çaitéag riam in Éire. "Léim breá is ea' í" arsaig a' bean "ac dá dtabarfá tar nais í i ndia' do cúil." Šíl sé bí sé cú láidir çu bríovar san go bfaçac sé í tabairt i ndia' a cúil a gleann airist. Caiteag síos ann é 7 briseag a muineál. Šin é mar a marúog Fionn ac Cúil. Šíl na Finn ná raib ao' rud ró maít dóiv go táinig a' Çarraig Mór, an Çarraig Dèarg i lea' tar farraige<sup>82</sup> 7 çuir sé

[p.335] THE FÍAN

I heard tell of Oisín when he went to Tír na nÓg. He thought that he was only there for four hours because of the fine music that he heard. He had been there for three hundred years when he came from Tír na nÓg. When he went home there was nothing there but old ruins and hedges and the Fían were all gone. There was a man travelling the road with a donkey until a bag of meal fell. He [Oisín] caught the bag of meal to throw it into the cart when he dismounted the donkey. He was riding [p.336] a donkey. He fell because of his old age, that's when he had spent three hundred years in Tír na nÓg. Fionn Mac Cumhaill, he went to leap over a glen. He asked the woman if she was going to marry him, if he was fond of her. Well, that was the finest leap ever leapt in Ireland. "That's a fine leap," said the woman, "if only you leapt it backwards." He thought that he was so strong and so vigorous that he could leap it backwards. He was thrown there and his neck was broken. That's how Fionn Mac Cumhaill was killed. The Fían

<sup>78</sup> MS: leis tréis leis

<sup>79</sup> MS: Bhí sé trí céad bliain ann er a táine sé abaile bí sé çun dul dtí, er a táine sé ó Tír na n-Óg

<sup>80</sup> MS: Ner a cúa sé abaile ní d'airin sé, ní raib ao' rud roimig

<sup>81</sup> MS: go çó bí

<sup>82</sup> MS: faraige

eagla ortá. Ní raib aoinne den<sup>83</sup> Fínn is mó a bí misneac aige ná fatuíoc<sup>84</sup> a dtugáidís Goll tréan air. D'iarhuíodar do Fíonn ac Cúil is dúirt Fíonn a' Cúil ná rağac sé féin in ioma' leis, go raib an iomarca den obair sin déanta aige féin e fada. Ní rağac Oiscir in ioma leis ná Conán. Dúirt Goll tréan ná raib ao' beann aige féin ar aon fear acu fós. Tugadar trí lá 7 trí oíce ag iomrascáil, a' troid 7 ag imiriscáil go dtí go bain Goll tréan, go' bain sé an ceann sa deire den gCarraig Dhearg 7 cait sé dul<sup>85</sup> go nGleann na Gealt annsan a<sup>86</sup> leigisfeac a cuid loit [p.337] 7 cait lea bliain ann. Bí sé lán suas de loiteanna is gearrta is martra. Go Gleann na nGealt a cua' sé á leigeas.

thought that nothing could better them until the Carraig Mhór, the Carraig Dhearg, came over the sea to them and he frightened them. None of the Fíán that he had were more corageous than a giant that they called strong Goll. They asked Fíonn Mac Cumhail and Fíonn Mac Cumhaill said that he wouldn't compete with him, that he had done enough of that for a long time. Oscar wouldn't compete with him nor would Conán. Strong Goll said that he wasn't bothered by any of them yet. They spent three days and three nights wrestling, fighting and wrestling, until strong Goll beheaded the Carraig Dhearg and he had to go to Glean na nGealt then to heal his injuries [p.337] and he spent half a year there. He was covered in wounds and cuts and lacerations. It's to Gleann na nGealt that he went to heal them.

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<sup>83</sup> MS: ~~agen~~ den

<sup>84</sup> MS: a bí og misneach aige ná age fatuíoch

<sup>85</sup> MS: ~~du~~ dul

<sup>86</sup> MS: gø a

A2 NFC 712: 479-544; BEARTLA Ó CONAIRE (60), FARMER, ROSCÍDE, ROS MUC, MAIGH CUILINN, CO. GALWAY. COLLECTOR: PRIONNSIAS DE BÚRCA, 5 NOVEMBER 1940<sup>87</sup>

[p.479] DIARMAD 7 GRÁINNE [p.479] DIARMAD AND GRÁINNE

[The tale of Diarmad and Gráinne runs pp. 479-544]

[p.544] Ac èroçadar suas annsin é [p.544] But they brought him [Diarmaid] [Diarmaid] ar sórt rud mar ba cúmra ánn up there on a sort of thing like a coffin deanta g'ór a bí aige [athair Dhiarmada] a made of gold then that he [Diarmaid's father] rinne sé le draoideacht, nó go ndeaca ceatar had made with magic, until four faoí 7 gur iompair sé é suas cuig Athlone<sup>88</sup> went under it and he carried it up to 7 go raib sé annsin gur togair sé a cur, gur Athlone and it was there he decided to fórr' sé é 7 gur cuir sé é. Agus nuair a bí bury him, and he waked him and he buried cuir sé é 7 bí Gráinne. B'í ceatar mac & inín him. And when he [Diarmaid's father] was ánn & d'fan sí [Gráinne] ariam i Sligeac nó there [in Athlone] he buried him gur caillead í. Agus nuair a bí an clann [Diarmaid]. And Gráinne, well she had suas bíodar i ndia' Fíonn ariam uaid sin four sons and a daughter and she stayed in amaç. Ac nuair a bíodar ina b'fir óga. Ac bí Sligo until she died. And when the children go maí bí Fíonn fíor sean a deire & bíodar were grown up they were always after Finn a' faire a gcúmnáí air. Ac bí an oiread from that time onwards. But when they draoideamlact 7 draoideacht aige 7 bí fíós were young men, well, Fíonn was very old aige i gcúmnáí, d'fágat sé fíós céard a bí at the end and they were always watching siad a guil a deana air. Ac bí sé ina lá tuas him. But he had so much magic and annsin ag a' tSionann<sup>89</sup> ag iascaç lá 7 cé a enchantment that he always knew what tiocfaid ánn ac iascaire 7 níor airi' sé ariam they were going to do to him. But one day gur buail sé go claibe é 7 gur marb sé he was at the Shannon fishing and who Fíonn. Ac ba sin é an bás a fuair Fíonn mar came there only a fisherman and he didn't ní féadfát sé deág bás fáil dá mbeat<sup>90</sup> sé notice anything until he hit him with a gan rud ar bit a deana ac a' cleas a rinne sé sword and killed Fíonn. But that was the

<sup>87</sup> Due to the length of this account, which comprises, 66 pages in total, only a transcription of the final page has been included. The preceding tale does not differ significantly from other modern versions of *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Gráinne* and Finn's death is not hinted at earlier in the tale. Immediately preceding this page, Gráinne has sent men to bring Diarmaid's body to her house so that she may wake and bury him. The men, however, meet Diarmaid's father mourning Diarmaid's death when they reach the body and the father will not allow Gráinne's men to take Diarmaid's corpse to her.

<sup>88</sup> MS: Atlone

<sup>89</sup> MS: ag a' t-'ininn

<sup>90</sup> MS: mbeat

ar Diarmaid, 7 ba sin é an deire a bí lé death that Finn got because he couldn't get  
Diarmad 7 a' deire a bí lé Fíonn mac a good death if he hadn't done anything  
Cúmail. except the trick he had played on Diarmad  
and that was the end of Diarmad and of  
Fionn mac Cumhaill.

A3 NFC 1169: 235-7; ÉAMON ACH SÍDHCHIG (74), FARMER, CLÓCHÁN AN LEISCEART, DUBH ÁTH, CO. KERRY. COLLECTOR: SEÓSAMH Ó DÁLAIGH, FEBRUARY 1950

[p.235]

GLEANN NA LÉIME

Gleann na Léime, Fiúnn MoCúil jumped it backways long ago. 'Tis a very steep glen and I couldn't say how many yards wide it is. 'Tis about a couple of hundred yards I suppose.

Fiúnn Mo Cúil and the Fianna were having a day's sport in Kildare. They were playing around and of course there were onlookers there and there was a very pretty girl amongst um and Fiúnn being a ladies' man made her acquaintance and he got into a conversation with her and they talked of the prowess of the Fianna and she'd said she'd run any of um herself.

"Would you run me?" says Fiúnn

"I would indeed," she said.

She challenged him for a race around Ireland and they both went down to the County Louth for the starting point and around by the west they ran and they came on to Kerry. There was one of the Fianna then, was there one of them called Kiaran. I forget the name but we'll call him Kiaran and he was a very loose man. He heard of it.

[p.236] "Fiúnn you fool," says he to himself, "there is no good in this and he followed them and he was nearly up to them. He sighted Fiúnn and the lady at Foynes and on they came to Kerry and the lady leading and Kiaran was very close to um coming for<sup>91</sup> Gleann na Léime and she went to jump the glen and Fiúnn was kind of nervous jumping it.

"Fiúnn, you cripple," says Kiaran behind him, "you are failing. You are afraid to jump."

He spurred Fiúnn with his talk and Fiúnn made a run for the glen and leapt and in the leap crossing the glen he touched the lady with his toe and the moment he touched her all her magic left her and she fell down a scrawny<sup>92</sup> old witch to the bottom of the glen below.

Fiúnn landed on the other side of the glen,

"Now," says Fiúnn to Kiaran, "you said I was failing and now you are afraid to jump it yourself."

"I'm not afraid to jump it but I'd prefer not. Come on home," says he to Fiúnn.

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<sup>91</sup> MS: of for

<sup>92</sup> MS: scrawney

Fiúnn to show his activity jumped it backwards then and when he landed on Kiaran's side he looked [p.237] down and he saw the scrawny<sup>93</sup> old witch in the glen. He jumped down and he landed on a rock below and the print of his two feet are in the rock to the present day and with the impact of his full weight on the rock his head flew off and it landed in Rockfield and 'tis there Fiúnn's head is buried. Kiaran looked and saw the hag at the other side of the glen grinning. He slid down and killed her.

"We're ruined now," says he.

He made for Kildare at once and by the time he got there the Fianna were engaged in a terrible battle with an invisible enemy. But Kiaran had the sword of brightness. I can't say is it from Fiúnn he got it or from the witch but he had it and there was blood flowing as high as the ditches and in some places in low places over the ditches and Kiaran or whatever his name was could see the enemy when he had this sword. He hit to the right and he hit to the left. He hit before him and he hit behind him and he killed and scattered them all and an Tuath Dé Danann<sup>94</sup> didn't engage any of the Fianna in battle ever since.

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<sup>93</sup> MS: scrawney

<sup>94</sup> MS: a Tuat-de-nán

A4 NFCS 234: 55A-56A; COLLECTOR: LILY SMYTH, CARRAMORE, BOYLE, CO. ROSCOMMON, CLEW'S MEMORIAL NATIONAL SCHOOL, MAINISTIR NA BÚILLE, CO. ROSCOMÁIN, 1937-38. TEACHER: MÁIRE NÍ NÉIRE

[p.55a]

OLD IRISH TALES

There is a mountain in the Co. Sligo called "Bruckawn" and on it Finn Mc Cool is supposed to have lived for a number of years. A cave in the mountain is pointed out as his house and in the cave is a ledge of rock known as Finn's bed.

Outside the cave is a deep hole in the ground where Finn used to bury the men that he killed in battles. Finn's cave was often attacked by warriors who came to kill him but Finn was a great fighter and he always was able to beat his enemies and put them to flight.<sup>95</sup>

One day a large party of men whose leader was a giant stole in and concealed themselves in the cave when Finn was out. When he returned the men jumped from their hiding places and one of them killed Finn by sticking him in the breast with a dagger. They then threw Finn's body into the hole where he had buried so many men himself and covered [p.56a] it with a great heap of stones.

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<sup>95</sup> MS: put them to (~~death~~) flight



A5 NFCS 552: 275-6; MRS JOYCE, 3 PEARCE TERRACE, THURLES. COLLECTOR: AGNES JOYCE, 3 PEARCE TERRACE, THURLES, CLOCHAR NA TOIRBHIRTE [SCHOOL], DURLAS ÉILE, ELIOGARTY, TIOBRAD ÁRAINN. TEACHER: AN tSR. AODÁN.

[p.275]<sup>96</sup> 4. The local place-names are Butler's Field, Maher's Field, Fitzgerald's Field, Walsh's Field, Hacket's Field, Delahunty's Field, Breveton's Field, Corcoran's Field. Here are some roads. "Slieve-na-mon Road" because one day Fionn MacCumáil held a gathering for all the women to come together, and he said he would marry the woman that would reach the wining post first.

He picked out the woman he liked best and gave her a short way to go. When the race was finished the woman<sup>97</sup> he picked out won. He married her. The King told them to go to his [p.276]<sup>98</sup> house. He killed the three women and Fionn MacCumáil and his wife drank poison<sup>99</sup> and died.

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<sup>96</sup> Available at NFC, UCD, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4922205/4860605>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>97</sup> MS: women

<sup>98</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4922205/4860606>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>99</sup> MS: poisin

**B. ACCOUNTS OF FINN'S DEATH, SCOTLAND**B1 NLS 73.1.24, pp. 132-9.<sup>100</sup>EACHDRAIDH MAR A CHAIDH FIONN A MHARBHADH<sup>101</sup>

Air bhith do dhuine aridh dan gaoirte A certain man, who is called Taileachd  
Taileachd-mac-a-Chuiligeadan, mar ainm, mac Chuiligeadan in name, was living on  
a' gabhail taimheachd ann an Oilean Loch the Island of Loch Iubhair beside Ben  
an Iubhair Iaimh ri Bein Mhoir ann an More in Glen Dochart, and who had a fairy  
Gleunn Dochart, aig an robh leannan sìth, lover as a companion in that place.  
mar chonaltra san aite sin.

Air bhith do Fhionn Machd-Chuthill air When Fionn mac Cumhail found out about  
faoitean fiosrachadh mo tiomchuill, chaidh her, he went in to see her and he enjoyed  
è asteach ga faichdeasan, agus ghabh e staying with her. However, when Taileachd  
tlachd a'm fuireach comhladh ri. Ach fa eventually found out that Fionn was  
dheireadh, air bhi do Thaleach air faighean meeting his lover frequently, after asking  
amach gun robh Fionn aig tachairt tric, an them about it they [Taileachd and Fionn]  
rathad a leannainn. became jealous of one another to such an

Air dha rannsugha eaturadh mo dheibhine. extent that they were going to strike each  
thuitedh leodha le cheil', ann an eud co other.  
mòr, agus gun rabhadar a dol a bhualadh a  
cheile.

Ach a deir ise gu dianum dhuibh riaghuilt, But she says 'Let me make a judgment for  
na bitheabh am feirg ri cheile. you, don't be angry with one another.'

1	Am fear is fearr buaidh a'n leum, sè leannas mi fein le tlachd,  Dhimeach na laoich an-sin amach  Leum Tailach on oilean air tir	1	Whoever accomplishes the leap best, it is he that I shall follow with pleasure,  The warriors went out then,  Taileachd leapt from the island to
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<sup>100</sup> Noted as 'Edinburgh, Advocates Library, Fletcher's Collection, pp. 132-9' in Campbell, *Leabhar na Feinne*, p. 195. On the updated manuscript call number, see MacKechnie, *Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts*, pp. 277-8.

<sup>101</sup> Due to inconsistencies apparent in the transcription of this account in Campbell, *Leabhar na Feinne*, pp. 195-6, e.g. 'mac-Chuiligadan' in the first instance of this name, later appearing as 'Clann Chuilige(a)dar', this is my own transcription from NLS 73.1.24. English translation is also my own. This account would seem to be the basis of the tale as re-told in Watson, 'The Place-names of Breadalbane', pp. 276-9; Gillies, *In Famed Breadalbane*, p. 337; and MacLean, 'Taileachd mac Cuilgeadain'.

- tiram, is lèum Fionn gu sgiobalt,  
treun na dheigh.
- 2 A deir Tailachd,  
Leammams an linn air m'ais  
Is mur leum thusa a'n coi'r do chuil,  
Bidh agamsa a'n cliù gu ceart.
- 3 Leum iad araon air an ais  
Ach, se Tailach a leum an toiseach,  
Agus bha è air tìor tioram san  
oilean,  
Ach, air leum an sin do dh' Fhionn,  
Chaidh è foidh gu cheann.
- 4 Agus ghlachd Tailachd an-sin an  
corom bho, thaobh cuil, air agus  
bhuin è an ceann do dh'fheann  
mura burrain e riamh tionndadh  
rish.
- 5 Theich Tailach le h-eagal fuathas  
na fheinne, agus ceann Fhionn aige  
Gu'n d'shrainig è ceann Loch-  
Laoidain, agus air bhi dha' sgi ga  
ghiulan, chuireadh leis air stob è,  
air torn dubh aig àth na h-amhann  
dan gaoirthar Ath Chinn ò sin  
amach.
- 6 Agus air do'n fheinn corp Fhionn  
fhaoitain ri taobh an lochain,  
Thogadar air Riogh 's air Triath,  
Air ghuailibh briatha nan laoch,  
Is dhamhluichd sinne è air cùl tuim,  
An uaigh da'n gaoirear Cilfhinn  
mar ainm.
- 7 Bha an Fheinn uile fodh throm
- dry land, and Fionn leapt agilely and  
strongly after him.
- 2 Taileachd said:  
Let me leap backwards over the strait  
And if you don't leap the strait  
backwards,  
I will deservedly have the renown.
- 3 They both leaped backwards  
But it was Taileachd jumped first,  
And he was on the dry land of the  
island,  
But when Fionn then jumped,  
He sank up to his neck.
- 4 And then Taileachd took the  
opportunity from behind him, and he  
removed Fionn's head before he  
could even turn around to [face] him.
- 5 Taileachd fled because of a terrible  
fear of the Fían, and he had Fionn's  
head  
Until he reached the top of Loch  
Laidon, and when he was tired of  
carrying it, it was put on a stake by  
him, on a blackthorn at the ford of  
the river which has been called Àth  
Chinn since then.
- 6 And when the Fían found Fionn's  
body beside Loch an Iubhair,  
They lifted our King and our Lord,  
On the fine shoulder of the warriors,  
And we buried it behind a hillock,  
In the grave which is called Killin.
- 7 All of the Fían were livid

	fheirg		
	Co dhianadh orra an tair,		Who would cause them harm?
	Dhiomaichidair air toir a chinn,		They went in pursuit of his head,
	Na suinn mo'n do gabh iad caird.		The warriors, before they rested.
8	Gus an d'fhuaras leo, ceann an	8	Until it was found by them, the
	laoich,		warrior's head,
	Air cnoc fraoich, an taobh Ath-		On a heather hill, beside Àth Chinn,
	Chinn,		
	Is rinneas toireachd, air an làimh,		And a search was carried out for the
			hand,
	Bha co dana is dol na dhàil.		that was bold enough to go against
			him [Fionn].
9	Chuir iad miar foidh dheud fios,	9	They put a finger under his tooth of
			wisdom,
	Dhinnseadh dhoibh am fios mur		that would show them the truth,
	bha,		
	Taileach a bhi fo fhiamh,		Taileachd, who was fearful
	Air son a ghnìomh am Beinn-All-		because of his action [was] in Ben
	Air.		Alder.
10	Thuaras Tailachd ann san uaigh,	10	Taileachd was found there in the
			grave,
	Is chuirreadar gu cruaidh ris ceisd:		And he was questioned fiercely:
	A Thailich an aireach leat Fionn,		Taileachd do you regret [killing]
			Fionn?
	Is fhreagair gu h-aingidh air ais:		And he answered back wickedly:
	Cha'n aireach mur aireach le Goll		I don't if Goll of the tricks does not
	na'n Cleas		regret
	An ruaig a chuir è air Clann-		His persecution of Clann
	Chuilgeadan.		Chuilgeadan.
11	An lamh dheas air son a' ghnìomh,	11	The right hand, for the deed,
	Bhuin sinn do Thaileach gu fìor,		Indeed we did remove from
			Taileachd,
	Bhuin sinn deth an lamh eile,		We removed his other hand,
	Air son gnìomh na mor chionta.		for the terrible deed.
	Chuir iad ceisd an dara huair,		They asked a second time,

- 12<sup>102</sup> A dubhairt Taileach:  
Air mo Riogh nach aireach  
Mur aireach le Goll na'n Cleass,  
An ruaig a chuir è air Clann-  
Chuilgeadan.
- 13 Shniomh sinn an leth chos o'n toin,  
  
Le teannachuir righin chruaidh,  
Agus phronn sinn a chos eile,  
Le leachdibh cruaidhe na sceire,  
A Thaileach an aireach leat Fionn  
  
Dubhairt Taileach:  
Air mo Riogh, nach aireach leom,  
Mur h-aireach le Goll na'n cleas,  
An ruaig a chuir è air Clanna-  
Chuilgeadan.
- 14 An da shuil a bha na cheann,  
Loisg sinn le lionn gaoileach garg.  
A Thaileach an aireach leat Fionn.  
  
