

THE DEATH OF BOAND AND THE RECENSIONS OF *DINDSENCHAS ÉRENN*

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ABSTRACT

The death of Boand is found in both prose and verse in the *Dindsenchas*. Three poems, labelled Boand I, II, and III by E.J. Gwynn, have survived in various sources. In the first section of this paper, I provide an analysis of the relationship of these poems to one another. This section also includes an edition and translation of a short poem, here called ‘Boand A’, from Oxford Bodl. MS Laud 610, which has a close connection to Boand I. In the second section, I discuss changes which occur between variants of the prose article on Boand. The outcome of the present enquiry demonstrates how studying individual *Dindsenchas* articles broadens our knowledge of the dynamics and growth of the entire corpus. The results of this investigation also have an impact on our understanding of the recensions of the *Dindsenchas*.

INTRODUCTION

Dindsenchas Érenn (or *Senchas Dind Érenn*)¹ has survived in over ten independent manuscripts, collectively dating from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries. The *Dindsenchas* features approximately 200 articles relating the history of notable places in Ireland. Depending on the manuscript, these articles take the form of poems, of short prose passages, or of a combination of prose and poetry. The majority of manuscripts contain prose and verse together, where a short prose paragraph usually precedes one or several poems. In most cases the prose paragraph paraphrases the content of the poem or poems which follow it. A group of fourteenth- to fifteenth-century manuscripts are the most important representatives of this format of *Dindsenchas*² texts:

- R—the Rennes manuscript (Bibliothèque de Rennes Métropole, MS 598)
- B—the Book of Ballymote (Royal Irish Academy MS 23 P 12)
- Lc—the Book of Lecan (Royal Irish Academy MS 23 P 2)
- Y—the Yellow Book of Lecan (Trinity College Dublin MS H 2. 16 [1318])
- M—the Book of Uí Mhaine (Royal Irish Academy MS D ii 1).

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¹ Called *Dindsenchas Érenn* in the Book of Ballymote fol. 188ra, and Royal Irish Academy MS D ii 2 (S) fol. 1ra; *Senchas Dind Érenn* in Rennes fol. 90ra, the Book of Uí Mhaine fol. 84ra, and Oxford Bodleian MS Rawl. B 506 fol. 11ra. The fragmentary texts in the Book of Lecan and the Yellow Book of Lecan lack the title. The word *dind* has an Old Irish genitive plural *dendae*. *Dind*, then, reflects the modelling of the *u*-stem genitive plural on the *o*-stems, since the falling together of unstressed final vowels caused the *u*-stem nom., voc., acc., and gen. pl. to look alike and disambiguation was required. The lack of nasalisation after the gen. pl. can be ascribed to scribal practice: since *dind* ends in a nasal (with *nd* and *nn* being interchangeable), the nasalisation would not be orthographically reflected on the following word *Érenn*.

² I distinguish between upper-case *Dindsenchas* and lower-case *dindsenchas*: the former refers to the corpus of the *Dindsenchas*, which is found in many manuscripts as an independent text or group of texts often entitled *Dindsenchas Érenn* (see note 1 above). The lower-case *dindsenchas* is used for individual articles (for example, ‘the *dindsenchas* of Temair’), and for the genre in general, for instance, ‘*Táin Bó Cúailnge* contains *dindsenchas*’.

A small number of manuscripts represent an exception to the scenario just described. The twelfth-century Book of Leinster (Trinity College Dublin MS 1339; hereafter L)—the oldest manuscript to contain *Dindsenchas*—comprises several sections featuring *Dindsenchas* material in which we find poems with no corresponding prose, and prose sections with no corresponding poems. We also find prose and metrical sections which relate to the same place, but which do not occur within the same section of the manuscript. Two further manuscripts, Oxford Bodleian MS Rawl. B 506 (Bd.) and Edinburgh National Library of Scotland MS Adv. 72.1.16 (Ed.), contain prose passages accompanied by one to three quatrains, which are usually different, however, from the corresponding metrical sections found in other manuscripts.

Editions of material from the *Dindsenchas* have been, on the whole, highly selective, even when editing from a single manuscript. The first texts to be edited and translated were the *Dindsenchas* of Bd. and Ed.³ Although these two witnesses contain material predominantly written in prose, they also feature a small number of poems. These were omitted by Whitley Stokes when he published the texts of Bd. and Ed. When editing the text from Bd., Stokes disregarded a poem about Temair—the only poem which the Bd. text contained—because its stanzas were ‘chiefly composed of stupid strings of place-names’.⁴ For his edition of the Edinburgh *Dindsenchas*, Stokes sought to publish only those *Dindsenchas* articles which did not already appear in his edition of Bd., since both texts agree ‘closely, both in contents and arrangement’.⁵ For this reason, he did not re-edit the Ed. text pertaining to Loch Garman (Wexford), which, in addition to the prose already found in Bd., also contains a poem of nine quatrains.⁶ He applied the same principle to the article on Túag Inbir in Ed., which contains both the prose and a poem. Since the prose was found in Bd., and the poem in L, the entire article was omitted.

Even more selective was Stokes’s approach to editing the *Dindsenchas* from the Rennes manuscript.⁷ Although R belongs to the group of manuscripts which contain both prose and verse *Dindsenchas* throughout, Stokes only edited and translated the prose sections, leaving the impression that R contained no verse. In addition to R, six copies of the *Dindsenchas* were known to Stokes. These were Bd., Ed., L, B, Lc, and H—Trinity College Dublin MS H 3. 3 (1322). For L and B, however, a copy facsimile and a photographic facsimile respectively had recently been published, and Stokes thus felt that these manuscripts were already available.⁸ Lc and H were excluded because both lacked the introduction to the *Dindsenchas*. The Rennes manuscript, on the other hand, had not been published before,⁹ and furthermore contained the introduction lacking in L, B, Lc, and H. Yet, even the text of R is defective in places, missing six articles between the middle and the end of the text. Stokes compared the text of R to that of B and Lc and found all three to be close enough to supply the pieces missing in R from Lc.

³ Whitley Stokes (ed. and trans.), ‘The Bodleian Dindshenchas’, *Folklore* 3 (4) (1892), 467–516; and Whitley Stokes, ‘The Edinburgh Dindshenchas’, *Folklore* 4 (4) (1893), 471–97.

⁴ Stokes, ‘The Bodleian Dindshenchas’, 469 n2. This poem is known as Temair V in Edward J. Gwynn (ed. and trans.), *The Metrical Dindshenchas* (5 vols, Dublin, 1903–35), vol. 1, 38–45 (cited hereafter as Gwynn, *MD*).

⁵ Stokes, ‘The Edinburgh Dindshenchas’, 471.

⁶ Stokes, ‘The Edinburgh Dindshenchas’, 471. The implicit reason for this was that the nine quatrains omitted here form part of a much longer poem on Loch Garman found in L, p. 196a (ll 26782–981).

⁷ Whitley Stokes, ‘The prose tales in the Rennes Dindsenchas’, *RC* 15 (1894), 272–336, 418–84; and *RC* 16 (1895), 31–83, 135–67, 269–312, 468.

⁸ Robert Atkinson (ed.), *The Book of Leinster sometimes called the Book of Glendalough: a collection of pieces (prose and verse) in the Irish language, compiled, in part, about the middle of the twelfth century* (Dublin, 1880). This facsimile edition is based on a copy made by Joseph O’Longan and collated by Brian O’Looney. See also Robert Atkinson (ed.), *The Book of Ballymote: a collection of pieces (prose and verse) in the Irish language* (Dublin, 1887).

⁹ Though a description of this manuscript by George Dottin can be found in Georges Dottin, ‘Notice du manuscrit irlandais de la bibliothèque de Rennes’, *RC* 15 (1894), 79–91.

Regrettably, Stokes's eclectic approach to the *Dindsenchas* makes it impossible to appreciate the variation which exists even between various manuscript copies of the same article, let alone the relationship between the prose and poems. After Stokes had thus set a precedent, his successor, Edward J. Gwynn, saw no other option but to perpetuate the textual segregation by editing only the poems (with a few exceptions)¹⁰ from the *Dindsenchas* manuscripts at his disposal.

Unlike Stokes, however, Gwynn was well aware of the shortcomings of this approach, acknowledging the need for a complete edition of the *Dindsenchas*, which would include both the prose and the verse, and lamenting his predecessor's handling of the material.¹¹ In addition to the texts and translations, Gwynn's editions also include a full apparatus and a commentary on each poem, often tackling complex issues such as date, authorship, rare linguistic forms, and the geographical locations of the places described. Gwynn devoted the final volume of his five-volume *Metrical Dindshenchas* to some much-needed discussion of the *Dindsenchas* manuscripts—by then nearly twenty witnesses—as well as a full discussion of the recensions of the corpus.

Before Gwynn's final volume appeared in print, however, Rudolf Thurneysen published his *Die irische Helden- und Königsage*, which also included a discussion of the *Dindsenchas*.¹² Thurneysen divided the *Dindsenchas* into three recensions or versions (*Fassungen*), which he labelled A, B, and C.¹³ *Dindsenchas* A is metrical and is found only in L. *Dindsenchas* B—the prose recension—exists in two versions, Ba and Bb, the former in L, the latter in Bd. and Ed. Thurneysen also assigns to version Bb the prose introduction found in later sources, relating how the *Dindsenchas* as a whole was recited by Fintan mac Bóchraí in front of the king of Ireland, his chief poet Amairgen, and the *comarba* of Saint Patrick.¹⁴ As regards the form and content of version B, Thurneysen was convinced that the prose Ba was made by making abstracts of the corresponding poems in collection A and ending each prose article with a simple quatrain. In turn, this pattern was adopted by the compiler of Bb.¹⁵

Thurneysen's *Dindsenchas* C is by far the most extensive. Thurneysen saw in this version the combination of A and B, that is, a prose abstract followed by a poem. Recension C also contains the introduction and the title, *Dindsenchas Érenn* or *Senchas Dind Érenn*. Thurneysen remarked that the prose of C seems closer to Bb than to Ba, and that for any prose which lacked a corresponding poem between versions A and B, the compiler of C seems to have supplied one himself.¹⁶ As regards the poetry, many of the poems already occurring in Recension A reappear in C, even if they were skipped over in Recension B. Furthermore, the geographical logic hinted at in the verse of version A is far more apparent in Recension C; it begins in Leinster and, making a clockwise circuit, finishes in Ulster. Thurneysen dates version C to about 1200, and version Ba to before 1147,¹⁷ but gives no dates for versions A and Bb.¹⁸ Thurneysen's paradigm in condensed form gives $A + B = C$, where $A > B > C$ in date.

¹⁰ Gwynn did also edit some prose pieces found in a late copy of the *Dindsenchas* in his fourth volume of the *Metrical Dindshenchas*.

¹¹ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 5, vii.

¹² Rudolf Thurneysen, *Die irische Helden- und Königsage bis zum siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (Halle, 1921), 36–46 (cited hereafter as *Heldensage*).

¹³ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 37.

¹⁴ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 42. This is not unlike the story of the finding of the *Táin*, in which the story's authenticity is guaranteed by a prehistoric, first-hand witness. Similarly, Fintan, having lived in Ireland since the Flood, would be an authority on the origin of all its famous places.

¹⁵ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 40–1.

¹⁶ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 44.

¹⁷ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 39.

¹⁸ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 45.

Gwynn's discussion of the *Dindſenchas* recensions is spread over a number of works, in which he variously identified first three, and later two, recensions. These publications all appeared after Thurneysen's *Heldensage*, although they may have been the products of several decades of earlier research given that references to Thurneysen's work are scarce. In an article in *Ériu* 10, Gwynn discussed the special place of manuscript M in the transmission of the *Dindſenchas* as a segue between what he calls the Bodleian-Edinburgh recension and the Rennes-Ballymote recension.¹⁹ One of M's most interesting features is a long poem at the end of its *Dindſenchas* section, in which each stanza is devoted to a different place, and which shows clear signs of geographical arrangement in a manner similar to the manuscripts of Thurneysen's Recension C. The poet identifies himself as Gilla na Naem Ó Duind, whose death is recorded in the annals in 1166.²⁰ Gwynn concluded that, as of 1166, there must have existed a recension of the *Dindſenchas* which was arranged geographically and which Ó Duind used as a source. Yet, unlike Thurneysen, Gwynn did not believe that this source was what he called the 'L-recension', but rather a forerunner of the Rennes-Ballymote version.²¹

While L, Bd.-Ed., and Rennes are the three recensions Gwynn distinguished at first, he only counted two recensions in his subsequent discussions. In a later article devoted to the transmission of the prose *Dindſenchas*, Gwynn stated that

[t]he Dindshenchas has come down to us in two recensions. Of the earlier in its full form (verse and prose) only the imperfect copy in the Book of Leinster (*L*) survives. Of the later we have a number of copies, more or less complete. ... it is clear that they are all based on one revision of the earlier text, which seems to have been in existence as early as the year 1166 ... The date of the first recension is uncertain: I believe it to be about 50 years older than the second. The text presumed to underlie the various copies of the second recension is here referred to as *Rev*.²²

If we follow Gwynn's dating, this would place the first recension at about 1100, and give a *terminus ante quem* of 1166 for the second.

In the final volume of his *Metrical Dindshenchas*, Gwynn reiterates his division of the whole corpus into two recensions, clarifying that, like Thurneysen, he regards L as the only representative of the earlier recension (which contained both verse and prose). He also claims that the Bd.-Ed. text is a derivative of the earlier L-Recension.²³ All other manuscripts are representatives of Gwynn's second recension, his so-called *Rev* (= Reviser). Gwynn does, however, revise his previous dating of the two recensions. Upon further analysis, Gwynn realised that the Ó Duind poem dated to before 1166 shared closer features with the Bd.-Ed. Grouping, as far as geographical arrangement was concerned, than it did with the text of the Reviser.²⁴ This means that the *terminus* of 1166 should not apply to Gwynn's second recension, but to the prose off-shoot of the first recension, pushing the date of the L-*Dindſenchas* even further back. That date, assigned on purely internal evidence from the long poem on Carmun in L, could be as early as the year 1079, with the caveat that it 'cannot be dated earlier than the

¹⁹ Edward J. Gwynn, 'The Dindshenchas in the Book of Uí Maine', *Ériu* 10 (1926–8), 68–91. I will return to the issue of M in the discussion of the various prose texts relating to Boand below.

²⁰ Gwynn, 'The Dindshenchas', 74.

²¹ Gwynn, 'The Dindshenchas', 75.

²² Edward Gwynn, 'The texts of the Prose Dindshenchas', *Hermathena* 22 (1932), 239–52: 239.

²³ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3; although he states further that Bd.-Ed. 'contain a recension of the prose Dindshenchas, differing both from that of L and from the Second Recension in contents, in arrangement, and in text' (Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 5, 25).

²⁴ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 5, 80.

close of the eleventh century'.²⁵ This leaves a rather vague date for the second recension; one that must, if we follow Gwynn, lie after 1166.

What remains to be added here from Gwynn's discussion is his arrangement of the various manuscripts of the second recension. Gwynn identified two major groups of manuscripts of *Rev*, divided according to the grouping of articles within them. The first, which he believed represented the archetype β (the archetype of the second recension as a whole) most faithfully, was comprised of R and B. Of these two, he believed B to be closer to the original than R.²⁶ The second and larger group is represented by MYLcSS3H,²⁷ although here again, M sometimes occupies an intermediary position so that RBM \neq YLcSS3H. Gwynn tested this grouping against 'a certain number of readings in support of [his] conclusions', meaning that he proceeded selectively, stating that 'the full evidence ... would occupy too much space.'²⁸ It is important, however, that we devote the appropriate amount of space to each *Dindsenchas* article if we want to understand how the corpus came together and how it evolved through centuries of textual accretion.

A number of important insights can be gained from reviewing the approaches taken thus far. First of all, there exists no edition which actually represents the *Dindsenchas* in the manner in which it is recorded in the manuscripts.²⁹ The editions we do have overlap only to a small degree,³⁰ so that it is nearly impossible to assess accurately the variation which exists between copies of the same *Dindsenchas* article. One would expect there to be greater variation between the prose versions than between copies of the same poem since metrical restraints do not apply to prose; yet significant variation exists even among the poems, as will be shown below. Furthermore, while no editor or commentator has thus far published both prose and verse *Dindsenchas* side by side,³¹ there was general agreement—at least between Thurneysen and Gwynn—that the prose *Dindsenchas* was derived from the poems and was therefore secondary.³² In the later recension (Thurneysen's C and Gwynn's second recension), we find the reverse scenario of poems being composed for the sole purpose of matching an already existing prose section in order to form a complete article.³³ But these two scenarios reflect the same binary thinking which has unfortunately governed the completion of editions. Neither Gwynn nor Thurneysen seems to allow for the possibility that prose passages may have undergone a continuous process of editing with each new compilation of the *Dindsenchas* corpus. Finally, as far as the division into recensions is concerned, the majority of scholars writing after Gwynn adopted Thurneysen's division of the recensions. The essential difference

²⁵ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 5, 94.

²⁶ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 5, 55.

²⁷ The sigla S and S3 refer to two Royal Irish Academy manuscripts: D ii 2 and B iii 1. These date from the sixteenth and seventeenth century respectively. See Gwynn, *MD*, vol 5, 7–8.

²⁸ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 5, 56.

²⁹ The diplomatic edition of the Book of Leinster is a notable exception. See Richard Irvine Best *et al.* (eds), *The Book of Leinster, formerly Lebar na Núachongbála* (6 vols, Dublin, 1954–83).

³⁰ One can compare the overlapping prose pieces in Stokes's editions of Bd.-Ed. and R to note any variation between texts relating to the same place.

³¹ Note, however, the edition of the prose and verse of the *dindsenchas* of Temair in John O'Beirne Crowe (ed. and tr.), 'The dind-senchus of Eriu', *Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland* 2 (1) (1874), 139–90.

³² Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 42–3: Thurneysen states that many prose texts in his version Ba specifically cite the poems from which B as a whole is drawn. Gwynn (*MD*, vol. 5, 22.) more explicitly comments that '[i]t can hardly be doubted that the prose Dindshenchas has been put together largely by making abstracts of the corresponding poems'.

³³ A case in point is the poem on Ceilbe, the earliest copy of which is found in the Yellow Book of Lecan, col. 424b–d, where it seems to be a later insertion, however. The first line of the poem is *Mithid dam comma Ceilbe* 'It is time for me to make a verse on Ceilbe' (cf. Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 4, 54), and the poet states that it was remiss of his predecessors not to put Ceilbe into verse. A prose text of this article is found in L as well as in the later *Dindsenchas* manuscripts.

between the two systems is that Thurneysen regarded the verse and prose as representing two separate recensions, whereas Gwynn regarded them as one, so that Gwynn 1 = Thurneysen A+B; Gwynn 2 = Thurneysen C.

