THE RECEPTION AND USE OF FLANN MAINISTRECH AND HIS WORK IN MEDIEVAL GAELIC MANUSCRIPT CULTURE

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Volume I

Main Text

Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

This is to certify that this thesis has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. I have published a specific case study of a text, covered primarily by Chapters 2 and 3, as ‘Flann Mainistrech's Götterdämmerung as a Junction within Lebor Gabála Érenn’, Quaestio Insularis, 13 (2012), 69–93. Where it becomes relevant, it is cited in the main body of the thesis as a secondary source. A re-print is also included (with the permission of the current editor of Quaestio Insularis) as Appendix 32.

Signed: Eoghein Ó Muineacháin 27/01/2016
Abstract

Flann Mainistrech (active c. 1014 to 1056) is well-attested in medieval and post-medieval Gaelic manuscripts and in early printed works on Irish history as an authority on history and literary tradition. He appears to have been an ecclesiastical scholar, based at Monasterboice (modern Co. Louth, Ireland), but potentially operating within wider ecclesiastical and political networks.

Almost fifty texts or fragments of texts, mostly poems, are at some point attributed to him. Their subject-matter includes the regnal history of early medieval Irish kingdoms, legendary material on Ireland and the Gaels’ more distant past, universal and classical history, hagiography, and genealogical traditions. In addition, various sources are extant that concern Flann Mainistrech as a character. Most imply that he was considered a pre-eminent authority; some go further and provide impressionistic sketches of his scholarship and locating him in certain social or political settings.

The secondary literature on medieval Gaelic authors like Flann has been largely concerned with establishing what can be securely stated about their historical biographies and with delineating reliable corpora of their works. In addition, there has been much discussion around whether medieval Gaelic literature is to be fundamentally characterised as secular or ecclesiastical. Recently, however, studies have begun to focus less on the literal realities of medieval authorship and more on how authorship was conceived in the Middle Ages, how it functioned as a form of authority, and how it might have been used or constructed within texts’ or manuscripts’ overall argumentation.

In response, in this thesis, I survey manuscript materials and early printed works relating to Flann Mainistrech and discuss how his status as an author-figure relates to his identity as an individual, considering how he was interpreted in different contexts, the extent to which later scribes or compilers used or manipulated his identity, and what made him useful or applicable to them. After analysing the textual material in light of these issues, I conclude that Flann was consistently placed in certain definable historiographical and biographical contexts and that his authority may thus have been tied to this specific characterisation. However, presentations of Flann can vary quite dramatically in emphasis, while close examination of material
attributed to him and their contexts within compilations and manuscripts reveals appropriation of his perspective, pseudonymous use of his identity, and re-contextualisation of his purported work according to later compilers’ interests and priorities. Relatively consistent treatment of his persona is thus ostensibly juxtaposed with dynamic, creative reading practices. Yet such conclusions are overshadowed by evidence, also considered in this study, suggesting that what survives of the manuscript tradition may well fall short of being representative both of Flann’s actual biography and of his textual persona.

As well as offering a case study into medieval Gaelic concepts of authorship, authority, and textuality, this thesis also necessarily presents more basic analyses of previously under-explored and, in a few cases, unedited texts that come to be of relevance. Several such texts are printed and translated in Appendices.
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# List of Abbreviations