Dubhairt Taileach fa dheireadh  
thall:  
Air mo Riogh nach aireach leam,  
Mur h-aireach le Goll na'n Cleas  
An ruaig a chuir è air Clanna-  
Chuilgedan
- 15 Chuir sinne air sleagha troimh chriodha  
Thailich, is mharbh sinn è.
- 12 Taoileachd said:  
By my King, I do not  
If Goll of the tricks does not regret  
His persecution of Clann  
Chuilgeadan.
- 13 We removed one leg from the  
bottom,  
With a hard pair of steel tongs,  
And we pulverised his other leg,  
With the sharp slabs of the rock.  
Taileachd do you regret [killing]  
Fionn?  
Taileachd said:  
By my King, I do not,  
If Goll of the tricks does not regret  
His persecution of Clann  
Chuilgeadan.
- 14 The two eyes that were in his head,  
We burned with rough boiling liquid.  
Taileachd do you regret [killing]  
Fionn?  
Taileachd finally said:  
By my King, I do not,  
If Goll of the tricks does not regret  
His persecution of Clann  
Chuilgeadan.
- 15 We put our daggers through the heart  
of  
Taileachd and killed him.

<sup>102</sup> MS: 11. *Recte* 12. The number 11 is given of this verse in the MS and all subsequent verse numbers follow accordingly. They have been re-numbered 12-15 here.

B2 EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, LA.III.475, P.108.

BÀS FHINN LE TAOILEACH<sup>103</sup>

1	Elan an uidhir, Leannan sìth, Leum mar dhuais graidh Leum Taoileach mach as an Elan,	1	Eilean Iubhair, a fairy lover, A leap as a reward for love Taoileach leapt out of the island
4	Leum Fionn a mach Leum Taoileach a steach an coinneamh a chuil Leum Fionn, is thuit san uisge. Chuir Taoileach an ceann deth.		Fionn leapt out Taoileach leapt in backwards Fionn leapt and fell in the water Taoileach removed his head.
8	Dh' fhalbh leis a' cheann, is chuir air stob aig Ath Fhinn, aig ceann shuas na cruaidh an Ranach. Dh' fhalbh iad an toir iar Fionn.		He left with the head and put it on a stake The Ford of Finn, at the other side of the mountain Rannoch. They left in pursuit of Fionn.
	Cha robh fios co thug an ceann deth ; Thachair iad air a cheann. Ma 's fìor a labhair an ceann 'Nuair tharruing iad deud ; Thuir aon dui, se sid guth Fhinn. Guth chinn air a chrann. Thug iad a-nuas an ceann. Chuir fear a mheur fo dheud fios, fhuair fios co rinn an gnìomh. Thuir Oisean mac an Rìgh. diolaidh sinn bas Fhinn.		It wasn't known who had removed his head. They came upon his head. If what the head said was true, 'When they pulled a tooth, one of them said 'That's Fionn's voice.' His head's voice on the tree. They took down the head. One put a finger under his tooth of wisdom, [and] found out who did the deed. Oisein son of the King said 'We will avenge Fionn's death.'
	No 's masladh gu brath dhuinn.		Otherwise is forever an insult to us.
12	Dh' fhalbhas air toir air Taoileach ; Fhuair e an namh aig ceann shuas Beinn Arlar. Thaoileach an aithreach leat Fionn,	12	They left in pursuit of Taoileach; The enemy was found at the other side of Ben Alder. Taoileach, do you regret [killing] Fionn?

<sup>103</sup> Transcription of Gaelic from Campbell, *Leabhar na Feinne*, p. 196. English translation is my own. Here, Campbell does not print the accent above the *a*, however I have added this and use it consistently throughout this thesis.

	Air mo righ, cha 'n aithreach leam ; Mar aithreach le Goll nan cleas.		By my King, I do not If Goll of the tricks doesn't regret
16	An cath ruaig bh' air Clann Chuilegadan.	16	The persecution of Clann Chuilegadan.
	An lamh dheas a rinn an gníomh. Bheir sinn do Thaoileach gu fíor, Bheir sinn deth an lamh eile.		The right hand that did the deed We removed from Taoileach, We removed the other hand.
20	Ann an cionta na moir choirre.  A Thaoileach, an aithreach leat Fíonn,  Air mo righ cha 'n aithreach leam. Shníomh sinn deth an leth chos	20	We will remove the other hand, guilty of the terrible crime.  Taoileach, do you regret [killing] Fíonn?  By my King, I do not. We removed one leg
24	Le teanchar gramail cruaidh ; Phronn sinn a choss eile, Le leacaibh garbh na sgeire ; A Thaoileach an aithreach leat Fíonn,	24	With strong steel tongs. We pulverised the other leg. With the sharp slabs of the rock Taoileach, do you regret [killing] Fíonn?
28	Air mo righ cha 'n aithreach leam. An da shuil bha na cheann, Loisg sinn le líonn goileach dearg, Bhuin sin an ceann de Thaoileach,	28	By my King, I do not. The two eyes that were in his head We burned with boiling hot liquid. We removed Taoileach's head
32	An comain an droch ghníomh a rinn e  Nan abradh Taoileach gu 'm bu bheud  An ceann a thoirt de chom nan ceud,  Cuach Fhinn bheiridh beo,	32	To avenge the evil deed that he had done.  If Taoileach said that it was an evil deed  To remove the head from the body of the hundreds Finn's drinking cup will bring him to life
36	chuireadh an ceann ris a chlo Phill sinn gu bronach tuirseach Ghiulainear leinn ceann Fhinn, Gun t-aite an d' fhuair a choluinn ;	36	The head would bring back his (spirit) We returned mournful and tired Finn's head was carried by us To the place where his body was found.

40 Ghiulan sinn e gu aluinn.  
Air chrannaibh sleagh Arda,  
Dh' adhlacadh leinn e an cill,  
Is deirear Cill Fhinn ris gu 'n duigh.

40 We carried it gloriously  
On the shafts of tall spears  
We interred it in a graveyard  
And it is called Killin now.



B3 SSS 1960.189.B3; ALICK MACLEAN, ULLAPOOL. COLLECTOR: JOHN MCINNES, 7 AUGUST 1960.

FIONN AGUS LOCH LURGAINN

- John MacInnes 'S a-nise bha naidheachd agaibh Now you had a story about Fionn  
mu dhèidhinn Fionn agus Loch and Loch Lurgainn. How did that  
Lurgainn. Ciamar a bha sin a' dol go now?  
a-nise?
- Alick MacLean Bha Fionn, bha e na bhalach beag Fionn was a small boy and his  
agus bha ' mhathair ann an àite ris mother was in a place that they  
an canadh Ùrsaig, ri taobh call Ùrsaig, beside a river there,  
abhainn ann an sin, tha sin shìos that's down at Bad a' Ghail. Loch  
aig Bad a' Ghail. Tha Loch Bad Bad a' Ghail is beside Loch  
a' Ghail ri taobh Loch Os[g]aig Osgaig and there's a river  
is tha abhainn eatorra. Bha iad dol between them. They were going  
an t-slighe an t-àma sin, is mìle that way that time and they went  
sìos an rathad sin leotha is thionn' a mile down that way they  
iad an t-aillt. crossed the stream.
- John MacInnes Dìreach. Exactly.
- Alick MacLean Bha iad a' fuireach an-sin agus They were living there and there  
bha seann duine eile a' fuireach was another old man living in  
ann am Bad a' Ghail. Chan eil sin Bad a' Ghail. That's only at Cros  
ach aig Cros Ruadh, far a bheil Ruadh, where the houses are, you  
taighean nas fhaide shìos na sin. know, further down there. And  
Agus bha i airson am balach a she wanted to baptise the boy.  
bhaisteadh. Ach cha robh fhios But she didn't know when he  
aic' cuin a bhiodh e fiot air a dhol would be fit to walk to  
a choiseachd a Srath Pheofhair Strathpeffer to baptise him. And  
airson a bhaisteadh. Agus chaidh i she went to where the old man  
far a robh am bodach an-sin agus was and he said to her 'you will  
thuir e rith' 'nì thu,' ars' eis' make,' he said 'a barley cake and  
'bonnach eòrna,' agus ars eis' 'cuir double it up then bring the boy  
dùbailt e' agus bheir a-mach am out with you then tomorrow and  
balach còmhlà riut a-rèisd a- he'll walk up the side of Stac and  
màireach agus dèanaidh e if he keeps up with you while

coiseachd an àrd cliathaich Stac agus ma chumas eis' coiseachd riut 's e ag ithe am bonnach seo tha na làimh faodaidh thu falbh leis uair sam bith. Agus 's ann mar seo a bha. Agus tha am balach, bha e a' cumail coiseachd ri ' mhàthair agus e ag ithe à làimh am bonnach èorna. Agus dh'fhalbh i ris a-rèisd, ga bhaisteadh, agus thill e air ais, tha glè-cholais gun do dh'aithnich e tè de na sìtheanan eile aig an Loch Droma, a mharbh athair. Agus thuir e ri mhathair gun robh e a' dol na dhèidh. 'Cha teid,' ars is', 'mà thèid bidh thu sabaid a h-uile gin dhiubh,' ars is' ach cha deach e fada gus an do dh'aithnich iad cò a bh'ac' agus thàinig iad as a dhèidh. A-nis a mhàthair, cha b'urrainn dhi cumail ris an ann agus 's ann a rug e air a' dhà lurgann a air mhàthair agus thilg e tarsainn air a mhuin i. Cha do choimhead e ri dad tuillidh, bha e a' ruith all the time 's cha tàinig iad suas cho fada na dhèidh ach ruith eis', lean e air a' ruith agus nuair a thàinig e gu mullach Suragan Agus bha e dol a' leigeil dha anail an-sin, agus nuair a chaidh e a leigeil anail an sin cha robh aig' ach na dà, an dà luirg aic' agus nuair a mhothaich e eating the barley cake in his hand you can go with him. And that's what happened. And the boy, he was keeping step with his mother and eating the barley cake out of his hand. Then she left with him, to baptise him, and on the way back, it seems that he recognised one of the fairies at Loch Droma that had killed his father. And he said to his mother that he was going after them. 'You won't,' she said, 'if you do, you will have to take on every single one of them,' she said but it didn't take long until they recognised who they had and they came after him. Now his mother, she couldn't keep up with him and so he took hold of his mother's two shins and threw her across his back. He didn't look at anything anymore, he was running all the time, they didn't press their pursuit but he ran, he kept on running and when he came to the top of Suragan, and he was going to catch his breath there, and when he went to catch his breath all he had were her two shins, and when he realised that's all he had he threw them out into the Loch and that's where [the name] Loch Lurgann or Lurgainn came from.

- nach robh aig' ach sin, thilg e a-mach air an loch iad. Agus 's ann à sin a thàinig Loch Lurgann neo Lurgainn.
- John MacInnes Agus Loch na Droma far an do thog e i, an ann? And Loch na Droma is where he lifted her up, is it?
- Alick MacLean Loch an Droma, tha fhios agad, shuas an-sin. Loch an Druim, 's e an rud ceart a th' air. Sin an ainm ceart air. Loch an Droma, you know, up there. Loch an Druim is the right name for it. That the proper name for it.
- John MacInnes Dìreach. Exactly.
- Alick MacLean Not Loch Droma. Not Loch Droma.
- John MacInnes Agus an uair sin, càit' an deach Fionn fhèin, bha sibh a' ràdh gun deach a mharbhadh a-rèisd? And then where did Fionn himself go, you were saying that he was killed then?
- Alick MacLean Chaidh a mharbhadh a-rèist ann an àite ris an can iad Asainte Bheag. Bha e a' dol timcheall sin, dol an rathad eile, thill e a Loch an Inbhir an àird is mar sin, na, uill, shnàmh, bha an rathad ann an Loch an Inbhir. Asainte bheag – ciad taigh gamekeeper a thachair riut. He was killed then in a place they call Little Assynt. He was going around there, going the other road, he came back up to Loch Inver and then he, well, he swam, the road was in Loch Inver. Asainte Bheag – that was the first gamekeeper's house you encountered.
- John MacInnes Seadh. Yes.
- Alick MacLean Agus bha blàr aca ann an sin, o bha sabaid chùrs innt'. And they had a battle there, oh he had a fierce battle there.
- John MacInnes Le na Fianaichean fhèin? With the Fianna themselves?
- Alick MacLean 'S e, 's e. Agus 's an-sin ' chaidh a mharbhadh. Yes. And that's where he was killed.

B4 SSS 1964.028.A13; ALLAN WALKER, KILLIN. COLLECTOR: ANNE ROSS, MAY 1964.<sup>104</sup>

FINGAL'S MURDER AND OSSIAN'S GRAVE

- Anne Ross And you never heard any stories about Finn and his men sleeping in caves waiting to be wakened?
- Allan Walker Oh, I've heard stories of that, yes. In the hour of Scotland's extremity they, they've only got to blow the horn and Fionn and his men will waken up and come to the rescue.
- Anne Ross Where is that cave supposed to be where they sleep?
- Allan Walker Well, I don't know that.
- Anne Ross No, there's no local tales?
- Allan Walker But Fingal himself is buried in Killin of course.
- Anne Ross What story did you hear about that?
- Allan Walker About Fingal?
- Anne Ross Yes, about him being buried there.
- Allan Walker Well, I heard that Fingal was murdered on the shores of Loch Dochart by an enemy when he was lying on his stomach drinking.
- Anne Ross From the water?
- Allan Walker Drinking from the water.
- Anne Ross Yes.
- Allan Walker He was lying down and this enemy came up and struck his head off. And that was the reason that he was brought from Loch Dochart and buried in Killin.
- Anne Ross Did his head fall into the Loch?
- Allan Walker Yes but it would be recovered, no doubt.
- Anne Ross Yes, but it was cut off and ...
- Allan Walker Yes.
- Anne Ross Yes, yes. And it's just called Loch Dochart, is it?
- Allan Walker Loch Dochart, yes. There's Loch Dochart and Loch Iuir there. Of course, Loch Iuir the lake of the yews.
- Anne Ross Yes. And then he was buried in Killin?
- Allan Walker He was buried in Killin and his son, Ossian, is buried in the Small

<sup>104</sup> Available at SSS, *Tobar an Dualchais: Kist o Riches*, <<http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/50940/537>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

Glen. Leading from Crieff you know.

Anne Ross

Yes.

Allan Walker

Funny thing. I read this somewhere. Where, I don't know, many years ago, that between the 15 and the 45 when the soldiers, the English soldiers were making a road through the Small Glen that they had to disturb Ossian's grave and the word got through the Highlands that they were going to disturb it and when, at, at the time they dug through Ossian's grave in the Small Glen over 8,000 people had congregated from all over the Highlands and I believe that they treated the body, which incidentally was a skeleton of a man about 8-foot high, that they buried him elsewhere in the Small Glen but the spot has been lost.<sup>105</sup>

Anne Ross

Aha, yes, yes, yes. Do you know where the spot, where he's supposed to be buried in. You know, in, according to your own tradition. Do you know the place is in the Small Glen?

Allan Walker

I don't, no.

Anne Ross

There's no...

Allan Walker

That was *terra incognita* to me when I was a child.

Anne Ross

Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Allan Walker

Yes.

Anne Ross

Who told you the story about Fingal having his head cut off into the Loch, was it...

Allan Walker

The late Donald Haggart told me

Anne Ross

He did, yes yes.

Allan Walker

The late Donald Haggart.

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<sup>105</sup> An account of this can be found in numerous sources. See, for example, C[halmers], 'The Country of the Clan Ivor', 194; [Rogers], *The Beauties of Upper Strathearn*, pp. 119-20; and [M'Lean], *Dunkeld: Its straths and glens*, pp. 103-4.

**C. ACCOUNTS WHICH PRESUPPOSE FINN'S DEATH, CANADA**

C1 ANTIGONISH, NOVA SCOTIA, STFX, CELTIC STUDIES DEPARTMENT GF266i02; JOE MACINTYRE, BOISDALE, CAPE BRETON COUNTY, NOVA SCOTIA. COLLECTOR: JOHN WILLIAM SHAW.<sup>106</sup>

FIONN MAC CUMHAIL AGUS AM BUAILTEIN

Joe MacIntyre	<p>Nuair a fhuair Fionn am bàs, tha teans nach robh gnothach aig Dia ris idir. 'S ann dhan droch àite a chaidh e agus bha buailtean aige mar a bha i aca a' bualadh sìl, ach cha robh an iall a bh' ann an fhaireachdainn dha idir agus thàinig fear dhe na naoimh an uair sin, Naomh Eòs, agus dh'fhaighnich e dheth, thuir e ris 'Fàbhar sam bith a tha a dhìth ort fhaighinn, bheir mise dhut e.'</p> <p>Theann e a cheann ris, 'Uill, fàbhar tha a dhìth ormsa fhaighinn, thoir dhòmhsa an iall 's a mhaireas an t-sùiste.</p>	<p>When Fionn died, there's a chance that God had nothing to do with it. He went to the bad place and he had a flail like they had for threshing the grain but the strap was not suitable for it and one of the saints came then, Saint Joseph, and he asked him, he said to him, 'Any favour you need, I'll give it to you.'</p> <p>He turned his head towards him, 'Well, a favour I need, give me the strap so that the flail will last.</p>
John William Shaw	Seadh.	Yes.
Joe MacIntyre	Tha e a' cumail an deamhain air falbh.'	It's keeping the devil away.'

<sup>106</sup> Available at St. Francis Xavier University, *Sruth nan Gaidheal: Gael Stream*, <<http://gaelstream.stfx.ca/greenstone/collect/capebret/index/assoc/HASH61c4/39ec3649.dir/GF266i02.m3>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

**D. ACCOUNTS WHICH PRESUPPOSE FINN'S DEATH, IRELAND**

D1 NFC 559: 546-8; JOHN WALSH, ROSCARBON, DRUMCONG P.O., CO. LEITRIM.  
COLLECTOR: THOMAS CASEY, 1938.

[p.546] There was at one time two giants in this part of the county. One of them lived on Shee-Mór and the other one on Shee-Beag.

Shee-Mór is a big hill situated almost two<sup>107</sup> miles North of Carrick-on-Shannon and Shee-Beag is something [of] a smaller hill than Shee-Mór and is situated about five miles North-East of Shee-Mór and thus they got the names Shee-Mór and Shee-Beag. It happened that there arose some [p.547] dispute between the two giants and the only way this dispute could be decided was to fix a day and on this day each of the giants was to stand on top of his own hill and to get two<sup>108</sup> huge stones and give one stone to each of the giants.

They were to throw these two<sup>109</sup> stones one towards the other and which ever stone travelled the farthest the thrower of that stone was to have the victory.

The two giants threw the stones one towards the other with all their might and it happened that the stones struck each other exactly between the two<sup>110</sup> hills this ended the [p.548] dispute between the two giants. It was said when the stones struck against each other that the sound was heard for a great number of miles around.

John Walsh also told me that Fionn-Mac-Cumhaill is buried on the top of Shee-Beag.

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<sup>107</sup> MS: too

<sup>108</sup> MS: too

<sup>109</sup> MS: too

<sup>110</sup> MS: too

D2 NFC 791: 442-3; HUGH M'CANN (74), SHOEMAKER, GREAGHITTA, BAILIEBORO, KNOCKBRIDGE, CLANKEE, CO. CAVAN. COLLECTOR: P. J. GAYNOR, 16 OCTOBER 1941.

[p.442]

TWENTY-SECOND STORY BY H. M'CANN

In the townland of CARRIAGACRUMMIN, near LOUGHNAGLARE, there is a rock known as "The Raven's Rock." [p.443] In a stone on this rock there are the traces of a man's elbow and knees. but the narrator (Hugh M'Cann) never heard any legend about it. There is, he said, a great stone on James O'Reilly's hill in the townland of SEEFINN. It is said that CONN M'COUL, brother of FINN M'COUL threw that stone from the LOUGH-IN-LAY Mountain about seven miles away. The old people said that CONN lived at the LOUGHINLAY mountain (which is in the parish of Kingscourt), and that FINN lived at SEEFINN. One of the brothers made a hole in GREAGHITTA hill and called it "TUBBERADHEEVY." There is a grand well in it and the people are using it still. There is a large mound on the top of MURMOD HILL, near Virginia, and about seven miles from SEEFINN. The mound is known as "FINN M'COUL'S GRAVE."