In an article published a few decades after Gwynn's discussion, Charles Bowen pointed out that Thurneysen's division was the more accurate one, since it did not seem plausible to him that the verse and the prose found in L should come from the same author, when there could lie 'as much as seventy-five years [according to Gwynn's calculations] between the collection of the poems and the composition of the prose'.³⁴ Indeed, not only does Thurneysen's division seem more plausible, it also emphasises format over date and over matters of transmission, issues which can only be addressed properly by examining each *Dindsenchas* article individually.

Besides supplying an inventory of the *Dindsenchas* articles from Gwynn's and Stokes's editions, including prose and verse, Bowen's chief contribution to *Dindsenchas* scholarship was to lay down the principles which should govern a new, integrated edition of the *Dindsenchas*:

- (i) The prose and the verse of the *Dindsenchas* should be published side-by-side.³⁵
- (ii) A new edition should include a 'thorough commentary ... comprising all the prose and verse pieces under a single place-name heading'.³⁶
- (iii) It should include a coherent numerical system to help identify and locate individual items.³⁷
- (iv) There should be a definition of the 'canon' of the *Dindsenchas*, which determines which articles should be considered the 'stock' and what ought to be considered 'accretions'.³⁸
- (v) Absolutely every item, no matter how late the manuscript and 'however slender its claim to authenticity' should be included.³⁹
- (vi) Poems in what Bowen referred to as 'archaic' metres, omitted by Gwynn, such as are found in the articles on Laigin, Ceilbe, Port Láirge, Srúb Brain, and Slige Dala, should be included.⁴⁰

³⁴ Charles Bowen, 'A historical inventory of the *Dindsenchas*', *Studia Celtica* 10 (1975–76), 113–37: 122.

³⁵ Bowen, 'A historical inventory', 114.

³⁶ Bowen, 'A historical inventory', 118.

³⁷ Bowen, 'A historical inventory', 118.

³⁸ Bowen, 'A historical inventory', 118–19.

³⁹ Bowen, 'A historical inventory', 119.

⁴⁰ Bowen, 'A historical inventory', 119. It is not clear from Bowen's statement what his definition of 'archaic metres' is. In all the examples Bowen cites above, we are dealing with short to medium-length verse pieces embedded in, or appended to, the prose sections of the articles in question. The article on Laigin contains a short piece of genealogical *rosc*, most recently edited in Corthals, 'The rhymeless "Leinster poems": diplomatic texts', *Celtica* 24 (2003), 79–100: 84–5. The prose section on Ceilbe (see Stokes, 'The prose tales in the Rennes *Dindsenchas*', 318–21) contains two short pieces of verse. The first piece consists of seven lines, the first six of which are heptasyllabic with trisyllabic cadence; the last line counts five syllables and ends in a monosyllable. There is no internal or end-rhyme, although alliteration is present in five out of the seven lines, and there is a *dúnad* in the words *nit raib*. The second piece of verse consists of a single stanza written in an *ochtfoclach* type metre following the format 7³7³7³5¹7³7³5¹ with end-rhyme between the final words of lines d and h. The fact that the first piece is rhymeless, non-stanzaic and alliterating may have led Bowen to call it 'archaic'. Though this metre may be rare, there does not seem to be anything particularly archaic about it. As it was Gwynn's general policy to edit material not covered in Stokes's editions, and since Stokes did edit and translate both verse sections in the prose of Ceilbe, there was no reason for Gwynn to include them. The prose of Port Láirge contains another non-rhyming poem of 17 lines (18 in Lc fol. 235vb). For an edition of this passage, see Ranke de Vries, 'The *rosc* passage in the Rennes *dindsenchas* tale of Port Láirge', forthcoming. The article on Srúb Brain contains an interesting poem of 38 lines, found in RBLcMSS3H, which begins *tathus drecht dronamnus* (R). It was edited from H, with variants from RBLc in Whitley Stokes, 'Hibernica', *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung*

- (vii) The ‘article’ should be the base unit in any edition, be it a combination of prose and verse, or just the one or the other.
- (viii) The principle of definition of an ‘article’ should be the toponymic heading, ‘not the amount or form of material gathered under it’.⁴¹
- (ix) Any items considered ‘interpolations’ to the original text (Bowen follows Gwynn in taking RB as representing the original text most closely) should be retained in order to maintain the geographical order of items presented in the manuscript.
- (x) Ultimately, the order of items in Recension C (using the RB model) should be followed, but additions in later manuscripts should be left where they stand in the manuscript.⁴²

While I am generally in agreement with Bowen’s points, especially as far as inclusiveness is concerned, there is much to be gained from publishing the *Dindsenchas* on a manuscript-by-manuscript basis. This would solve the question of the arrangement of articles, and would not require an extensive apparatus in cases where readings diverge significantly. This may not be feasible for every single manuscript and, at times, it may be more beneficial to use two or more particularly close manuscripts for an edition. Yet, cases like M, or indeed Gwynn’s S (Royal Irish Academy MS D ii 2), which both contain a remarkable amount of additional material when compared to RB,⁴³ would certainly benefit from being edited on their own. For present purposes, however, it is Bowen’s appeal to examine all the variants for each *Dindsenchas* article which informs my examination of the Boand material below.

The pioneering works of Stokes, Gwynn and Thurneysen are indispensable for any further editorial, literary and philological work on the *Dindsenchas*. They have also paved the way for Tomás Ó Concheanainn’s thought-provoking reversal of Thurneysen’s recensional paradigm.⁴⁴ Ó Concheanainn’s core arguments may be summarised here as follows:

- (1) Collection A [Ó Concheanainn uses Thurneysen’s division] is an anthology which was extracted from an early text of C.
- (2) B is an abridged recension made from the prose of C.
- (3) The Book of Leinster text of B contains some items which have been taken from a text of C.⁴⁵

Thus, rather than postulating that $A + B = C$, Ó Concheanainn argues that $C > A$; $C > B$.

In the first case, Ó Concheanainn seeks to show that the text of L was based on a manuscript or manuscripts containing early versions of Recension C. To this end, he discusses seven examples: Ráth Chnámrosa, Dún Másc, Cend Finichair, Fornocht, Ceilbe, Carmun and Loch Garman. First, he compares the prose to the verse of these articles in L; then he compares

auf dem Gebiete der indogermanischen Sprachen 33 (1895), 62–86. For this reason, Stokes did not re-edit it in his edition of the Rennes *Dindsenchas*. The text must have been obscure to Stokes, as he does not provide a translation. Similar to the examples mentioned above, this poem contains only minimal rhyme and is highly alliterative, and most lines are heptasyllabic and end in a trisyllable. The final item, Slige Dala, also contains a rhymeless poem of c. 40 lines, beginning *Buaidh Cuind rigroid rogaide*. In R, it begins on fol. 108vb. Further copies can be found in BLcMSS3H. This poem has recently been edited and translated in Grigory Bondarenko, *Studies in Irish mythology* (Berlin, 2014), 132–6.

⁴¹ Bowen, ‘A historical inventory’, 120.

⁴² Bowen, ‘A historical inventory’, 132.

⁴³ A group of prose pieces from that manuscript is published in Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 4, 268–311.

⁴⁴ Tomás Ó Concheanainn, ‘The three forms of *Dinnshenchas Érenn* (part I)’, *Journal of Celtic Studies* 3 (1) (1981), 88–101; and Tomás Ó Concheanainn, ‘The three forms of *Dinnshenchas Érenn* (part II)’, *Journal of Celtic Studies* 3 (2) (1982), 102–31.

⁴⁵ Ó Concheanainn, ‘The three forms (part I)’, 91.

the prose in L to the prose in Recension C (the RB version). As regards Ráth Chnámrosa, Dún Másc and Cend Finichair, Ó Concheanainn argues that because the prose section in L stands apart from the corresponding poems, but ends with a reference to them, the compiler of L must have used an exemplar containing a prose-verse text, that is, an early text of Recension C.⁴⁶ With regard to Fornocht, Ó Concheanainn considers the prose of C to be superior to that of L, and concludes that L must have copied from a C exemplar. The prose of Ceilbe in C (much like that of Ráth Chnámrosa and Dún Másc) contains three sections, but L's prose text reflects only two of these. In L, the passage on Fornocht begins with the phrase *vel aliter*, suggesting that L's source may also have been a text with several sections. Moreover, the articles on Ceilbe and Ráth Chnámrosa in L are headed by the phrase *ut ante*, which Ó Concheanainn sees as evidence that the compiler also copied a poem on this article.⁴⁷ As for the final two examples, Carmun and Loch Garman, Ó Concheanainn points out that the poems for both items contain multiple sections, which led him to believe that they were written by more than one author. But in the case of Carmun, the implication is primarily one of date: Gwynn assigned a *terminus a quo* of 1079 to the poem, while Ó Concheanainn argued that this date can only apply to the second part, and that the first part must be earlier. Furthermore, the prose of L only reflects the poem's second section, but it is once more headed by the phrase *vel ita*. As regards the example of Loch Garman, this poem is also composed in two sections; its prose, however, contains four.⁴⁸ Ó Concheanainn suggested that 'the respective authors of the two sections of the verse composed the corresponding sections of the prose'. Since the composite poems on Carmun and Loch Garman are both ascribed to eleventh-century authors in L, Ó Concheanainn saw this as evidence that these authors were 'engaged in adding sections of prose and verse to *dinnshenchas*-compositions already existing in the form of prose-and-verse units'.⁴⁹

Ó Concheanainn further held that Recension B was extracted from an earlier text of C, which he argues provides better versions of the tales than B, and often features earlier linguistic forms.⁵⁰ He illustrates this point by juxtaposing examples from the prose in L (Ba), Bb, and C (Stokes's edition) of the articles on Duiblinn, Slíab Bladma, Berba and Mag Femin. Using

⁴⁶ Ó Concheanainn, 'The three forms (part I)', 92–4. The article on Ráth Chnámrosa contains prose and verse. The prose has three sections which reflect the three sections of the verse. In L, the poem and the prose occur separately: the poem is found on p. 195a (l. 26513); the prose on p. 200a (ll 27729–36). L's prose only recounts the second and third section, abbreviates the first, and ends with a reference to the first line of the poem. Therefore, L's prose was taken from a C text, making L secondary to C. L's prose on Dún Másc found on p. 160a (ll 21170–81) ends with a reference to the poem, found in a different section of the manuscript (p. 162; ll 21607–46) instead of ending with a quatrain written for the prose passage (as is usual in Recension B). The prose of Cend Finichair (p. 200b; ll 27757–67) concludes with a reference to the poem, also found in L on p. 191b (ll 25745–808). Ó Concheanainn's explanations seem to suggest only one possibility. Indeed, as Thurneysen had already pointed out (*Heldensage*, 42), many prose passages in L end with a reference to the poem they are connected to, and the prose passages of Ráth Chnámrosa from L and from Recension C seem to me to be different enough to be extracted from the same poem on more than one occasion, once by the compiler of B, and a second time by the compiler of C. In any event, it would be necessary to compare all manuscripts of C to make more confident statements about this relationship.

⁴⁷ With regard to Ceilbe, this becomes difficult to sustain. As Ó Concheanainn points out, there is no poem on Ceilbe until the sixteenth century. This means that the phrase *ut ante* cannot possibly refer to the Ceilbe poem and may have another meaning. See Ó Concheanainn, 'The three forms (part I)', 97. I believe there may be a simpler explanation: the phrase *ut ante*, which Ó Concheanainn believed to indicate that a poem on the same place had been copied elsewhere, could simply represent a reference to the title of the whole section if the scribe did not wish to repeat it. Instead of repeating the title 'dindshenchas X' before each article, *ut ante* could simply mean that, 'as above', what follows is a *dindshenchas* article.

⁴⁸ For a discussion of quatrains 12, 25–7, 39–41 of the Loch Garmun poem, see Elizabeth Boyle, 'Allegory, the *áes dána* and the liberal arts in Medieval Irish literature', in Deborah Hayden and Paul Russell (eds), *Grammatica, Gramadach and Gramadeg. Vernacular grammar and grammarians in medieval Ireland and Wales* (Amsterdam, 2016), 11–34: 15–8.

⁴⁹ Ó Concheanainn, 'The three forms (part I)', 101.

⁵⁰ Ó Concheanainn, 'The three forms (part II)', 109.

examples from Nemthenn, Taitiu, Slíab Mairge and Cerna, Ó Concheanainn also argued that some of the single quatrains appended at the end of the prose in B were drawn from the corresponding poems on the articles just mentioned, and that the redactor of B therefore used an early text of C.⁵¹

As regards his third argument, Ó Concheanainn sought to show that L contains some prose pieces—without corresponding poems in that manuscript—taken from an early text of C. In the case of the Ba articles Fích Buana and Finnghlais, there are no poems in A, but these do appear in C. Furthermore, the single quatrain at the end of the Ba prose of these articles corresponds verbatim to the first quatrain of the respective poems found in C. Ó Concheanainn took this as evidence that the Ba prose was derived from C. A final example, Fafann, presents a particularly telling case in that it agrees closely in language with its C counterpart, and also contains three quatrains corresponding verbatim to the C poem.⁵² Ó Concheanainn concluded that all this evidence can only point to the fact that Gwynn’s ‘Reviser’, that is, the author of *Dindsenchas C*, was also the ‘original redactor of *Dindshenchas Érenn*’.⁵³

More recently, Clodagh Downey has re-examined Ó Concheanainn’s arguments regarding the development of the *Dindsenchas* recensions and has cast considerable doubt on some of his assertions.⁵⁴ As regards Ó Concheanainn’s argument that Recension A is derived from an early text of C, and that L’s prose (Ba) is also drawn from the composite *Dindsenchas*, Downey points out the following:

- (i.) How can we be certain of the relationship of Ba to C if the Ba text is fragmentary and material may have been lost?
- (ii.) Why was the clear geographical logic found in C not retained for A?
- (iii.) Why does A contain so many more ascriptions than C, which, if found in the putative earlier version of C used by A, would have had to have been systematically excised from the later copies of C which we have?
- (iv.) How does one explain items exclusive to A which are absent from C?⁵⁵

Furthermore, in an article following his discussion of the *Dindsenchas* recensions, Ó Concheanainn examined a selection of religious quatrains appended to a number of *Dindsenchas* poems. One of these poems, Temair III,⁵⁶ is ascribed to the eleventh-century poet Cúán ua Lothcháin (†1024) in several manuscripts. Because this poem is not part of Recension A, but occurs in Recension C, and because Ó Concheanainn believed Cúán to have been the author of all the poems containing additional religious quatrains, he concluded that the early text of Recension C was compiled by none other than Cúán ua Lothcháin himself.⁵⁷ Downey, however, demonstrates that two of Ó Concheanainn’s assertions are fundamentally at odds with one another: that Recension C was the source of Recensions A and B and that Cúán ua Lothcháin was the compiler of C. She examines two composite poems ascribed to Cúán, namely Druim Criaich and Taitiu.⁵⁸ It is the second section of each of these poems which bears the associations with Cúán. And in both cases, the second sections of the poems are only found in Recension A, not in Recension C. If Cúán is to be understood as the author of all sections in

⁵¹ Ó Concheanainn, ‘The three forms (part II)’, 118–25.

⁵² Ó Concheanainn, ‘The three forms (part II)’, 130.

⁵³ Ó Concheanainn, ‘The three forms (part II)’, 131.

⁵⁴ Clodagh Downey, ‘Cúán ua Lothcháin and the transmission of the *Dindsenchas*’, in Ailbhe Ó Corráin and Gordon Ó Riain (eds), *Celebrating sixty years of Celtic studies at Uppsala University: proceedings of the eleventh symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Uppsala, 2013), 45–61.

⁵⁵ Downey, ‘Cúán ua Lothcháin’, 48–9.

⁵⁶ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 1, 14.

⁵⁷ Tomás Ó Concheanainn, ‘A pious redactor of *Dindshenchas Érenn*’, *Ériu* 33 (1982), 85–98: 98.

⁵⁸ Edited and translated in Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 5, 42–57, and 146–63 respectively.

those poems, then it is difficult to imagine how he should be the compiler of Recension C if his own recension does not contain the quatrains which he himself composed.⁵⁹

Besides demonstrating the benefit of examining individual *Dindsenchas* articles to better understand the relationship between the various recensions, Downey also shows the relevance which the composite nature of some *Dindsenchas* poems can have in establishing their date and possible authorship. Since one of the Boand poems discussed below is composite, and is further ascribed to Cúán, and two other Boand texts are attributed to the tenth-century poet Cináed ua hArtacáin (†975), I will return to the connection between possible authorship and the recensions below.

THE FORMATION OF THE BOAND ARTICLE IN THE *DINDSENCHAS*

The figure of Boand is perhaps best known for her connection to Óengus (Mac ind Óc),⁶⁰ whom she conceived illicitly with the Dagda. Her place in the Brug na Bóinne cycle of stories is well established. She appears as the wife of Elcmar and as Óengus's mother in *Tochmarc Étaíne*,⁶¹ and in the latter role once more in *Aislinge Óengusso*, and further as maternal aunt to Fráech in *Táin Bó Fraích*. In the *Dindsenchas*, however, Boand is best known as the wife of Nechtan, guardian of the supernatural well of Segais in his *síd*. The well of Segais appears elsewhere in the *Dindsenchas* and in medieval Irish literature, and it is usually connected with the idea of poetic inspiration.⁶² Boand creates the course of the river named after her by provoking the supernatural waters of the well, which pursue her all the way to the sea. Patrick Ford has discussed the connections between the well of Nechtan, the figure of Nechtan himself, and both Irish and Indo-European mythological sources.⁶³ Taking up a discussion by Georges Dumézil, Ford compares Nechtan to the Indic deity Apām Nápāt, who is 'said to dwell in the waters, emanating a brilliance',⁶⁴ waters which are only to be approached by a chosen few. While the Sanskrit account bears certain thematic similarities to the properties of the well of Segais, stories about the creation of major water sources, such as rivers and lakes, are commonly found in the Irish literary tradition so that we need not have recourse to Indo-European examples here. Very often, the creation of a water source is intimately connected with a taboo, the transgression of which usually results in the death of the transgressor, and in the creation of the landmark. Indeed, there are several examples of this in the *Dindsenchas* corpus. The origin of the river Shannon, for instance, goes back to an account very similar to that of Boand, where the woman Sinann desires the knowledge from the well of Segais and drowns in her attempt to gain access to it.⁶⁵ Another example is the origin story of Lough Neagh (*Loch nEchach* 'Eochu's Lake'), in which the main character, Eochu, is instructed not to let an otherworldly

⁵⁹ Downey, 'Cúán ua Lothcháin', 54–9.