Where abbreviations indicate a published work or both a text or manuscript and a certain edition of that text or manuscript, the editor and title (if different) is listed here; for full references, see the Bibliography. Note that, in some cases, the same abbreviation stands for both a manuscript and a diplomatic edition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AClon</td>
<td><em>The Annals of Clonmacnoise</em> (Murphy (ed.)).</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFM</td>
<td><em>The Annals of the Four Masters</em> (O'Donovan (ed. and trans.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td><em>The Annals of Inisfallen</em> (Mac Airt (ed. and trans.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALC</td>
<td><em>The Annals of Loch Cé</em> (Hennessy (ed. and trans.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td><em>Anno Mundi</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AnÍ</td>
<td><em>Aided Nath Íocus a adnacol</em> (‘Nath Í’s death and burial’; 1:2.2.3; 4:2.1.5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASNaC</td>
<td>Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic Studies, University of Cambridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td><em>The Annals of Tigernach</em> (Mac Niocaill (ed. and trans.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td><em>The Annals of Ulster</em> (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill (ed. and trans.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BiL Cat.</td>
<td><em>Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum</em> (O’Grady et al.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOCD</td>
<td><em>Book of the O’Conor Don</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELT</td>
<td>Corpus of Electronic Texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGH</td>
<td><em>Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae</em> (O’Brien (ed.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGSH</td>
<td><em>Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae</em> (Ó Riaín (ed.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMCS</td>
<td>Cambridge/Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies (same journal).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td><em>Chronicon Scottorum</em> (Mac Niocaill (ed. and trans.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUL</td>
<td>Cambridge University Library.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUP</td>
<td>Cambridge University Press.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIAS</td>
<td>Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eDIL</td>
<td><em>Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUP</td>
<td>Edinburgh University Press.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fen.</td>
<td><em>The Book of Fenagh</em> (RIA, MS 23.P.26; Hennessy and Kelly (ed. and trans.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRSH</td>
<td><em>Genealogiae Regum et Sanctorum Hiberniae</em> (Walsh (ed.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHK</td>
<td><em>Die irische Helden- und Königsage</em> (Thurneysen).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISOS</td>
<td>Irish Script on Screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITS</td>
<td>Irish Texts Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Journal of Celtic Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LB</td>
<td><em>Lebor Bretnach</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGÉ</td>
<td><em>Lebor Gabála Érenn</em> (Macalister (ed. and trans.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lis.</td>
<td><em>The Book of Lismore</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LL</td>
<td><em>The Book of Leinster</em> (TCD 1339; Best et al. (dipl. ed.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMG</td>
<td><em>Leabhar Móir na nGenealach</em> (Ó Muraile (ed. and trans.)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR</td>
<td>Literature Review.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1 Cross-references are given by Chapter, then by section. Thus, this example refers to Chapter 2, section 2.2.3.
LU: Lebor na hUidre (RIA 23.E.25; Best and Bergin (dipl. ed.)).
MD: The Metrical Dindshenchas (Gwynn (ed. and trans.)).
MR: Methodology Review.
NLI: National Library of Ireland.
NLI Cat.: Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland (Ní Shéaghdha and Ó Macháin).
NLS: National Library of Scotland.
NUIG: National University of Ireland, Galway.
O’Conor I: Charles O’Conor of Belanagare (1710–91).
O’Conor II: Rev. Charles O’Conor (1764–1828).
ODNB: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Goldman (ed.)).
OUP: Oxford University Press.
PRIA C: Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Section C.
q.: quatrain.
QUB: Queens University Belfast.
RIA: Royal Irish Academy.
RIA Cat.: Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy (O’Rahilly et al.).
SAM: Sex Aetates Mundi (Ó Cróinín (ed. and trans.)).
SG: Silva Gadetica (O’Grady (ed. and trans.)).
Tara Diptych: ‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tnú’ and ‘Ríg Themra toebaige iar ttain’.
TCD: Trinity College Dublin.
TCD Cat.: Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College Dublin (Abbott and Gwynn).
TD: the Tinnakill Diánaire (TCD 1340).
UCD: University College Dublin.
UM: the Book of Uí Maine (RIA D.ii.1).
YBL: the Yellow Book of Lecan (TCD 1318).
ZCP: Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie.
Acknowledgements

This thesis discusses medieval presentations of scholarly collaborations, relationships, and dialogic interactions with laureated predecessors. I, too, am in the position to acknowledge multiple sources of support, encouragement, and intellectual stimulation that have contributed to its production.

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College Dublin, and Edinburgh University Library for permitting me to include images of their holdings.

Informally, I have benefitted hugely from discussions with other scholars. Dr Nicholas Evans has been extremely generous with his magisterial thoughts and suggestions after reading my discussion of the medieval Irish chronicles (Chapter 1) in draft. My understanding, hopefully sound, of Lebor Gabála Érenn’s notoriously complex textual tradition can be traced back to David Alexander’s kind and lucid explanations. Dr Joseph Flahive has shared his erudition with me regarding the post-medieval manuscript tradition (Chapter 5). Dr Sharon Arbuthnot has provided useful insights and helpful guidance on diverse matters, including textual criticism (Chapter 2) and glossaries (Chapter 5). Prof. John Carey and Dr Peter Smith have pointed me in various counter-intuitive but ultimately very fruitful directions. Dr Christopher Yocum and Dr Elliot Lash have both advised munificently on certain issues with translation and interpretation and have both been sources of good humoured wisdom on academic life. Dr Yocum has also read several sections of this thesis and offered rigorous and incisive comments. Helen Smith has provided thoughtful input on style and argumentation in other sections. Discussions with Oisín Plumb have been a source of encouragement and insight into things both knowable and unfathomable. Dr Andrew Simpson has been generous, both with robust support and with stimulating perspectives on my research from his own field of legal history.

The students and researchers both within Celtic and Scottish Studies and in the School of Literatures, Languages, and Cultures and in the School of History, Classics, and Archaeology have constituted a lively, friendly, and intellectually invigorating community within which to work and study, such that I am sadly unable to document each useful relationship and friendship individually here. Worth noting also is the university’s network of societies, seminar series, workshops, and social events, often devised and run by student volunteers, although with valuable support from staff, which has greatly facilitated collegiality and the sharing of ideas. In this vein, useful research resources are now available online in some abundance, often also thanks to volunteers around the world, in this instance. Such resources have played a considerable role in my work: while specific uses are referenced in the
appropriate manner, I would like to acknowledge generally this often unpaid and obscure work put in for collective, communal benefit.