D3 NFC 830: 334; MRS KATE KING (60), FARMER'S WIFE, MURMOD, LURGAN, CASTLE RAHAN, CAVAN. COLLECTOR: P. J. GAYNOR, MAY 1942.

[p.334]

FINN M'COOL'S GRAVE

There is a big mound on Murmod Hill, and they say that Finn M'Cool is buried in it. They call it Finn M'Cool's Grave. It was said that he lived on Murmod Hill and there's a well there and they call it "Finn M'Cool's Well." It was said that the rocks of stone at Ardlow were fired by Finn from Murmod Hill to scatter a crowd of people that were drawing near Ardlow cross-roads.

D4 NFC 1223: 227; ORDNANCE SURVEY LETTERS: MAYO. II. TS. P. 181; MS. P. 454.  
COLLECTOR: T. O'CONOR, CROSSBOYNE PARISH, AUGUST 1838.

[p.454] There is pointed out to the south of the ruin (of Cloonmore Church in Lissadoo townland) and near Geata na Sgread a spot where there was formerly an entrance to a cave, that ran underground as far as Doonard in the county of Galway, where Fionn MacCumhail is supposed to lie interned.

The entrance is now closed, and all that<sup>111</sup> is memorable with the cave is that a schoolmaster, it is said, taught in it when schools were suppressed in Ireland and that a priest was wont to celebrate mass for a congregation therein when persecution was exercised against priests in this country.

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<sup>111</sup> MS: this

D5 NFCS 66: 389; BRIGID NÍ FLANNADA. COLLECTOR: CRIOSTÍNA NÍ FLANNCHADHA, AN GLEANN, CILL CHUIMÍN, CO. GALWAY, 23 MAY 1938. TEACHER: EIBHLÍN, BEAN UÍ DHUIBHGHIOLLA.

[p.389]<sup>112</sup> Bhí baint ag na Fianna i n-áit annseo. Tugtar Cairn Saoide Finn ar an áit sin. Tá Fionn Mac Cumail curta ann agus nuair a bí na laocra ag imeacht rinne siad an cairn sin ós a chionn.<sup>113</sup> [p.389] The Fían had a connection to a place around here. That place is called Cairn Saoidhe Finn.<sup>114</sup> Fionn Mac Cumhaill is buried there and when the warriors were leaving they made the carn over him.

<sup>112</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613701/4610206>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>113</sup> MS: ós a gcionn

<sup>114</sup> This appears to mean Carn Suidhe Finn.

D6 NFCS 138: 355; PATRICK GIBBONS, PROSPECT, CO. MAYO. 76. COLLECTOR: NORA FLANAGAN, TEEVENACROAGHY, CO. MAYO, TAOBH NA CRUAICHE, AUGHVALE, MUIRISC, CO. MAYO. TEACHER: N. NÍ MHÓRÁIN.

[p.355]<sup>115</sup>

"Historic"

13. Finn McCool's grave said to be in Prospect, 2 miles from this school (see page 11),<sup>116</sup> one mile south of Killadangan school.

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<sup>115</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4428021/4368685>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>116</sup> The page number is now NFCS 138: 357. This is part of the same entry, the section in question is 27.3 (c) and reads '[Mass rock] at Prospect (Killadangan) near little graveyard.' Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4428021/4368687>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

D7 NFCS 140: 51-4; MICHEÁL BREATHNACH (55), CNOC LEACA LÍAGA. COLLECTOR: SEÁN DE BÚRCA, GORT AN TÚAIR, BAILE AN CAISIL, CO. MUIGEO, BALLYCASTLE BOYS' [SCHOOL], BALLYCASTLE, CO. MAYO 19 JANUARY 1938. TEACHER: MICHEÁL DE BÚRCA.

[p.51]<sup>117</sup>

Mo Ćeantar féin

Táim i mo cómnuide i nGort an Túair, i bparóiste Leacainn agus i mbarúntacht Tír Anlaid. Tá timceall tríocha tígite ann anois agus bí timceall céad agus caoga tígite ann fadó roim bánúgadh 1859. Slinn atá ar an gcuid is mó de na tígítib. Táatar ag tógáil tígite nua anois. Ceatarnaig an sloinnead is coicteann íart ar áit seo.

Deireann cuid de na sean daoinib gur Gort An Iubhair an t-ainm atá ar an áit seo, mar geall ar go raib gort mór Iúbhair íart annseo fadó. Deireann cuid eile gur Gort an Túair an [p.52]<sup>118</sup> t-ainm atá ar an áit seo mar geall ar go raib gort annseo fadó chun éadaig a geallad ann.

Tá go leór daoine íart annseo ós cionn 70 bliadain. Tá sean duine<sup>119</sup> tuas i gCnoc Leaca Líaga ós cionn 70 bliadain. Peadar Breatnac is ainm dó. Tá go leór amráin agus sean scéalta aige. Is féidir leis scéalta a innsint i mBéarla agus i nGáedilg aict is fearr leis an Gáedlig. Bí sean duine i Lorg na gCon agus fúair sé bás bliadain ó soin. Pádraic Mac Giollarnát an t-ainm a bí

[p.51]

My Home District

I live in Gortatoor, in the parish of Lackan and in the barony of Tirawley. There are about thirty houses there now and there was about a hundred and fifty houses long ago before the depopulation of 1859. Most of the houses have shingle-roofs. New houses are being built now. O'Caharney is the common surname here.

Some of the old people say that 'Gort an Iubhair' [the Field of the Yew] is the name of this place. Because there was a big field of yew trees long ago. Some others say that Gort an Túair [the Field of the Bleach] is the [p.52] name of this place because there was a field for bleaching clothes here long ago.

There are plenty of people around here who are over 70 years of age. There is an old man up in Lackanhill who's more than 70 years old. Peadar Breathnach is his name. He has plenty of songs and old stories. He can tell stories in English and in Irish but he prefers Irish. There was an old man in Lorg na gCon and he died a year ago. Pádraic Mac Giollarnáth was his

<sup>117</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4428026/4369343>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>118</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4428026/4369344>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>119</sup> MS: sean ~~da~~ duine

air. B'í sé indánn sean scéalta agus sean amráin a innsing i nGáeilg agus i mBéarla. Téigead na cigirí scol síos<sup>120</sup> cuige cun sean amráin a fágáil uaid.

Tá a lán sean foitraça tart an áit seo agus go mór mór ar taob Cnuic Leaca Líaga an áit a bánúgadh trí teallaigh. Ó Duibín, Ó Taidg, agus Maol Páidín i 1895. B'é Ministéir De Búrca a rinne an bánúgadh le talam a fágáil le mairt a tógáil i gcóir Sasana. Tairig gaç teac díobta sin céad punt d'on tígearna act íad a fágáil ann act ní fágfaide. Do siubail ceann de na Duibin agus ceann de na Taidg cóm fada le Droichead Áta go bfuigead siad [p.53]<sup>121</sup> don Oileán Úr ar long. Nuair sroic siad Droichead Áta bí síad gearr d'en airgead. Siúbail síad ar ais go Cnoc Leaca<sup>122</sup> Líaga agus roinnead an talam orá arís. Ó cuirread stad leis an imirce níor imtiç mórán daoine as an áit seo don Oileán Úr.

Lúadað ainm na háite seo go minic in amráin. Luadað é ins an amhrán a rinne Eogain Ó Duibin.

"Go Cnoc Leaca Líaga do tríoll me as Laragan mór. B'í Peadar im diaid ann. Ní raib caom air tuirse ná brón."

Talam saidbir féaraç atá sa gceanntar seo. Níl ach abainn amáin ann; Aba Lorg na gCon. Deirtear go raib Taoiseach dárð ainm Fionn 'na cómnuide i

name. He could tell stories and sing songs in Irish and in English. The school inspectors used to go down to him to get old songs from him.

There are a lot of old ruins around here and especially on the Lackanhill side from where three families were evicted – the Duibhins, the Tadhgs and the Maol Phaidíns in 1895. It was the Reverend Burke that evicted them to get land to build a mart for England. Each of those houses offered the landlord a hundred pounds to let them stay there but they wouldn't let them stay. One of the Duibhins and one of the Tadhgs walked as far as Drogheda so that they could go to [p.53] America by boat. When they reached Drogheda they were short of money. They walked back to Lackanhill and the land was divided amongst them again. Since emigration stopped not many people have gone from here to America.

The name of this place was often mentioned in songs. It was mentioned in the song that Eoghain Ó Duibhin wrote.

"I went to Lackanhill from Laragan Mór. Peadar came there after me. He wasn't sorrowful nor tired."

This area has rich, grassy land. There's only one river there; the river of Lorg na gCon. They say that there was a leader called Fionn living in Seefinn with

<sup>120</sup> MS: ~~ins~~síos

<sup>121</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4428026/4369345>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>122</sup> MS: leac

Suide Fionn le'a cuin agus<sup>123</sup> a capall. his dogs and his horse. The dogs used to Téigead na cuin treasna na haibne ag Lorg cross the river at Lorg na gCon. When na gCon. Núair a fúair Fionn bás cuiread é Fionn died he was buried with the dogs lé na cuin agus leis an gcapall. Cúaid beirt and the horse. Two of the Burkes went de na Búrcaig síos faoi'n dtalam i Suide underground and they found dog bones and Fionn agus fuairadar cnáma con agus horse bones but they didn't find any human cnáma capaill aet ní fuairadar aon cnám bones Then the light went out on them and duine ann. Annsin cúaid an solus as oría they couldn't go any further. There's a big agus níorb féidir leó dul níos fuide. Tá wood [p.54] at Clúan an Chasa. There's a coill mór [p.54]<sup>124</sup> ag<sup>125</sup> Clúan an Casa. Tá turn there too. Clúan an Chasa was full of cas ann freisin. Bí Cluain an Casa líonta water once but the Burkes made drains and úair amáin lé uisge aet rinne na Búrcaig drained the water from it. díogranna agus leigeadar an t-uisce as.

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<sup>123</sup> MS: ~~aga~~ agus

<sup>124</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4428026/4369346>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>125</sup> MS: ig

D8 NFCS 282: 242-3; SEÁN Ó CRÓINÍN (82). COLLECTOR: SEÁN Ó CRÓINÍN, CÚLOM, COM SHEÓLA [NATIONAL SCHOOL], KILMOCOMOGUE, BEANNTRAIĞHE, CO. CHORCAIGHE, 1938. TEACHER: CONCHOBHAR Ó SÉAGHDHA.

[p.242]<sup>126</sup> Nuair táinig Oisín tar nais ó Tír na n-Óg casad Naomh Pádrúig air agus íosnuigeadar ag caint. Ba maí le Oisín go n-innseósad Naomh Pádrúig dó cá raib na Fianna. "Táid go léir in Ifreann" arsa Naomh Pádrúig. "Cad tá a deanamh acu ann"? arsa Oisín.<sup>127</sup> "Táid mar seo" arsa Pádrúig. Tá Oscar tuirseac de'n tsúiste. Agus Fionn na suide ar ínteán Goll mac Mórna, agus Diarmuid Uí Daoinne ag rinne is ag deanamh [p.243]<sup>128</sup> amrán. Conán Maol na suide i leac faob leó ag bearra a gruaid leis an hook. Is ní h-eólaic dom cá bfuilid eile dár maí des na Fianna annso."

[p. 242] When Oisín came back from Tír na nÓg Saint Patrick met him and they started talking. Oisín wanted Saint Patrick to tell him where the Fían were. "They're all in Hell," said Saint Patrick. "What are they doing there?" said Oisín. "They're like this," said Patrick. Oscar is tired of the flail. And Fionn is sitting on Goll mac Mórna's hearth and Diarmaid Uí Duibhne is dancing and singing. Conán Maol is sitting on a flagstone beside them cutting his hair with his hook. And I don't know where the rest of the Fían that lived are."

<sup>126</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4921578/4881311>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>127</sup> MS: arsa Naomh Pádrúig ("Cad tá a

<sup>128</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4921578/4881312>> [accessed 07 August 2017].



D9 NFCS 515: 78-82; MR P. CONDON, HOSPITAL, KNOCKLONY, CO. LIMERICK.  
COLLECTOR: KITTY JONES, HOSPITAL, KNOCKLONY, CO. LIMERICK, HOSPITAL  
CONVENT NATIONAL SCHOOL, HOSPITAL, SMALL COUNTY, CO. LUIMNEACH, 1938,  
TEACHER: SR. BERNARD.

[p.78]<sup>129</sup>

#### MY HOME DISTRICT

My home is in the western side of the main street in the town of Hospital, town land of Coolscart, barony of small county. Hospital derived its name from a community of "Knights Hospitallers" who had a monastery here in the twelfth and thirteenth century. The ruins of this ancient abbey lie at the northern side of the town. It has a population of approximately five hundred people. Of this number about a hundred<sup>130</sup> and fifty reside in Coolscart district, most of whom are business people and some trades-men living in the town, and about eight or ten farmers and labourers in the vicinity. All [p.79]<sup>131</sup> the houses are slated with a few exceptions which are thatched. There is no common name in the district. As the town is of recent growth, its present inhabitants or ancestors came from various districts therefore there are scarcely any Irish speakers amongst them. There are very few old people in it, about ten or twelve over seventy years would be the most. Families vary, some large some small and some none at all.

During the famine years and after a great number of poor people of this district sold their little homes and plots of land for as much money as would take them to America: As those were mostly mud built houses there is now very little trace<sup>132</sup> [p.80]<sup>133</sup> of their existence. Coolscart, part of Hospital was very insignificant at that period. Only a few houses stood from Fair Green to Knocklong road, and for the most part an<sup>134</sup> old stone wall where now stands a row of splendid two storey houses. The land in the vicinity of Hospital which is situated in the Golden Vale, is splendid, for tillage or dairy farming. There is no bog-land, very little forest trees but the surrounding are adorned with white-thorn hedges which when in blossom<sup>135</sup> in the month of May make the country look very beautiful.

<sup>129</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4922065/4849249>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>130</sup> MS: about hundred

<sup>131</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4922065/4849250>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>132</sup> MS: ta trace

<sup>133</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4922065/4849251>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>134</sup> MS: and

<sup>135</sup> MS: when in blossoms

The river Comogue flows at the northern end of the town. This little stream rises [p.81]<sup>136</sup> at Kelleenanolive, Co. Tipperary (about four miles from Hospital) where the remains of an old Abbey which dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> Century can be seen, then flows through a part of Cromhill which derives its name from Cromlech which<sup>137</sup> was an ancient burial mound supposed to be that of Finn Mc Cool which can be seen on the hill of Suidhe-Finn. Cromhill is also famous in song. As when Farmer Hayes shot the land-lord in Tipperary he went on his keeping and was hunted like a fox through the country, and in song all the time he was alluded to as a fox. His exploits were recorded verse, "Through Cromwell Hill I hunted still" On a fine fat [p.82]<sup>138</sup> goose I feasted," "It was a long fast, for three days last" "For not a bit I tasted" "I washed my face and then said grace" etc. Evidently he was well received by the people of Cromhill who are noted for their hospitality<sup>139</sup> even at the present day.

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<sup>136</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4922065/4849252>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>137</sup> MS: (that) which

<sup>138</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4922065/4849253>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>139</sup> MS: hospitality

D10 NFCS 674: 238; COLLECTOR: ANNA LAMBE, RIVERSTOWN, PARISH OF MONASTERBOICE. CO. LOUTH, FIELDSTOWN NATIONAL SCHOOL, DROGHEDA, MONASTERBOICE (DRUMSHANNON), FERRARD, CO. LOUTH, 1938-39. TEACHER: BEAN UÍ CHLÉIRIGH.

[p.238]<sup>140</sup>

#### GIANTS

In this district there was a giant named Fionn mac Cuímaill. There is a well in Brownstown still called Tobar Finn. The people use the water of this well for cattle. Fionn mac Cuímaill is supposed to be buried in a field in Fieldstown Hill called Lios Dú. His grave is known as Fionn's grave.

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<sup>140</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5008865/4962179>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

D11 NFCS 674: 239; COLLECTOR: ANNA J. WIN, RIVERSTOWN, PARISH OF MONASTERBOICE. CO. LOUTH, FIELDSTOWN NATIONAL SCHOOL, DROGHEDA, MONASTERBOICE (DRUMSHANNON), FERRARD, CO. LOUTH, 1938-39. TEACHER: BEAN UÍ CHLÉIRIGH.

[p.239]<sup>141</sup>

#### A CROMLECH

There is a cromlech in Byrne's field on Fieldstown Hill. The field is called Lios Dub. Fionn mac Cumáill is supposed to be buried there. The cromlech is on the top of the hill. There are some stones standing upright in the ground and a large flat stone on the top of them. The stones are almost covered with clay and the place is overgrown with briars. Within the grave are bones.

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<sup>141</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5008865/4962180>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

D12 NFCS 775: 373; DENIS CURRAN (60). COLLECTOR: ANNIE CURRAN, PUNCHERS GRANGE, DROICHEAD NUA, CO. KILDARE, BAILE AN MHUILINN NATIONAL SCHOOL, AN DROICHEAD NUA, ALLEN (FEIGHCULLEN), CONNELL, CO. KILDARE, 1936-1938, TEACHER: S. P. Ó DONNCHADHA.

[p.373]<sup>142</sup>

#### HIDDEN TREASURE

Once upon a time a certain man who lived about the time of the Fianna, hid a treasure of two hundred pounds in gold in the bog of Allen.

He placed it under a furze bush at the foot of the hill, and he gave permission to the chief of the Fianna, Fionn Mac Cumhail, to mind it.

When Fionn died many people came to look for the treasure but it was not discovered till at last two big men from Ulster dug it up. When they were bringing it home the crock fell into a boghole and try as they might they could not get it out. It is said some people came to look for it but were kept back by the power of Fionn, and from the time it dropped into the boghole to this day it was never discovered.

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<sup>142</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4742170/4741896>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

D13 NFCS 931: 173-5; RUAIDRÍ RÓDÁC [IN THE PUBLICATION *SCÉALTA ÉIRINN*] & UNKNOWN SOURCE. COLLECTOR UNKNOWN, ÁTH NA BHFEARCHON, DOMHNACH MAIGHIN, FARNEY, CO. MONAGHAN, MAY 1934. TEACHER: B. MAC CLOSCAIGH.

[p.173]<sup>143</sup>

BROLLAC

(1)

Áit mór le rád, Át na bFearcain i gcúrsaí  
béaloideas, cé naç ró fairsing an dútaig í  
maidir le méid, nó le saidbreas saogalta. Tá  
ainm na h-áite céadna in airde, ní hamáin  
sa ceantar máigcúaird, açt ar fud an  
condae in a bfuil sí suidte, dar le gac  
tuairisc, dá fuil le fágail o béal, agus o  
scríobad.

In san leit tiar den<sup>144</sup> paróiste,  
Dómnaig Muiğin, atá suideam uirti. Cean  
des na cúig Paróistí de barúntact  
Fearnmuige<sup>145</sup> sead an paróiste seo, agus is  
i deiscirt condae Muinneacáin atá sí suidte.

"In Monaghan, (the Thicket) you will find romantic names

Of scholars, saint and warrior Red Branch Knights and Fiann,

Racnel is the rath where dwelt the famous Conall Cearnach,

And Fionn Mac Cumhail is buried near a place called Aughnafarcon

[p.174]<sup>146</sup> Achadh na bhearcon, Warriors' Field, Annaglaive the Ford of  
Swords,

Three Mile House should be Druim Guill, the ridge of Goll Mac Morn.

II

" " " " " " " "

" " " " " " " "

At Donaghmoyne (the Church on the Plain) you'll see some famous caves

And Castle Manaoir's the country seat of Mac Lir who ruled the waves.!

<sup>143</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756734>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>144</sup> MS: de

<sup>145</sup> MS has preceding *b* added in different ink, bFearnmuige

<sup>146</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756735>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

Deireann Ruadraí Ródaç rudaí annsin mar Ruadhraí Ródach then says things about  
geall ar na h-áiteanna naç iad a luadað tuas, places other than those mentioned above,  
açt mar geall ar 'Aí na bFearçoin.' Tá le rað but this is what he has to say about  
aige mar leanas Aughnafarcon:

"Think of a man sowing seed in Warrior's Field, or watering cattle at the Ford of  
Swords – or drawing a cart down Chariot Hill"!