⁶⁰ So called in the *Dindsenchas*, for example, in Brug na Bóinne I and Brug na Bóinne II (see Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 2, 10; 18; 24. In *Tochmarc Étaíne*, he is referred to as *in Mac Óc*. See Osborn Bergin, and Richard Irvine Best, 'Tochmarc Étaíne', *Ériu* 12 (1934–8), 137–96. James Carney suggested that the reading *Mac Ind Óc* can be interpreted as *Macind Óc* 'fair young boy', see James Carney, *Poems of Blathmac Son of Cú Bretan* (Dublin, 1964), 112 n6. T.F. O'Rahilly derived *Mac ind Óc* from an old form **Maccon* or **Maccan* to which the adjective *óc* was added for emphasis, hence **Maccan óc*, which became re-analysed as *Mac ind Óc* and finally became *in Macc Óc*; see T.F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish history and mythology* (Dublin, 1946), 517 (cited hereafter as O'Rahilly, *EIHM*). My thanks to Damian McManus for this reference.

⁶¹ Although this connection may be secondary; see below. p. xx.

⁶² Patrick K. Ford, 'The well of Nechtan and "La Gloire Lumineuse"', in Gerald J. Larson *et al.*, *Myth in Indo-European antiquity* (Berkeley, 1974), 67–74: 73. See also O'Rahilly, *EIHM*, 322–3. Outside of the *Dindsenchas* the well of Segais appears in other contexts relating to poetic knowledge, see, for instance, Liam Breatnach, 'The cauldron of Poesy', *Ériu* 32 (1981), 45–93: 67, §11 l. 49.

⁶³ Ford, 'The well of Nechtan.'

⁶⁴ Ford, 'The well of Nechtan', 68.

⁶⁵ For the prose of Sinann, see Stokes, 'The Bodleian Dindsenchas', 497–8, and Stokes, 'The prose tales in the Rennes Dindsenchas', 456–7. For the verse, see Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3, 286–97.

horse urinate. But due to his carelessness, the urine of the horse drowns Eochu and his men and creates the lake.⁶⁶

Dindsenchas material on Boand has survived in both verse and prose. The prose of Bd and Rennes was edited by Stokes. Two poems, beginning *Síd Nechtain sund forsint sléib* and *A Máil Séchlainn meic Domnaill*, labelled Boand I and Boand II respectively, were edited and translated by Gwynn.⁶⁷ Boand I survives in eight manuscripts, and Boand II is transmitted in six. A third Boand poem, beginning *Sect.o.f.n.*, called Boand III by Gwynn, only occurs in L, where it stands apart from any of the *Dindsenchas* sections.⁶⁸ Boand III had previously been edited elsewhere,⁶⁹ and for this reason was not included in Gwynn’s edition.⁷⁰ The manuscript evidence for the prose and poems on Boand in the *Dindsenchas* may be illustrated as follows:

	L	Bd	R	B	Y	M	S	S ₃	H	E
Prose		•	•	•	•	2x	•	•	•	•
Boand I	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Boand II					•		•	•	•	•
Boand III	•									

Figure 1 Sections of the article on Boand in various manuscripts

Boand I

Boand I has come down to us in eight copies and bears the heading *dinnshenchas side Nechtain* in L, which is the only manuscript in which this poem bears an ascription; it begins on p. 191a and is ascribed to Cúán ua Lothcháin.⁷¹ Boand I opens with a description of the various names for stretches of the river Boyne, having as its origin the well of Segais in *Síd Nechtain*. The part of the river which is located within *Síd Nechtain* is therefore called Segais. Further on, Boand is compared to more famous rivers of the known world, such as the Severn in Britain, the Tiber in Rome, and the Middle Eastern rivers Euphrates and Tigris, and the Jordan. After this description, we are told how Boand came to Nechtan’s well one day out of haughtiness and provoked the supernatural waters therein by circling the well three times. The waters of the well then burst out of the *síd*, flowed over her and disfigured her. In an attempt to hide her blemish, Boand fled from the waters, and created the course of the river Boyne all the way to the sea. The poem also mentions Boand’s connection to Óengus and the Dagda, and gives the etymology of the woman’s name as Bó and Finn, the names of two rivers whose convergence creates the Boyne.⁷² The poem closes with three verses relating the fate of Boand’s lapdog, Dabilla, which leapt after her and perished in the sea, leaving behind the name *Cnoc Dabilla* ‘Dabilla’s Hill’.⁷³

⁶⁶ For an overview of different versions of this story, according to Recensions A and C, see Ranke de Vries, *Two texts on Loch nEchach. De causis torchi Corc’ Óche and Aided Echach maic Maireda* (London, 2012), 7–8. See also John Carey, ‘The names of the plains beneath the lakes of Ireland’, in John Carey *et al.* (eds), *Cín Chille Cúile* (Aberystwyth, 2004), 44–57: 49.

⁶⁷ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3, 26–33; 34–9.

⁶⁸ L, p. 208b–209b (ll 29451–765).

⁶⁹ Lucius Gwynn, ‘Cináed úa Hartacáin’s poem on Brugh na Bóinne’, *Ériu* 7 (1914), 210–38. Note corrections in Kuno Meyer, *Miscellanea Hibernica* (Urbana, IL, 1917), 38–9.

⁷⁰ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 5, 19. Although Boand III does not form part of any *Dindsenchas* collection, it is nonetheless placename lore, and it should be counted as part of the *Dindsenchas* of Boand.

⁷¹ Best *et al.*, *The Book of Leinster*, 859–61.

⁷² As Damian McManus suggests to me, this quatrain beginning *nó* ‘rather’ could refer to an alternative explanation of the origin of the river Boyne and thereby to a different tradition, perhaps one which focuses on etymology rather than eponymy (see further in the discussion of the prose below, p. xx).

⁷³ The name *Cnoc Dabilla* only occurs in the prose and in three versions of Boand I, where the line reads *Cnoc Dabilla ó sin ille* (YSS3). The other variants for this line are:

L dabilla ric ó saín ille

As becomes apparent from the foregoing account, Boand I is not thematically unified. Indeed, it is possible to divide the poem into five distinct sections relating different aspects of the Boand legend. None of the sections seems to be related, and the information contained in them may have come from entirely separate sources. The poem can be divided thus:

- I—qq 1–9: The river’s various names, from the *síd* to paradise, and back
- II—qq 10–18: Boand’s offence against Nechtan’s well, her flight and her death
- III—q. 19: Boand as mother of Óengus Mac Ind Óc
- IV—q. 20: Boand’s name composed of the names of two other rivers, Bó and Finn
- V—qq 21–3: The fate of Boand’s lap dog, Dabilla, and the placename Cnoc Dabilla

or, in more general terms:

- I Topography: the stretches of the river Boyne
- II Aetiology: what caused the creation of the river (= Boand’s offence)
- III External narrative: the conception of Óengus
- IV Etymology: the components of Boand’s name
- V *Coda*: *dindsenchas* of Cnoc Dabilla.

This division of the content is matched by the form of the poem. In fact, several quatrains end with a *dúnad* in the words *na síde-se* ‘of this *síd*’, echoing the opening line *Síth Nechtain sund forsint sléib* ‘*Síd Nechtain* is the name upon the mountain here’. A *dúnad* also occurs at the end of sections I, III, IV and V.⁷⁴

While the closure of a poem is the primary function of a *dúnad*, Pádraig Ó Néill has pointed out that its function can be more diverse, and that *dúnada* are also employed to divide a poem structurally.⁷⁵ Cathal Ó Háinle takes a different approach in relation to poems

-
- B dabillam ric ó sáin ‘le
 - R dabilla in roc ó sáin ‘le
 - M dabhilla ó sin aille
 - H dabilla a ainm.

It looks as if *ric* may be a corrupted form of *roc*. But the word *roc* itself has very few attestations. *DIL* s.v. *roc* gives the meaning ‘wrinkle’, citing a line from Geoffrey Keating’s *Trí Bior-Ghaoithe an Bháis* (edited by Osborn Bergin [Dublin, 1931]), 331, ll 10746–7: ‘... *bíd lán do rocaibh 7 do logaibh*, but a better translation for *roc* here would be ‘trench’, so that the line translates as ‘they are full of trenches and hollows’. See also Edmund O’Reilly, *An Irish-English dictionary* (Dublin, 1864), 425 (s.v. *roc*): ‘the tops of sea weed that appear above water; a rock; a fold, a wrinkle’. The line is hypersyllabic in L and in YSS3, unless we elide *illé* to ‘lé (ellision of the first syllable of *illé* occurs commonly after a vowel, but note the example after a consonant in Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 4, 82, l. 31). Cf. Liam Breatnach, ‘*Cinnus atá do thinnrem*: a poem to Máel Brigitte on his coming of age’, *Ériu* 58 (2008), 1–35: 31, who notes that the form which is metrically required is not always the form which is written; it is up to the reader to make the substitution. The placename *Cnoc Dabilla* (Modern Irish *Cloch Dábhiolla*) is anglicised as Rockabill, and designates two small islands in the Irish Sea north of Dublin, approximately ten kilometres north of Lambay Island, and six kilometres north-east of Skerries [53°35’49.3”N 6°00’16.1”W]. See also the entry in Pádraig Ó Riain *et al* (eds), *Historical dictionary of Gaelic placenames: Fascicule 5 (Clais an Chairn—Cnucha)* (London, 2013), 170–1. Cf. the earlier description in Edmund Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum* (Dublin, 1910), 274: ‘... Abill Rocks on coast of Dub. betw. Rush and Holmpatrick, ML...’.

⁷⁴ On the subject of *dúnada*, see Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish metrics* (Dublin, 1961), 43–5. Murphy discusses the distinction in Early Irish texts between three types of *dúnad* called *comindsma*, *ascnam* and *saigid*. The *comindsma* type only echoes the first consonant or vowel of the corresponding word; *ascnam* repeats the whole first syllable; and *saigid*, the most common type in Old and Middle Irish poetry, repeats the whole first word. For a more recent discussion of the types of *dúnad*, with special reference to a potential fourth type called *úaim do rinn*, see Damian McManus, ‘*Úaim do Rinn*: linking alliteration or a lost *Dúnad*?’, *Ériu* 46 (1995), 59–63. The example afforded by Boand I would fit into the second category, *ascnam*, since the last syllable *-se* (or *-si*) of *na síde-se* echoes the opening word *Síd*.

⁷⁵ Pádraig Ó Néill, ‘Airbertach mac Cosse’s poem on the Psalter’, *Éigse* 17 (1) (1977), 19–46: 24.

transmitted as part of the *Dindsenchas*, stating that many *Dindsenchas* poems contain several *dúnada*, and that these can be used to mark ‘supplementary units’, that is, quatrains which do not form part of the core of the poem, and which may have been added at a later stage of its transmission.⁷⁶ Yet, as Clodagh Downey points out, the presence of multiple *dúnada* need not automatically mean that quatrains were added ‘subsequent to the original composition’, but that they were simply ‘found demarcating different thematic or structural divisions of a poem ...’⁷⁷ Therefore, the final section of the poem, recounting the death of Dabilla, should not be seen as a supplementary unit in the sense that Ó Háinle argues, since the *dindsenchas* of *Cnoc Dabilla* still forms part of the *dindsenchas* of Boand.⁷⁸

Boand II

Boand II has survived in six manuscript copies, namely YSS3HEV.⁷⁹ Of these six, four also contain Boand I, namely YSS3H. Of these four, Y and S contain Boand II before Boand I. The poem opens with an address to Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill, whose death is recorded in the annals in 1022. Consequently, Gwynn suggested that the poem was written before that date.⁸⁰ Unlike Boand I, Boand II features only one *dúnad*: Máel Sechnaill’s name is repeated in the last line of the poem. A thematic division of the poem looks as follows:

- I. Address to the patron: Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill
- II. Boand—the Jordan of Ireland; confluence of rivers Bó + Finn = Boand
- III. Boand’s tryst with the Dagda; the conception of Óengus; Boand’s death from the well
- IV. Máel Mórda mac Murchada’s expedition; a blessing upon Máel Sechnaill (*dúnad*).

It is evident that Boand II shares some elements with Boand I, and the possibility of one of these poems drawing upon the other is discussed in greater detail below. Notably, Boand II also contains the comparison of Boand with the river Jordan. While the Jordan is only one of several foreign rivers to which Boand is compared in Boand I, Boand II explicitly states that she is *sruth Eorhanán na hÉirenn* ‘the river Jordan of Ireland’.⁸¹ It delves further into the etymology of the name Boand as being composed of *bó* and *find*. The first element stems from *Bó Gúairi* (the river Blackwater), which joins the Boyne in Navan, Co. Meath. The second is explained as coming from Find Life and Mífind, two *Finds* in Leinster, one of which flows past Tara and is eventually joined by the *Bó* where it becomes *Bófind* = *Boand*. Gwynn therefore suggested that the *Find* part of the river must have referred to the stretch of the Boyne before it is joined by the Blackwater.⁸²

⁷⁶ Cathal Ó Háinle, ‘Refrains in *Ógláchas* poems’, *Ériu* 42 (1991), 83–98: 90–1.

⁷⁷ Clodagh Downey, ‘*Trí Croind Éirenn Oiregdha*: a medieval poem on three famous trees of Ireland’, *Éigse* 36 (2008), 1–34: 3. See also Elizabeth Boyle and Liam Breatnach, ‘*Senchas Gall Átha Clíath*: aspects of the cult of St Patrick in the twelfth century’, in John Carey *et al.* (eds), *Sacred histories. A festschrift for Máire Herbert* (Dublin, 2015), 22–55: 29 n33. On the possible independent existence of section 1 of Boand I, see the discussion on Boand A and Boand I below, pp xx–xx.

⁷⁸ One indication that the short section on Dabilla was considered part of the *Dindsenchas* of Boand is afforded in the prose section of the article on Brug na Bóinne, entitled *Do dingnaib in Broga* ‘Regarding the monuments of the Brug’, edited and translated in Stokes, ‘The prose tales in the Rennes *Dindsenchas*’, 292–3, which mentions Boand and Dabilla together: *Firt mBoinne mna Nechtain meic Núa[d]at. Is i tuc [le] in coin [m]big] diarbo ainm Dabilla unde Cnoc Dabilla dicitur*, ‘The tomb of Boind wife of Nechtán son of Nuada. ’Tis she that brought with her the little hound named Dabilla, whence “Dabilla’s Hill” is so called.’

⁷⁹ V is Gwynn’s siglum for Royal Irish Academy MS 24 P 13 (1068, *olim* Reeves 832).

⁸⁰ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3, 481.

⁸¹ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3, 34, l. 8.

⁸² Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3, 481.

The next seven quatrains relate Boand's tryst with the Dagda; how she came to the house of Elcmaire (Elcmar in *Tochmarc Étaíne*)⁸³ and how the Dagda joined her there. The Dagda halted the course of the sun for nine months so that the birth of Óengus occurred within a single day. Boand II explains the name of the boy as Boand's *óen-gus*, her 'one strength'.⁸⁴ Given that Óengus was conceived illicitly, Boand attempts to hide her shame by washing herself clean in Nechtan's well, but the fountain rises and drowns her. Boand II says nothing about the creation of the river itself, or whether Boand attempted to flee from the well. The final two quatrains of the poem relate an unsuccessful incursion by Mael Mórda mac Murchada of Leinster into Meath where he was ousted by Máel Sechnaill.⁸⁵

Boand III

In 1914, Lucius Gwynn edited and discussed a poem on the topic of Brug na Bóinne contained in L p. 209b24, which begins *Sect.o.f.n.*⁸⁶ It is ascribed to Cináed ua hArtacáin, an ascription which was taken at face value by Gwynn:

The author of this composition was the famous poet and scholar Cináed úa hArtacáin, whose death is recorded in the year 987 [*sic*]. He addressed the poem to one Óengus, son of the high king of Ireland, to whom Brug na Bóinne then belonged: in the dedicatory stanzas at the beginning, that prince and his father are deliberately confused, out of flattery, with Óengus Mac Ind Óc and the Dagda of the story. The occasion of its composition (to complete the account in traditional style) seems to have been a banquet held by that chieftain at his palace (*Feis Tigi Oéngussa*, v. 8). The tale as told in the verse, in consequence of metrical exigencies, is at once diffuse and condensed.⁸⁷

Gwynn called this poem Boand III, since it is thematically related to the other two Boand poems. He did not include it in the *Metrical Dindshenchas*, although he later admitted that he should have included it as part of his edition after Boand II.⁸⁸ The poem contains three *dúnada*: at the end of quatrain 9; at the end of quatrain 65, and at the end of the poem. Each repeats the word *secht* of the enigmatic opening line. The thematic sections of the poem can be listed as follows:

- I—qq1–9: Opening address to Óengus (mac Ócán?)⁸⁹
- II—qq 10–65: How Óengus was born and how he gained the Brug
- III—qq 66–78: Boand's death following her provocation of the Well of Segais.

⁸³ He is called Elcmaire in Boand II and Boand III, with both nom. and gen. Elcmaire/i, which suggests that the name was taken as an *io*-stem. But in the glosses in Trinity College Dublin MS H 3. 18, the character is called Elcmair. See Christian Ludwig Stern, 'Das Märchen von Étaín', *ZCP* 5 (1905), 522–34. In this text, the form of the name is Elcmair in all cases; the declension is unclear.

⁸⁴ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3, 36, l. 38. Gwynn translates *óen-gus* as 'one desire'.

⁸⁵ This is Gwynn's interpretation of these final two quatrains. See, Gwynn, *MD* iii: 482.

⁸⁶ Gwynn, 'Cináed úa Hartacáin's poem', 210–38. On an interpretation of the opening line, see Marie-Luise Theuerkauf, 'A note on *Sect.o.f.n.*', *Celtica* 29 (2017), 76–89.

⁸⁷ Gwynn, 'Cináed úa Hartacáin's poem', 210. See further discussion of the date of Boand III below, p. x.

⁸⁸ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 5, 25.

⁸⁹ This is Gwynn's interpretation of the line in q. 5c, in *Mac Ócán nach braith bríg* (Gwynn, 'Cináed úa hArtacáin's poem', 230 n2). Gwynn refers to the Annals of Ulster, in which he claims that the death of an Óengus mac Ócán is mentioned in AD 956. But upon closer examination, the name is actually Óengus m. Nócan; see Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill, *The Annals of Ulster* (Dublin, 1983), 398. Donnchadh Ó Corráin (*Clavis Litterarum Hibernensium* (3 vols, Turnhout, 2017), vol. 3, 1566), who assigns an eleventh-century date to the poem, believes that it was composed for Óengus son of Carrach Calma (d. 1017).

The second section is the longest in the poem, and tells the story of the conception of Óengus, much the same way as it occurs in *Tochmarc Étaíne*. A few narrative differences should, however, be noted. First of all, Boand is not the wife of Elcmaire, but his sister. This allows for Nechtan to assume the role of Boand's husband without omitting Elcmaire from the story. Secondly, it is not from Elcmaire that Óengus obtains the Brug—since he is merely *techttaire na túath* 'messenger of the túaths'—but from the Dagda himself, who is tricked into surrendering it forever. The final section returns to Boand, stating that she was forty years of age when she died, that she tried to hide her affair by bathing in the well of Segais, and that the well drowned her as a result, creating the course of the river. The idea that Boand approached the well to absolve herself of her guilt is shared with Boand II. But it is curious to read that Boand III counts *deogmaire ... cethrur* (73a; c) 'four cupbearers' and not three, as is related in the other two poems. Boand III and Boand II also share the explanation of the name Óengus as Boand's *óen-gus*, her 'one strength'. Since Boand III is the latest of the Boand poems, I do not exclude the possibility that the two earlier poems were known to the author of the third.