The Ph.D process is, however, still quite solitary and friends both within and beyond the academic world have been extremely encouraging, patient, and empathetic with me in this regard. For this, I am humbled and grateful. My girlfriend, Edith, has provided constant love, inspiration, sagely advice, and some much-needed alleviation from taking myself too seriously. My parents, Ann and Peter, and my brother, Alasdair, have been deeply supportive during my studies and throughout my life. They helped form my intellectual ambitions through sharing discussions, literature, and ideas and have always been there for us in their pursuit. For this reason and for many others, I dedicate this thesis to them.
Preface

This thesis considers concepts of authorship within medieval and post-medieval Gaelic historiography via a study of the reception and treatment, throughout the manuscript tradition, of the author Flann Mainistrech (ob. 1056). This approach’s foundations and implications are discussed in full in the Methodology Review but a few points are worth clarifying at the outset.

I use the term ‘author’ very broadly to denote an individual to whom a text is attributed. When greater specificity is required, terms like historian, poet, or compiler are used. This thesis’ purpose is to explore some of the medieval Gaelic models and categories that might be denoted by ‘author’ and ‘authorship’, so I deliberately abstain from providing definitions for them. I use the term ‘author-figure’ to refer to the character implied and constructed, intentionally or not, by the texts attributed to them and by the attributions’ forms and contexts, as distinct from the text’s actual composer.

As is often the case with ancient and medieval authors, modern scholars often treat attributions to Flann with scepticism. This should be kept in mind. However, this thesis is largely unconcerned with what the historical Flann actually composed but rather with his later reception and afterlife. To avoid repeating cumbersome circumlocutions, I use phrases like ‘Flann’s texts’ to refer to work attributed to Flann even where confirmation of his authorship is lacking. Similarly, when I discuss ‘Flann’, I do not mean the historical eleventh-century individual but the character as he appears in our sources. To indicate the real-life individual, some phrase like ‘the historical Flann’ shall be used (as it is above).

Finally, as a case study, this thesis uses focused analysis of material relating to Flann Mainistrech ultimately to propose more broadly applicable ideas and questions about medieval authorship and textuality. Under constraints of time and word count, I have not included much detailed comparison with other medieval Gaelic authors. Thus, while I demonstrate that analysing the dossier on a single named author-figure can yield insights, this is a case study and further work on other

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2 For this term’s complexities, see Andrew Bennett, The Author (London: Routledge, 2005).
authors and on related material is needed before any points made here can be truly generalised.
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‘While the materials of tradition are indeed static and given, our attitude to tradition is also liable to historical change, and [...] sometimes such a change in attitude may be revolutionary’.3

1 Introduction: Flann, authorship, and attributions

This literature review follows scholarship specifically relating to Flann Mainistrech from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, considered in the context of conceptions of named authors from medieval sources and how they relate to the study of medieval literature. I argue that this survey reveals two major desiderata for medieval Gaelic studies.

The first is more research focused on individual medieval authors’ characteristics and their later reception, although such studies have begun to appear (LR:3.3.1). Since the nineteenth century, scholarship has moved from focusing primarily on authors (LR:2), to text-centred and generic analysis (LR:3.2), back to authors in the context of dating texts and debating their social and cultural affiliations (LR:3.3), to the rhetorical uses and impacts of authorship (LR:4). Given this complex history, modern scholarship on a specific, named medieval author like Flann is inevitably disconnected.

The second is sustained theoretical discourse on authorial models and conceptions evidenced in medieval Gaelic learned culture. Much relevant secondary scholarship is either oriented around an idea of original, absolute authors determining texts’ form and meaning or is ultimately concerned with assessing texts’ date and provenance. Yet most medieval Gaelic authors’ work and the generally sparse information about them are mediated to us by later scribes, compilers, and scholars, as well as by the medieval authors’ own rhetorical self-constructions. Exploring authors and compilers’ categories and uses of authorship unlocks an alternative phenomenological dimension of social meaning for their texts (LR:4). It also aids investigation of actual, historical authors through elucidating the models and rhetorical purposes at work in the evidence.

This thesis responds to both desiderata by diachronically surveying and analysing material related to Flann across the Gaelic manuscript tradition and in printed scholarship. As well as supplying the most extensive dossier of evidence relating to Flann published to date, it identifies points of continuity and points of innovation in presentations of him and his work. This allows us to assess the social meaning of Flann as a figure and the authorial templates and narratives used to interpret him.

While Flann appears regularly in secondary literature, there is no single self-identifying, developmental scholarly discussion on him or on medieval authorship for this literature review to follow. Insights into relevant attitudes and approaches within scholarship are thus sought more opportunistically and analytically than is perhaps normal in such a context. Furthermore, this thesis is about historiography’s reception within historiography, so the boundary between primary and secondary literature – that is, between layers of historiography – is ultimately arbitrary. We begin at the inception of the formal, university-based study of medieval Irish history and literature in the mid-nineteenth century. Post-medieval scholarship is covered in Chapters 5 (manuscripts) and 6 (early printed works) of the thesis proper.