Deireann sé freisin He also says.  
[p.175]<sup>147</sup> "Aye, and you notice that the old mythical Gods left their names on hills that  
men plough and reap."

Tá malairt tuairime ann i dtaoib<sup>148</sup> There's a difference of opinion  
na céille a bainneann le 'Aí na bFearçon'. Is about the meaning of Aughnafarcon. Some  
í tuairim roinnt daoine gurb áit mór seilge people think that it was a big hunting  
é fadó, agus go mbíod na coin go fairsing grounds and that hounds used to be  
sa taob-tíre seo. widespread around this area.

'Se deireann an cuid eile, ná gurb What others say is that it was  
"feara groide ná claidfead céadta" a bíod "strong men that hundreds could not  
ag cur fúta ann fadó agus dar liom is fíore subdue" used to live here long ago and I  
é seacas na tuairime eile. think that's truer than the other ideas.

'Sé fé ndeara dom é sin a rád, ná What causes them to say that is  
mar geall ar iarsmaí na háite, agus ar an because of the artefacts of the place, and  
méid laoc atá a gcnáma ón smior, ag the amount of warriors whose bones are  
tabairt an féir sa timpeallaçt. Cifear gurb pushing up daisies in the area. You'll see  
fearrde an dara bríg seaças a céille, dá that the second meaning is better than the  
dheascaib na tosaí sin. Tá uaiç F'inn Mic other because of that. Fionn Mac  
Cumail, taob leis an scoil agus 'Manober' Cumhaill's grave is beside the school and  
fén bfód annsin in amairc na scoile. Manower is buried in view of the school.

Níl aontuigeact aigne ann ar caide There isn't an agreement about  
is ceart 'Aí' nó 'Açað' ann roim ainm na h- which is right, 'áth' or 'achadh' in the first  
áite seo. Ríteann aba beag tríd an gleann part of the name of this place. A small  
agus is dóca go raib 'Aí' innti fadó. Açt naç river runs through the glen and there was

<sup>147</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756736>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>148</sup> MS: idtaioib

ró cuma ceactar de'n dá ainm seo.

probably an 'áth,' a ford, here long ago. But it doesn't really matter which of the two elements it is.



D14 NFCS 931: 183-6, THOMAS FLANAGAN IN *DUNDALK EXAMINER*, 1932. COLLECTOR UNKNOWN, ÁTH NA BHFEARCHON, DOMHNACH MAIGHIN, FARNEY, CO. MONAGHAN, MAY 1934. TEACHER: B. MAC CLOSCAIGH.

[p.183]<sup>149</sup>

#### HISTORIC FINCARN

By T.F. in an article in "Dundalk Examiner"

##### The Garland of Legend

"Fincarn is the name of an historic Townland in the parish of Donaghmoynes, and three miles south of Castleboyne. The greater part of Fincarn consists of a lofty hill half a mile long and of considerable width. On the top a considerable portion of the hill is level and covered with bracken. This is the highest hill in South Monaghan and on a clear day a great view is obtainable from its summit of the Counties Louth, Meath, Cavan, Fermanagh, Armagh and Down.

Fincarn got its name from Finn's Cairn, near the centre of the hill where the great leader of the Fianna Éireann or National Militia of Ireland is buried. And the loving care and devotion of his followers was shown by the mighty cairn which they reared over his immortal remains to preserve them from destruction. Fionn was the son in law of Cormac Mac Airt, Ard Rí of Éirinn and the greatest champion of the [p.184]<sup>150</sup> Fianna, a military force called into being by Cormac, for the protection of his kingdom. While the principal residence of Fionn was on the Hill of Allen he also had a residence on Fincarn and he and his warriors often sauntered along its sides or disported over the plains or pursued deer and wild boar with their famous wolf hounds."

Very little of the cairn on the hill now remains but a circular range of upright stones marks out the spot where the cairn was, and even some of these were displaced and deposited in the slough nearby. Or they may be something of the nature of the ring at Emania, near Armagh. Anyway, they are of historic interest and excite the curiosity of the antiquarian. Nearby is a large flat stone, a Dorna Fionn, which Fionn threw from Slieve Cullin to Fincarn and on which the impression of his hand remained. Some years ago a bonfire was lighted in [p.185]<sup>151</sup> it to celebrate some national victory and which somewhat defaced this national relic of our historic past. It was a pity this act of vandalism was permitted by the people of their historic locality, who are proud of

<sup>149</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756744>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>150</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756745>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>151</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756746>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

Fionn's connection with the neighbourhood and fittingly treasure legends relating to him. They believe that he and some of his warriors had their residence on the hill in summer time and in a declivity in the south side was the gríanán or sun-house where Fionn's wife and family resided. Tradition has it that a mighty Scandanavian giant sought Fionn's place in Fincarn to fight him, and for once he was afraid, and confided his fears to his wife, who counselled him to leave all to her, and all would go well. He did so and on the approach of the giant, Fionn was tucked into the cradle and lay cuddled up there. The giant inquired about Fionn and was told that he was outside on [p.186]<sup>152</sup> on the hill.

#### Feeding the Giant

He went over and admired the big baby in the cradle, and in sport put his big finger in its mouth and Fionn took a nasty bite out of it. Fionn's wife sent the giant out to where a garsún (Oscar) was herding cattle to bring in a calf that she might prepare a meal for him. But the herd would not part with the beast, and in the melee the beast was torn asunder and a portion brought<sup>153</sup> in and cooked on the cooking spits. She also prepared an oaten cake for the giant, and kneaded in a good many horse shoe nails, which excited the giant's curiosity. In answer to his queries, she told him that she always did this for Fionn, as it strengthened his teeth and kept them sharp. During the baking of the cake smoke came down the chimney and filled the apartment and was very nippy of the eyes. She wished that Fionn was in and he would turn [p.187]<sup>154</sup> round the house, and so avoid the smoke. And Manowar – for that was the giant's name – went out and turned round the house and avoided the unpleasant smoke caused by the burning logs. He then proceeded at ease to the sumptuous feast spread out for him by Fionn's wife and quaffed some of the mead to wash savoury meat and homemade oaten cake.

Having partaken of the meal he went out in search of Fionn around the hillside. Afterwards he went down to the little stream which divides Fincarn from Aghnafarcon and took a copious draught of its sparkling water, and wandering up the gentle slope of Aghnafarcon hill, he became exhausted, lay down to rest and died. One wonders was it blood poisoning from Fionn's finger bite or corrosion from the horse shoe nails that caused the death of the famous giant. At any rate [p.188]<sup>155</sup> Manowar's grave still remains up on the side of the hill and is covered by a mound of stones.”

<sup>152</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756747>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>153</sup> MS: brough

<sup>154</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756748>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>155</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756749>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

D15 NFCS 931: 188-95; THOMAS FLANAGAN IN *DUNDALK EXAMINER*, SATURDAY, 14 JANUARY 1933 COLLECTOR UNKNOWN, ÁTH NA BHFEARCHON, DOMHNACH MAIGHIN, FARNEY, CO. MONAGHAN, MAY 1934. TEACHER: B. MAC CLOSCAIGH.

[p.188]<sup>156</sup> THE GIANTS' GRAVES AT LACKAFIN AND MANOWAR'S GRAVE  
Dundalk Examiner

Saturday, January 14, 1933.

By T. F.

"In my notes on the battle of the Three Collas which occurred near Fincarn Co. Monaghan in A.D. 332 I promised to give an account of the giants' graves and of Manowar's grave. Well the giants' graves are in Lackafin in the centre of a field which adjoins the country road. The<sup>157</sup> occupy a mound of considerable extent raised above the level of the surrounding ground, and marked off by foot and head stones of [p.189]<sup>158</sup> considerable size. These latter are conspicuous to the passer by and of considerable interest to the antiquarian<sup>159</sup> and archaeologist. The largest of the headstones is nearly five feet high and nearly as wide. About three feet above the ground it tapers in on one side like a shoulder. It is of considerable thickness and moss grown and on the back is a hole the size and shape of a man's thumb. Owing to the moss it is not very easy to tell if there is any Ogham on it. But it is believed that from the inside of this stone to the inside of the foot stone opposite is 12 feet,<sup>160</sup> so that it really looks like a giant's grave. The headstone in the next grave is not so high, but a great deal thicker and from the subsidence of the soil at its base it is inclined over and in its reclinary position the grave is only nine feet long. But if this stone was straightened up, this grave is as long as the other. [p.190]<sup>161</sup> Other graves adjacent have smaller head and foot stones, and are not so long as the ones already mentioned. Separated from the first mound is another nearly as large and not so high, and with graves fairly well discernible. A hawthorn bush on this mound with four branches pointing north, south, east and west keep vigil over the gallant warriors who slumber around it. In my opinion it is from the large headstone named that the townland gets the

<sup>156</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756749>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>157</sup> MS: They

<sup>158</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756750>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>159</sup> MS: (passer) antiquarian.

<sup>160</sup> MS: But it is believed that there is from the inside of this stone to the inside of the foot stone opposite is 12 feet.

<sup>161</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756751>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

name of Lackafin, Lac Fionn or Fionn's stone. There is a similar stone on Fincarn somewhat thicker and without the shoulder noticed in the other. It is five feet high and resting other stones and is all visible whereas the other is five feet above ground and probably the same distance under it. This stone was probably standing sentinel over Fionn's grave on Fincarn, and was removed to Lackafin to mark the grave of some of Fionn's sons or grandsons or other renowned warriors of his race. A small detached stone on [p.191]<sup>162</sup> the second mound I mentioned, has a considerable number of indented lines and after the manner of these we read of as craob Ogam. But as I am not an adept in deciphering Ogham I will not vouch for the accuracy of this.

Manowar's grave is in Aughnafarcon, about a ½ mile from Lackafin. It occupies as much ground as the giants' graves, but it is of greater height. Large upright stones surround the grave on all sides which is elevated by filling in of cloug and stones to a height of four or five feet. As it is about 5 yards wide, it meant a good deal of work to cover an unknown warrior like Manowar with such a prodigious pile.

But the story of Manowar coming to fight Fionn, and of Fionn hiding in the cradle is probably pure myth. These cairns are only the resting place of the warriors who fell in the battle of the Three Collas [p.191]<sup>163</sup> who were buried in the most convenient part of the battlefield. The race of the Three Collas was powerful, and gathering strength in Connaught, while the power of the Fianna and the northern warriors declined after the battle of Gabra. In these far off pagan times might meant right. So the warrior hosts of Connaught and all their kith and kin combined and made a swath in the northern province, to reduce it to subjection and extend their army. In their advance they came by Shercock and Bellatrain and on by Fincarn and the first shock of battle took place in Lackafin convenient to Fincarn. The western hordes probably intended to subdue whatever forces were at Fincarn and then march on to Emania and conquer it. The northern warriors knowing of their approach advanced to meet them at Lackafin and bar their further progress and there took place the first shock of one of the bloodiest battles recorded in Irish history. [p.193]<sup>164</sup> The invading forces advanced, and in the hollow between Fincarn on one side and Kednagullion and Aghnafarcon on the other the clash of swords was felt and the hills around re-echoed with the shouts of the warriors and the moans and laments of the wounded and dying. In the open plain the war chariots advanced to battle the kern

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<sup>162</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756752>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>163</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756753>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>164</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756754>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

and galloglasses took their places, the javelins and spears were thrown. The combatants mingled and parried and thrust, the red blood was flowing and the wounded and dead were trampled upon. The hosts of Connaught advanced they bore down the resistance of the Fianna and the northern warriors and without further resistance they advanced to Emania and burned and destroyed the palace of the Red Branch Knights. When the battle was over the survivors picked out their dead and buried them with becoming solemnity. Those of Fionn's family who were killed in the [p.194]<sup>165</sup> encounter at Lackafin, were buried where the large headstones mark the graves. Possibly two runs of them were buried in the long graves I have described. Those of the Connaught warriors who fell were buried in the second mound somewhat separated from the first. Of the graves in Aghnafarcon, Shirley in his history of County Monaghan says that the mound of graves extended from the centre of the hill down hill near the way. What remains of the graves now on the hillside is sloping in that direction and it is possible that many of them were destroyed with the advance of cultivation. These are the graves of those who perished in that area during the battle. As they contain the remains of some of our greatest pagan ancestors it would be a grand thing if they were paled in and saved from further spoliations. They have withstood the rains and storms and ravages of the past sixteen hundred [p.195]<sup>166</sup> years. They are historic landmarks in our locality and worth treasuring and looking after as memorials of our heroic past.

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<sup>165</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756755>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>166</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756756>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

D16 NFCS 931: 217-8; INFORMANT UNKNOWN. COLLECTOR: JAMES MURPHY, FINCARN, ÁTH NA BHFEARCHON, DOMHNACH MAIGHIN, FARNEY, CO. MONAGHAN, MAY 1934. TEACHER: B. MAC CLOSCAIGH.

[p.217]<sup>167</sup>

#### LOCAL PLACE-NAMES

Our farm is situated in the townland of Fincarn and Lackafin. Fincarn means Finn's grave and Lackafin means the tomb-stones<sup>168</sup> of Finn. There<sup>169</sup> are four of our fields in the townland<sup>170</sup> of Lackafin. Their<sup>171</sup> names are "the field at [p.218]<sup>172</sup> the road," "the dam field," "the three cornered field," and "the field below the house." The field at the road got its name because it is beside the road. The dam field got its name from a dam that was in it at one time. The three cornered field got its name because there are three corners in it. The field below the house got its name because there was an old house built at the heart of it. There are six fields of our farm in Fincarn. Their names are "Parog's field," "the acre," "the bush field," "the well field," "The field behind the house,"<sup>173</sup> and "the far hill." Parog's field got its name from a man named Patrick who used to live there. The bush field got its name from a lone bush that used to be growing in the field. The well field got its name from a well that was in the field. The acre got its name because there is an acre of land in it. The field behind the house got its name because it is behind the house. The far hill got its name because it is the farthest away from the house.

<sup>167</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756778>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>168</sup> MS: tumb-stones

<sup>169</sup> MS: Ther

<sup>170</sup> MS: in in the in the townland.

<sup>171</sup> MS: Thir

<sup>172</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756779>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>173</sup> MS: 'the field behind the (the) house.'

D17 NFCS 931: 237-8; COLLECTOR UNKNOWN, ÁTH NA BHFEARCHON, DOMHNACH MAIGHIN, FARNEY, CO. MONAGHAN, MAY 1934. TEACHER: B. MAC CLOSCAIGH.

[p.237]<sup>174</sup>

#### MY HOME DISTRICT

I live in the townland of Fincarn. It is in the Parish of Donaghmoyne, and in the Barony of Farney. There are seven families in the townland. There are about twenty [p.238]<sup>175</sup> people living in the townland. Woods is the most common family name in the townland. The houses are all slated. Fincarn got its name from Finn's<sup>176</sup> grave. Carn means grave and Fincarn means Finn's<sup>177</sup> grave. The land is hilly.

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<sup>174</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756798>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>175</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4758586/4756799>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>176</sup> MS: Fin's

<sup>177</sup> MS: Fin's

D18 NFCS 939: 188-9; COLLECTOR UNKNOWN, LÁITHREACH, ÁTH NA MUILEANN, CREMORNE, CO. MONAGHAN. TEACHER: MRS DUFFY.

[p.188]<sup>178</sup>

FINN MAC COOLE AND THE GIANT

Once while Finn MacCoole was on Archie Fionn a giant came to him. He challenged him to fight and they<sup>179</sup> fought for two days and two nights without stopping. When they had stopped the giant told<sup>180</sup> Finn to perform some feat. Finn went to a nearby quarry and got a huge stone and threw it about five miles to Finn Carn beside Anafarcon.

The giant said that was no feat compared to what he could do. He asked Finn to run him a race and they ran until it was dark. [p.189]<sup>181</sup> The night became very rough and stormy and as they were at Tully Bridge a pot was blown from a house near Finn and the giant followed it and they got it beside Loughnagerman. They<sup>182</sup> sat down and the giant said he was very hungry and tired. Then Finn caught some fish in the lake and boiled them for himself and the giant. When they had finished their meal the giant became ill and died. Finn buried him beside<sup>183</sup> the lake and then returned to his camp. He spent the rest of his life happily and when he died he was buried on Finn Carn to where he threw the stones. His grave and stone can be seen yet.

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<sup>178</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5162159/5160138>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>179</sup> MS: the

<sup>180</sup> MS: When they had stopped the giant told (When they)

<sup>181</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5162159/5160139>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>182</sup> MS: the

<sup>183</sup> MS: beside (se) beside



D19 NFCS 973: 75-6; MRS HENNESSEY, CORRAVARY, CASTLETARA, CAVAN. COLLECTOR: BRIDIE HENNESSEY, CORRAVARY, CASTLETARA, CAVAN, SCHOOL-NAME NOT GIVEN, CASTLETERRA, UPPER LOUGHTEE, CO. CAVAN, DECEMBER 1938. TEACHER: S. Ó CÍOSÓIG.

[p.75]<sup>184</sup>

#### OLD IRISH TALES

In the townland of Shantemon and in the parish of Castletara is a very big mountain called "Shantemon Mountain." Of course every one is familiar with the stories connected with Finn about it. On the top of this particular mountain stands five big finger stones. It is supposed that Finn stood on the top of the Sleibh Glac Mountain and taking five stones he fired them over on Shantemon.

Another story is one connected with Ardkill Mountain. Finn stood on top of this mountain and fired a huge stone down to the road and Finn asked to be buried under this stone and it is said that on certain nights of the year he is seen galloping around this spot on horse back and gallops up to the top of this mountain. Of course he is supposed to have been [p.76]<sup>185</sup> buried under so many stones that it is<sup>186</sup> so hard to say which he is buried under.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5044818/5041442>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>185</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5044818/5041443>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>186</sup> MS: (it) that it is.

<sup>187</sup> MS: (buried) buried under

D20 NFCS 1000: 232; INFORMANT UNKNOWN. COLLECTOR: PHILIP GRAY, MURMOND, VIRGINIA, VIRGINIA (B.), LURGAN, CASTLETAHAN, CAVAN. TEACHER: E. O'REILLY.

[p.232]<sup>188</sup> It is said Finn Mac Cool used to live on Murmod Hill long ago. His grave is still to be seen on the highest part of the hill. People say that he threw a stone to Mullagh Hill from Murmod Hill and he threw a stone he called a pebble to Lynch's of Enagh.

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<sup>188</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5070789/5063805>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

D21 NFCS 1000: 287-8; INFORMANT: MRS GILSEANAN, MURMOD, VIRGINIA.  
COLLECTOR: THOMAS ERICKSON, MURMOND, VIRGINIA, VIRGINIA (B.), LURGAN,  
CASTLETAHAN, CAVAN. TEACHER: E. O'REILLY.

[p.287]<sup>189</sup>

OLD IRISH TALES

Finn Mac Cool was buried<sup>190</sup> the top of Murmod Hill. His thumb is as big as a man and his body is as big also and where Fionn Mac Cool was is the highest on the hill. It is easy to know where his thumb is buried. There is a little height of sods along the ditch and [p.288] beside a house that is going to fall and this is on the top of Murmod Hill and where his body is buried there is a height and you can see the country all around.

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<sup>189</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5070789/5063820>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

<sup>190</sup> MS: was buried is on

D22 NFCS 1015: 379; TOM SULLIVAN (71), ROOSKEY. COLLECTOR UNKNOWN, KNOCKBRIDE (2), KNOCKBRIDE, CLANKEE, CAVAN, JANUARY 1936-JANUARY 1939. TEACHER: T. J. BARRON.

[p.379]<sup>191</sup>

THE GIANT'S GRAVE IN DRUMEAGUE

Tom Sullivan (71) Rooskey says that Finn McCool is buried in the Giant's Grave in Drumeague. Finn had bands of men who fought against the Danes.

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<sup>191</sup> Available at NFC, *Dúchas.ie*, <<http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5162181/5161685>> [accessed 07 August 2017].

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusion

The regrettable dearth of scholarship on the tale known as 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' was the prompt for this thesis on the death of Finn. It has resulted in three studies related to this tale. The first (Chapter 2) is an examination of the quire in which the tale is found in the manuscript Egerton 1782. The second (Chapter 3) comprises an exploration of the place of 'The Chase' within the traditions of a death for Finn. The third (Chapter 4) is a presentation and examination of modern traditions of Finn's death.