Of the three poems just described, two carry an authorial inscription in at least one of the sources which transmit them. Boand I is ascribed to Cúán ua Lothcháin in L, and Boand III is ascribed to Cináed ua hArtacáin in the same manuscript. These claims of authorship have an obvious implication for the date of the poems, which is further discussed below. Moreover, given how close all three are in subject matter, the question arises as to whether they may have influenced one another, or whether they may be derived from a common source. In addition to the three poems, most manuscripts also contain a prose abstract concerning Boand. These abstracts sometimes show considerable differences which are worth assessing further. In studying the formation of the Boand material below, I first focus on the poems alone, before discussing the relationships between the prose and the poems and between different variants of the prose.

BOAND A ('THE FIFTEEN NAMES OF BOAND')

There is a short poem of nine quatrains, beginning *A écsiu Fáil fégam sein*, which was edited by Kuno Meyer in *ZCP* 8, but never discussed or translated, and which is of some significance here.⁹⁰ Since the manuscript does not give it a title, Meyer supplies 'Die Fünfzehn Namen des Boyne'. To my knowledge, this poem and its potential connection to the *Dindsenchas* has not received any critical attention to date, though mention was made of it by Thurneysen in a footnote to his discussion of Boand I.⁹¹ The poem is found only in the fifteenth-century manuscript Laud 610, fol. 116v, where it follows a list of kings and abbots and precedes a poem relating the adventures of Cú Roí mac Dáire.⁹² I have re-edited and translated the poem below. For the purpose of this article, I refer to this poem as 'Boand A' throughout.

In the edition, I have provided macrons for long vowels when the manuscript does not mark them and I have expanded the manuscript ligature *æ* as *ae* in 4b. I have silently expanded common abbreviations (for instance *n-*, *m-*strokes, *spiritus asper*), compendia (such as *ar* and *us*), and suspensions when their meaning was unambiguous. I have italicised ambiguous expansions. I have supplied a *h* for lenited voiceless stops (*c* > *ch*; *t* > *th*), as the manuscript does not always mark them. I have also supplied glide vowels for both palatal and broad consonants, since they are not always written in the manuscript, but are required for grammar and rhyme in several instances. For all emendations, I give the original reading in the footnotes.

⁹⁰ Kuno Meyer, 'Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften', *ZCP* 8 (1912), 102–20: 105–6.

⁹¹ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 606 n2.

⁹² Brian Ó Cuív (ed.), *Catalogue of Irish language manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries* (Dublin, 2001), 86–7.

Language and authorship

In his edition of the poem, Meyer stated that, ‘nach Sprache und Stil möchte ich Cináed ua Hartacáin für den Dichter halten’.⁹³ This is an intriguing suggestion, but Meyer unfortunately provides no further information to substantiate this claim. If his statement is true, then Boand A must have been written before AD 975—the year of Cináed’s death. Due to its shortness, however, the text yields very few dating criteria, even if some of its features seem early. Among the early features we may note are, for instance, the nasalisation of the adjective after a noun in acc. sg., as in *tre blaid mbinn* (q. 2a), *co pardus n-ūasal n-Ādaim* (q. 2d), and *re gail nglūair ngil* (q. 8b); the retention of the neuter in nom. sg. *Sruth n-ard nEordanān* in q. 8a, *dá n-ainm* in q. 4a and q. 5b; and its retention in acc. pl. *anmann* in q. 1d (later masculine *anmanna*—as the scribe saw it).

On the other hand, the falling together of unstressed final vowels from rhyming examples such as *Dē : essēрге* (q. 9ab; Old Irish *esséirgiu*) means that the poem can hardly be Old Irish. There is also evidence for the loss of hiatus as seen in the examples *dēc* (q. 2a) and *cóir* (q. 7d).⁹⁴ The later forms of the demonstrative *sein* and *sain* (confirmed by rhyme in qq 1ab and 6cd) occur beside older *sin* (q. 4a), although it should also be noted that the latter form is not metrically confirmed. For Middle Irish verbal forms, note *rofar gnī* (q. 9c; see the note on this form below), and *-dubaig* (q. 1b) from the denominative verb *dubaigid* ‘darkens, obscures’ (Old Irish *dubaigidir*), as well as the plural copula form with singular predicate in *ropond béo* in q. 9a (Old Irish *bí*).⁹⁵

Based on the language alone, there seems to be no reason why Boand A could not have been written by Cináed, as the Middle Irish features discussed are already found in the contemporary *Saltair na Rann* (AD 988). But while we could assign a late-tenth-century date to the poem on purely linguistic grounds, this in and of itself does not prove Meyer’s assertion that Cináed was the poem’s author.

Metre

The poem is written in *deibide*. The greater part of the poem follows the type *deibide scailte*, $7^x 7^{x+1}$ or 2 (qq 1–2; 4; 6–9) although the first couplet of quatrains 3 and 5 respectively follows *deibide ngulbnech*, $7^1 7^1$. End rhyme occurs in a : b / c : d throughout the poem. There are four quatrains which contain no internal rhyme at all. In the remaining five quatrains, four feature internal rhyme only in the second couplet. The first quatrain, which is the metrically most ornate, has two internal rhyming pairs in the first couplet in addition to the two in the second couplet: 1ab *Fāil : dāil; fēgam : dēnam*; 1cd *samlam : anmann; óige : Bōinne*.⁹⁶ The second couplet in quatrain 6 has three internal rhyming pairs: *galla : Banna; nglūair : Tūa[i]g; gail : sain*, and there are two in 7cd *Tibir : dligid; rRōim : cōir*. Alliteration is frequent, but it does not occur in every line of the poem.⁹⁷ Only six out of the nine quatrains have alliteration between the final two stressed words in line d. Ornamentation is often absent in those parts of the poem in which the would-be rhyming partner is a placename. In other instances, when a

⁹³ Meyer, ‘Mitteilungen’, 105 n4.

⁹⁴ Disyllabic nom. sg. *Boänd* in q. 5a and dat. sg. *Boind* in q. 2b are not reliable markers of date: as can be seen from examples in Boand I and Boand II below, and from some variants of the prose Boand, the word was still a disyllable in the eleventh century.

⁹⁵ Although this is usually considered a later Middle Irish feature (cf. *SNG* 322 §14.4), Myles Dillon notes instances of non-agreement in number between the copula and its predicate in the *Saltair*. See Myles Dillon, ‘Nominal predicates in Irish’, *ZCP* 16 (1926–7), 313–56: 329; 345. More relevant still to the present discussion is the example *iat-som dimbúan* (cf. Dillon, ‘Nominal predicates’, 329 n4; a palatal plural form *dimbúain* would be expected in Old Irish) from the poem Brug na Bóinne I (Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 2, 10–7; 16). Brug na Bóinne I is ascribed to Cináed ua hArtacáin in Lebor na hUidre, in which manuscript it forms part of *Senchas na Relec* (for the poem, see LU, ll. 4117–204).

⁹⁶ See note on *óige* below.

⁹⁷ There is no alliteration in 2b, 3a, 3d, 4a, 4d, 5b, 6b, 8b.

line closes with a placename or placename kenning, rhyme is achieved with the help of a *cheville* in the previous line (for example 4cd *ní lúad lac : Núadat*). There are four instances of elision before an unstressed vowel in qq 3c, 5b, 6c, 6d.

Returning to the issue of Cináed's possible authorship, Boand A is simply too short a text to make any confident pronouncements with regard to the language and style of a particular author. Moreover, an in-depth study of what exactly defines the language and style of Cináed ua hArtacáin yet remains to be done.⁹⁸ In the first instance, such a study requires that all ascriptions of poems to Cináed be checked for their authenticity, which means that it is necessary to date them linguistically. For example, in L a number of poems are ascribed to Cináed, but not all of these ascriptions are trustworthy.⁹⁹ Several *Dindsenchas* poems are ascribed to Cináed in various manuscripts, namely Temair II, Temair III, Temair IV, Achall, Ráth Éasa, Brug na Bóinne I (which also forms part of *Senchas na Relec*), Ochan, and Bend Étair I. A poem beginning *A chloch thall for elaid úair*, which forms part of *Aided Chonchobuir*, is also ascribed to Cináed in L, as is a single quatrain beginning *In cloch fors' tait mo dí sáil*, found in *Lebor Gabála*.¹⁰⁰ One particularly long text, *Fíanna bátar i nEmain*, occurs independently in a section in L containing *Dindsenchas* and other poetry. For seven out of the eleven poems just listed, attributions have generally been accepted,¹⁰¹ even though issues of language and date often are not fully addressed in the editions.¹⁰² For instance, Thurneysen rejected Cináed's authorship of *Fíanna bátar i nEmain* because the poem referenced tales which, according to him, could not have been written before the twelfth century, but he did not discuss the language of the poem, which he dismissed as 'farblos'.¹⁰³ Murphy later re-examined the poem and found that, as far as the sections written by Cináed were concerned, the text contained no features which would not fit into the Early Middle Irish period.¹⁰⁴ For the present, and until all of the poems ascribed to Cináed have been subjected to a thorough linguistic analysis, it is not possible to make any further pronouncements about the style of Boand A.

TEXT

1. A ēcsiu Fāil, fēgam sein
dēnam dāil nāchan dubaig
samlam¹⁰⁵ a nn-ōige uili
anmann¹⁰⁶ Bōinne Bregmaige.
2. Cōic anmand dēc, tre blaid mbinn,
fil d'anmanaib for Boinn;
ō Šīth¹⁰⁷ Nechtain, nīth im gail,

⁹⁸ The only study of the poetry of Cináed ua hArtacáin carried out to date has never been published (see Nioclás M. Ó Briain, 'Fílocht Chinaeda Uí Artacáin', unpublished MPhil thesis, National University of Ireland, Dublin, 1977). To my knowledge, there exists only one copy of this dissertation, and while it comprises editions and translations of those poems commonly accepted to be Cináed's, there is no in-depth discussion of the author's style and metre, and next to no discussion of the language.

⁹⁹ Note the poem Boand III (*Sect.o.f.n.*) discussed below.

¹⁰⁰ See edition in R.A.S. Macalister, *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* (5 vols, London, 1932–1942), vol. 4, 244.

¹⁰¹ John Carey, 'Cináed ua hArtacáin' [Cineth O'Hartagain] (d. 975), *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford, 2004); available online at: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20636> (accessed 23 October 2015).

¹⁰² There is no discussion of language in Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 1, 80–81; vol. 2: 92, 99; vol. 3: 495–6; or in Whitley Stokes, 'On the deaths of some Irish heroes', *RC* 23 (1902), 303–48, 438 (add. and corr.). Corrigenda: *RC* 27 (1906): 202.

¹⁰³ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 20–1.

¹⁰⁴ Murphy, 'On the date of two sources used in Thurneysen's *Heldensage*', *Ériu* 16 (1952), 146–56; 151–5.

¹⁰⁵ MS samlam.

¹⁰⁶ MS anmanna.

¹⁰⁷ MS *sit*.

co pardus n-ūasal nĀdaim.

3. Segais a hainm isin sídh
in tan failsig^{ther} iar fir
Sruth Segsa ōtā síd somma
co Linn Mo Choe¹⁰⁸ Nōemdroma.
4. Dā n-ainm fuirre ō sin immach
i lLaignib na lāechmarcach:
Rig Mnā Nūadat nī lūad lac,
ocus Colpa Mnā Nūadat.
5. Boann i mMide na mál;
dā n-ainm fuirri ō šein co sál:
Mōrchuing¹⁰⁹ Argait hūaisle dē,
ocus Smir Find Feidelme.
6. Trethnach Tonn co Cūalngne hūass cath
Sruth Findchuill¹¹⁰ co Loch nEchach;
galla a nēm re gail nglūair ngil,
Banna iar sain¹¹¹ co Tūaig¹¹² Inbir.
7. Lunann i nAlpain cen ail;
Sruth Sabrann i Saxanaib;
Sruth Tibir i rRōim na recht;
dligid co cóir comaitecht.
8. Sruth n-ard nEordanān, nī cēl,
hi tīrib mac nIsraēl;
Tigir¹¹³ a hainm iar n-astar
hi pardus na pīmapstal
9. Ropond¹¹⁴ bēo for deis meic¹¹⁵ Dē
iar n-etsecht, iar n-essēрге,
is hē rofar gnī, ro-fes,
iss ē ardrī na n-ēces.

A hēcsiu F.

TRANSLATION

1. O scholars of Ireland, let us observe the following:
let us make an account which does not make us gloomy;

¹⁰⁸ MS *coe*.

¹⁰⁹ MS *morcuing*

¹¹⁰ MS *findcuill*.

¹¹¹ MS *sin*.

¹¹² MS *tuag*.

¹¹³ MS *tigira*.

¹¹⁴ MS *robond*, corrected by scribe ,no p’.

¹¹⁵ MS *mic*.

let us assess, in their whole entirety,
the names of Boand of Bregmag.

2. There are fifteen names, through sweet renown,
which are names of Boand;
from Síth Nechtan, a fight concerning valour,
to the noble paradise of Adam.
3. *Segais* is her name in the *síd*
when it is revealed truthfully;
the *Stream of Segais* from the wealthy *síd*
to the Pool of Mo Chua of Nendrum.
4. Two names are upon her from there on
in Leinster of the heroic horsemen:
the *Fore-Arm of Núadu's Wife*, no weak story;
and the *Thigh of Núadu's Wife*.
5. *Boand* in Meath of the princes;
two names are upon her from there to the sea:
the *Great Silver Yoke*, all the more noble for it,
and the *White Marrow of Fedelm*.
6. *Thundering Wave* as far as Cúailnge, overlooking battle;
the *Stream of Findcholl* as far as Lough Neagh;
fierce is her radiance against bright shining valour
Banna after that as far as Túag Inbir.
7. *Lunann* in Alba without reproach,
the *Stream of the Severn* in the land of the Saxons,
the *Stream of the Tiber* in Rome of the laws;
the association is perfectly fitting.
8. The *Great Stream of the Jordan* I shall not conceal,
in the lands of the sons of Israel;
Tigris is her name after a journey
in the paradise of the eminent apostles.
9. May we be alive on the right side of the son of God
after death; after resurrection;
it is He who created you; it is known;
He is the highking of the scholars.

O scholars of Ireland.

Textual Notes

1c *samlam*: MS *samlaim*. Here, I go with Meyer's emendation to 1st person plural imperative with broad *m*, as the previous verbs reflect. This form is also required to make rhyme with 1d *anmann*.

1c a nn-ōige uili: The MS has *oge* here without a glide vowel. This could be taken as Old Irish *ógae* or Middle Irish *óige*. An emendation to palatal *óige* does not do violence to the text, however: internal rhyme with *Bóinne* was most likely intended given how ornate the first quatrain is (each stressed word in the second line of both couplets has a rhyming partner). Furthermore, glide vowels are omitted in other instances in this poem where language and metre clearly require them. See, for instance, 6d *Túaig Inbir* where the MS has *tuag*. Since *túag* is an *ā*-stem, palatal *túaig* is required in the accusative after *co*. Palatal *túaig* is also required for internal rhyme with *glúair*. Further, see the note on 6d.

I take the *a* to be the 3rd plural possessive pronoun anticipating *anmann*. Since the noun *óige* does not nasalise the following adjective *uili*, and since nasalisation after the accusative, after neuter nouns, and after genitive plural is otherwise shown on both vowels and consonants (see 2d, 6b, 6c, 8a, 8b), I take the whole phrase as an independent dative ‘in their whole entirety’.

1d anmann: MS *anmanna*. I have emended to *anmann* since the line would otherwise be hypermetrical and would not rhyme with 1c *samlam*.

3c sīdh somma: lit. ‘a wealthy *síd*’. I take this phrase to refer to Nechtan’s *síd* in 3a, that is, Boand is called Segais in the *síd*, and Sruth Segsa from the *síd* to Mo Chua’s Pool.

3d Linn Mo Choe Nōemdromma: ‘the Pool of Mo Chua of N.’ Boand A and Boand I are the only two sources for this placename (see Hogan, *Onomasticon*, 491). Although the pool is dedicated to Saint Caolán (also known as Mo Chua or Mo Chaoi) of Nendrum in Co. Down, the well referenced in the poem is located in Meath. See Pádraig Ó Riain, *Dictionary of Irish saints* (Dublin, 2011), 152–3. The form *Nōemdruim*, gen. *Nōemdromma* is also peculiar here; the usual form is *Nóendruim* or *Óendruim* (see Hogan, *Onomasticon*, 555) as is explained in the commentary to the *Féilire Óengusso*, 23 June (Saint Caolán’s feast day): *Mo-chue .i. Mochóe fil a nAendruim ind Ultaib .i. nóe ndromanna fil isinn inis a fil a cheall*, ‘Mo-chue, i.e. Mochóe who is in Nóendruim in Ulster, i.e. nine ridges which are in the island wherein his church is’. See Whitley Stokes, *Féilire Óengusso Céli Dé. The martyrology of Oengus the Culdee* (London, 1905), 158–9. But see the variant for the placename from Laud 610 (which is also our source for Boand A) in the same note: *naemdruim*. This form may be the result of an error or, as Liam Breatnach suggests to me, it may represent a folk etymology.

6c galla a nēm re gail nglúair ngil: There is much room for interpretation in this line. The word *galla* is given in *DIL* s.v. *galla* as ‘fairness, whiteness’, an abstract from *gall*. The spelling *galla* can also represent *galdae* ‘warlike, fierce’. The *a* in *a nēm* can be taken as the preposition ‘from, out of’ or as the 3rd sg. possessive pronoun. The third word in the line can be taken as either *nēm* ‘lustre, brilliance’ or *nem* ‘heaven, sky’. The fifth word *gail* (<*gal*>) has attested meanings of ‘fury, valour, mist, steam’. The adjectives *glúair* (*i*-stem) and *gil* (*gel*, dat. *gil*) are synonyms conveying the idea of ‘brightness, radiance’. We could translate as ‘fierce (is) her radiance against bright shining valour’.

6d Banna iar sain: The MS has *sin*. As Liam Breatnach points out to me, the emendation to *sain* is necessary here, since *sin* would make *aicill* rhyme with *ngil*; this is not allowed in *deibide*.

7d dligid co cóir comaitecht: I have taken this line to mean that it is fitting for Boand to go together, that is, to be associated with or accompanied by, these famous rivers.

8c Tigir a ainm: The usual form of the river name in Irish is *Tigir*; *tigira* may be an instance of dittography here since the following word is *a* ‘its’.¹¹⁶

9b iar n-etsecht: Meyer gives *ētsecht* with a long vowel in his edition. But another word *etsecht* (supposedly from an otherwise unattested verb *as-tét*) with a short *e* is well attested as meaning ‘departure, death’.