2 ‘Evidence of very considerable cultivation’: Flann in nineteenth-century scholarship on medieval Ireland

2.1 Overview and historical context

After the end of formal classical Gaelic culture in the seventeenth century, the literature and other remains of medieval Ireland had, for two centuries, been sporadically preserved, investigated, and debated by scholarly societies and individuals. By the mid-nineteenth century, such projects were receiving increasing support, with the foundation of academic institutions for the study of Irish language and antiquities. Medieval manuscript sources, which had long lain scattered and

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obscure, were becoming more amenable to study through the growth of stable archives, such as those at Trinity College Dublin and the newly-established Royal Irish Academy. Major texts made available in early editions included the medieval Irish chronicles and literary works, like Geoffrey Keating’s *Forus Feasa air Éirinn*.6

In the scholarship of this period, it is common to find the apparent prestige of medieval or pre-medieval authors of texts fronted in discussions of texts. This may be partly due to Romantic conceptions of the author as solitary genius.7 However, it is also apparent that many authors were considered significant and illuminating as characters in their own right, constituting evidence for Ireland’s glorious past, and not simply metadata around the texts they purportedly composed. Promoting the qualitative merits of Ireland’s ancient civilisation, as it was being reconstructed, was important for the nascent discipline of medieval Irish studies, which had long been intertwined with developing Irish national identity and political movements that had support and impact far beyond academic and intellectual spheres.8

Flann Mainistrech features prominently both as an icon of Ireland’s lost civilisation and as a figure who made tangible and important contributions to the development of Irish historiography. Before examining these presentations, we consider the corpus of texts attributed to him by nineteenth-century scholars, which constituted the bulk of their evidence for his identity and significance.

### 2.2 Corpus

Two pioneers in the burgeoning study of the Gaelic manuscript corpus produced bio-bibliographical catalogues of Irish authors and the works attributed to them: Edward O’Reilly (c. 1770–1829), in the first and only volume of the *Transactions of the Iberno-Celtic Society*,9 and Eugene O’Curry (1794–1862), in his posthumously

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published *Lectures on the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*.\(^{10}\) Their entries on Flann constitute useful evidence for what he was understood to have composed during this period.\(^{11}\) Indeed, after O’Curry, although Norman Moore quickly recognised the insufficiencies of his catalogue of Flann’s works,\(^{12}\) attempts at full assessments of Flann’s corpus would not be resumed until the early 2000s (LR:3.3.1\(^{13}\)).

Their catalogues differ in their ostensive purposes. O’Reilly aimed to provide an introductory framework for Gaelic literary history that would encourage the publication of primary texts and facilitate their study. O’Curry presented his catalogue as evidence of the antiquity and achievements of Gaelic education in Ireland, perhaps reflecting developments in his own time on the cusp of the Gaelic Revival. Both authors emphasise the positive implications of a continuous history of learning for Ireland’s status as a nation.\(^{14}\)

The poems listed as Flann’s work in each catalogue are summarised in Appendix 1. O’Curry’s eleven additional poems are almost all attributed to Flann solely in the twelfth-century *Book of Leinster* (*LL*; 2:2.2). For ‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’, he refers to a supposed extract from this poem attributed to Flann in a manuscript of the *Annals of the Four Masters* (*AFM*; 5:2.1.2).\(^{15}\) Both catalogues present Flann’s output as quite diverse. They include regnal histories and origin legends relating to medieval Irish kingdoms, poems on the more distant legendary past, world history, satire, and hagiography.\(^{16}\)

Whether O’Reilly or O’Curry differentiated what we would term legendary material from more verifiable medieval history in Flann’s corpus is not clear, however. Their catalogues make no such distinction overall: O’Reilly’s begins with Amairgen (fl. AM 2935; a participant in the Goidelic invasion),\(^{17}\) O’Curry’s with the

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\(^{13}\) Cross-references are by Chapter number or section title, followed by section number.


\(^{16}\) The poems are discussed in detail by O’Curry and O’Reilly (and others) and in the main body of this thesis.

\(^{17}\) O’Reilly’s date: ‘Chronological Account’, p. xiii.
Túatha Dé Danann (c. AM 3304). Yet O’Curry characterises Flann’s metrical corpus as ‘a vast quantity of valuable contributions to the illustration of our history’. 

For O’Curry, Flann’s major contribution was not a poem but a prose work, the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ (6:3). This he discussed in more detail in his Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History. In the ‘Synchronisms’, Flann had supposedly synchronised the kings of Ireland, the world-kings (in the tradition of the Eusebius-Jerome Chronicon21), the kings of the Irish cóićid (‘provinces’), and the kings of Alba. However, the medieval manuscript evidence provides little support for the existence of one text under Flann’s name that meets this description. O’Curry is actually referring to a number of medieval tracts, often codicologically and chronologically distinct from one another. None are ever attributed to Flann by a medieval scribe, as O’Curry himself admitted. O’Reilly did not include the ‘Synchronisms’ in his own catalogue of Flann’s works, noting only an eighteenth-century superscription in the late fourteenth-century Book of Ballymote (BB) connecting Flann with one of the medieval tracts also cited by O’Curry.23