The only extant copy of 'The Chase' appears in a section of Egerton 1782 which contains four tales from the now-lost *Cín Dromma Snechtai* and four *fánaigeacht* tales. In order to consider whether these eight texts formed a deliberate anthology, it first needed to be investigated whether the tales formed a discrete section of the manuscript from the time of its compilation. Although Robin Flower was of the opinion that the eight texts did constitute a unit,<sup>1</sup> new information on the manuscript's history has come to light since the time of Flower's catalogue. Following a description of the manuscript, Chapter 2 presents the contents of Egerton 1782, including discussion of any visible pagination or foliation. There was further consideration of some other evidence, particularly descriptions of the manuscript when in the possession of the eighteenth-century scribe Muiris Ó Gormáin. Taken together, these factors allow us to determine what changes were made to the arrangement of the manuscript from the time of its compilation to the time it came into the possession of the British Museum (now Library), a period of some 300 years. Some leaves are now lost and two folios were added to the manuscript, the leaves of which underwent re-ordering a number of times before being bound. Yet, the examination of the make-up and rearrangement allows us to conclude that the manuscript does indeed appear to have been a coherent collection of texts from the time of its production. As the manuscript underwent a number of changes during its history, the question of whether the four *CDS* and four *fánaigeacht* tales constitute a discrete section from the time of Egerton 1782's

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<sup>1</sup> Flower, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 260

creation is addressed by examining the mise-en-page. Having determined that the manuscript allows for such a conclusion, the chapter draws on recent studies to demonstrate that the medieval intelligentsia did not only engage with *fíanaigecht* in a manner suggesting it was treated as a genre unto itself but rather would have appreciated the resonances of and connections with a wide range of literature. It then proceeds to consider links between the tales to examine whether the *Cín Dromma Snechtai* – *fíanaigecht* complex was a thematically driven compilation of texts. In the chapter it has been argued that consideration of this section in Egerton 1782 shows it to be a distinct anthology due to there being connections between the texts on multiple levels. Many of the texts share an interest in Otherworld and prophetic themes, two themes which are intermingled as those tales in which the Otherworld plays a role use the Otherworld character as the source of the prophetic information. Further connections identified are the correlation of texts that may be viewed as having had significant truth-value for their contemporary audience, and cyclic concerns which, it is proposed, contributed to the selection of material for this anthology.

In Chapter 3 I have examined the treatment of the death of Finn in 'The Chase' within a continuum of traditions of Finn's death. This study demonstrates that the author of 'The Chase' seems to have been aware of several accounts of Finn's death, either those which are now extant or sources akin to them, and sought to bring together many of the elements present in other accounts of Finn's death in a single tale. It is perhaps the case that 'The Chase' was intended to be a comprehensive death tale for Finn. A number of characters to whom the killing of Finn is attributed or who are depicted as present in the events leading up to his demise in other works, appear in the tale, as do the two most popular locations named as the site of Finn's death in other accounts, namely *Áth Brea* and *Luachair Dedad*. Furthermore, the elements of prophecy and a drink of poison and/or from a horn also feature. These various elements, however, have not merely been cobbled together. Rather it has been demonstrated that the composition skilfully treats of the themes of death, prophecy and youth versus age, making regular allusion to the audience's presumed knowledge of other tales of the Fenian corpus and carefully situating this work within the boundaries of literature about Finn. In the tale, the failed chase, which drives the *fíán* to hunt the great boar of *Formaél* is employed to facilitate a shifting geographical focus in 'The Chase', thus enabling the author to combine the *Luachair Dedad* and *Áth Brea* locations associated with Finn's death in a single tale. In doing so the tale sits comfortably alongside principal Finn cycle tales of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries such as *Acallam*

*na Senórach* and *Macgnímrada Finn*. Furthermore, 'The Chase' treats of the element of prophecy throughout the narrative, using prophecies which then come to pass to create tension for the audience who, like the characters of the tale, have been told what is to come. The characters, however, forge on, presumably hoping to avoid their foretold fates, perhaps suggesting the audience should hold out hope for the same. The climax, however, comes as the audience sees the inevitable unfold, unthwarted by the characters' best efforts to change the outcome. It is this recurring pattern of prophecies coming true that allow us to reasonably conclude that the intended end of the tale was Finn's demise, and consequently consider it within the context of traditions of Finn's death. Regarding the prophecy of Finn's death as it plays out in 'The Chase', this is one instance where we can see clearly see an allusion to the audience's presumed knowledge of other written *fíanaigeacht* tales. 'The Chase's' Maillén mac Midna from *Síd ar Femen* appears to recall not only the *Acallam's* Aillén mac Midgna, who Finn killed with a spear, but also *Marbaid Cúlduib's* Cúldub from *Síd Fer Femen* who Finn also seriously injured with a spear. Both are seemingly recalled in the tale to anticipate Finn's fate. Additionally, Finn, whom it would seem dies at the hands of the five sons of Uirgriu of the Lúaigne of Tara in the tale, cannot plausibly be killed by both his enemies and by a fall, the cause of his demise in some other sources. However, across the wider tradition, the leap which causes Finn's death is often a leap of age, a feat whereby Finn tests his agility as he grows old. Finn performing a leap does not feature in this tale, but the concern of which it is indicative is dealt with in the narrative, namely that Finn is incompatible with the *fían* that he leads due to his age. Not only is Finn addressed as *senóir*, but there are instances in the tale where the question-and-answer format, which found its most famous expression in *AS* and becomes widespread in *fíanaigeacht* literature, is used to juxtapose Finn's age with those of his followers. Where Finn is shown to possess greater knowledge than his companions, it seems to come as a result of his age. Furthermore, Oscar's actions upon seeing the slaughter of the boar of Formaél are suggestive of him superseding Finn as leader of the *fían*, a depiction which is likely foreshadowing the event of Finn's death later in the tale. Finally, the author of 'The Chase' combines the enmity of Clann Baoiscne and Clann Morna with Finn's opposition to the Lúaigne, allowing for both Finn's popular animosity with Goll and his traditional opposition to the Lúaigne of Tara to play a role in his death. The presence of all these elements, it has been argued, demonstrate 'The Chase' to be the longest engagement with Finn's death in extant pre-modern *fíanaigeacht* literature, as the author seems to have been drawing on several traditions of Finn's demise. This was done within a narrative that echoes themes, events, and motifs popular elsewhere in written

*fianaigecht* tradition. This adherence to cyclic norms, we know, was not always found in Early Modern works; many of the plots of Early Modern romances, have much in common thematically with international folktales,<sup>2</sup> something which leads to different strands within tradition being "inextricably interwoven" in such texts. Such attributes can be seen in other Early Modern Irish tales, such as *Cath Finntrágha*. 'The Chase' is therefore rendered distinctive from some Early Modern contemporaries because of its adherence to traditional written Finn Cycle convention.

Chapter 4 of this thesis arose from the recognition that although 'The Chase' appears to be the longest extant engagement with Finn's death, there exists no study in which it is detailed what material on Finn's death there is in the modern period. In this chapter, therefore, I have identified, presented, and where applicable, translated all the modern accounts found in which Finn's death is recounted or in which it is presumed that Finn is dead, usually mentions of Finn's grave. Most of these have not, to my knowledge been printed elsewhere. This study investigated whether 'The Chase' had an impact on traditions regarding Finn's death that came after it, and if the same concerns present in 'The Chase' can be seen in the modern narratives. The Chapter shows that no other response to Finn's death presents us with an text of comparable length or complexity. Neither do they reflect aspects of the plot in 'The Chase', but the reciters do show similar concerns in treating of material about Finn's demise, e.g. where Finn's age is a contributory factor in his death. One noteworthy parallel to 'The Chase' in the modern accounts of Finn's demise, however, may be what we find in the eighteenth-century accounts 'Eachdraidh mar a Chaidh Fionn a Mharbhadh' and 'Bas Fhinn le Taoileach'. The similarity between some of the motifs in 'Eachdraidh' and 'Bas Fhinn' and motifs found in earlier traditions of Finn's death, namely a leap and Finn's death by beheading, and at the hands of an enemy, may point to the forerunner to those accounts having been composed with some knowledge of sources akin to traditions of Finn's death known to us today from Middle and Early Modern Irish manuscript materials, e.g. *Aided Finn*. In Chapter 4 I have also discussed motifs common to multiple accounts of Finn's death, or noteworthy elements of those tales. Aside from 'Eachdraidh' and 'Bas Fhinn', mentioned above, and possibly 'Fingal's Murder and Ossian's Grave' which appears to be part of the same tradition, these accounts do not seem to have formed a part of the same traditions as those to be found in extant pre-Modern manuscript sources, although they certainly show the longevity of the themes of *fianaigecht* literature, because of the medieval scribes' and modern reciters' interest in the many of the same

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<sup>2</sup> Flahive, *The Fenian Cycle*, p. 50.



questions and use of similar motifs. They also resonate with many other contemporary and earlier *fianaigecht* tales. One particularly interesting instance is 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne', where Finn's death is appended to Diarmaid's. As the tale of Diarmaid and Gráinne was far more popular than accounts of Finn's demise, at some point it seems to have been recognised that the former offered a perfect opportunity to explain Finn's death. Not only does this particular version of 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' manage to relate how Finn died succinctly, it explains why a 'good' death was not in store for Finn and, in the events between Diarmaid's and Finn's deaths, recalls numerous other versions of the conclusion of *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Gráinne*. Furthermore, Finn's death in 'Diarmad 7 Gráinne' resonates with Finn's deeds and adventures elsewhere in the modern Fenian corpus, such as Finn's association with water at both the beginning of his life and in his boyhood, when he is associated with fishing. In this case the same elements also feature at the end of his life. While accounts relating how Finn died are scant in the modern period, another element of the tradition Finn's death enjoys a little popularity. That is the identification of Finn's grave in local landscapes. These accounts are generally not accompanied by an account of how Finn died and are most often associated with large stones, megalithic tombs or elevated places, usually hilltops. This forms part of the widespread view of the *fíán* as giants, something which fits well with a well-established international pattern concerning the depiction of giants.

To conclude, therefore, this thesis has made clear that the death of Finn mac Cumail excited the Gaelic imagination for over eleven centuries. Yet 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn', which is a part of the tradition of Finn's death, has not enjoyed the same attention from modern scholars as other *fianaigecht* texts. Through an examination of its placement in the manuscript Egerton 1782, and through an investigation of its place within pre-Modern traditions of the death of Finn, it is hoped that the benefits of more in-depth engagement with 'The Chase' have been suggested. 'The Chase' seems to be unknown in the extant manuscript sources after its inscription in Egerton 1782, as evidenced by the physical disarray of the leaves on which 'The Chase' appears in Muiris Ó Gormáin's account of the manuscript in the eighteenth century, and perhaps bolstered by the fact that it had little impact on *fianaigecht* literature as it continued in the Early Modern Irish period. However, being able to compare it with the material presented in Chapter 4, we can certainly deem it not only the longest but also the most complex response to a death for Finn in the extant sources while also having identified and begun a discussion on the treatments of Finn's death in the Modern period. That the tale lacks an ending will

naturally inhibit some aspects of literary criticism, however the same may be said of all of the extant versions of the *Acallam* and the modern scholar must work with the extant material in order to appreciate these key *fíanaigeacht* works. To this end, we should look to editing 'The Chase', a task that is not without its difficulties due to portions of the manuscript having become stained or which are now otherwise illegible. However, that the tale has only been edited and translated once, and was not accompanied by an editorial policy, glossary, or discussion of the language at that time, has likely played a part in few modern scholars engaging more fully with the text. Future work on this tale will include a new edition, which includes the aforementioned, and which it is hoped will secure the place of 'The Chase' within the fast-expanding scholarship on the Finn Cycle.

## APPENDIX 1

### Diplomatic edition of 'The Chase of Síd na mBan Finn and the Death of Finn' from London, British Library, MS Egerton 1782

- f20<sup>v</sup>a1** [S]eallg romhor rofairsing docommodadh  
le find.ocus lé fíanuib ágmura airm  
derga erenn .fasith namban finn.ocus  
fasith<sub>h</sub>i arfemen .7 fa oirrtur muigh<sub>h</sub>i feimin
- f20<sup>v</sup>a5** ocus fa lerguibh lhacra deg<sub>h</sub>adh. Et do chúadar maithe  
naféne .7 anaiccma uáisli leisín.riféinnid<sub>h</sub> do  
chommodh<sub>h</sub>naselga sin.i.clanna báiscne .ocus clanna  
morna.ocus clanna duibditrib.ocus clanna nemnuind  
ocus clanna rónáin . ocus clanna smóil.ocus aicme duib
- f20<sup>v</sup>a10** da boireann.7 ingnáth fían uile ar chena .  
D o suidiged<sub>h</sub>. ocus dosrethnaiged<sub>h</sub> intsealg leo fof<sub>h</sub>e  
duib.ocus fofhasaigibh .7 fofhánglenntuip naferann  
ba coimnesa doip .7 fo muigh<sub>h</sub>ib reid<sub>h</sub>e roáilli
- f20<sup>v</sup>a15** ocus fo cailltib clith<sub>h</sub>ra dlúithe .ocus fódhoired<sub>h</sub>uib dos  
leatna dimóra. Et dochúaid gach duine folet<sub>h</sub> d<sub>f</sub>íanuibh  
hErinn. ina дума sealga .7 inalathair lic<sub>h</sub>e .7 inaberna  
báeghuil mar angnathai<sub>h</sub>gdís cosgur gachaselga doch<sub>h</sub>ur  
roimi sin . ocus nírbinonn dóip inla sin.7 gach lái  
ele.oir do ceiled<sub>h</sub> inselg sin orra.conach<sub>h</sub> fuaratar
- f20<sup>v</sup>a20** mucc namíl nabrecc na brocc. nadam na  
eilit namang naógláeg<sub>h</sub> allaid<sub>h</sub> aranderg<sub>h</sub>fadh nech díb  
alám in lásín.ocus tucsat as inoid<sub>h</sub>che sin cohin  
snímach aithmelach. Ocus do éirgedar isinmaidin  
mochsoluiss arnamarach .7 dosrethnuiged<sub>h</sub> sealg leó
- f20<sup>v</sup>a25** fansinainnsríbúaine .7 faneacht<sub>h</sub>ge aird ad<sub>h</sub>fúair  
ocus fas<sub>h</sub>eanmag<sub>h</sub> nag<sub>h</sub>ar mac umóir .7 doceiled<sub>h</sub> conach<sub>h</sub>  
sealga inlasín orra amhail do ceiled<sub>h</sub> in.cét.lá.Et  
amaidin intres lá.immorro do choirgedar acúanarta  
cícimura croibgliga cocomáentadach<sub>h</sub> fa se
- f20<sup>v</sup>a30** iscenn nanáighed<sub>h</sub> .7 fana crichaibh faoimnesa dó.Et  
nir frecradh inla sin iat acht mur gach lá ele. B a mór  
inmacht<sub>h</sub>nugh meanman le finn .7 le fíana erenn uili  
innisin. Et ahaithle asibail .7 anaistir .7 asaeda  
dóib intres lá do hsuid<sub>h</sub> finn hitulaigh air echtuis
- f20<sup>v</sup>a35** do lethtaeb hsescinn nanaighed<sub>h</sub> .ocus tangatar  
in fían inandronguib .7 inandírmad<sub>h</sub>uip .7  
inambuid<sub>h</sub>nib bega béls<sub>h</sub>gailte.inacuirib .7  
ina .cét.uib .7 naconnlánuib.muin arm<sub>h</sub>uin .7 druim  
ardhruimm .7 diáid<sub>h</sub> indiáid<sub>h</sub> dáimste. ocus dosui

- f20<sup>v</sup>a40** deatur murtimchill inrífennidh.IS annsin doffarfaigh  
oglach dfíanaibh .hErenn. dfinn. cía inlaech dana fert so  
arafuilmaíd afinn arsé. Ata afis sin acomsa  
duidsi arfind. fert failbi fhinn maisigh sin arse .i. rí  
fennidh maith dommuintirsi arnamarbhadh domuicc annso
- f20<sup>v</sup>a45** .i. torc forbartach Formaile. secht. mblaidhana gusinniud 7 domarb  
inmuc sin deich coin.7 da fhichit. dom coinsi .7 deichnur.7 da fhichit  
domlaechaibh maille ris inlasin .7 famaith inlaech est  
isin fert so ar finn inuair fa cath no comrac dona fíanaib.  
ocus dorinne finn in láidh ann ag moladh fáilbe.
- f20<sup>v</sup>a50** Fert failbe frecradh in féin. a focus nó inetercén. nó guradh  
nacht in laech de. dothaeb seiscinn nanaíge.  
C óeco.i is.coíca.fer . luidhsidar leis sunn arseal. Noch  
térnodibuile. .ach cú .7 énduine.  
F uaratur bas doberuib.onmuic dísgir druimremuir.
- f20<sup>v</sup>b1** romarb coin .7 daoine.torc forbartach formaíle  
Fuair inmuicc nduibdelba nduind. donanic tré cert  
comluinn.docuir coin isdaoineifángleo darclaidhedh infertán.  
Bá hinmuin lim failbe fland.inlá do cuir ár na
- f20<sup>v</sup>b5** ngall.do frecair imnedh iságh. Inte fuil isin fertan. Fert  
Et afíana erenn arfinn dogenamne selg nam  
aidnisi amaroach arinmuic úd ódo ceiledh selg  
ocus fíanchosgar ele oruinn .7 isuimi doceiledh gach  
sealg ele oruinn uair do bí atairrgeri dúin
- f20<sup>v</sup>b10** comracc risin muicsin .7 dighelum ananfolta  
fuirri. Et dochúaidh conamuintir inoidhche sin co  
dúnadh máillén.mac midhna .i. óglach maith do  
muintir fínn. oculus is amlaidh ro buí máillén .7 fledhmór  
cháin móradhbal aici dfinn .7 dfíanaibh. hErenn. uile.
- f20<sup>v</sup>b15** Dohesradh .7 do húrlúachradh intech nola aragcind  
ocus rotógbadh buird altacha órdha ann .7 dosuidh  
ideadh naslúaig foméit inuáisli.7 ininmi .7 inonóra  
ardánuib .7 argráduib isin bruidhin .7 dofolchad  
na buird dosrol .7 dosída .7 došicir .7 dosind
- f20<sup>v</sup>b20** snáth .7 dosgóraidib scíamglana .7 dedaigibh  
líghda lánáilli .7 dofresladh .7 dofrithoileadh iád do  
do rogha gacha sóidh .7 dotócbadh aco ann sin  
bleidhedha búailtecha buis .7 bán airgid .7 cuirn  
cáema cumdaighe clochbúadha .ocus rotógbadh
- f20<sup>v</sup>b25** ann corn finn féin.i.midhlethan a ainm .7 is  
amlaidh robuí incorn sin .7 dá ghilla imchuir aici  
.i. iárratach .7 athcuingeach ananmanna .7 fá  
maith dlígedh nadeisi sin .i. induine maith databradh  
gilla díb lán in chuirn dogheibedh cummain oír nó airgid
- f20<sup>v</sup>b30** uadh .7 fasaidh bertach .immurgu iád o dlígedh inchuirn sin. Et ta  
rrla frithrosc feicheamnuis .7 fergi etarro ino  
idche sin gur marbsat aheili hifiadhnaise naféni  
Rofás ceist mór agfinn donghním sin coraibe  
afat inathocht gan digh gan bíadh gan urgaird
- f20<sup>v</sup>b35** iughadh menman.A rífeinnid ar maillén mac midhna ná  
cuiredh hisocht. ná imbrón tusa indís úd domarbsat  
achéile. uair mór ndeágláech domarbhadh aradosealbaibh