¹¹⁶ My thanks to Liam Breatnach for this suggestion.

9c rofar gnī: This is taken as the past tense of the verb *gnūd* with the Middle Irish form of the 2nd pl infixed pronoun *-far*, i.e. *rofar gnī* ‘who created you’ (referring to the scholars addressed in the opening line of the poem). Cf. q. 10a of a poem beginning *Cōictach, discipul, foglaintid*, edited by Kuno Meyer, ‘Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften’, *ZCP* 5 (1905), 495–504: 499: *Mælsuthain is hē rosgnī*. Alternatively, we can read *ro fargni*, as Meyer did, that is, a past tense form of a verb recorded in *DIL* s.v. *for-gní* ‘performs, contrives, brings about’, hence ‘creates’. This raises the question of internal rhyme with *ardrí*. The second syllable of *-fargni* is unstressed (on the model of *do-gní* > *do-rigni*, *-deirgni*, i.e. *for-gní* > *for-rigni*, *-forgni/-fargni* > *ro fargni*?), and ends in a short vowel so that *-fargni* : *ardrí* do not rhyme. Rhyme can only be achieved if we stipulate that we are dealing with the old compound *ardri*. But Liam Breatnach (‘Varia: VI. 3. *ardri* as an old compound’, *Ériu* 37 [1986], 192–3; 192) notes that ‘the old compound fell out of use at a relatively early stage, being replaced by a re-compound *ardrí*, gen. *ardríg*; [...]’. While the old compound *ardri* is attested as referring to God or Christ (see Johan Corthals, ‘The Retoiric in *Aided Chonchobuir*’, *Ériu* 40 [1989], 41–59; 46 §§1, 10, 12a; and more recently John Carey, ‘From David to Labraid: Sacral Kingship and the Emergence of Monotheism in Israel and Ireland’, in Katja Ritari and Alexandra Bergholm, *Approaches to Religion and Mythology in Celtic Studies* (Newcastle, 2008), 2–27: 21), its survival into Middle Irish, supported only by the possibility of internal rhyme with a poorly attested verb, would be exceptional and unexpected.

RELATIONSHIP OF BOAND A TO BOAND I

It seems evident that Boand A and Boand I have a close textual relationship, but the direction of this relationship may not be so obvious. The material which both poems share closely (Table 2) only concerns the first section of Boand I, namely the topographical section up to the first *dúnad*. The overlapping names and phrases in the corresponding section are printed in bold:

<i>Boand A</i>	<i>Boand I</i> ¹¹⁷
2 Cōic anmand dēc , tre blaid mbinn, d'anmanaib fil for Bōinn; ō Sīth Nechtain , nīth im gail, co pardus n-ūasal n-Ádaim .	Cóic anmand dēc , demne drend, forsin tšruth-sin ad-rímem, otá Síd Nechtain as maig co partus n-ūasal Ádaim . ¹¹⁸
3 Segais a hainm isin sīdh in tan failsig ^{ther} iar fīr Sruth Segsa otā sīdh somma co Linn Mo Choe Noēmdromma.	Segais a hainm issin tšíd ria cantain duit in cach thír: Sruth Segsa a hainm otá sin co Lind Mo Chúí in chlérig.
4 Dā n-ainm fuirre ō sin immach i lLaighnib na laechmarcach: Rig Mnā Nūadat nī lūad lac, ocus Colpa Mnā Nūadat.	Otá Topur Mo Chúí chóir co cochrích Midi mag-móir Rig mnā Nuadat ‘s a Colptha a dá ainm ána imarda.

¹¹⁷ I here give Gwynn’s text, with a few editorial changes, from *MD*, vol. 3, 26–8, but I supply q. 2d from R.

¹¹⁸ It should be noted that the first syllable of *Ádaim* is long; several rhyming examples for this name occur in *Saltair na Rann*, see Eleanor Knott, ‘The Proper Names in *Saltair na Rann*’, *Ériu* 16 (1952), 99–122: 103–4. Gwynn treats the vowel as short in his edition; I have amended it above.

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|---|---|
| <p>5 Boand i mMide na māl;
dā n-ainm fuirri ō sein co sāl:
Mōrchuing Argait hūaisle dē,
ocus Smir Find Feidelme.</p> <p>6 Trethnach Tonn co Cūalngne hūass cath
Sruth Findchuill co Loch nEchach;
galla a nem re gail nglūair ngil,
Banna iar sin co Tūaig Inbir.</p> <p>7 Lunann i nAlpain cen ail;
Sruth Sabrann i Saxanaib;
Sruth Tibir i rRōim na recht;
dligid co cōir comaitecht.</p> <p>8 Sruth n-ard nEordanān, nī cēl,
hi tīrib mac nIsraēl;
Tigir a hainm iar n-astar
hi pardus na prīmapstal.</p> <p>9</p> | <p>Otá cochrích Midi maiss
co rrici in fairgi fond-glass
Mór-Chuing Argait gairther dí,
ocus Smir Find Fedlimthi.</p> <p>Trethnach-Tonn ó sin immach
connici Cúailnge cráibach.
Sruth Findchuill ó Chúalnge chrúaid
co Loch n-Echach Abrat-rúaid.</p> <p>Banna ó Loch Echach cen ail,
Drumchla Dílenn co hAlbain;
Lunnand hí i nAlbain cen ail
nos-turrand iarna tucsain.</p> <p>Sabrann dar tír Saxan slán,
Tibir i ráith na Román,
Sruth nIordanen iar sain sair,
ocus Sruth nEufrait adbail.</p> <p>Sruth Tigir i pardus búan,
fota sair síst fri himlúad:
ó phardus darís illé
co srothaib na síde-se.</p> |
|---|---|

The common words in bold print show that Boand A and Boand I not only feature the same phrases, they also often share them within the same line of the same quatrain. The sequence of names is nearly identical, with the slight difference that the kennings which take up quatrains 6–8 in Boand A, are spread over 4 quatrains (6–9) in Boand I instead. When we juxtapose all the names for the river Boyne from both poems, we get the following list:

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| <p>1. Segais (3a)</p> <p>2. Sruth Segsa (3c)</p> <p>3. Rig Mná Nuadat (4c)</p> <p>4. Colpa Mná Nuadat (4d)</p> <p>5. Boand (5a)</p> <p>6. Mórchuing Argait (5c)</p> <p>7. Smir Find Feidelme (5d)</p> <p>8. Trethnach Tonn (6a)</p> <p>9. Sruth Findchuill (6b)</p> <p>10. Banna (6d)</p> <p>11. Lunann (7a)</p> <p>12. Sruth Sabrann (7b)</p> <p>13. Sruth Tibir (7c)</p> <p>14. Sruth n-ard nEordanán (8a)</p> <p>15. Tigir (8c)</p> | <p>1. Segais (3a)</p> <p>2. Sruth Segsa (3c)</p> <p>3. Rig Mná Nuadat (4c)</p> <p>4. <i>ocus</i> a Colptha (4c)</p> <p>5. Mórchuing Argait (5c)</p> <p>6. Smir Find Fedlimthi (5d)</p> <p>7. Trethnach Tonn (6a)</p> <p>8. Sruth Findchuill (6c)</p> <p>9. Banna (7a)</p> <p>(10. Drumchla Dílenn [7b]) ?</p> <p>10. (11) Lunnand (7c)</p> <p>11. (12) Sabrann (8a)</p> <p>12. (13) Tibir (8b)</p> <p>13. (14) Sruth nIordanen (8c)</p> <p>14. (15) Sruth nEufrait (8d)</p> <p>15. (16) Sruth Tigir (9a)</p> |
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Both poems seem to have found different ways to arrive at the number fifteen. Boand A counts *Boand* itself among the names, whereas Boand I omits it. The reason for this could be that the author of Boand I may have felt that the ‘fifteen names of Boand’ should refer to fifteen names *besides* Boand itself. And in 10a, the line, directly following the catalogue of names, Boand I states that *Boand a hainm coitchen cain* ‘Boand is her general pleasant name’, so that the

omission in the first section appears to be deliberate. A further reason for not including *Boand* among the fifteen names could have been to make room for *Sruth nEufrait* in 8c, since *Sruth Eufrait* and *Sruth Tigir* often form a pair.

The name *drumchla dílenn* ‘surface of the flood’ in 7a was taken to be one of the fifteen names by Gwynn, but we may simply be dealing with a common noun here rather than with a river name.¹¹⁹ Unlike the other names, *drumchla dílenn* is not described as having a particular start and end point (cf. 5ab *otá...co rrici*), a location (cf. 7c *i*, 3a *issin*, 8c *sair*), or a range (cf. 8a *dar*). It may simply stand in apposition to 7a *Banna* so that it describes the stretch *ó Loch Echach...co hAlbain*. *Banna* here seems to designate the Lower Bann, which flows from Lough Neagh (*Loch nEchach*) into the Atlantic Ocean, waters which in turn connect the coasts of Ireland and Scotland.

These close textual correspondences raise the question of whether Boand A could have served as a source for Boand I, or vice versa, or whether both poems go back to a common ancestor poem which has not survived. In L only, Boand I is ascribed to Cúán ua Lothcháin, whose obit is recorded in the Annals in 1024.¹²⁰ The language of Boand I does not seem to undermine this ascription. Among the earlier features in Boand I should be noted the agreement in number between the copula and the independent 3rd pl. pronoun in q. 13c *it é a n-anmand* ‘these are their names’, and the old neuter nom. pl. of *ainm* is retained here. We further find nasalisation after the neuter in the river names *Sruth nJordanen* and *Sruth nEufrait* (q. 8cd), and after the noun *míad* in *míad nglé* (q. 19c), although it should be noted that the neuter tends to survive much longer as part of placenames than in other contexts. Among the Middle Irish features, note the falling together of unstressed final vowels (confirmed by rhyme) in q. 13ab *de : deogbair* (earlier nom. pl. *deogbairi*) and in 14cd *tarta : cumachta* (earlier acc. pl. *tartu* and gen. pl. *cumachtae*). In the verbs, we find one instance of the 3rd sg. conjunct Pres. Ind. ending in *-enn*, in q. 1c *assa silenn* ‘out of which flows’ (earlier *assa sil*);¹²¹ further s-Preterite *rethis* ‘she ran’ in q. 17a (earlier *ā*-Preterite *ráith*). The verbal noun *cantain* in q. 3b is the later verbal noun of *canaid*, the earlier form being *cétal*. Note also the confusion of accusative and dative in q. 9d *co srothaib* ‘to the streams’, with dative for accusative.¹²² With regard to relative pronouns, we should note q. 12b *nach maided* ‘which would not burst’ (earlier *nád maided*). Based on the linguistic features, many of which are already found in *Saltair na Rann*, the ascription to Cúán can be accepted as genuine.

Since both Boand A and Boand I contain earlier as well as later features, which would allow for them to be dated to the Early Middle Irish period, a linguistic analysis alone may not provide the answer as to which is the earlier poem. In addition to the catalogue of names which both poems share, however, Boand A shares the line *co pardus n-úasal nÁdaim* in q. 2d with the R version of Boand I. In his edition of Boand I, Gwynn follows the reading in L *coro saig pardus Ádaim* ‘until it reaches the paradise of Adam’, as he believed L to be the superior witness. The reading in R, which provides a further link to Boand A, can be interpreted in several ways. It can either be seen as evidence that Boand I was based on Boand A or on its source, or that the scribe of R corrected his text, having consulted an earlier version of Boand A or indeed Boand A itself.

If different themes were combined in Boand I, with each theme being marked off by a *dúnad*, then it is possible that different texts were consulted by the author. And one of those texts could have been a copy of Boand A or its ancestor. A further point may suggest that Boand I was based on an earlier version of Boand A if not Boand A itself. Both poems profess

¹¹⁹ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3, 29. My thanks to the anonymous reader for *Ériu* for this suggestion.

¹²⁰ Clodagh Downey, ‘The life and work of Cúán ua Lothcháin’, *Ríocht na Midhe* 19 (2008), 55–78: 55.

¹²¹ The potential second form, l. 28 *nos-turrand*, may not be a verb at all. Gwynn (*MD*, vol. 3, 480) suggested that the reading may be *nó is Torand* ‘or it is Torand’ with elision between *nó* and *is*.

¹²² Note the examples recorded in *SNG*, 240.

to name fifteen names, but, as we have seen, each poem arrives at the number in a slightly different manner. It seems more likely to me that the *Eufrait* was added by the author of Boand I and that Boand itself was removed, and the name relegated to the first line of the next section as ‘her general pleasant name’ than that the author of Boand I, if he found *Eufrait* and *Tigir* as a pair in his source, would have removed the former and added the latter. The rivers *Eufrat* and *Tigir*, apart from appearing as a pair in literature in general, also occur together in a line of a poem beginning *Ro-fessa i curp domuin dúir* ascribed to Airbertach mac Cosse in both L and Rawl. B 502: *eter Eufrait is Tigir ... is tuatha Mesopotámia*.¹²³ At present, I am inclined to take either Boand A or its exemplar as the basis for the first section in Boand I.

RELATIONSHIP OF BOAND II TO BOAND I

In his *Heldensage*, Thurneysen not only discussed the *Dindsenchas* in general, but also included discussions of a few individual articles whenever these overlapped with other areas of medieval Irish literature. In his treatment of the ‘Sagenkreis von Étāin und Conaire Mōr’, he also discussed the three Boand poems. Of the relationship between Boand I and Boand II, Thurneysen remarks:

Ein anderes Gedicht, das schon zur ursprünglichen Dinnsenchas-Sammlung A gehört, ist nach den Buchstabenresten des Titels in LL von dem Dichter Cūān ua Lothchāin (†1024) verfaßt. Es [=Boand I] fußt deutlich auf dem eben erwähnten, dessen zweiten Teil es weiter ausführt.¹²⁴

Thurneysen believed that Boand I was based on Boand II, his reason being that the etymology of the name Boand as deriving from *bó* and *finn* is treated in greater detail in Boand II than it is in Boand I, and that the story of Boand’s punishment by the well also receives greater attention in the former. Having more detail, however, does not necessarily translate to Boand II being the earlier poem. Boand II has a greater focus on etymology in general: beside the etymology of Boand (found in q. 6c), the river Jordan, also mentioned in the list of river names in Boand I, is analysed as *ordan* + *án* = *Eorthanán* (q. 6a). Further on, the name Óengus is said to come from Boand’s *óen gus* ‘one strength’ (q. 10b). As for more narrative detail, Boand’s relationship to Óengus is expressed in a single quatrain in Boand I, but Boand II expands the story of her affair with the Dagda and transforms the conception of Óengus into the reason Boand is punished by the well of Segais (this theme is taken up again in Boand III—see below). But despite this shift in narrative focus from one Boand poem to the other, some similarities are still to be noted: the first section in Boand II is also concerned with geography (qq 2–5), and both poems share the line *do chomrac in dá rí-g-lind* ‘from the meeting of the two royal streams’ (Boand I q. 20b; Boand II q. 6d), which occurs directly after the etymology of Boand in both texts.

In his discussion of the two Boand poems, Thurneysen did not address matters of language. I believe that, on both linguistic and internal evidence, Boand II is actually the later of the two poems. Boand II does not carry an authorial ascription in any of the six manuscripts which transmit it, but because it is dedicated to Máel Sechlainn, it is possible that this poem, too, may have been penned by Cúán ua Lothcháin given that he is often associated with this Irish king in the literature about him.¹²⁵ On internal historical evidence, Gwynn has dated it to the period between 1012 and 1022.¹²⁶ He believed that it was composed between Máel Morda’s

¹²³ Edited in Thomas Olden, ‘The geography of Ros Ailithir’, *PRIA*, (1879–88), 219–52. Cf. *LL* II 16221; 16223.

¹²⁴ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 606.

¹²⁵ Downey, ‘Cúán ua Lothcháin’, 57. Donnchadh Ó Corráin has recently proposed that Boand II was penned by Cúán. See Ó Corráin, *Clavis*, vol. 3, 1564.

¹²⁶ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3, 481.

incursion into Meath in 1012, and the death of Máel Sechlainn in 1022. From the point of view of language, however, Boand II contains a few features which might push the proposed date later than that envisaged by Gwynn. Note the instance of the independent object pronoun 3rd sg fem. *coros báid hí* ‘so that it drowned her’ (q. 13d),¹²⁷ and the new form of the 3rd sg fem. infixed pronoun in *-dos/-dus*, in *rodus asaít* (q. 8d, Y *rodus athsaid*) ‘he brought her to labour’.¹²⁸ Both of these features are metrically confirmed. A further Middle Irish feature is the verbal form *éirgid* ‘it rises’ (q. 13c, earlier *at-reig*);¹²⁹ though this instance cannot be metrically confirmed. While some of the features just listed already occur in *Saltair na Rann*, Boand II seems on the whole linguistically more innovative than Boand I, and I am inclined to regard it as the later of the two poems. We know that Boand II is not part of the *Dindsenchas* collections in R and B, and is also absent from M. There may be many reasons for this. But the simplest explanation is that, by the time the first *Dindsenchas* collections were established, Boand II had either not yet been written or it had not yet been considered for entry into a collection.

RELATIONSHIP OF BOAND III TO BOAND I + II

The final poem relating the death of Boand is Boand III, which survives in a single copy in L. Like several other poems in this manuscript, it is ascribed to Cináed ua hArtacáin, whose name is also mentioned in the final quatrain of the poem:

Sægul mná Nechtain co nnirt,
Cináed ro chertaig co cert
 æs na mná cíalla co docht,¹³⁰
 cóic bláidna di i corp cóic secht.

‘The life span of Nechtan’s wife with strength,
Cináed has set right
 the age of the wise woman exactly:¹³¹
 was five years in her body and five times seven.’

Lucius Gwynn, who edited this poem, stated that ‘[t]he mention of Cináed’s name confirms the ascription at the head of the poem.’¹³² However, the scribe of L who copied this poem could just as easily have read the last quatrain and added the ascription himself. Thurneysen, who could hardly have been aware of Gwynn’s edition, calls the poem ‘eine Fälschung auf dem Namen Cinaed ua h-Artacáin’.¹³³ Looking at the language of Boand III, Thurneysen argues that the poem is far too late to have been written by a poet of the mid-tenth century:

Lesen wir aber das Gedicht durch, so stoßen wir fortwährend auf Formen, die wir diesem schon 975 gestorbenen Dichter unmöglich zutrauen können, wenn wir nicht unsere Ansichten über die irische Sprachentwicklung völlig umgestalten wollen, und die sich denn auch in seinen zahlreichen anderen Gedichten nicht finden. Vgl. das Objektspronomen in *fácbait é 209a5*, *co-fargbur tu 209a27* (auch die 1. Sg. des

¹²⁷ The use of two object pronouns is pleonastic here.

¹²⁸ See *SNG*, 266.