O’Curry was by no means the first to cite the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ (Appendix 29). This title was first attested in Roderick O’Flaherty’s (1629–c. 1718) Ogygia (1685) and regularly re-appeared thereafter in printed scholarship referring to various combinations of medieval tracts. It is cited most often to supply or corroborate the chronology of medieval Gaelic historical texts. One of the tracts, which I refer to as the Provincial Synchronisms (6:3.1.4),25 was an important source for the origins and antiquity (or, rather, the relative lack thereof) of the kingdom of

18 O’Curry’s date: Manners, II, 50.
19 O’Curry, Manners, II, 149.
20 O’Curry, Manuscript, pp. 53–57.
21 For which, see Rosamond McKitterick, Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 7–34.
22 O’Curry, Manuscript, p. 522.
24 Roderick O’Flaherty, Ogygia, seu Rerum Hibernicarum Chronologia (London: Everingham, 1685); Ogygia, or A Chronological Account of Irish Events, trans. by John Hely, 2 vols (Dublin: McKenzie, 1793).
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Alba and, thus, Scotland. The origins and usage of the whole concept of the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ as pseudo-text are traced in Chapter 6 (6:3.2). For the purposes of this literature review, meanwhile, we will simply accept that they existed subjectively for some scholars and were an important source for their interpretations of Irish historical chronology.

One other major prose compilation is attributed to Flann during this period. He was identified by Heinrich Zimmer as the compiler of a collection of sagas that constituted the direct source for the late eleventh- to twelfth-century Lebor na hUidre (LU), the earliest extant medieval Gaelic literary manuscript. Zimmer’s identification was based on Flann’s appearance in a colophon in that manuscript (2:2.2.3) and his apparent access to texts that also appear in LU, as well as on what he perceives to be Flann’s character as a scholar. References in his poems and in the ‘Synchronisms’ imply not only that he was familiar with numerous sagas but that he strove to reconcile variant narratives and recensions. LU’s texts and marginalia, likewise, often comprise disparate extracts and digressions into alternative versions, leading Zimmer to identify Flann as the individual most likely to have produced such material.

Although occasionally revisited, this interpretation did not gain widespread acceptance. Rudolf Thurneysen has specifically critiqued it, arguing that compilation from multiple sources was a feature of all medieval scholarship rather than...
than something defining an individual.\textsuperscript{32} In light of the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’, however, it is interesting that Zimmer again felt inclined to make Flann responsible for a major compilation without unambiguous medieval evidence. Here, Flann’s imagined expertise is literary, rather than chronological, but the impulse to see him as the controlling intelligence behind a large body of material is similar.

Greater scepticism was applied elsewhere, however. As is evident from Appendix 1, some doubt existed around Flann’s authorship of a set of poems on northern Uí Néill politics (hereafter, the ‘Donegal Series’; Appendix 31).\textsuperscript{33} O’Reilly simply noted that some poems are attributed to other authors in some manuscripts but O’Curry fully supports several such alternative attributions when perceived divergence in style or historical anachronism makes Flann’s authorship untenable. In fact, Flann’s involvement is even more uncertain than they imply, with no clear medieval attributions to him of any of these poems other than ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’. Even the latter was not undisputed. Again, these issues are examined in more detail in Chapter 6 (6:4).

Pseudepigraphy was a well-known concept during this period.\textsuperscript{34} Indeed, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could be described as the heyday of debates and controversies over authorship, in which students of the Gaelic past shared, courtesy of James Macpherson (1736–96).\textsuperscript{35} Yet O’Curry and O’Reilly are rarely openly critical of the attributions to Flann they encounter, only considering rejecting them if alternative attributions are also extant. O’Curry, in particular, appears to be at least dimly aware of the problematic nature of the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ but does not pursue the matter. Both are much quicker to emphasise that other works by Flann no doubt exist, waiting to be discovered, than they are to scrutinise what they have.\textsuperscript{36} In general, during this period, it is difficult to tell how sceptical scholars were of manuscript attributions, as they tend to accept attributions without explanation and leave those they have rejected unmentioned.

\textsuperscript{32} Rudolf Thurneysen, \textit{Die irische Helden- und Königsage} (Halle: Niemeyer, 1921) [hereafter, \textit{IHK}], pp. 24‒32 (26–27). I am very grateful to Ms Maureen Cohen for her assistance with reading this material.

\textsuperscript{33} See also Eleanor Hull, \textit{A Textbook of Irish Literature}, 2 vols (Dublin: Gill, 1906), I, 215.


\textsuperscript{36} O’Reilly, ‘Chronological Account’, p. lxxv; O’Curry, \textit{Manners}, II, 167.
During this period, the vast majority of the texts attributed to Flann were yet to appear in print and few of the relevant manuscript archives had been catalogued in detail. O’Flaherty included in *Ogygia* a heavily amended version of the *Provincial Synchronisms* (at this point, not regarded as Flann’s work). Occasional extracts from Flann’s texts were printed by O’Curry. Otherwise, *LU* and *LL*, both containing texts attributed to Flann, only became available in facsimile in 1870 and 1880 respectively. *Adam primus pater (6:3.1.1)*, the most cited component of the ‘Synchronisms’, was published from one manuscript in 1892. Most of the Donegal Series, again from only one manuscript, was published in 1875. In this context, concepts like the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ gained currency and rigorous assessment of the basis on which texts were in Flann’s corpus was impractical.