- roimi sút ríam. IS olc limsa indís  
 út ar find .7 nidamar**bh**adh fén fásus ceist acum acht inní  
**f20<sup>v</sup>b40** dafuil a mar**bh**adh .7 tabraidh incorn cucomsa ar finn  
 ocus tucadar incorn **ch**um finn . ocus adubart .**finn**. in  
 fetabuirsi aóga arse ciathhug incorn sa  
 damsá nó cait afuarus he. Nifetamar a  
 rífeinnídh arsíat dofetursa ar.**finn**.
- f20<sup>v</sup>b45** Lá dárabusa .7 sibsi acseilg .7 acfian**ch**uscar  
 afedhuib .7 afásaigib.ocus dobadusa im  
 duína shealga .7 dias fénned imaroen rim  
 ann .i. cailti .7 oisín and sút .uair do bidís  
 días fasech artim**ch**eall dfiannuip hÉrenn maróen
- f20<sup>v</sup>b50** rimso acumforaire .7 acom for**ch**oimét isna  
 hinadaibh sealga ambinn I S dóib ranic mfédhadh  
 ocus mforaire inlásin .cailti .7 oisín .7 do bamar  
 ageistecht re mongur namiledh .7 reséiselbe  
 nasochaidhe .7 re greadhan nagillanraidhe .7 re
- f21<sup>r</sup>a1** góthaibh nangadhar .ocusrefetgairre nafer fiadach.7 rela  
 ídheadh nalaechraidhe arnamor conuib .7 re nuallgairib na  
 gasraidhe .7 re sestan nasealga argach tóeb dinn. Et  
 nir chían do bámur ann inúair doéirigh dobur cheo
- f21<sup>r</sup>a5** druídhechta duínn narbo lér donech achéli againn  
 artriur .7 do fagbamar indumho .7 dochuamur  
 fónfidh fa nessa duinn .7 roshhiremar infid cof  
 úaramar ess .7 inbher.7 abann ann .7 doghabamar  
 bradán ethrechbrec gachafir .7 gacha con asinabainn .7 do
- f21<sup>r</sup>a10** rinnedh both .7 bel sgálán linn .7 rofadaighigh morc  
 morthinedh aguinn .7 dochaitthemur arlór deathain  
 doníasc. Et ina dhíaidh sin dochúalamar in ceol  
 soinemhuil sírechtach síde dachantain inarfochuir .7  
 adubart cailti re hoisín . eirigh súis arsé .7 déntur airechus
- f21<sup>r</sup>a15** acoinn nach mella incéol sídín sinn .7 dorinnedh marsin  
 hé arfinn .7 tucamar ass indidhche sin .7 infían uile ag  
 árniarraidh arfud na crích comfógus .7 do **ch**uamurne  
 hímucha láí arnamárach. gusinduma sealga .cét.na  
 ocus fuáramur aithech dub dodhealba díreca dimór
- f21<sup>r</sup>a20** isin dumha arargcind inashuidhi .7 do rinne coimérghi  
 romuinn .7 rofer fáilti rinn .7 tug alám inachuim  
 ocus tug dá chuislinn.<sup>/orda/</sup> as .7 dosinn slithhi senma cuir  
 ocus puirt .7 adhbuinn dúinn innus co coiteoladháes gon  
 ta.nó.mna ré lamnaidh. nó fíallaigh galracha. nócuraidh crechtnaighthe nó
- f21<sup>r</sup>a25** laeich leóna frisin céol soinemhail dorinne .7 arsgur  
 don **ch**eól dó tug corn conór aclithhar díamuir a  
 édaigh .7 tuc am láimsi incórn .7 alán domidh somesga  
 sho óla ann .7 doibus deoch ass .7 tucus allaím oisín in  
 corn.7 doib deochh as .7 tuc allaim **ch**ailti in corn.7 do
- f21<sup>r</sup>a30** ib dhhig ass .7 tuc cáilti incorn illaim inathaigh .7 isamlaidh  
 robui incorn sin .7 chóig imlenda ailli ilgresacha  
 oraidhe cocoimegur gacha cóirighthí ann .7 ól desi etur gach  
 da immlenn dib. ocusintan fasubhach sómenmach sinn.do conac  
 amur inmbuidhin móir mboirbnertm[air] mborrfadhaigh cuguind
- f21<sup>r</sup>a35** isin slíab .7 rofíarfaigh infermór dímsa· cuichh inbuidhen

- mór út a<sup>l</sup>cím .isintulaigh darrochtain a finn arsé.ro  
fregusa sin . Fer nach gabhadh tar nutarcaisne onech ar  
domun sut . dorreithes cughainne cenn na cath buidhne úd  
ar.finn. C uich inbuidhen mor ... úd ele arintaithech ís
- f21<sup>r</sup>a40** mo na .trícha. fer ar ... dfen coem calma cur  
ata coimnertmar ... congín .7 conuruáth tri .cét.  
immedhón. nabuidhne sin folt fainnc<sup>h</sup>lech<sup>tach</sup> fath<sup>h</sup>mann  
ach<sup>h</sup> forórda fair roslethard inach<sup>h</sup>inn .7 grinne fa  
choimnertmar ... innill inaurtimch<sup>h</sup>ill .ni hannsa sin.ar.finn. righ
- f21<sup>r</sup>a45** fennidh.connacht infersin... failtech coimnert fri cartib isé  
min málla re eir...ib ise crod<sup>h</sup>a cobsaidh coimnert re  
cathuibh.daingen dic ... re diberg .islám risnachgabhadh cath  
nacomrac na comlainni ... nasochaidhe intí ata ann  
sin.i.goll mac mórna mic cormaic .mic uemóir.mic morna moir
- f21<sup>r</sup>a50** sinar.finn.Math<sup>h</sup> am arintaithech. cia in.buidhen.mór ud éile  
ismó na .caogadh. laech<sup>h</sup> .fer mórmenmhach mileta sain.i. co  
ngrain áigh<sup>h</sup> .7 irgaille fair.ni hannsa sin.ar.finn.fer conuall.7cona
- f21<sup>r</sup>b1** aibnes.o cus conengnum.7connainus .uair fer co ...  
na buidhne.sin .i. mac láimdeirg lugach. Mac ... am ... for ...  
tathech. C uich<sup>h</sup> in .buidhen. mor úa llach uteli co ...sai  
súaichentas imda .7 connetachgaça dath<sup>o</sup> impu...
- f21<sup>r</sup>b5** feramhail finnrúadh<sup>h</sup> fírnertmur fír<sup>h</sup>alma coruath...  
coléidmige léomhanta .7 colainne ladrainn ... .i. na b. ...  
ismó na .trícha.cét. fer afairgsi .ni hannsa sin.ar.finn. ismuirar mar  
sála.7 isleomhan arluinni .7 is beth<sup>h</sup>ir arburba .7 is tonn  
rabharta arrúathar .7 ísmathamain armiri .7 iscuradh ...
- f21<sup>r</sup>b10** claítur .7 isfer nachfuilngtur intan do geib tenta ch<sup>h</sup>atha  
no chomrac .táisech na.buidhne. sin .i. osgur echtach<sup>h</sup> anglonnach<sup>h</sup>  
mac oisín . acht rolínadh<sup>h</sup> inslíab anoir .7 aniar do conuib  
ocus dodoínib fanangbaidh nirgalachfa osgur ar.finn.7  
do rinne finn narainnsi sis ann sin .
- f21<sup>r</sup>b15** Mac morna intoglach eim ard.goll infuilech foeburderg .ris  
nigabann cath<sup>h</sup> .cród<sup>h</sup>a. omaidin co híarnóna .  
Mac rethi súd arinslíabh .7 aífian uime aníar. gingoga  
bann air infer.noch<sup>h</sup>a lugh<sup>h</sup>aite aghaisced<sup>h</sup>.  
Mac lugach isnesa dáib.cid<sup>h</sup> cet laech dechinadh<sup>h</sup>ail.
- f21<sup>r</sup>b20** onló curid ceannhiceann.isgairid cofobaigh<sup>h</sup>end .  
Atchíu osgur inandiaid<sup>h</sup>.minic benus se re glacc. Mo  
les amenma nainm uir .orosoich<sup>h</sup> cohimargoil.  
Do breccatur uiliinslíabh.iter anoir isaníar . gurablándo  
buid<sup>h</sup>en balcc.imosgur imónmórmhac. Mac morna~
- f21<sup>r</sup>b25** Asahait<sup>h</sup>li sin tánic goll cugam ar.finn.ocustuc intaithech  
incorn illáim gh<sup>h</sup>uill .7 atib di<sup>g</sup> as.I S ann sin tangatur  
fíana agh<sup>h</sup>mura.hErenn. co cosgur gacho fianchosgur .7 go  
neredaibh fordergo fíadaigh forra ar commáidim gach<sup>h</sup>a sea  
lga ch<sup>h</sup>ugainn .7 rosh<sup>h</sup>uid<sup>h</sup>sit nátaísigh<sup>h</sup> féni ch<sup>h</sup>uchisin

- f21<sup>r</sup>b30** dumho sealga .7 *tuc* intathech lán rechuirn ... *gach* taisech féne díb *gur* bá subhach somenmhach uili íat. *Et gach* so illsíughadh dohicedh donló rofás dealb .7 *denum* 7 ...  
ocuscoímlí forinathech innus coraibe cruth rigda ro  
allainn fair conach táinic otur cbáil gréne. cofuinedh ...e
- f21<sup>r</sup>b35** doffer inneall .7 *ecusc* ina e. idir met .7 co... ca íme .7 *ch*utrama .7 aíne .7 erġna.7 urlabra.s ...  
atha faí .7 inneall airdrígh air .7 ... oglach ina dhealb. Ma ith ám arífennidh . argoll Ciá intóglach a ... cr othach anaichnidhsin idfochuair .7 adubartsa ar finn ... fetar
- f21<sup>r</sup>b40** uair niderna alomsloinded dom do...nsa an ois *arsé* moshluinnedh duit ... IN ... ach ... síth ar bfemin misi ar intógl ... mac annso *arsé* doghenum m o muinnter ... *gacha* ... alám amláimsi annsin ar .finn.7 naiso...fian
- f21<sup>r</sup>b45** .hErenn.uili .7 do bí bliadhan acamsa ....7 *tuc* in cornso dam .7 cúig immlenna ib...*gach* da imliu díp .7 cid usce línighi f ...dur ann is mid somblasta soblast ... aousl...  
incronánach rimsa ar.finn. indid dom ... nrea ... bit
- f21<sup>r</sup>b50** gillaí imchuir inchuirn acheile combrisfidhe s ... am in... .scur isin bliadhain sin no cofuighinn fén bás ... t ... s. s..ela incuirn .7 adbar mo bróinsi ar.finn.7 adbert inlaidh...ann
- f21<sup>v</sup>a1** Cuig imlenna bui hi corn finn. maithh inlám ro cuiris inn .ba hé infer cert asgachmudh.inlám ro *ch*umm in cuiger .  
E góir andersat náfir.gananamuin re síh soinnim . is messa rohadhradh de.cáh domarbhadh acheile.
- f21<sup>v</sup>a5** Cronánach sithi arfemen. fúaramar sunn gan temel . roba robinn dord infír. isé.tug incorn cúigir . Cúig .  
A sahaithli sin do *ch*uir finn incorn úada maillere toirrsi móir .7 ceiltedh incomradh sin acu osin amach  
ocusrótócbadh muirn .7 medair na bruidhni .7 roeirgetur
- f21<sup>v</sup>a10** lucht fedma .7 frestail .7 fritholma na bruidhne ar *ch*ornaibh .7 ar chúachaibh .7 ar chuiplestraibh gur bo subach somenmnach uile íat .7 gur uo cómchomraítec milisbriatrachh forne ferúallcha  
Aht *ch*ena roeirgetur comochh ar namárach cum selga namuici rémráiti.i. torcformáile
- f21<sup>v</sup>a15** Et ro suidh *gach* laech dfánaib.hErenn.inaláthair lichti .7 ina berna baeghail innoir cill namuici .7 dosgáiletur dangadhh raibh croma ceólbinne croibglica fofedhuib .7 fofotrib ocusfofásaigibh .7 fofánglentaibh .7 rochóirgetur anēn aighi sealga arfairsingib .7 arforrétib naferand
- f21<sup>v</sup>a20** ocus ro dhúiscetur incullach congleca sin cofacatur coin .7 cuánarta .7 curaidh naféni uili hí . f a lór.immorro dua thbás túaruscbháil namór muici sin.i.sí gorm garb gáisitech greitlíath gráinemhail ganclúasa ganerball

- gan uirgi .7 affacla faidi fírgráinemla dontóeb
- f21<sup>v</sup>a25** muigh damór cend .I S ann sin doligedh coimrith commert  
con .7 curadh co comtrom asgach aird da hinnsaighh .Et cui  
ris inbilga bésti béldeirge sin ár con .7 fer naféni  
arinláthair sin . Ot concatar dámhac sgorain macsgann  
ail.i. daolgus .7 díanghus árach comloinn uirri tangatur
- f21<sup>v</sup>a30** da hinnusighi .7 rofersat comloinn crodhá calma curata fri  
sin muicc .7 dothuitetur indísín lé acríchibh incomloinn .i.  
dealgus .7 díangus .I S ann sin tánic lugaidh luathlámachh  
sidi cairn chuici .7 rofer comloinn fria .7 dothuit lugaidh lé  
icrichibh incomraic . Tánic dano fer taichhim macuaithni
- f21<sup>v</sup>a35** irgalaigh .7 d orinne comrac frisin muic .7 dothuit lé hicrich  
incomloinn. Otchúala.finn.na maithe sin do thuitim  
leisin muicc. t ánic fén .7 oisín .7 osgur .7 cáilte .7  
maithe naféne dfechain in cullaigh congleca sin . Et otconaire
- f21<sup>v</sup>a40** osgur echtachh anglonnachh mac osín inláthair laech .7 con .7  
fer dothuit lesinmuicc roéirigh <sup>b</sup>firmór <sup>a</sup>fiuchadh fergi  
ocus anfadh ard anmín uathbásach anaichhnigh anaighidh  
inairdmílidh arfaigsin inchhnamchumaighh tuc intorc allaidh  
úrbadhachh arconuib .7 arferuib .7 ar ardtáisechibh naféne  
ocus nírmíadhh .7 níрмаisi leisin rímlidh léhosgur
- f21<sup>v</sup>a45** nech dodíghailt a huilc uirri acht e fen. 7 famór  
ahegla .7 ahimgábháil arnasleghaib .7 fa mor ahadhh  
úath .7 ahurgráin arosgur. Achtcena nirfét ahimgabháil  
arnafaigsin .7 othánic osgur coláthair doligedh dorus
- f21<sup>v</sup>b1** bél mór dó chum nabéisti béldeirgi sin .7 isamlaidh ro  
buí sí ann sin inabethhir bodhba .7 ina harracht aidhgill7  
inahurdlochtan aighh .7 urbadha .7 fa samalta récu  
bur ríesa romóir gach cuip cróderg cróch buidhe cubur  
tighedh taraigin .7 taracraésaib cogantacha acarba ag dranntadh
- f21<sup>v</sup>b5** adéitbaig inaghdh inairdmílidh .7 cuiris fraech adromo  
anairde innus conanfadh ubhall fortamhail fíadnach forgach guáire  
garb gráinemhail di.ocus bertaighhis osgur intslegh atger  
aghmur inaláim .7 tug urhor indilldírech arinmuic  
ocusnirbimroll urchuir sin .7 cuiris intslegh anurbrollach
- f21<sup>v</sup>b10** ahochta innte .7 dobosamalto cotreghdfedh intslegh  
trithhi hi .7 sginnis intslegh anairdi esti amhail dodechedh do  
charruic.no do congna. ber is osgur céim nacoinni .7 tuc  
beim brathamhail doncláidhim cuci gur bris incláidhim fanah  
ormna urri . beris inmucc céim dinnsuighe osguir .7 brisiss
- f21<sup>v</sup>b15** osgur insgáth furri .7 gabuis greim dághairbfinnfadh .7 roéirigh  
inmuc arahúathhnedhuib dímóra deridh do gerradh inrímíledh  
arnúaachtar.sínis osgur adhá dhóid rígdá romóra  
mílita tarinmuic arnichtar .7 tuc cor dísgir denmnetachh  
di gur chuir fraech adroma fritalmáin -7 tuc aglún ar nichtur
- f21<sup>v</sup>b20** inte .7 adá ghlaicc ré abél .7 ré acarpat arnuachtur



- conidh amlaidh sin rotharrngetur forni feróglach na féni ahabach .7 ahinathar trithi síarsechtairconidh amlaidh sin dothuit inmórmuc sin lehosgur hicrich incomloinn .7 roclaídedh lechta .7 ferta nafénidh .7 naferóglach romarbhadh lesinmuic annsin. Tánic*
- f21<sup>v</sup>b25** *finn osnafertaib sin .7 adbert inlaídh ann.  
Lecht fír thaichim sunn amne.dorat brón for sochaidhe.ba sgél ádhbhal fagnímgúirt.arnamarbhadh donmórmuic.  
IN muc romarb fer taichim.romarb móran dáрмаithibh.nogo torcuir léhosgur .fáselg láeich fálúathchosgur.*
- f21<sup>v</sup>b30** *R omarb triar eile darslúagh. intorcruánata rorúad dáelgus diángus lugaidh balc.éirgidh iscláididh alecht.  
Atrochair lehosgurard.intorc rúanata rogharg.dónocur dam cóir nácert.cofuil osmoin atiughlecht.Lecht.  
D o smúain .finn. comairle annsin.i.ére dfágbháil ar*
- f21<sup>v</sup>b35** *églá nafaistine dorinne incrónánach do uair dogáb úaman .7imegla é fa ár dothabhairt arinféin.nófábás dfagbháil dóféin isinbliadhain sin .7 isí comairli rochinn eridfagbháil ocusdul tar muir soir docaithim aífánoidhechta uair nir luğa arighi foir na abus guma síaiti uadhá*
- f21<sup>v</sup>b40** *cend na bliadhna sin .7 nafástine dorinnedh dó .7 ro inn isim incomairli sin dóengus inbrogha .7 domaithib amuintire ocusdonféinuili fadul tar muir soir .7 adbert in.laídh.  
Tiagam tar muir medraigh moill.afían.finn.ateamraigh truimm. minafágar cabuir ndaithe.sgarfatreerinn mbit maith.*
- f21<sup>v</sup>b45** *D o luáighni ataindán intres. nignim uaili achtadhbur fras.mina fágur cabair ndeis.sgarfat remfein fein abus .  
Ticfa oengus mac inóg.darcabuir archairdes ngarg.dola don brugh isé isséridh.rendul arinturus téig.Tiagam.  
D o cúatar maithi nafene íarsin anen comairli .7 isí*
- f22<sup>f</sup>a1** *comairli ro cinnedh acu gan.finn.doligidh tarmuir inbliadhain sin Nírachasi tarmuir arí.féinnidh.arsíat.uairda ceilter selg .7 fíanchosgur . hErenn . oruinni atám ... tni dotháisechibh feni .7 dferuib feruinn agatsa anso lín do congbhála gocend bliadhna*
- f22<sup>f</sup>a5** *ocusdobéram fléidh núad gach noidche duit noco cuirem inbliadhain si thoruind .7 docinnedh incomairli sin léo .7 dosgáiletur infían dandúintib .7 dambailtibh fén dullmugadh ar<sup>cinn</sup>.finn.innus cofuigedh sé fléidh atigh gacha duine díb .7 Isdóránic .finn. dofrestladh .7 dofrithealemh inoidheche sin .i.fertaí.mac úaithe irgalaigh rí*
- f22<sup>f</sup>a10** *fennidh conuilli murtemne .7 lúaigne temrach .7 Isí fa bend fer tháí .i.iuchna ardmór .inghen.ghuill mic morna .7 isamlaidh robúi fertaí .7 mac suaichnidh sainemhail aci.congaiscíoch .7 congáis .7 congliscus .7 fa hí iuchna máthair inmic sin .7 fer lí aainm. Bacosmhail immorro renasenathair é.i.ré goll armét .7 armaisi .7 armilet acht*
- f22<sup>f</sup>a15** *arneim .7 arnert .7 arnidhachus.ar enech .7 ar engnum .7 arárrachtus . ar*

- lúth .7 arlámach .7 arlinmairacht.<sup>1</sup> arcrúas archalmacht archuratacht. Arm ire armerdánacht armóraicnedh. ardeilb ardétlacht ardasachtaighi ocus otconairc ferlí began slúaiġh .7 sochaidhe afochair .finn. ro smúain feall .7 meabal .7 mítháem dodénum air conamuintir
- f22<sup>f</sup>a20** úair níraibi afarradh.finn.ann sin damuintir.acht cétach cithach macrígh lochlann .7 láegaire lúath bémendach mac duib mic sál móir mac rí fer fannáil .7 cúig<sup>//cét.//</sup> laech hifochair gachaduine díb .7 isinaimsirsin tangatur tar muir higend .finn. 7 *tuc*. .finn.leis íat inoidhche sin mar onóir dóip .7 rofáguib
- f22<sup>f</sup>a25** aclannmaicne fén .7 agnáth muintir. uile acht aedh baillderg mac fóeláin.mic.finn .7 natri coin amóenmuigh .7.cúig.cét.laech aili afarradh incethrair sin. conid .cúig.cét.dég.uile ro bui .finn.ann sin .7 ro lig ferlí comairlí infill rehémer nglúnglas mac æda micgaraidh mic morna. iscomairli chubhaidh choimneirt incomarli sin ar
- f22<sup>f</sup>a30** emer uair isbidba bunaidh dúinne .finn .uair dothuit goll.mór.mac morna leis .7 clanna.morna.uile .7 arnaitri .7 ar sen atri .7 rocrichnaigh sit .finn. conamuintir domarbhadh afill .7 isiat dorinni incomer lisin.i.fer lí.mac .fer.taí .7 emer.glúnglas.mac aeda mic garaidh .7 cúiger. mac
- uirgrena dolúaignibh midhi .7 natri taiblennaigh afosad
- f22<sup>f</sup>a35** lar fernmaighi .7 romolatur sin uili .finn.conamuintir. domarbhadh ocusrochóirgetur .7 rocumatur infeall .i.inbegan slúaiġhdo biagfinn.dosgaíledh .7 doconmadh uair niraibi acht .cúig.fichit. aningnus con .7 gille afarradh.finn. 7 isí celg rocumadh acu daeíne dísguiri derglommachta dotecht codúnadh .fir.thaí.mic
- f22<sup>f</sup>a40** uaitni irgalaigh cohairm hiraibi . finn. hi coinmedh a.muintiri ocus comadedh aderdáis airgne .7 esbaidh do denuim domuintir.finn. armuinter .firthaí .7 gumadé insgél sin bud tosach cogair .7 coimérgi cum finn domarbhadh Et ar gcuinmedh amuintire dfinn rocóirgedh bruidin
- f22<sup>f</sup>a45** brotla bélfairsing dó andúnadh .fir.thaí.mic.uaithe. irgalaigh gonédaighib examla .7 conurlúachair .7 do faidigedh moremór thinedh afiadnaise.finn.7 firtai .7 inbeagáin
- f22<sup>f</sup>b1** macrigh .7 roflatha ro búí. inafochair. Intan dosh uid .finn. conamuintir cumfledhi dochaithe do conatur lucht in chogair .7 infill chuco isinmbuidhin conédadh .7 conarmuib ocus cosgíathuib sgelmelbréctha arduim gacha trenfir
- f22<sup>f</sup>b5** díb .Ot conuire.finn. gné fóla fingaili arnaferaib sin *tuc* aithne orra .7 nírléig assin urgnum dodénam acht ro bui acomair fritholma nairne fir namát tán ic donbruidhin chugi .7 isamlaidh robui .finn. 7 cotún clíabfairsing uimi inarabatur .secht.cíarléti .fichit. et
- f22<sup>f</sup>b10** cíartha clarda comdlúta animdítean acup re congalaibh

<sup>1</sup> Is contraction for *a(i)r*.