¹²⁹ Though YS read *eirgid*, Gwynn emends to *éircid* (*MD*, vol. 3, 36, l. 51), but the medial guttural should be lenited.

¹³⁰ Corrected as in Meyer, *Miscellanea Hibernica*, 39.

¹³¹ Cf. Gwynn, ‘Cináed ua Hartacáin’s poem’, 236: ‘... the woman’s age, until (the river) extinguished her life, ...’ I agree with Meyer’s emendation from 78c *tacht* to *docht* which makes *aicill* rhyme with 78d *corp*. The phrase *co docht* should not be taken as a verbal form but as an adverbial phrase meaning ‘strictly, exactly’.

¹³² Gwynn, ‘Cináed ua Hartacáin’s poem’, 229n78.

¹³³ Rudolf Thurneysen, ‘Allerlei Irisches’, *ZCP* 10 (1915), 421–44: 438–40; *addendum* in *ZCP* 11 (1917), 167.

Subjunktivs auf *-ur!*), die Konstruktion: *mac ro-ail sinni 'nar síd* 'der Knabe, den wir in unserem Sid aufgezogen haben' 209a39, Verbalformen wie *at-rubratar* 209a13, *con-ebratar* 208b14, die *nn*-Formen: *risa-mbenand* 209b38, *as-mberand* 36; auch das Adverbium *sút* 208b55, 209b30 dürfte kaum so alt sein.¹³⁴

Gerard Murphy later agreed with Thurneysen's analysis:

With it we may therefore contrast the poem on Bruig na Bóinne discussed by Thurneysen (*Heldensage*, 608) and rightly assigned by him to the middle of the 12th century, though LL attributes it to Cináed úa Artacáin. The poem on Bruig na Bóinne begins *Secht o.f.n.* and has been edited by Lucius Gwynn, *ÉRIU* vii. 210–38. As distinguished from Cináed's true poems and the 11th-century poem on Carmun, the poem on Bruig na Bóinne contains, beside Middle Irish forms, several forms which do not become common in poetry till the second half of the 12th century, and are normal only from the beginning of the 13th century on: *bess tussu* '(which) you will be' (15); *lá-so é* 'send him' (19); *mā ro gab sé* 'if he has accepted'; *fácbaít é* 'they leave him' (39); *co fargbur tū* 'that I may leave thee' (50); *ro ail sinni* 'whom we fostered' (56). As this poem appears in LL it cannot be later than c. 1160.¹³⁵

Ascriptions to famous poets, such as Cináed ua hArtacáin, Cúán ua Lothcháin, Flann mac Lonáin, Flann Mainistrech, or Fulartach are common in L. The edition by Lucius Gwynn, and the respective reactions to it by Thurneysen and Murphy, make us aware that authorial ascriptions should not necessarily be taken at face value. It takes far less skill to write a famous name above a poem than it does to make said poem adhere to the form of the language utilised by that famous name. If Cináed were to have written Boand III, then the other two Boand poems would be later works. But the combined linguistic evidence of all three Boand poems does not bear out this argument.

Apart from the linguistic evidence, similarities in theme and phraseology suggest that Boand III made use of other Boand material, it appears, from within and without the *Dindsenchas*. As already mentioned, in both Boand III and Boand II, Boand's approach to the well of Segais is motivated by her sin of having lain with the Dagda. In Boand II, Boand wants to hide her guilt from a still unsuspecting Nechtan:

Luid Boand ó thig co tric
dús da tairsed in tiprait:
derb lé do cheiled a col
da soised lé a fothrucud.

'Boand went from the house in haste
to see if she could reach the well
she was sure of hiding her guilt
if she could attain to bathe in it.'¹³⁶

In Boand III on the other hand, Nechtan seems to be already aware or at least suspicious of Boand's transgression (q. 69) and suggests that she prove her innocence by bathing in the well (qq 70–1), which Boand proceeds to do:

¹³⁴ Thurneysen, 'Allerlei Irisches', 439.

¹³⁵ Murphy, 'Two sources in Thurneysen's *Heldensage*', 155n7.

¹³⁶ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3, 36–7.

Ricob cosin Segais súairc,
 d'fis mo genais as cach geis:
 ticub 'na thuathbel fó thrí
 in topair bí búan can breis.

'I will make my way to the pleasing Segais
 to prove my chastity beyond doubt
 thrice I shall walk withershins
 around the living water, inviolate.'¹³⁷

One should note that the idea of Boand's shame or guilt is not expressed in the relevant section in *Tochmarc Étaíne*, but this idea of shame provided a means of connecting the story of Óengus's conception with the origin of the river Boyne in Boand III. The description of the well of Segais itself, though not wholly intelligible owing to staining on this part of the page, also contains a line warning those of ill-intent of its dangers (*cach óen téit chuci ra bréic / ní cumma tic is tég dis* 'whosoever approaches them with a lie, goes not from them in like guise'),¹³⁸ bears resemblance to a similar warning given in Boand I (q. 12d *ní thargad úad cen athis* 'he would not come from it without blemish').¹³⁹

Like Boand II, Boand III gives evidence of a conflation of what appear to be two originally distinct Boand traditions according to which Boand is either the wife of Elcmaire and mother of Óengus or else the wife of Nechtan, guardian of the well of Segais. In Boand III, this conflation turns Elcmaire into Boand's brother (and male guardian) so that Nechtan can assume the role of her husband. Boand II is not as explicit here; it does not describe her familial relationship to Elcmaire, merely stating that she is coming to his house, where the Dagda joins her (qq 7–8). Both also give the etymology of the name Óengus as *óen + gus*. From the foregoing discussion regarding the relationship of the Boand poems to one another, I believe the following scenario to be the most likely:

Boand I > Boand II > Boand III.

I would suggest that both Boand I and Boand II are older than Boand III on linguistic grounds. I further believe it to be likely that Boand I is slightly older than Boand II for linguistic as well as internal logical reasons; and that Boand III, a latecomer to the Boand tradition as a whole, may have made use of Boand I and II (and perhaps a version of the Boand prose), together with some other *dindsenchas* material on the area around Brug na Bóinne.¹⁴⁰

THE PROSE *DINDSENCHAS* OF BOAND

There exist ten copies of the prose *Dindsenchas* of Boand, nine of which are found in manuscripts containing a version of *Dindsenchas C* and are therefore followed by the Boand poems. The tenth version is found in Bd., a representative of Recension B. One of the Recension C manuscripts, M, is unique in that it contains two versions of the prose Boand, the first of which precedes a poem on another placename, the poem on the river Shannon labelled Sinann I.¹⁴¹ Besides the ten prose versions found in the *Dindsenchas*, there exist two further versions of the prose Boand which are found outside the corpus. One version is contained in

¹³⁷ Gwynn, 'Cináed úa Hartacáin's poem', 229; 236, v. 74.

¹³⁸ Gwynn, 'Cináed úa Hartacáin's poem', 229 v. 72c–d.

¹³⁹ Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3, 28–9.

¹⁴⁰ The theme and Meath setting of Boand III could be the reason that it was ascribed to Cináed, whose poetry mostly deals with Meath and Brega.

¹⁴¹ See Table 1 above. For an edition of the poem, see Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3, 286–91.

Royal Irish Academy MS 23 O 48 (Liber Flavus Fergusiorum; hereafter Ls) fol. 27r, where it precedes the version of *Airne Fíngein* in that manuscript.¹⁴² The other is an adapted version of the prose Boand, which appears to have made use of Boand I as well, and is found embedded in the Middle Irish version of *Tochmarc Emire*.¹⁴³ Since there have been no detailed discussions regarding the relationship between the prose and the verse sections of an individual article in *Dindsenchas* C (with the exception of Ó Concheanainn’s study discussed above), and since no such discussion exists for Boand, the following section will address the relationship between the prose and the Boand poems, before turning to the relationship between individual versions of the prose.

A. Relationship between prose and verse

In his discussion of the recensions, Thurneysen stated that Recension B was created by making prose abstracts of the corresponding poems and that the redactor of the prose was primarily interested in the etymological content of the poems.¹⁴⁴ We should note that ‘etymology’ here does not necessarily mean the Isidorean-style dissection into the constituent components of a name, since this process, as Gregory Toner has pointed out, is actually quite rare in the *Dindsenchas*. Rather, we would be justified in stating that the prose sections of *Dindsenchas* articles tend to be concerned with the aetiological part of the placename story, whereas the accompanying poems usually go beyond the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of the creation of a placename. The prose passage on Boand, then, specifically reflects the second section of Boand I, which relates Boand’s provocation of the well of Segais and the consequences of her actions. The passage (here given from Stokes’s edition of the Rennes *Dindsenchas*) shows clear signs of being abstracted from the poem, and I have highlighted the relevant phrases in bold below:

§1 Bóand cid diata? Ni *ansa*. Boand ben **Nechtain meic Labrada** dodechaid docum in **tobair diam[air]** bui i n-urlaind in Sídhá Nechtain. *Cach* óen fodriced ni ticed uad **can maidsin a da rosc acht** min[i]ptis hé **Nechtan 7 a trí déogbaire .i. Flesc 7 Lam 7 Luam a n-anmand.**

§2 **Fecht and musluid Boand la dimus do cobfis cumachta in tobair,** 7 asbert nad búí cumachta diamair connised cumac a delba, 7 imsóí tuaitbhel in **tobuir fothri,** 7 **máidhid tri tonna** tairsi don tobur, 7 fosruidbed **a sliasait 7 a [leth]laim 7 a lethsuil.** Imsóí didiu **for teched a haithisi co fairgi 7 an uisce anadáiadh** co hInber mBóinne, 7 **ba hí sin máthair Óengusa meic in Dagda.**

§3 *Vel* ita: Bó ainm in [t]srotha 7 Find aband **Slébe** Guaire 7 **dia comrac** mole is ainm Boand (rectius Bófind).

§4 **Dabilla ainm a hoirce,** unde Cnoc Dabilla, *Sliab* in Cotaig hodie.

§1 ‘Bóand, where is it from? Not difficult. Bóand, wife of Nechtán son of Labraid went to the well which was in the green of Sídh Nechtáin. Whoever went to it would not come

¹⁴² All versions of the prose Boand with the exception of the one found in *Tochmarc Emire*, are given in the Appendix to this article. But the latter is discussed further in Marie-Luise Theuerkauf, ‘The road less travelled: Cú Chulainn’s journey to matrimony and the *Dindsenchas* of *Tochmarc Emire*, in Matthias Egeler (ed.), *Landscape and Myth in North-Western Europe. Proceedings of an international conference held in Munich on 6-8 April 2016* (Turnhout, 2018), 146–64: 154–5..

¹⁴³ Edited in A.G. van Hamel, *Compert Con Culainn and other stories* (Oxford, 1933; repr. Dublin, 1978), 20–68. The origin story of Boand forms part of Cú Chulainn’s and Emer’s riddling colloquy. The relationship between the passage in *Tochmarc Emire* and Boand I and the Rennes and Ballymote prose of Boand in turn was addressed by G. O’Nolan in Hans Hessen and G. O’Nolan, ‘Zu *Tochmarc Emire*’, *ZCP* 8 (1912), 498–524: 516–19.

¹⁴⁴ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 41. Also mentioned in Bowen, ‘A historical inventory’, 122. See Gregory Toner, ‘Authority, verse and the transmission of *senchas*’, *Ériu* 55 (2005), 59–84: 74.

from it without his two eyes bursting, unless it were Nechtán and his three cupbearers, whose names were Flesc and Lám and Luam.’

§2 ‘Once upon a time Bóand went through pride to test the well’s power, and declared that it had no secret force which could shatter her form, and thrice she walked withershins round the well. (Whereupon) three waves from the well break over her and deprive her of a thigh and one of her hands and one of her eyes. Then she, fleeing her shame, turns seaward, with the water behind her as far as Boyne-mouth, [where she was drowned]. Now she was the mother of Oengus son of the Dagda.’

§3 ‘Or thus: *Bó* the name of the stream [of Síd Nechtain] and *Find* the river of Sliab Guairi, and from their confluence is the name *Bóand* [= *Bó* + *Find*].’

§4 ‘*Dabilla* was the name of her lapdog, whence *Cnoc Dabilla* (“D.’s Hill”), today called *Sliab in Cotaig* “the Mountain of the Covenant”.¹⁴⁵

The words printed in bold can be found either verbatim or in rephrased form in Boand I, and it is obvious that there is very little to the story of Boand in the prose which one cannot find in the poem. It is possible to trace how lines from the poem were rephrased for the prose, see for example:

- (i) *nach maided a dá rosc rán* (q. 12b) > *can maidsin a dá rosc*;
- (ii) *fecht and do-lluid*¹⁴⁶ *Boand bán* (q. 14a) > *fecht and mus-luid Boand*;
- (iii) *immar ro thimchell fo thrí* (q. 15a) > *im-soí ... fo thrí*;
- (iv) *maidit teora tonna de* (q. 15c) > *maidhid trí tonna tairsi*;
- (v) *rethis co fairgi ... d’imgabáil a hathise* (q. 17ab) > *for teched a haithisi co fairgi*.

The prose also follows the sequence of events in the poem and devotes, relatively speaking, the same amount of space to each topic: how Boand approaches and circles the well and her punishment are described in detail. Much more economical on the other hand is the section on Boand as mother of Óengus, the components of her name as *Bó* and *Finn*, and the reference to her lap-dog *Dabilla* from which *Cnoc Dabilla* is named.

The prose adds that Boand explicitly states that the well has no power over her (*asbert nad búí cumachta diamair ...* ‘and declared that it had no secret force ...’), an idea which is merely implied in the poem. A further addition is the phrase *túaitibel* ‘anti-clockwise’.¹⁴⁷ This is not a great leap from the verse (which only states that Boand circles the well), especially since the idea of turning anti-clockwise (with negative consequences) is attested elsewhere in Irish literature.¹⁴⁸ Finally, the prose adds the identification of *Cnoc Dabilla* with *Slíab in Cotaig*.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Edition and translation from Stokes, ‘The prose tales in the Rennes Dindsenchas’, 315–16.

¹⁴⁶ H has *musluid* here. Perhaps a later scribal emendation.

¹⁴⁷ When assessing the relationship between the *Dindsenchas* of Boand and the Middle Irish recension of *Tochmarc Emire*, G. O’Nolan took the detail *túaitibel in topair* to have come from *co n-étuachli* ‘imprudently’ (q. 15b) in Boand I, which he saw as being re-interpreted as *túaitibel* by the author of the prose section; see Hessen and O’Nolan, ‘Zu *Tochmarc Emire*’, 519. As the reader points out to me, this is an unlikely scenario, given that the phrase is so common in Early Irish literature.

¹⁴⁸ Note, for instance, the very similar phrase, *ima-soí ar túaitibel fo thrí*, which describes how the Devil turns on the chest of a dying man, before extracting the soul from the body. The phrase is found in a text from the Liber Flavus Fergusiorum, edited in Carl Marstrander, ‘The two deaths’, *Ériu* 5 (1911), 120–5: 122.

¹⁴⁹ Hogan, *Onomasticon*, 609, states that *Slíab in Cotaig* was variously identified with *Síd Nechtain* and *Cnoc Dabilla*. For the former, see LL 1. 38596 (*Bórama Lagen*).

B. Interrelationship of prose variants

In the following I propose to look at a number of readings from the prose which illustrate the gradual change from one version to the next. While the versions of Recension C and Recension B are clearly distinguishable, there are also what we could call ‘hybrid’ versions, that is, versions of the prose which contain features from both recensions and which show signs of rewriting and emendation. For ease of reference, I have provided all prose variants under discussion here in the Appendix to the article so that the reader may consult them at their leisure.

In his article on the *Dindsenchas* in the Book of Uí Mhaine, Gwynn stated that the prose of Boand in M is different from the version in RB: ‘*Bóand*. M Bd. Seem to be expanded from R. MR have one phrase not in Bd.: R Bd. have one phrase not in M. This item is not in LL.’¹⁵⁰ Gwynn’s article discusses the special place of manuscript M within the transmission of the *Dindsenchas*, specifically its place between Recension B, as represented by Bd., and Recension C as represented by RB. Unfortunately, the ‘phrases’ which Gwynn speaks of are not explained and examples are not given. Another point, which Gwynn seems to have omitted, was that M contains two separate versions of the Boand prose. The first, which I will call M¹, is found on fol. 87rb, and is indeed very close to the version contained in Bd. This prose section is followed not by any one of the Boand poems, but by Sinand I, a poem on the origin of the river Shannon.¹⁵¹ The second prose section on Boand, here called M², is found on fol. 87va. It follows Sinand I directly, and is itself followed by Boand I. This version is closer to the prose of R given above. I believe that we can both correct and expand upon Gwynn’s comments above. There are a number of phrases which only occur in certain manuscripts, and their occurrence is neither meaningless nor coincidence.

In the first instance, we can distinguish those versions of the prose which conclude with a quatrain—the hallmark of Recension B—from those which do not. The quatrain is contained in M¹BdELsS; and I here give the text and translation from Bd.:

Dia Boann broga Breag
brissis gach fal co find-lear
ba Boan[n] a hainm fria la
mna Neachtain maic Labradha.

‘(One) day Boyne of the mark of Bregia
Broke every fence as far as the white sea;
“Bóann” was the name on (that) day
Of the wife of Nechtán, son of Labraid.’¹⁵²

The quatrain seems to have been composed for the purpose of the prose, rather than being taken from any of the poems, which is the case with most quatrains in Recension B. It provides no further information than that which we already get from the rest of the prose passage: that the river Boyne is named after Nechtán’s wife Boand. While M¹BdELsS all contain the quatrain, we can mark off ES as a separate group because these two witnesses contain a paragraph not contained in M¹BdLs, which is however found in RBM²YS3H. This paragraph refers to Óengus and to Dabilla, Boand’s lap-dog, the name Slíab in Chotaig, and gives the etymology of Boand’s name. Since ES are the only witnesses to contain both the paragraph and the quatrain,

¹⁵⁰ Gwynn, ‘The Dindsenchas in the Book of Uí Maine’, 73.

¹⁵¹ Edited in Gwynn, *MD*, vol. 3, 286–91.

¹⁵² Text and translation from Stokes, ‘The Bodleian Dinnsenchas’, 500. Note the variants in M¹ELsS (given in the table below).

they represent a special group to be discussed further below. The remainder of the witnesses are grouped as either featuring the paragraph or the quatrain.

At this point, it may be helpful to pause and recall the two contrasting opinions regarding the relationship of the three recensions of the *Dindsenchas* at their basic level: it was Thurneysen's opinion that Recension C represented a combination of the verse sections of Recension A and the prose sections of Recension B, B having been abstracted from A in the first instance. Ó Concheanainn, on the other hand, argued that Recension A was an anthology extracted from an early text of Recension C, and that Recension B was an abridged recension abstracted from the prose of C. In our case, agreeing with Thurneysen would mean that the common exemplar of RBM²YS3H is ultimately derived from the common exemplar of M¹BdLs, the latter having been abstracted from the verse, or having had a parallel textual existence to the verse before finally being combined with it to give Recension C. As part of this process, the quatrain as found in M¹BdLs was omitted, the paragraph concerning Óengus, Boand's name, etc., added to give the version now represented by RBM²YS3H. The opposite scenario, championed by Ó Concheanainn, would suggest that the exemplar represented by RBM²YS3H was abstracted from the poem, and that the exemplar behind M¹BdLs was a text derived from RBM²YS3H, to which the quatrain was added, and the paragraph on Óengus, etc. omitted.