### 2.3 Historiographical saviour and intellectual icon

Alongside texts, some nineteenth-century writers attributed specific intellectual contributions to Flann. In printed scholarship from Fr. John Lynch (*ob. c. 1677*) onwards, he was cited, on a point-by-point basis, predominantly as a chronologist, his purported work corroborating the medieval Gaelic past’s structural integrity (*6:3.2.1*). Rev. Charles O’Conor (1764–1828; hereafter O’Conor II) was the first to set out what he saw as Flann’s overall historiographical contribution. O’Conor II hailed him as the scholar who made common-era dating possible through synchronising kings of Ireland, who lacked absolute dating, with the great empires of Eusebian universal history, whose absolute chronology was supposedly well-established.

Meminisse oportebat, Hibernorum veterum chronologiam, neque aerae Mundaneae accomodatum fuisse, neque aerae communi, usque ad saeculum X,
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quo Flannus Synchronismos Regum Hibernorum cum Imperatorum annis collatos composituit.43

He goes on to downplay the significance of the otherwise much-vaulted *Annals of Tigernach (AT)* – thought, in this period, to have been compiled by Tigernach Úa Braein (ob. 1088)44 – since Flann had laid much of their chronological groundwork a generation earlier. O’Curry later concurred with this assessment.45

The fact that someone had gone to the trouble of chronologically correlating the traditional Irish *réim rígraide* (‘king-list’) with Latin universal history obviously does not make the former’s earlier swathes any less fictional. Nonetheless, O’Conor II put this interpretation of Flann’s work into practice, regularly drawing on the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ to resolve chronological difficulties and provide common-era dating in his editions of the medieval Irish chronicles.46 Elsewhere, he criticises the Four Masters for not employing Flann’s chronology in their own common-era apparatus.47 In his edition of *AFM*, John O’Donovan (1806–61) made good this omission by regularly citing the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ to corroborate or correct dates in *AFM*’s main text.48 Curiously, he also listed the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ as one of *AFM*’s sources, despite its absence from the Four Masters’ own source list.49

While Flann’s poems are occasionally cited for similar purposes (6:2), they were eclipsed, up to the end of the nineteenth century, by the perceived rationalism and comprehensive scope of the ‘Synchronisms’. This pseudo-text was of particular interest because it did not merely re-state Gaelic tradition but enmeshed that tradition within world history as it appeared in texts common to medieval European

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43 *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*, ed. by Charles O’Conor [II], 4 vols (Buckingham: Seeley, 1814–26), II, 67: ‘It ought to be remembered that the chronology of the old Irish employed neither anno mundi nor common-era dating, until the tenth century [sic], in which Flann composed his collated Synchronisms of the Kings of the Irish with the years of the Emperors’ (my translation).
46 For example, *Rerum Hibernicarum*, ed. by O’Conor [II], II, p. 9 (n. 33) (MacCarthy (ed. and trans.), *Codex*, §o (pp. 302–03)); *Rerum Hibernicarum*, II, p. 31 (n. 19) (MacCarthy, §t (pp. 308–09)); *Rerum Hibernicarum*, III, pp. 136–37 (n. 3) (Thurneysen (ed.), ‘Synchronismen’, III:C (p. 86)); *Rerum Hibernicarum*, III, p. 41 (n. 1–2) (MacCarthy, §§l, m (pp. 298–99)); *Rerum Hibernicarum*, III, p. 52 (n. 1) (MacCarthy, §n (pp. 300–01)).
47 C. O’Conor [II], *Bibliotheca MS. Stowensis: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts of the Stowe Library*, 2 vols (Buckingham: Seeley, 1816), I, 139.
48 For example, *Annales Ríoghachta Eireann: Annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, ed. and trans. by John O’Donovan, 7 vols (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1848–1851) [hereafter *AFM*], I, p. 80 (n. o) (MacCarthy (ed. and trans.) *Codex*, §n (pp. 300–01)); *AFM*, I, p. 84 (n. a) (MacCarthy, §o, (pp. 300–03)); *AFM*, I, p. 105 (n. s) (MacCarthy, §t, (pp. 308–09)).
49 *AFM*, I, xlii.
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historiography. By implication, although this is never stated in so many words, its author-figure emerges as someone with an all-comprehending, overarching perspective on Gaelic historiography. However, it is also worth remembering that O’Reilly and O’Curry followed in the tradition of some seventeenth-century scholars, who presented Gaelic learning as a continuous and ancient tradition (5:3.2). This presumably limited Flann’s perceived virtuosity, despite the commentary around the ‘Synchronisms’.