- ocusre comthógbháil *chatha* .F a gairit asahaithli sin ro batur ann intan dochualatur na hifúagarta arda angbaidhe .7 daéine dísguire derg lomnachta acsestan .7 agsírégheam dochum indúnaid airm hirabatur namaithi
- f22<sup>f</sup>b15** sin .7 isamhlaidh adubatur argain .7 innrad dodenum donféin ocusdomuintir.finn. arbúar .7 ar brughadhuib intíri .Ni maithh linne na lúathhcrecha sin arferlí. budh maithh immorro.ar.finn. úair leiseóhar codingbhála nadígbála arsé uair dobétur daboin samboin .7 dá *cháirigh* sage
- f22<sup>f</sup>b20** aéirigh díbsi annsin ar.finn. N i huime sin tánagus arfer lí *acht* dármarbhadhne mar domarbais arnaitri .7 arsenaitri romuind *Et* isamlaidh adubart sin .7 roinsaid .finn. codenmnetachh dásachtach dichéillidhi .7 nírbinsaidhe ganairaegadhh ininnsaidhe sin uair dofregradh sin ac.finn.conamuintir. cobríghach bághachh
- f22<sup>f</sup>b25** borrfadhhach .7 rocuiredh inimresain aturra coferrda feramhail fráechaigméil ar lármedhón nabruidhni .7 robuí fertai ag edarcain .7 ag imdítean .finn.acht *ch*ena nírfuil getur nahánraidh achéili dfaicsin cotorcratur tri .naoi.muir dodegláechaibh aturra arlárna bruidhne .I S annsin do
- f22<sup>f</sup>b30** chúala iuchhna ardmór.inghen. ghuill .mic.morna sestan nas ochaidhe .7 let gairi na laechhraidhe acletradh achéile .7 tánic dochum nabruidni .7 benus abricín dabaithis .7 sgáilis afolt finn buidhe .7 nochtais acíhe .7 isedh adubart a mic ars[1] ismethh enichh .7 ismaslughadh mílidh .7 isimhcháinedh refinn inn
- f22<sup>f</sup>b35** isin .7 isdíscaíledh conáichh feall arinflaithfeinnidh.finn. ocus fágaib colúathh inbruidin anoiss amic arsi ocus rofagais ferlí inbruidhean máthair . ocus adubart ac dul immach do cathh úimsi dúit amárach a finn arse frecétur duitsi incathh sin a ferlí ar.finn. ocus nibud
- f22<sup>f</sup>b40** cás oruinni ar.finn.damad coimlín sinn cathh dothabhairt duitsi .*Et* do frithóiledh.finn.inoidhche sin gurbasaithh echh sonairt somenman éconaféin .7 adubart.finn.isolc inonóirsi do-beir .ferlí damsa inocht .7 nídaman sé *cert* dam ar.finn.ocus ticfa aimser ann arsé .7 nidema
- f22<sup>f</sup>b45** nechh cert dácheile .7 dorinne inlaid ann . A fir lí.gid fada gairit cotí.intan fa ticfa infer féig. nidingna réir dolethhéid.
- f22<sup>v</sup>a1** B iaidh ass. hicomaimser na ngall nglas.isnífuighi ére úainn.achtmaidm thúaidh .7 maidm thess . T icfa am. higcuirfither ár na ngall .gid fada gair id gotí.isborb sráinfius cách aclann.
- f22<sup>v</sup>a5** IS me finn.maith barlinn isibighh digh .onan damaighhcert nacóir .bíaidh dolecht osbóinn afir . A fir. A haithhle naláidhisin adubart finn.aóga arsé is ecal lium nabriatrasa adeir fer lí rinn higcuimnechadh afála dúinn. ocusisfír ám arsé gofacusa garadh mac

- f22<sup>v</sup>a10** morna *acath chrunnmóna agslaidhi naféne conár fuil*  
*ñgetur hinurchomuir aaiǵthe refiuchad fergiincur*  
*adh .7 atconarcsa ám fós ar.finn.intáirsigh hitenta con*  
*féin .7 adubart inláidh ann .// chaidhe sa ceand docrom*  
*IUchna ardmór .inghen. ghuill .máthair fírlí seng aǵlacc.so*
- f22<sup>v</sup>a15** regoll iscosmuil inmac. // tuitfit modádalta  
*Fer lí mac fír taí ganlocht.eimer mór comlann rochlecht.*  
*lium .dam dar lium ní damuit ceartt*  
*A t conarc garadh comoch.doíbadh loch gemasruth . inlá*  
*atbath risinféin.adubart fein ach isuch . iuchna.*
- f22<sup>v</sup>a20** Do bí goll agscoltadh sciath.agsin intríath dodáil fuil  
*hicath crundmóna narcerb.alám isafergrusfiuch.i.*  
*Asahaitli sin tánic fer taí mac úaithe irgalaigh isin*  
*tech hiraibi.finn. 7 roshuid arlethláim.finn.ocus ro fer*  
*fáilti ris .7 rofúráil ól .7 aibnis air .7 adubart*
- f22<sup>v</sup>a25** fer tai isuime rofúagrad incath so ort amarach ari  
*feinnigh. ganslúagh nasochaidhe maróen rit .N i ham*  
*laid sin idir atúsa arfinn . úair ata mac rífer f*  
*ánnall imfochuirsi .i. láegaire luath béimendach*  
*ocusdingebaidh trí.cét.laech lasamuin lángér isin cath sa dim*
- f22<sup>v</sup>a30** Et ata cetach cithach .macrí lochlainni imfarradh tánic  
*dodighuil aderbráthairech orumsa .7 arinbféin .7 otcon*  
*aircc coin .7 fir naféne tug grad dímór dóib .7 ro*  
*léig fo lár afoghúil .7 adi berg .7 roan acamsa .7*  
*dingebaidhtri.cét. cuingid catharmach isinchathsa dímsa*
- f22<sup>v</sup>a35** ifirtaí bar.finn.ocus isimda laech loinngnímach lanch  
*alma osoin himach maróen rimsa is tnuht*  
*ach re troit .7 isaflum inimguin .7 isesgaidh aneang*  
*nam .7 is fíchda re forrán .7 isbert inláid ann.*  
*M ac duib mic sálmóir nalend.laegairi luath nam béimeand*
- f22<sup>v</sup>a40** mairfidh tri.cét.ferngaili.nibudh brég infáistini.  
*A ta mac ri lochlannann.cét.ach nacomlonn.tuitfit leis*  
*tri.cét.don íslúagh .curata cródha claidhemrúad.*  
*M airg bías arcind naféne.dańgaba cách coimérge*  
*arní obuid incath cruaidh.ismer érgit rehaenúair.*
- f22<sup>v</sup>a45** D atigit lúaigne sachath.isinmaidinsi himárach .illos sciath  
*ísland isglacc. budhhimda máthair gan mac.Mac .*  
*D obatur inoidhchi sin agimrádh inchatha .7 na hirgaile*  
*urrdálta arnamárach . Roéirigh .finn. isin maidin*  
*mochsholuis .7 ro cuir techta anagaidh amuintire .7*
- f22<sup>v</sup>a50** dofregadar cobríghach bágach borrfadhach hé  
**f22<sup>v</sup>b1** as gach aird.ocus do chúaid.finn.7 achúig .cét.dég laech  
*cohat mbrea for bouinn budhes .7 rochoirigh .finn.*  
*achúig .cét.dég. láech ar ur inátha combróin sciath .7 claidhem*  
*ocus cathbarr. S gela firthaí mic úaithe*
- f22<sup>v</sup>b5** irgalaigh .7 fir lí mic firthaí.rothinóiletur aslúaigne

- ocus asochaidhi .7 tangadar inandírmadhuib data  
dímóra deghslúaigh coháeninat gorabatur.deich.cét.  
ar.fichit.cét.curadh catharmach .7 tangatur coathu mbrea  
donréimsin . *Et otconcatatur inbecán slúaigh arur in*  
**f22<sup>v</sup>b10** átha dontáeb ali roches amenma forru .7 I Sí  
comairli dorónsat roghabsat anerredha catha .7 comloinn  
umpu .7 dochúatar anetromuib anétach .7  
animtromuib anarm .7 isíat so na húaisli rocóir  
gedh atús inchatha sin na coloman .i. Fertai mac .uaithne.  
**f22<sup>v</sup>b15** irgalaigh.ocus ferlí mac firtaí .7 emer glún glas  
mac aeda.mic garaidh. mic morna.ocus cúig mac uirgrena  
do hsentúathaibh temrach .ocus natri táiplendaigh  
afosadhu lár fernmuighi.ocus lúaighne temrach ar cena.  
Ot conáirc.immorro inflaithu feinnig ferdo fortamhail fedmlaidir  
**f22<sup>v</sup>b20** fraechaicméil fichinnsaigtechu .7 incuingid comlonnach  
crúaidh conglecach .i.mac cathu línmur cumail inci  
pi catha sin aga chórugudh ina aghaidh. Dar lim arsé  
isdáirib atáit nafir út agtabairt catha dúinn  
*Et abirgad banechhlach ar.finn.* eirgh .7 aicill in lucht  
**f22<sup>v</sup>b25** úd .7 tairg comadha dóib . Cacomadha sin ón ar  
birgat .ni hannsa sin. ar .finn. ismisi tug dóib aconachu .7 acrich  
ocus acongbail hiferund .7 do bérin acutruma .7 a  
coméid ali dóib .7 gantecht imaghaidh don chursa  
ocus máidh orra gurab daltadha damsa íat ar .finn.  
**f22<sup>v</sup>b30** T anic tra birgat banechu lach. cohairm irabatur  
na maithi sin .7 ro chan sin ríu. I S cóir na  
comadha dogabháil ar. fer. taí. uair is mór dogradhsa  
ag .finn. afirlí arsé. oir istú indara fer.dég. dobídh  
ina luing ac. finn. oculus dobídh tosach coguir .7 comairle  
**f22<sup>v</sup>b35** agot uadhu .7 deredh comóil .7 isdalta do tú arsé  
do bérin dom bréthir ris arfer lí nach dingnum comól caird  
eamhail choidhchi misi .7 find arsé .7 fós nach rachu ina  
luing cobráth . I S olc incomairli sin ar fertai . úair  
isflaith úasal fertamhail forglidhe.finn.arsé.oir isághmar  
**f22<sup>v</sup>b40** urlam innsaigtechu hé conaféin.ocusdoconacsa  
.finn. arsé acathuib .7 acomlonnuib .7 nífaca amac  
samla ríam.ardéne.artairpighe.ardechracht .arcrúas  
archalmacht.ar luinne .ar laechdacht agslaidh  
slúaigh .7 sochaidhe .7 atbert inlaidh and .  
**f22<sup>v</sup>b45** M airg do béradhu cathu donfein.dambedh arcéill garb angluind  
dobferr and ag .finn. féin. 7 dul da darénaluing.  
N ocha racha me go .finn. bed arachinn sachathu cruinn.isnían  
ab gan é fein .nocha rachu darér naluing .  
Mair doslaidhi catha cirb .finn lám asráinti ingachaird. Gach  
**f22<sup>v</sup>b50** nechu tachrus ré rireil .darlimisdó fein amairg.M.  
**f23<sup>f</sup>a1** I S olcc in chomairli sin ar fertai .cathu . dotabairt df

- inn aráúaisli .7 ara aingidhecht .7 ara ághmure.ac|idir  
 ón arferlí nígébamne ní artalam acht cath úad. Arní  
 frecéra indíbin senláich úd sinni arsé arlámach  
**f23<sup>f</sup>a5** nóarlaechdacht ré comtógbháil catha. ocus roimpáidh in  
 echlach roimpi arís .7 rofritháil nabriatra sin dfinn .Do  
 berim dombréthir ris ar .finn. dátístaís arsochraiti chug  
 ainn nach bíadh úainde nacomadha sin dóib. Eirighsi  
 aridhisi aeclach ar .finn. ocus tairg tuilledh comadh dóib. Catui  
**f23<sup>f</sup>a10** lledh sin ón arineclach. Breth breitheman .7 ambreth féin fosdoib  
 airsin anúas .7 tánic inechlach aridhisi .7 targaidh nacomadha sin  
 IS cóir nacomadha dogabháil arfertaú .7 gach nechh tug cath  
 go hégoir ríam dfinn isroim finn romeabaidh orra .7  
 isbert fertaí láidh air sin .// chur ris iscomlonn cláen  
**f23<sup>f</sup>a15** D o conarcsa finn. agslaidhe slúagh. ar arbris báighh.ta  
 maírg thét nadáil .// raibi mur ismían lem .gan  
 N írachha finn gan tachurris. gidh garb aghlonn .go  
 chíall gan conn .// aían nantimm.bed daim gan cuing.do.  
 Bedíd nafir ómóenmuighh ann .gofóebrach uill .obartacur  
**f23<sup>f</sup>a20** I S mithidh damsá imtecht budesta ar inechlach. Nígabthar  
 crodh na coma ele úaib <sup>//acht cath//</sup> arémer glúnglas mac aedha  
 mic garaidh .7 armic uirgrend miclúidhech cuirr .7 arlúaigh  
 ni temrach. Tánic inechlach roimpi .7 ro innis scéla  
 derba dfinn .7 aderuit issenóir díblidhi do lámáighh thusa  
**f23<sup>f</sup>a25** afinn arineclech. Doberim briathar ris ar .finn. gurub cathh  
 gilla óig dobér dóib siun .7 isbert in láid ann .  
 S en lúaighni temrach. combriatraib gúa.da risat br  
 ea.dober cathh núadhh .// bith sa cath agnuthgreis .  
 M ac aedha mic garaidh. mac emer glúnglais.isé crich aríghbais  
**f23<sup>f</sup>a30** C lanmaicni uirgrend.tuitfit inaforgoll.d.gachhole  
 datuirmim. budóib busaidhgeall // léo nasgéla seana.  
 Budhait lenaimdib .dandáilit bera.bérait inambélaibh  
 A sahaithli sin adbert .finn. erigh aeclach .7 tairg tuilledh com  
 adhh dóib súd arsotlacht aslúaigh .7 arfeabus anengamha  
**f23<sup>f</sup>a35** ocus ardétlacht andeghdaínead .7 arcródacht acomairle  
 úair nemaithmechh gachh náma aeclach ar sé .7 ta  
 bair ambreth féin dóib ár nímaithh cathh gan choma  
 T ánic tra birgod banechlech cohairm hirabatur na  
 maithi sin .7 targaidh ambruidhin féin dói b. Níghébum  
**f23<sup>f</sup>a40** crodh na coma natír natalamh.acht cathh condíglum  
 arsenfolta cosunda ar insenlaech .7 fóbruis  
 fer lí marbhadh na hechlaighi .7 nir ligedh dó. Doberim dom  
 bréthir risar ferlí abirgat dafaicter tú doridisi co  
 nimérat gairdi ísaeghail fort. Et roimpoidh birgat  
**f23<sup>f</sup>a45** isinsligidh .7 rotogaibh ahétachh ósmeallaibh amás .7 teb  
 easl– fecheamnus nacinn .7 atenga arfolúaimain rémét  
 inimgábhuidh araibi coríacht .finn. cohairm hiraibe .