Before the textual discussion can proceed further, an important literary point needs to be made first. If we want to find an answer regarding the omission and addition of information, we need to ask ourselves what the information represents. As far as the paragraph on Óengus, Dabilla and Boand's etymology is concerned, this information is, strictly speaking, superfluous to the origin story of the river, as it does not tell us how or why the river was created. The quatrain at the end of M¹BdLs, on the other hand, emphasises causality, that is, the river bears the name Boand because Boand was the name of the woman who was responsible for its creation. It seems indeed that M¹BdLs do not contain any information which may distract from the main focus of the prose, that is the cause and circumstances of the creation of the Boyne. Note also the absence of etymological information (*bó + finn*), which means that Thurneysen's statement, that the prose is largely concerned with etymology, needs to be revised. As stated above, it is preferable to speak of the aetiological rather than of the etymological focus of the prose, or to distinguish between different forms of aetiology—eponymous aetiology, that is, the river Boyne is called Boand because it is named after a woman called Boand; and etymological aetiology,¹⁵³ that is, the name of the woman is Boand because the constituent parts of her name are *bó* and *finn* which make *Bófinn*, hence Boand, when combined. The prose of Recension B, as represented by M¹BdLs, then, only focuses on eponymy, whereas the prose of Recension C, represented by the remainder of the variants, contains both eponymy and etymology in the Isidorean sense.¹⁵⁴

Bearing this point in mind, we can return to the textual discussion of the variants. The relationship among the recensions according to Thurneysen is not borne out by either the linguistic or the internal textual evidence as far as the Boand prose is concerned. First of all, the prose of RBM²YS3H, (Recension C), corresponds more closely to the poem, Boand I, than does the prose of M¹BdLs (Recension B). This point seems obvious given that no poem was intended to follow the prose in Recension B. The prose of Recension C, moreover, is more

¹⁵³ On etymological aetiology in an Irish context, see Rolf Baumgarten, 'Etymological aetiology in Irish tradition', *Ériu* 41 (1990), 115–22.

¹⁵⁴ My thanks to Clodagh Downey for pointing out this interpretation. In the example above, we could go further and say that the Recension C prose is aetiologicaly circular: the name of the river comes from the woman Boand, the name of the woman Boand comes from the combination of the words *bó* and *finn*, and *bó* and *finn*, as stated in Boand I, the Recension C prose and, to a more detailed extent in Boand II, come from the name of two rivers whose confluence creates the river Boyne (see Gwynn, *MD* vol. 3, 32, ll 77–80 q. 20; 34, ll 9–20).

concise in its telling of the story than the prose of Recension B, which is characterised by a number of phraseological expansions or simplifications. But it is also noticeable that, although there are obvious differences in phraseology, each phrase in Boand-C has a phrase in Boand-B which corresponds to it in meaning. The narrative proceeds in the same order in both versions. See the following examples:

(a) **RBS3HY:**

ní ticed úad can maidsin a da rosc

‘he would not come from it without his two eyes bursting’

M²:

gan aithis a da rosc

‘without blemish of his two eyes’

EM¹BdLsS:

ní thiced uad cen aithis

‘he would not come from it without blemish’.

In the variants of Recension B and the two hybrid witnesses, E and S, the reference to the bursting of eyes does not occur. This incident refers to the power of the well to make the eyes of anyone who approaches it burst, apart from Nechtan or his cupbearers, and is derived from q. 12b *nach maided a dá rosc rán* in Boand I. We should note that, with the exception of S,¹⁵⁵ only witnesses which also contain Boand I feature this line in the prose.

(b) **RBM²S₃HY:**

fecht n-aen mus luid Boand

‘one day Boand quickly went’

M¹BdLsS:

luid iarum in rígan

‘afterwards the queen went’

E:

fecht n-aen luid iarum in rígan

‘once upon a time the queen went afterwards’.

The phrase beginning *fecht n-aen mus-luid* seems to be derived from q. 14a *fecht and do-lluid Bóand bán* in Boand I. While *luid iarum in rígan* expresses the same basic idea, it represents a simplification of the first. The verbal form *mus luid* ‘went quickly, went soon’ is largely restricted to the metrical parts of the *Dindsenchas* and we can see how a later redactor might

¹⁵⁵ S often contains more detailed accounts of placenames found in the *Dindsenchas* and its account of the story of Boand is longer than that in any other witness. For the purpose of the present discussion, I will not discuss S’s readings. I believe that S is unique with regard to the *Dindsenchas* material which it preserves, which should be published as a stand-alone edition. Because of all the extra material it contains, taxonomy such as *Dindsenchas* B or C becomes difficult to apply to the text in S. It may even be the case that S constitutes another recension of the corpus altogether. For instance, since the story of Boand is also found in the Middle Irish *Tochmarc Emire*, it has been suggested that S used this tale as one of its sources. The version in *Tochmarc Emire* also omits the reference to the bursting of the two eyes. Perhaps this is how the absence of the phrase in S may best be explained. That a link between S and *Tochmarc Emire* exists is confirmed by the fact that S cites the Ulster Cycle text as its source. See the prose section on ‘Oin Aub’, edited and translated from S in Gwynn, *MD* vol. 4, 302–3; 456.

have wanted to replace it with the more straightforward *luid* ‘went’. The reading in E is particularly interesting here as it nicely demonstrates a conflation of the two phrases.

(c) **RBM²S3HY:**

máidit trí tonna tairsi don topur 7 fos-ruidbed a slíasait 7 a láim 7 a lethsúil
 ‘three waves break over her from the well and her thigh and her arm and one of her eyes were shattered’

EM¹Bd:

maidid trí tonna assin topur tarsi co remaid co hoponn a deisslíasait 7 a desláim 7 a dessúil
 ‘three waves break over her from the well so that suddenly her right thigh and her right arm and her right eye broke’

LsS:

ro mebatar iarum teora tonna tarsi co remid a desslíasaid 7 a deslam 7 a llethshuil
 ‘three waves brokes over her afterwards so that her right thigh and her right arm and one of her eyes broke’.

A number of points are to be made about this development. The verb form *fos-ruidbed* in RBM²S3HY is the more unusual, coming from the rarely attested verb *fo-díben* ‘destroys, deprives’. This verb was replaced by the more common verb *maidid* ‘breaks, bursts’. Second, we notice a further departure from the poem in EM¹Bd., which seems to give its own version of the events of Boand’s punishment by the well. In Boand I, the body parts which were injured were a leg (*ria cois*), an eye (*ria súil sláin*), and one of her arms (*a leth-láim*). Group RBM²S3HY seems closer to this rendering than EM¹Bd., which agree in stating that her right side (*des-*) was affected. This emphasis on the right side of the body is not reflected in Boand I. Finally, in LsS we notice the late form of the verb *maidid* in *ro mebatar* on the one hand, but the correction to the old form of the feminine numeral *teora* as it is found in q. 15c in the poem. This form is not found in any of the earlier copies of the prose.

(d) **RBM²S3HY:**

im-sóí tuathbel in tobuir fo thrí
 ‘she turned thrice withershins around the well’

EM¹Bd:

do-saig (do-luid M¹) for tuathbel in topair fo thrí do airiugud (derbad E) a c[h]umachta
 ‘thrice withershins she goes around the well to test its power’

LsS:

do-luid iarum do airiugud a cumachta tuathbel in tobair
 ‘she went afterwards to test its power withershins around the well’.

The Recension B branch of the prose, as well as the hybrid E, add a detail here that is not contained in the Recension C prose of Boand, but does feature in Boand I. This is the phrase *do airiugud a chumachta* which is identical to q. 14d of the poem. This expansion may point to the possibility that Boand I was consulted by the redactor of the Recension B prose and that he chose to include this phrase because it further strengthens the relationship between cause and effect in the passage, that is, Boand went to the well *because* of her pride, and she circled

it three times *because* she wanted to test its power. The idea of causality which is the focus of the Recension B prose is emphasised here.

Finally, there are two minor variant readings which are interesting for our discussion. One of the aspects which Boand II and Boand I share is that Nechtan's well is guarded by three cupbearers whose names are Flesc and Lám (or Lesc) and Lúam. These three and Nechtan are the only people who are able to approach the well and walk away without blemish or punishment. Together the three names Flesc, Lám and Lúam form a thematic trinity; their names can be translated as 'rod', 'arm', and 'steersman'. This mysterious threesome is unknown outside the *Dindsenchas*, and their precise role as Nechtan's cupbearers can only be guessed at. There exists a fair degree of variation, both within variants of the verse and variants of the prose, as far as the name of the second cupbearer is concerned. His name is sometimes given as *Lám* 'arm, hand', sometimes as *Lesc* 'lazy':

	Bd.	L	R	B	M¹	M²	Y	S	S₃	H	E	Ls
Prose	Lesc	—	Lám	Lesc	Lesc	Lesc	Leas	Lesc	Lesg	Lesc	Lesc	Lesc
Boand I	—	Lám	Lám	Lam	—	Lam	Lesc	Lesc	Lesg	Lesc	—	—
Boand II	—	—	—	—	—	—	Lesc	Lesc	Lesc	Lesc	Lesc	—

I have highlighted the name Lám here because I believe it to be the original reading. The form Lesc can be explained as a scribal error whereby the scribe wrote the first letter of the second name beginning in L, got distracted and wrote out the rest of the first name again. This way Flesc, Lám, and Lúam became Flesc, Lesc, and Lúam. Since the first two names rhyme, this reading may have proved to be more popular. Another point may support viewing Lám as the original reading. Lám is the reading in L, which is the earliest of all copies and, in the transmission of the *Dindsenchas*, stands apart from the copies of Recension C. As can be seen, all versions of the prose, with the exception of R, read Lesc.¹⁵⁶ As the reader points out to me, the reading Lám in the R prose could be seen as evidence that the scribe was correcting his text, that he found Lesc in his exemplar in the prose, but Lám in the verse (as in BM²) but recognized Lám as the original reading and changed his own text accordingly. But the alternative should also be borne in mind: that only R contains the original name of the second cupbearer because its exemplar contained the correct name in both prose and verse.¹⁵⁷

The second variant reading which requires further comment is the phrase *do choimét in topair* 'to guard the well'. This phrase occurs in the third sentence (after the response *ní ansa*) in some copies of the prose. See the following comparison:

(e) **RBM²S3H**

Boand ... do-dechaid dochum diamair
'Boand went to the secret well'

YEM¹LsS

Boand ... do-dechaid do choimét in topair diamair ... (lasna deogbair EMBdLsS)
'Boand went to guard the secret the well'

The phrase *dochum in topair* 'towards the well' is the simpler and more logical reading. In the context of Boand's approach to the well, the phrase *do choimét in topair* makes little sense in the story. Boand does not go to the well to 'guard it'; especially given that her motives of *dímmus* 'haughtiness' and *do cobfís cumachta in topair* 'to learn of the power of the well' are

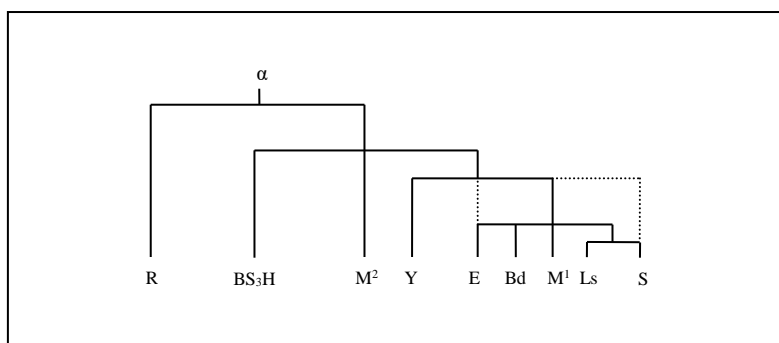
¹⁵⁶ Thurneysen (*Heldensage*, 606 n3) remarked that the name of the second cupbearer is 'Lesc nur in den Handschriften, die auch Gedicht A [Boand II] enthalten'.

¹⁵⁷ The *Dindsenchas* in R deserves to be studied separately so that its readings in relation to those of other witnesses of the corpus can be accurately assessed.

made explicit. In those witnesses which contain *do choimét in topair* (with the exception of Y), however, Boand approaches the well twice, once *lasna deogbair* ‘with the cupbearers’, and once alone (in the paragraph introduced by the phrase *luid iarom in rigan* in EM¹BdLsS). In RBM²S3H, which contain *dochum in topair*, there is only one approach, without the cupbearers. An explanation for this discrepancy may be that the conditions of the well were understood differently by different witnesses. In RBM²S3H we are told that Nechtan and his cupbearers are the only people who can approach the well without negative consequences. In EM²BdLsS, however, this restriction does not apply. Rather, we are told that no one can approach the well *unless* either Nechtan or his cupbearers are with them (see E’s reading ... *ní thiced cen aithis muna tised Nechtain ⁊ a trí deogbair* ‘he would not come [from it] without disgrace unless Nechtan and his three cupbearers came’). In these witnesses, Boand was with the cupbearers the first time, but went alone the second time, resulting in her disgrace.

While this explains the reading *do choimét in topair* from a narrative point of view, it does not tell us how it arose. Although the reader’s comment, that *do choimét in topair* is the *lectio difficilior* here, is duly noted, I do not believe that it was the original reading. It is contained in those witnesses which show innovation, and it is not supported by the poem which provided the basis for the prose in the first place: Boand I. Nevertheless, the reader is correct in pointing out that if *dochum in topair* is to be taken as the original reading, then it is hardly feasible that a scribe would replace a straightforward phrase with one which makes less sense in the story. As a tentative explanation, we could suggest that the exemplar of those witnesses which give *do choimét in topair* found the phrase *dochum in topair* abbreviated, for example as *doċ in topair*, and that he looked to the poem(s) for context. Since Boand I makes no mention of guarding or protecting the well, we can look to Boand II. Indeed, in q. 12cd, we are told of the three cupbearers, *Nechtain mac Námat dorat / do chomét a chóem-thiprat*. ‘Nechtain mac Namat set / to watch his fair well.’¹⁵⁸

STEMMA OF BOAND PROSE



SUMMARY

The preceding analysis shows that new insights can be gained from analysing individual articles from the *Dindsenchas*, and from paying due attention to the relationship of the constituent parts of an article (that is, each prose passage and each poem). Once we understand how each individual article came to be, be it prose in combination with poems, or simply a prose abstract, we will be in a better position to judge the corpus as a whole. It has been the approach of previous editors and commentators to take a bird’s-eye-view of the *Dindsenchas*, to comment on which parts feature in which manuscript, whether passages were left out and whether articles were added. While this is important, it should not be the only method of investigation.

¹⁵⁸ Gwynn, *MD* vol. 3, 36–7.

The analysis of the Boand article has brought greater clarity to the question of the relationship between the prose and the verse sections of the article. But it has also investigated the relationship between the poems and between the versions of the prose. The core of the article seems to be the poem Boand I, which was written some time in the early eleventh century, before 1024 if the attribution to Cúán ua Lothcháin is correct. Boand I bears some relation to Boand A—the poem on the river names—most likely written around the same period. From Boand I the prose article was abstracted. The writing of the prose may have coincided with the composition of Boand II, the poem dedicated to Máel Sechnaill. Boand II displays some dependency on Boand I so that it was most likely composed later in the eleventh century. Boand III, because it survives in L, cannot be later than 1160. But due to its later linguistic forms, it should be dated later than Boand I and Boand II, and the twelfth-century date assigned to it by Thurneysen and Murphy seems justified.

The prose of Boand can be broadly divided into the established Recensions C and B. To Boand-C belongs the group RBS3HM²Y; to Boand-B the group M¹BdLs. The witnesses E and S are special cases and deserve separate scholarly discussion. As far as Boand is concerned, E represents a conflation of Boand-C and Boand-B,¹⁵⁹ while S, though it also incorporates readings from both recensions, represents an even later stage in the transmission of the text and shows signs of further material having been incorporated. Within Boand-C, R is the witness closest to Boand I, the poem which served as the basis of the prose passage in the first instance. R and the witnesses closest to it, BS3HM²Y, contain earlier linguistic features than do M¹BdLsES. The latter group also seems to have incorporated readings from Boand I in order to emphasise certain aspects of the story. This is significant because M¹BdLs, specifically, are representatives of Recension B. This speaks in favour of Boand-B being ultimately derived from Boand-C.

While the example of Boand may bolster Ó Concheanainn's argument that Recension B had an early text of Recension C for its source, his theory need not hold true for every article, and one should not judge from the particular to the general. Every new examination of a *Dindsenchas* article could contradict previous findings, and the examination of individual articles cannot answer all the difficult questions of the corpus. The example of Boand cannot, for instance, shed light on whether Ó Concheanainn was right in suggesting that Recension A was also derived from an early text of Recension C. More analysis will be needed to answer these questions satisfactorily.

¹⁵⁹ Clodagh Downey ('Cúán ua Lothcháin', 51) has previously drawn attention to the intermediary role of E. In her discussion of the poem on Carmun in L and E, she calls E a 'critical link in the chain of transmission of the poem ...'. A separate edition of the *Dindsenchas* of E with a discussion of its link to the remainder of the witnesses would be of great benefit for understanding the transmission of the *Dindsenchas* as a whole.