In discussing Flann’s metrical corpus, meanwhile, O’Curry is, of course, positive, but he does not seem to have felt that his poems made a decisive contribution as sources. In relation to three poems from what would later be known as the ‘Cenél n’Éogain Suite’ (2:2.2.1), he stated that ‘it would be difficult to overestimate the historical value of these three poems’, but only because they ‘supply life and reality of details to the blank dryness of our skeleton pedigrees’ and illuminate ‘many an obscure historical allusion [...] and many an historical spot as yet unknown’. He appreciated their details and curiosities but they did not, for him, revolutionise historical understanding in the same way as the ‘Synchronisms’. He also pointed out the lack of originality of two further poems but puts this down to Flann’s primary role as a monastic teacher.

O’Curry, in fact, was often less interested in specific contributions and innovations attributable to Flann than he was in the mere existence in medieval Ireland of great historians composing in Gaelic. The purpose of the extended catalogue of Flann’s (and predecessors’) work in Manners and Customs was to prove ‘not only the existence of an early and general education in Erinn, but the continued exercise also of the practice of it in the Gaedhelic tongue, without interruption, to a comparatively recent period’. Likewise, when discussing the ‘Synchronisms’ in Manuscript Materials, he used the fact they concern not just Irish but world history to emphasise the quality of learning in eleventh-century Ireland. They were used to make the same point by Thomas Moore (1779–1852).

50 O’Curry, Manners, II, 156–57.
51 O’Curry, Manners, II, 154–55.
52 O’Curry, Manners, II, 169.
53 O’Curry, Manuscript Materials, p. 56.
Other Middle Gaelic historians, such as Gilla Cóemain (fl. 1072) or Tigernach Úa Bráein (ob. 1088), were also used to illustrate medieval Ireland’s refined civilisation. Yet Flann was especially important to O’Curry because he was, as far as O’Curry could tell, a layman employed as a teacher at Monasterboice’s monastic school. Education in medieval Ireland was thus not sourced solely from the Church but instead permeated society. Furthermore, that Flann produced much of his extant work as a teacher, for O’Curry, enhanced its reliability and utility. It represents mainstream eleventh-century Irish learning, as doubtful or controversial material would have been pedagogically unsuitable. As we have seen, it also exonerated Flann from occasional platitudes. O’Curry was, in fact, the first modern scholar to treat Flann not simply as a great authority but as situated in a social context in light of which his work can be read.

2.4 The nineteenth-century: conclusions

In the historiographical record, as it stood in the final decades of the nineteenth century, Flann was the Gaelic historiographical tradition’s saviour and icon. He had made a coherent and objective history of Ireland possible and his purported achievements in turn exemplified his own eleventh-century civilisation’s refinement.

The type of scholarship discussed here soon came to be rivalled by more philological approaches. One aspect of the latter was less emphasis on ‘great authors’: that a certain author composed a text became less important than that text’s date, genre, and intertextual relationships. The ‘Synchronisms’, and thus Flann’s role as master-chronologist, dropped out of prominence without ever having been directly scrutinised, to re-emerge sporadically thereafter. Serious scholarship last associated

56 This is based on Flann having attested offspring (1:4). In reality, marriage among clergy and other ecclesiastical personnel was widely accepted in eleventh-century Ireland (Marie T. Flanagan, *The Transformation of the Irish Church in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), pp. 118–68).
57 O’Curry, *Manuscript Materials*, p. 75
the ‘Synchronisms’ with him in 2014.\textsuperscript{60} Otherwise, the influence thereafter of this imposing manifestation of Flann remains ambiguous.

3 The strange death of Flann the genius and the subsequent age of doubt: twentieth-century impersonal scholarship

3.1 Introduction: major themes

With its focus shifted to texts, genres, and traditions, twentieth-century scholarship lacked a developed critical framework for discussing medieval Gaelic authorship, whether within the discourse of the medieval sources or in its historical reality. Impersonal philological or literary historical approaches led to studies that powerfully critiqued the notion of Flann as an authoritative and originative historian. However, these were rarely drawn together in an explicit assessment of his meaning as an author-figure. As a result, diverse and arguably contradictory conceptions of him emerge.

Later, the author would return as a significant criterion of study in two main respects. First, any attribution to a known historical individual naturally came to be implicated in assessing a text’s date and provenance. As a result, the veracity of attributions to Flann and others came under direct scrutiny. With much more of his and others’ purported work appearing in print, a renewed impetus emerged to continue the work of O’Reilly and O’Curry and securely establish authors’ corpora.

Scholarship mid-century was also characterised, notoriously, by intense interest and debate concerning the origins and cultural affiliation of medieval Gaelic literature and, by extension, the social context in which it was produced. The two positions involved are often termed ‘nativism’ and ‘anti-nativism’.\textsuperscript{61} The former conceived of the literature as the preservation of ancient Celtic or Indo-European ideas by an initially oral, traditional, secular learned class (the \textit{filid} (‘poets’)) with their own institutional claims to antiquity; the medieval church’s useful contribution was largely limited to the technology of writing. In the anti-nativist critique,


\textsuperscript{61} For a useful, recent summary, see Elva Johnston, \textit{Literacy and Identity in Early Medieval Ireland} (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013), pp. 16–23.
meanwhile, the literature was produced by a medieval, Christian, often fully ecclesiastical, literate learned class. They operated largely on the basis of contemporary political or cultural concerns, although perhaps occasionally making use of ancient narratives and motifs.