- f23<sup>f</sup>b1** ótconairc .finn. na hairdena sin arbirghat dorinni infrith<sub>l</sub>ergso  
A birghat aechlach. dobir artúatha trethnach<sub>l</sub> .ata do  
tenga ardech<sub>l</sub>radh. nahábair rinn acht fír. Mada tecaid  
lúaigne .sascéith arañguallaibh. is nafir ochúalngne
- f23<sup>f</sup>b5** bid aith<sub>l</sub>rech .7 rofrecair birghat hé .7 adbert.so ann  
A le afínd imnedaigh<sub>l</sub> . fada atá ga tharrngere.biáid  
tú higcosuir cró. tegait chucut lúaigni. Sascéith  
arañgúailib .<sup>b</sup>is émer aroen leó. <sup>a</sup>isnafir ochúailgne  
D aroisi higcend catha. bud forderg infatha.isolcta
- f23<sup>f</sup>b10** char flatha. re fatha ganch<sub>l</sub>in. arnérgi naféne.da  
muid<sub>l</sub>hi hicond ceilli .ticfat acend cleit<sub>l</sub>hi. Dambía  
meid<sub>l</sub>hi arbir. abirghat. // táib chugatsa arsí .7 dena  
A rifénnigh<sub>l</sub> arbirghat dochuiretur sút acomuirli dén  
calma anaghaidh nacuingedh catha út .7 lúai<sub>l</sub>ghnetemrach
- f23<sup>f</sup>b15** dogentur. immorro ar .finn. uair bud<sub>l</sub> forderg foránach<sub>l</sub> fergarnaigh<sub>l</sub>  
nafuigh<sub>l</sub>le feich<sub>l</sub>emnuis dogensa friú arfinn.  
I S ann sin éirgis rífénnigh<sub>l</sub> hErinn. 7 alban .7 saxan .7 bretan  
.7 leous .7 loch<sub>l</sub>lann .7 nanailén cendtarach<sub>l</sub>. Et gabuis aca  
therredh catha .7 comraic .7 comloinn uime .i. léne thana sididhe
- f23<sup>f</sup>b20** dosróll súaichnid<sub>l</sub>h sainemhail tíri trebarglaine tairngire  
ré grían ageilch<sub>l</sub>nis .7 gabuis aceitir ciarléti .fich.et  
cíartha clártha comdlúta cotúin uime tarsi sin amuigh<sub>l</sub>  
anechtuir .7 gabuis aluirigh tigh<sub>l</sub> treabraidh tré dúalaigh don  
fúairíarann athleg<sub>l</sub>tha aranúachtar sin .7 asgabhal engach
- f23<sup>f</sup>b25** óircimsach<sub>l</sub> imamuinél .7 gabuis clarcoilér cressa  
comartaigh<sub>l</sub> comdaingin condealbhaibh dúuibsecha dracon  
fochóel ach<sub>l</sub>uirp congabhadh dó<sub>l</sub>tarb aslíasat coderc  
aogsaile dasgendis renna .7 fóebuir .7 ro con  
ngbhadh aslegha crandremra curata coigrinne anurcomair
- f23<sup>f</sup>b30** inrígh<sub>l</sub> .7 tarraidh ach<sub>l</sub>laid<sub>l</sub>hem órdorcair inech<sub>l</sub>ruis for a  
clú .7 glacais amanáis leth<sub>l</sub>anglas lím<sub>l</sub>tha loch<sub>l</sub>lann  
ach<sub>l</sub> ina láim .7 tarraidh ascíath scothamlach scáthuaine comb  
úailtibh breca bit<sub>l</sub>háilli dobán óir .7 cocomradhaibf  
innáille finndruine .7 coslabradhuib sní<sub>l</sub>thi sesmach<sub>l</sub>a
- f23<sup>f</sup>b35** senairgid forsdúadh<sub>l</sub> lerg ad<sub>l</sub>h<sub>l</sub>ruma .7 gabuis acath<sub>l</sub>barr  
círach clárach<sub>l</sub> cethireoch<sub>l</sub>rach<sub>l</sub> donór ál álainnórloisgi  
congemuib glémaisigh<sub>l</sub>a gláinigh<sub>l</sub>i .7 goleguib laind  
ered<sub>l</sub>ha lánáilli log<sub>l</sub>hmura arnanegar dolámuib  
súadh<sub>l</sub> .7 sáircerd ind dodítin ch<sub>l</sub>ind inchuraidh isin chat<sub>l</sub>h
- f23<sup>f</sup>b40**ocus tánic roime fónsamla ina cloth<sub>l</sub>bili congbhála  
catha .7 inados dítin deg<sub>l</sub>h laech .7 inash<sub>l</sub>onn sesmach<sub>l</sub>  
sluagh<sub>l</sub> .7 sochaidhe .7 ina com<sub>l</sub>laid<sub>l</sub>h cho<sub>l</sub>thaithe curata .7 cath<sub>l</sub>  
míleta.íartair domain .7 níran donréim sin coríacht cohur  
iná<sub>l</sub>tha. D óig ám nír bingnam righ<sub>l</sub>i. nhErenn .7 albain .7 ri
- f23<sup>f</sup>b45** fennig<sub>l</sub>hecht indomhain uile do beith<sub>l</sub> ag .finn. mac cumhaill mun amm  
sin arf a <sup>/he/</sup>.incúgedh sái ré gach sáircerd é .7 tres gein

- sochuir .hErenn.i. Lugh lámfota mac céin rodíchuir  
**f23<sup>v</sup>a1** fine fomra ahÉrinn.ocus brían bóruma mac cinnédigh  
 tue hÉre adáir .7 adocraiti conachraibi cáithlech atha  
 in erinn gan gall dáer ica frithalom fair nogur díchuir brian  
 íat .7 find.mac cumhaill intres gin tsochuir .hErenn. ac  
**f23<sup>v</sup>a5** díchur danar .7 dibergach .7 úath .7 arracht .7 ilphíast  
 ocusloingsidh lánmór .7 gachndoccamuil árchena a  
 .hErinn .7 tánic bódíth indérinn ónuillind coarali .7 rus  
 bithnaigh .finn. fir .hErenn. ré bliadhna .7 tue .secht. mba .7 tarb in  
 gach énbaille in .hErinn. Acht atá ní chena tánic inseam  
**f23<sup>v</sup>a10** oir suaichnidh sonairt sithchenach sin .i.finn .7 gabuis  
 láma forinúathadh slúaiigh robúi inafarradh imcalma  
 dodenom anaghaidh nasocraiti robúi aracinn. Et ro  
 érgetur nacúig .cét. dég. fíangaiscedhach robui hifochuir  
 .finn. regairbgresadh gotha atigerna .7 roling gach laech inalúirigh  
**f23<sup>v</sup>a15** dib .7 roglacc gach curaidh aclaidhem .7 dogab gach mílidh  
 amanáis corabatur fóbróin scéith .7 claidhim .7 cathbarr  
 fa .finn. mac cumuill .7 fa.cét.ach cithach.mac ri lochlann  
 ocusfa laegaire. luath béimnech.mac duib .mic sálmoir  
 micrí bfer fánnoll .7 fa aedh mbaillderg .mac fóeláin  
**f23<sup>v</sup>a20** mic .finn. 7 fa trí conuib móenmuighe. Et rothógbatar  
 doiredha dlúithe díghainne dimóra donruada derg  
 lasrach dacraisechaib cranremra curata coig  
 rindi .7 dalaighnib lethanglasa .7 dafoghaitib  
 fuilecha fóebarderga .7 dorónsat mainer athusach  
**f23<sup>v</sup>a25** ogulborb aintrenta .7 leibend daingen dlúith di  
 toghlidhi doscáilti doscíathaib scíamda scellbolgacha  
 ocusdoscíathaibh áille aingheala .7 do .scíathaibh. engacha úainidhe .7  
 do.scíathaibh. corcra cró derga .7 do .scíathaibh. etrochta aladh breca  
 ocus do scíathaibh. dubcorcra deilgnecha .7 doscíathaibh. Brecbuidhe  
**f23<sup>v</sup>a30** búabalda .falór .imorro dúathgráin .7 do cridhenbás  
 dámbidbadhaibh afaigsin foninnus sin arnemnighe anarm .7 arágh  
 muiri aninnill .7 arcrúas acraidheb .7 arcrodhachta  
 comairli .7 rucatur sidhi arnaid athlum imesgaidh antrenta  
 inacippi chóiriti .7 ina mbróin badba .7 inatuinti trethan  
**f23<sup>v</sup>a35** borb colár medhoin indátha . T angatur.imorro na .deich.cét. ar fichit.cét.  
 curaidh catharmach robatur columna natemrach don leith eile  
 donáth .7 rogabatur anerredha catha .7 comraic .7 comlainn impu .7  
 rosinnedh asduicc rompo .7 rocronaighedh acomairc .7 rocóirgedh  
 acath léo .7 rohegradh .7 rohordaigedh amílidh mercalmá .7  
**f23<sup>v</sup>a40** acuraidh confadacha .7 anánraidh echtmara anurtosach inimbúaltach  
 .i.Fertai. mac .uirgrenn. irgalaigh. ocus fer lí. mac .fir.taí. ocus émer  
 glúnglas.mac  
 aedha mic garaidh .7 cúic mac uirgrenn .7 áithlech mór .mac. duibrend  
 ocus uirgrenn budésin .7 na<sup>tri</sup>táiblendaiigh afosadlár fernmuighe  
 Et rugatur sidhe saidemáil sarluath sruth lúaimnach co lármedhón in



- f23<sup>v</sup>a45**      *atha don tóeb aráighaidh finn .7 amaithe. Et nír fuilngedh co fada infeghadh sin acuintan robrúcht dóirteí nacathá cechtarda higend araile .7 tugsat gáire ardá osgur do ós aird innus coraibi amacalla acranduib .7 aclochaibh*
- f23<sup>v</sup>b1**      *anallaibh .7 aninberuib .7 acomúamannaib intalman .7 acres uib fúara fruighimellacha nafirmamenti .ocus rodibraicedh aturra frasa dfogáithib fuilecha fáoburgera .7 doledg aethib lethna licti .7 doclochuib crúaidhi connerta. Et*
- f23<sup>v</sup>b5**      *ro imfaigsig inirghal .7 rotendadh introid .7 rohaib ligedh intár .7 ro cruadhagh incomrac .7 roinnsaidh gach curaidh acheli dib godían dúuibsech denmnedach dásachtach díchéillech .7 do rinnetur gléo fíchda fergach forránach forsmachtach urlum agarb innsaigtech .7 rocaithsit cetha comora cloch do cruadhbrisedh*
- f23<sup>v</sup>b10**      *chend .7 chlogad .7 chathbarr achéile .7 dorinne cimsa comcomuisc dona cathaib mesg armesg. Dóigh am robimdo ann sin slegha sithrighne gasirbrisedh .7 claidme crúad slípti gacamlumpadh .7 scéith scellbristi gascáiledh .7 clogaid .7 cathbarr ga cominugadh .7 amuis .7 ánruidh agan*
- f23<sup>v</sup>b15**      *athchuma. ro bimda ann dano cuirp chirrfa .7 cnis cerptha ocustáuib tolla .7 láich lonna ledartha .7 ánruidh arnanarlech ocus colla curata hi cosair cró. F a lór. immorro domarbhadh múadh laech ocus midlech féchain fhíarletartadh nafíarlann arformnaib nafer óglach .7 tairm natrénfer ictoitim .7 scolgaire. <sup>nascíath.</sup> agascoltadh .7 dorn*
- f23<sup>v</sup>b20**      *gáir nalúirech línech agaláechbrisedh .7 coicetail naclaidem récíuib nacathb arr .7 letgaire nalaechraidhe acursclaidhe arnahánradhaibh Et niransat nacuraidh don congail comarbhtha sin gur bo corcra comaisci intáth ónuillinn goraili .7 comocuire cróderg cubrach buinnedha borba búaidherta nabóinne onáth síis le himat*
- f23<sup>v</sup>b25**      *nafola acsiledh ascnesuib na curadh . I S annsintangatur días domuintir. finn. acath nacolumon .i.tnúthach mac dubthaigh .7 túarán mac tomair .7 tucatur indiasin búaidredh arbuidhen cotorcratur .noenmur laech légach duine díb cotarrla días domac aib uirgrend inanaghaidh isinchath gur fersat comrac acethrar .7 do*
- f23<sup>v</sup>b30**      *rochratur in diasin dimuintir.finn. lé macuib .uirgrena. hicrich incomloinn IS annsin .immorro tanic laech arnaid ainsergach domuintir. finn. hicath nacoluman.*
- .i. laegaire lúath béimnach.mac duib mic sálmóir mic rí fer fánnoll ocus do bris bern .cét.isin cath inurcomair aagthi .7 roimir aferg arlúaigni temrach cotorcratur .cét. laech lasamoin lángér leis*
- f23<sup>v</sup>b35**      *domuintir.firlí. Oíconaire ferlí immorro insertadh slighe .7 in rore idhiugudh ríghda romór sin .7 incumach catha tug laegairi fora. maithi. Tánic fer lí acend conaire dó . I S baranta naborbrúathair sin alaegairi arferlí. isfír ón arlaegairi .7 nífritsa bertar abuidhi ní com cogur carat tucabairsi ararmuinntirni arlaegairi . I Sannsin tangatur.cét.laech lasamuin lángér do.maithibh. fir lí arabelibh isin*
- f23<sup>v</sup>b40**      *irgail .7 torchuirsit in .cét. láech sin lé láegairi arinchuib*

- atigerna .7 gonuis láegairi ferlí .7 gonuis fer li eisín ecomáin  
 aghona .7 tangatur .cét. laech arnaidh ansergach eili do .maithibh.  
 fir lí arainchibh isinuair sin .7 torcratur in.cét.sin do laim láegairi  
**f23<sup>v</sup>b45** hicríchaibh incomloinn .7 gonuis ferlí esim .7 gonuis sim ferlí .Acht  
 chena tárratur indiasin árach comraic .7 comloinn araceili gur saithetur  
 slegha crannremra curata cror ighni ataobaibh .7 atorc  
 asnach achéile .acht atani chena fabúaidhredh arnabuidhñib  
**f24<sup>f</sup>a1** ocus facritñugadh arnacathuib beith hicfechain comruig nad  
 esi sin cotorchair laegairi hicríchibh inhomloinn leferlí .7 comaíd  
 is ferlí incosgur. N í hartlás naartime dochuaidh sin.  
 dfinn nádá muintir .acht ro crúadhaisit in cath .7 rothensat  
**f24<sup>f</sup>a5** AR tuitim laegairi.immorro tánicc.cét.ach cithach mac rí lochlann hicath  
 nacoluman .7 ba húathbásach na hírnadha aimreidhe  
 dorinni donacathuib inaurthimchill combenadh bonn fri  
 bonn .7 dóid fridóid .7 méidhi fri méidhe dá bidbadhaibh cachconuir  
 notégedh. Otconuicc émer glúnglas.mac oedho.mic  
**f24<sup>f</sup>a10** garaidh incumach curata .7 inrúathar rímíleta sin famacrígh  
 lochlann. tánicc fén hi gcenn conuire do.cét.ach amhail tarp  
 tnúthach troda hicomarrchis choinglecca .7 ótconcatur ach  
 éili tucsatur dasidhi tenda troda daráli gurbamesc  
 aithi cach hicacoimfechain. achtata níchena torcratur tri cét  
**f24<sup>f</sup>a15** curadh comlonnach crúaidh aturro .7 torcratur anamus imdegla .7  
 nifrih fóirithin arnaferuib .7 ro bocinti crich imbethaidh  
 inimfogus dóib nir coigletur corp arali gotorcratur com  
 thuitim le.chéle hifadhnaise nacath .i. emer .7 .cét.ach cithach  
**f24<sup>f</sup>a20** IS ansin tánic aedh ballderg macfóeláin mic finn faslúagaibh  
 nacolumon .7 ro léigedh dorus bél mór dó isin chath gur úathbá  
 sach ré fechain e gach conuir nothéged. Ettarra aithlech  
 mór mac duibrend .7 aedh dachéli isin chath cotorcratur tri  
 .nóen<sup>mur</sup>. láech lé háedh mbaillderg dogléri .muintire. mic uirgrena  
 gotarra iter aichlech .7 oedh baillderg gurfersat comlonn crodha  
**f24<sup>f</sup>a25** curata friacheli . Fa húathbásach nahálaidhsin .7 fágáibthech  
 nagona .7 fáíartharsna nafercrechta tucatur arcuirp  
 aib achéle gotorchuir aedh baillderg le haithlech icrích in comlonn.  
 O tconuic immorro inflaithfénnidh find firchuingedha naféni  
 arnafalmugudh .7 atrénfir artuitim .7 aóes gradha armanairlech  
**f24<sup>f</sup>a30** ro dech insenóir forbthe fírglic gur búaine bladha ina  
 saéghal dó .7 gur bferr dó bás dfagháilnamaitmighé do  
 dénum ré nanaimdib .Et isansin tánic inrifénnid  
 faslúagaibh nacolumon .7 romédaigh amenma .7 ro ardaigh aai  
 gnedh .7 rolúathaigh aláma .7 robrestaigh nabéminna guréirigh  
**f24<sup>f</sup>a35** áengaile osanáil inrímílidh gonar fetatur forni fer  
 óglach fulung inurcomair aaiti g o fagbhadh infer hifail  
 agluin .7 himad atraigedh díb inatortuib tamnaithi .7 ina  
 meidhib móilderga .7 inacosuir cró gach conair no tegehdhisin cath  
 ocus do chúidh futhu .7 trithu .7 tarsa murdam ndían.

- f24<sup>r</sup>a40**      *ndásachtach arnadroch búaladh.no mur leomhan arnacrád fánachuilen x  
aib no mur buinni ndían ndílinn sceithes ahucht airdslé  
be inaimser thuili brisis .7 minaighes gach ní gus aroichend  
ocus ró timchell cath na columon.fotri amhail timicillus féth fidh  
no mur chenglus ben báidh amac . gur basamalta frihur*
- f24<sup>r</sup>a45**      *laidhi gabhas hicerdcha nofrifúaim críncrann higacoimbrisedh  
no fri lecuib aigri fochosuib echraidhe fúaim les .7 la  
org .7 lethchhend fo dhéis achlaidim isin chath .7 rogáir*
- f24<sup>r</sup>b1**      *etur bánánaigh .7 bocánaigh .7 badba belderga .7 ginite  
glinne .7 demna aieóir .7 arrachta folúaimnecha na fir  
mamenti hi comóradh áigh .7 irgaili óscinn inrí feinnidh . gach  
slighidh daingabhadh isin cath .7 nir scuir inrí míledh. Donruathar*
- f24<sup>r</sup>b5**      *sin. no gur díthláithredh cath nacomlumon.iter thuitim .7 tethedh .acht ferlí  
.7  
fertaí .7 cúig mac uirgrena .Otconairc.fer.lí.finn ina oénar gan  
amus acaimdeghail .7 gancharait icachúl coimed.tánic  
hicend conuire dó .7 rochuimnigh aescairdes don rí.féinnidh.fregrais  
.finn.ferlí .7 isbert tuitfirsi féin isnafoltaibh sin arsé. acht chena ro*
- f24<sup>r</sup>b10**      *comrac oenláthair dondís sin .f a crúaidh conamhail connert incho  
minsaighe sin .fadútrachtach dígaltach dúaibsach díanbuillech comrac  
nadesi sin. f a gráinemhail gúasachtach glé<sup>t</sup>nighe cruadhcoigetel  
naclaidhim .7 nacolg ndet ré cendaib .7 reclogataibh achéli  
Othairnic dfer lí aclaidem dochaitim recend .7 recolainn inrí*
- f24<sup>r</sup>b15**      *féinnidh .táraidh intslegh crannremor chóigrinne .7 tuc urchor séitrech sírc  
alma certcoimsech curata ar .finn. gur chuir intslegh trésin édach imdo ro  
boi imon rí míledh. gurtreghdustar intslegh trít é arcirrbhadh acuirp.  
fafergach  
foránach rofegur inrí.féinnidh. intanbforlann áladh sin tuc ferlí fair gotuc  
béim*
- f24<sup>r</sup>b20**      *barranta borrfadach cruadhcnáimleturtha claidhim dferlí gurbenachhend  
dacholonn .7 comáidhis .finn. intáirsigh irgaile.7 insond sídgaile  
sin dothuitim leis. Otconairc . immorro .fer.taí mac úaithe irgalaigh amac  
dothuidim. tánic codísgir domenmnach denmnatach hi cend conuire  
dfinn .7 isedh roraidh . I S mór ám nahéhta sin a .finn. ar .fer.taí  
isfir on ar .finn. 7 cidh nach gus trásta tánacsi ar .finn. Bamenanradh*
- f24<sup>r</sup>b25**      *lem cot<sup>t</sup>féasa leferlí .7 robu luinne lim dothuitim leis na  
lim fén. IN domairchisedh tanacussi ar .finn. no indominnsaighe. I S  
dotinnsaighe ám ar fertaí. arnír hordaighedh dothigernus no dú...  
dinnilib ní aramait<sup>t</sup>finnsi momac domarbhadh. I S amlaidh rochu...m  
ocus roinnsaigh sé. finn. gan chéill gan chuimni ganchóigili ... ro*
- f24<sup>r</sup>b30**      *fregradh infendigh firchalma sin ag .finn. R othógbatur indías sin  
clesa coimimda curata dodíth .7 dodílgend araili. acht ba doirb  
dofáinési do doínib túaruscbháil nahirgaili sin dothabhairt  
uair fatarbda tinnesnach natairberta .7 fagarb gáibthech gu  
asachtach nagona .7 fa harnaidh aigméil nahálaidh tucsada*
- f24<sup>r</sup>b35**      *forchéli .7 táraidh fertaí bóeghal gona forsínrífénidh gotug*

*sáthadh sleghi fair conar balugha ahoslughadh dontóeb araill in  
 nas dontóeb ar bean.ocustug finn crúadhbéim claidhim  
 dfertaí ańdíghal aghona conárbó dín lúirech leburláidsech. ná cotun  
 comdlúta na édedh arnaidh allmurado dfertaí cotorchuir in  
**f24<sup>r</sup>b40** tréńfer fortalman nadá ordain imtroma .7 comáidis finn inmór  
 écht sin dothuitim leis. Isí sin uair fatangatur .cúig. mac uirgrend  
 goláthair .7 tugsat anagthi ar .finn. Otconairc .finn. nafírnaimide sin .  
 dainnsaighe níringaib íat gur sáithsetur slegh gachafirdíb  
**f24<sup>r</sup>b45** isinrífeíndid .7 rofregairsium in .cúiger. curadh cocomtrom .gotug  
 guin sańguin doib .Otconcatur.clann uirgrenn incuradh arnacrecht  
 nughadh isnacomraguib roimi rochuirestur fri fertai  
 ocus frána mac .i. fri fer líí .7 é anbonn ošiledh ańola*

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