APPENDIX: THE PROSE VARIANTS OF BOAND¹

R fol. 97ra19–34	B fol. 194ra49–b13	S3 fol. 15v1–13	H fol. 9ra15–30	M ² fol. 87va16–31
Bodand cid dia ta? Ni <i>ansa</i> . Boand ben Nechtain meic Labrada do-dechaid docum in tobair dia mbui i n-urlaind in Sidha Nechtain. <i>Cach</i> óen fod-riced ni ticed uad can maidsin a da rosc <i>acht</i> minptis hé ² Nechtan 7 a trí déogbaire .i. Flesc 7 Lam 7 Luam a n-anmand. <i>Fecht</i> and <i>mus</i> luid Boand la <i>dimus</i> do cobfis <i>cumachta</i> in tobair, 7 as-bert nad buí <i>cumachta</i> díamair <i>conn-ised</i> cumac a	Boand, cid dia da? Ni <i>ansa</i> . Bounn ben Nechtan meic Labrada do-dechaid dochum in tobair diamair bæ i n-urlaind Sída Nechtain. <i>Cach</i> æn fod-ricedh, ni <i>thiceadh</i> uad can maidsin a da rosc <i>acht</i> menptis hé Nechtan 7 a trí deogbaire, Flesc 7 Lesc 7 Luam a n-anmann. <i>Fecht</i> and <i>mus</i> luid Boand la <i>dimus</i> do cobfis <i>cumachta</i> in tobair 7 as-bert nad bhai <i>cumachta</i> diamair <i>conn-ised</i> cumac a delbha 7 im-sai tuaithbhel in topair fo trí 7 maidhidh	Boann canas ro hainmnighed? Ni <i>ansa</i> . Boann bean Nechtain meic Labhradha do-dhechaid dochum an tobair dhiamhair baoin i n-urlainn Sithe Neachtain. <i>Gach</i> aen fot-riccedh ni <i>thighed</i> uad gan athais no gan muidhsin a da rosg muna tisedh Nechtain 7 a trí deoghmuire, Flesg 7 Lesg 7 Luam a n-anmann. <i>Fecht</i> n-ann mos luidh Boann la diomus do coimfios <i>cumhachta</i> an topair 7 as- mbert nad mbaoi ni no <i>cumhachta</i> diemhoir <i>co nn-isedh</i> combach a dealba 7 im-saoi tuaitbeal an tobair fo trí. Maidhid tri tonna tairsi don tobar 7 fos-ruidhbet a slíasait 7	Boand canus ro hainmniged? Ni <i>ansa</i> . Boand ben Nechtain meic Labradhæ di-dechaid dicum an tobar diamair boi a n-irlainn an tShidha diamoir-sin Nechtain. Cech aon fot-ricedh ni ticed uad cin muidsin a da rosc <i>acht</i> minip tised Nechtan 7 a trí deoghbairi .i. Flesc & Lesc & Luam a n-anmanna. <i>Fecht</i> ann imus luid Boand la diumus do coibfis <i>cumachta</i> in topoir 7 is-bert nat boi <i>cumachta</i> diamair co n-isedh combach a delbhao 7 im-sui tuaithfell in topair fo	Boand canas ro hainmnigid? Ni <i>ansa</i> . Boann bean Neachtain meic Labrada da-deachaid dochum in tobair diamair bai i n-urlaind Sidha Neachtain. <i>Gach</i> aen dos-raigidh ni tigidh uadh gan aithisi a da rosc <i>acht</i> miniptis e Neochtan 7 a trí deodbairi .i. Fleasc 7 Leasc 7 Luamh a n-anmanna. <i>Feacht</i> and do-luidh Boand la huail 7 diumus d’is [.i. do coibfis (?)] <i>cumachta</i> in tobair 7 ad-bert nach bai dha <i>cumachtaib</i> [diamair] aigi ni do <i>chæmsadh</i> comach ⁴ a dealbha 7 luidh-

¹ In the editions above, I have added punctuation, hyphenation, and capitalisation of personal and placenames. Abbreviations and compendia are marked in *italics*. Small emendations and interlinear glosses are given in square brackets. For convenience sake, I give all manuscript sigla as follows: R = Rennes MS; B = Book of Ballymote; S3 = RIA MS B iii 1; H = TCD MS H 3. 3; M² = Book of Uí Mháine, second passage; Y = Yellow Book of Lecan; E = TCD MS E 4. 1; M¹ = Book of Uí Mháine, first passage; Bd. = Bodl. MS Rawl. B 506; Ls = Liber Flavus Fergusiorum part i.; S = RIA MS D ii 2.

² This phrase is rendered differently in all the MSS. R’s *minptis é* is the past subj. 3rd pl conj. of the copula after *mani* ‘unless’, followed by the 3rd pl indep. pr. *é* ‘they’. The same construction occurs in B *menptis hé*, M² *miniptis e*. Less straightforward is H’s *minip tised*, which seems to be a combination of the copula construction and *muna tised* ‘unless would come’, which is the reading in S₃ and E. Y has *minip tised*, unless we wish to supply an *i* and render it *miniptis iad*. Bd.’s form *manbistis iat* seems corrupt, but *maniptis iat* was probably the intended meaning.

⁴ Corrected in MS from *conacud* to *comach*.

<p>delba 7 im-soí tuaithbel in <i>tobuir</i> fo <i>tri</i>, 7 máidhid <i>tri</i> tonna tairsi don <i>tobur</i> 7 fos-ruidbed a sliasait 7 a laim 7 a lethsuil. Im-soí <i>didiu</i> for <i>teched</i> a haithisi co <i>fairgi</i> 7 an uisce ana <i>díaidh</i> co hInber mBóinne 7 ba hí sin <i>mathair</i> Oengusa meic in Dagda. <i>Vel</i> ita Bó ainm in <i>srotha</i> 7 Find aband <i>Sleibe</i> Guaire 7 dia comrac ‘mole is ainm Boand. Dabilla ainm a hoirce. <i>Unde</i> Cnoc Dabilla, <i>Sliab</i> in Cotaig hodie. + BOAND I</p>	<p><i>tri</i> tonna tairsi din <i>tobar</i> 7 fos-ruidhbedh a sliasaid 7 a laim 7 a leathshuil. Im-sai <i>didiu</i> for <i>tetheadh</i> a haithisi co <i>fairgi</i> 7 an usque ina <i>diaidh</i> co hInber mBoinne. Ba hi sin <i>dano</i> <i>mathair</i> Ænghusa meic in Dagda <i>vel</i> ita Bo ainm it <i>shrotha</i> 7 Finn abann <i>Sleibe</i> Guaire 7 dia comrag ‘mole is ainm Boann. Dabilla ainm a hoirce, <i>unde</i> Cnoc Dauilla. <i>Sliab</i> in <i>Chotaigh</i> hodie. + BOAND I</p>	<p>a laimh 7 a leathshuil. Im-saoi <i>dano</i> for <i>teched</i> a hathaisi co <i>fairrge</i> 7 an uiscci ina <i>diaidh</i> co hairm hitá Inber mBoinne co <i>bfuair</i> a <i>hoidhed</i> ann. Ba si sin <i>dano</i> <i>mathair</i> Aonghusa meic an Daghdha. No <i>dano</i> Bo ainm ant <i>srotha</i> <i>shnidhes</i> a <i>Sleibh</i> Guaire 7 Finn <i>sruth</i> Sidhe Nechtain 7 as dia comrac imoalle do garar Boann .i. bo 7 finn innsin. Dabhiolla ainm na hoirce baoid ag Boainn o n-ainmnighther Cnoc Dabiolla risi raiteir <i>Sliabh</i> a <i>Codaigh</i> aniu. <i>Conidh</i> doib-sin do <i>raidhed</i>. + BOAND I + BOAND II</p>	<p><i>tri</i> 7 muidit <i>tri</i> tonnai <i>tairrsi</i> don topar 7 <i>fus-</i>ruibdet a sliasait 7 a lethlaim 7 a lethsuil. Im-sai <i>dano</i> for <i>teithed</i> a hathaisi co <i>fairrciu</i> 7 an usciu ina diaid co Inuer mBoinne. Ba hi sin <i>dano</i> <i>mathair</i> Aongusa meic in Daghdho³ <i>vel</i> ita Bo ainm in <i>tsrothai</i> 7 Find abann <i>Sleibi</i> Goairi 7 dia comracc immalle is ainmb Boand. Dabillai ainm a hoirci, <i>unde</i> Cnoc Dabillai, <i>Sliab</i> a <i>Chotaigh</i> hodie. + BOAND I + BOAND II</p>	<p>si tuaithbeal in <i>tobair</i> fo <i>tri</i> 7 maidit <i>tri</i> tonna tairsi dan <i>tobar</i> 7 ro meabaidh a sliasad 7 a leatlamh 7 a leathshuil. Um-sai <i>dano</i> ar <i>teitheadh</i> a haithisi co <i>fairgi</i> 7 an t-uisce ana <i>diaidh</i> co hInber na Boindi. Ba hi sin <i>dano</i> <i>mathair</i> Aengusa meic in Dagha [<i>vel</i> ita Bo ainm an tsrota] 7 Find aband <i>Sleibhi</i> Guairi 7 dia comrag imale⁵ is ainm Boand. Dauilla ainm a hoirce, <i>unde</i> Cnoc Dabilla, <i>Sliab</i> in Cotaigh hodie. + BOAND I</p>
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³ MS „ in *Daghdho*., *Āongusa meic*., (with marks of transposition).

⁵ Corrected in MS from ‘*mbole* to *imale*’.

Y col. 420 ll 9–23	E p. 88b22–43	M ¹ fol. 87rb11–28	Bd. fol. 14rb30–14va7
<p>Boann cid diata? Ni <i>ansa</i>. Boand bean Neachtain <i>meic</i> Labrada do-deachaid do coiméd an tobair díamair báe a n-urland tSída Neachtain. <i>Cach æn</i> foriced, ni thicead cen muidsin a da rosc <i>acht</i> minip tísad Neachtain 7 a <i>tri</i> deogbairi .i. Fleasc 7 Leasc 7 Luam a n-anmanda. Feacht <i>ann</i> mus laid Boann la diumus do choibius <i>comachta</i> an tobair 7 as-bert na bai <i>cumachta</i> diamair oca <i>connisiad</i> comoch a dealba 7 am-sai tuaithbeal an topair for <i>tri</i> 7 muidid <i>tri</i> tonna tairsi don tobar 7 fos-ruibed a sliasad 7 a lam 7 a leathsuil. Am-sæ for teithead a hathaise co <i>fairge</i> 7 in <i>usce ina</i> diaid co hInber mBoindi. Ba hí sin <i>didiu</i> mathair <i>Ængusa meic</i> an Dagda. <i>Vel dano</i> ita Bo ainm in srotha 7 Find aband Sleibi Guairi 7 dia <i>comrac</i> i n-alaile is ainm Boann. Dabilla ainm a hairce. <i>Unde</i> Cnoc Dabilla 7 Sliab in Chodaid hoidide.</p> <p>+ BOAND II + BOAND I</p>	<p>Boind canus ro hainmniged? Ni <i>ansa</i>. Boind ben Nechtain <i>meic</i> Labrada do-dechaid do <i>chomet</i> in topair ro boí fo diamair [.i. lasna deogmaire] a n-urlaind duine tShída Nechtain. <i>Cach æn</i> no <i>theiged chuice</i> ní <i>thiced</i> cen aithis muna tised Nechtain 7 a <i>tri</i> deogmaire .i. Fleasc 7 Lesc 7 Luam a n-anmann. Fecht n-æn luid <i>iarum</i> in rigan la huail 7 <i>dimus dochum</i> in topair 7 is-bert na baí occa do nach diamair <i>no</i> do nach <i>cumachta</i> no <i>choimsed</i> aithis for a deilb 7 do-saig for tuaithbel in topair fo <i>tri</i> do derbad <i>chumachta</i> in topair. Moigit <i>tri</i> tonna assin topur tairsi co remaid co hoponn a deissliasat 7 a deslaim 7 a desshúil. Luid sí <i>iarum</i> asin tshíd for a hathissi 7 for teichid in topair co riacht co muir 7 in t-uisci <i>ina</i> diaid 7 <i>rus báig</i> ac Inber Bóinde 7 ba sí mathair <i>Ængusa meic</i> in Dagda. <i>Vel</i> ita Bó ainm in tshrotha 7 Find abhann tShleibe Guaire 7 dia <i>comrac imalle</i> is ainm Boann. <i>Unde</i> Boann 7 Inber mBoinde <i>unde dicitur</i>. Dauilla ainm a</p>	<p>Boand, canas ro hainmnidhead? Ni <i>ansa</i>. Boann bean Neachtain <i>meic</i> Labrada <i>meic</i> Namad do-deacaidh da coimed an tobair diamardha bai a n-urlaind in dunaidh a niamair lasna deodhbairibh uair. <i>Gach aen</i> no <i>thigeadh chuigi</i>, ni <i>theideadh uadh gan ainibh</i> 7 <i>gan aithis</i> 7 ba he ainm na ndeodhmai .i. Fleasc 7 Leas 7 Luam. Mina bheidis na deogbairi tra risdafis a dochom in tobair, ni tiucfadh neach n-aen uadh gan ainibh.</p> <p>Luid <i>iarum</i> an rigan la huail 7 <i>dimas dochum</i> an tobair 7 adubairt nach raibhi aigi do <i>dimair nadh</i> a <i>cumachta</i> ni no <i>chæmsad</i> aithis fora deilb 7 do-luid for tuaithbeal an tobair fa <i>tri</i> da <i>airiughadh</i> a <i>cumachta</i>. Maighidh <i>tri</i> tonna asan tobor tairsi co roimidh co hoband a deissliasad 7 a deaslaim 7 a deasuil 7 iar sin do theich in inghin for eagla in tobair co roich in muir 7 do rith in tobar ina diaidh co hInber mBoindi. <i>Unde dicitur</i></p> <p>De ata Boand broga Breagh briseas gac fal co findlear uair ba Boond ainm na mna mna Neachtain <i>meic</i> Labhradha.</p>	<p>Boann can ro hanmned? Ni <i>ansa</i> .i. Boann bean Nechtain <i>meic</i> Labrada <i>meic</i> Namhat do-deachaid lasna deogbairib a hurlainde in duine. <i>Cach</i> n-æn no tegeadh <i>chuicce</i> ni teigedh uada cen athais. Badar heat a n-anmanna seo tra batar ic Nechtain .i. Fleasc 7 Lesc 7 Luam. Manbistis iat na deogbaire tra ristais dochum in topair, ni thicfad nech dænna uada cen athais.</p> <p>Luid <i>iarum</i> ind rigan la huail 7 <i>dimmus dochum</i> in topair, 7 as-bert nad boi occa do nach diamair no do nach <i>cumachtu</i> mino <i>coimsedh</i> aithis for a deilb 7 do-saigh for tuaithfiul in topuir fo <i>tri</i> do airiud a <i>cumachtai</i> in topuir. Maidhid <i>tri</i> tonna asin topur tarrsi, co roimmidh coro obann a deisslisset 7 a deslaim a dessuil, is iarmo ro teag assa sidh for teichedh na haitisi 7 for teichegh in topuir <i>iarum</i>, co riacht in muir .i. in muir ina diaid 7 ros-baid ic Inbiur Bonne. <i>Unde</i> Boann 7 Inber mBoinne</p> <p>Dia Boann broga Breag brissis cach fal co findlear,</p>

	<p>hoirce. <i>Unde Cnoc Dauilla Sliab in Chotaig hodie. Unde Boann.</i> De ata Boann broga bręg. brises <i>cach</i> fal co findlear: ba Boann a hainm <i>fria</i> la. mna <i>Nechtain meic</i> Labrada</p> <p>+ BOAND II (incomplete)</p>	<p>+ SINAND prose + SINAND I</p>	<p>ba Boann a hainm <i>fria</i> la mna <i>Nechtain meic</i> Labradha.</p>
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Ls fol. 27ra38–50	S fol. 15ra24–b28
<p>Boand <i>ben</i> Neachtain maic Labrada do-deachaid do coimed <i>in topuir</i> diamuir is arloind la <i>tri</i> deogbairre .i. Flesc 7 Leasc 7 Luan. Cech oen ricet do, ní ticeid uaid cen <i>athis manibetised</i> na deogbairi.</p> <p>Luid <i>iarum ind rigan</i> la uail 7 la <i>dimmus docum</i> an <i>topuir</i> 7 <i>atbert</i> nad boí as nach diamuír no eitad <i>athis for</i> a <i>delbh</i>. Do-luid <i>iarum</i> do arigud a <i>comactai tuadbel in topuir</i>. Ro meatar <i>iarum</i> teora <i>tonna tarsi</i> co <i>remidh</i> a <i>desshliasuid</i> 7 a <i>deslam</i> 7 a <i>llethshuil</i> 7 is <i>iarum</i> ro reith asa sith do <i>imgabail</i> na <i>athisi-sin</i> co <i>rrici</i> ín muir. An <i>n-edh</i> ro reith-si ro reit <i>in topur</i> ‘na diaid co Inber mBonde. Ut ait poeta:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dia ta Bound broga Breg. brises cach fál co fíndler. ar ba Boand ainm fri lá mná Nechtaín meic Labradha ///F///i///n///id//</p> <p>+ AIRNE FÍNGEIN</p>	<p>Boand <i>cidh</i> dfa ta? Ni <i>ansa</i>. Boann ben Neachtain meic Labhradha do-deochaidh do <i>choiméd</i> in tobair <i>díamhair</i> baí i n-urlainn in dúne la <i>trí</i> deoghbairiu [.i. na gille copáin]¹ Neachtain .i. Fleasg 7 Lesg 7 Lúamh a n-anmann. <i>Cach</i> æn <i>ricedh</i> dó, ní <i>thicedh</i> uadh cen aithis <i>mani</i> bí sé ‘na deoghbairre.</p> <p>Luidh <i>íarum</i> ind <i>righan</i> la húaill 7 <i>díummus dochum</i> an topair 7 as-bert na boí ar <i>nách</i> <i>díamhuir</i> ní <i>conn-ísadh</i> aithis <i>for</i> a <i>deilb</i>. Do-lluidh <i>iarumh</i> do <i>airiugud cumhachtai</i> tuaithebell in tobair. Ro <i>meabhatar íarum</i> teóra <i>tonna thairsi</i> co <i>rémidh</i> a <i>ddéslíasait</i> 7 a <i>deaslámh</i> 7 a <i>lethshúil</i>. Ro reith <i>iarum</i> asa <i>síth</i> do <i>imgabháil</i> na <i>haithisi-sin</i> co <i>rice</i> in muir 7 in <i>uisqi</i> 7 an <i>eadh</i> ro reith-si, ro reth in tobar ‘na <i>díaidh-si</i> co hInber mBóinne coro <i>baidhedh</i> and sin hí.</p> <p>Nó Bó Guaire ainm na habann. Tic a Loch Muinnremair 7 Fínn ainm na habann tig timchell Temrach aníartúaidh co <i>comruicet</i> i <i>comur mána</i> 7 <i>abha</i> 7 <i>tréna</i> n-<i>accomal</i> i n-<i>æninadh</i> .i. Bó 7 Fínd. Ratar Bófhinn. Nó Bóann ben Nechtain mic Námhad <i>mathair</i> Aongusa meic in <i>Daghdhai</i> .i. do-luidh-si do <i>thigh</i> hElcmaire in Brogha d’éis a fir .i. Nechtaigh a <i>mMaigh Laigen conus</i> fúair in <i>Dághdha</i> 7 <i>co nderna Óengus fría</i>. Tainic sí íar sin co tech a fir 7 ro-fes <i>fuirri</i> a <i>bét</i>. Luidh-si <i>íarum dochum</i> an topair <i>día sáradh for</i> a <i>cinaidh</i> 7 <i>luidh</i> tuathbel in topair 7 <i>cetera</i>. Ut poeta <i>dixit</i>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">De atá Boand brogha Breg Brises cach fál co fínnler ar Boann a hainm fría lá. mhna Neachtain meic Labhradha.</p> <p>+ BOAND II</p>

¹ Added in a later hand.

	+ BOAND I
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