The literature’s ultimate origins are not relevant to this study. However, the controversy equally concerned the organisation of medieval Gaelic learning and textual production. This aspect generated renewed and useful historical interest in known authors’ identities. In this context, Flann returned to prominence; he sometimes personifies distinctively ‘monastic’ learning and sometimes a synthesis between cultural forces. Contradictions in his characterisation became positively meaningful.

Throughout much of this scholarship, authorship, where it is relevant at all, is consistently discussed as an actual, historical phenomenon. It was not necessarily considered radically creative: twentieth-century scholars were generally comfortable with the idea of medieval Gaelic texts having been produced within a tradition, synthesised from pre-existing sources, and then corrupted, adapted, or synthesised anew. However, individual authors themselves were invariably considered in relation to attributional issues or to their biographies, cultural affiliations, and social identities. With these questions resolved, the understood author-figures were in a position to impute provenance, context and meaning to the extant literature for the modern reader. Left undiscussed are the rhetorical use of authorship and author-figures within medieval Gaelic literary discourse and the subjective experience of authorship by medieval Gaelic readers. This dimension has begun to be addressed in more recent scholarship (LR:4).

### 3.2 Shattering questions: text-centred scholarship

Where once named authors had given structure and legitimacy to medieval Gaelic literature, texts themselves came to be the major source of evidence both for their own context and provenance and in broader historical or cultural studies. Critical self-awareness is not a feature of scholarship in the early twentieth century, but it was occasionally remarked that prior scholars’ focus on authors had inhibited the study of texts. While Tigernach úa Braein, abbot of Clonmacnoise, had been
regarded since the seventeenth century as AT’s eponymous author,62 Eoin MacNeill argued against crediting him with full authorial responsibility, attributing this erroneous view to Sir James Ware (1594–1666).

With the naming of Tigernach by Ware, what we may call the legend of Tigernach sets out on its course; and successive writers find satisfaction in building up a personality and a reputation, where six preceding centuries show nothing but a name.63

Also while considering medieval Gaelic chronicles, Robert A. S. Macalister alluded to a new approach less concerned with authorship.

I had grown up with O’Curry’s ideas of great scholars, Tigernach, MacFirbis, Cathal MacManus, the Four Masters and so on, who drew up these arid lists of names and dates. But now that I was actually face to face with them, and their suppositious work, I could not help asking myself the question: why did they adopt this form? Surely a connected history, on the lines of ‘Lebor Gabála’ or, for the matter of that, of the Old Testament, would have been more interesting and much easier to write! And then suddenly there came out of the void the shattering question: how did they do so?64

He went on to argue that the extant chronicles could not have had single authors: they are compilations, the individuals under whose names they circulate being editors and compilers within a textual tradition rather than investigative historians. This approach was, of course, not original to the twentieth century, even where Flann was concerned: O’Curry had commented on Flann’s sources for the ‘Synchronisms’ and saw little originality in the Cenél nÉogain Suite.65 However, its application thereafter seems to have had greater impact on perceptions of Flann’s authorial role.

3.2.1 Flann as ‘synthetic historian’
Several scholars came to ask Macalister’s ‘shattering question’ concerning texts attributed to Flann. MacNeill described Flann as a ‘synthetic historian’, a category he himself devised. That is, Flann was not a direct tradition-bearer but a correlator and

62 McCarthy, Irish Annals, pp. 72–83.
65 O’Curry, Manuscript Materials, pp. 56, 521; O’Curry, Manners, II, 156–57; LR:2.3.
harmoniser of traditional materials and pre-existing texts. He applies this model when interpreting a number of examples of Flann’s purported work. For instance, O’Conor II, O’Curry, and others had cited the various components of the ‘Synchronisms’ interchangeably under Flann’s name. MacNeill, likewise, saw Flann as devising and composing *Adam primus pater*. However, on the basis of close textual study (now considered erroneous), he concluded that Flann had merely translated the *Invasion Synchronisms* (6:3.1.3) from an eighth-century Hiberno-Latin original.

MacNeill also examined (and edited) a series of poems, dominated by the Cenél nÉogain Suite, on various Uí Neill kingdoms attributed to Flann in *LL* (hereafter, the ‘Uí Néill Series’; 2:2.2.1). While accepting the attribution, MacNeill focused on the poems’ sources. For history before c. 950, he argued, Flann depended on a limited array of texts.

Flann does not seem to have gone much in search of material to sources other than the annals and regnal lists. These provided just the sort of record that he desired. His work was mainly to abstract from them, and to supply the ‘thread of poetry’.

Flann emerges from MacNeill’s analysis as a discerning reader and versifier of pre-existing sources that are often still extant for us.

Likewise, for Douglas Hyde, the ‘Synchronisms’ were a genuine scholarly achievement but Flann’s poems are, ‘though composed in elaborate metres, anything but creative and imaginative’. Like O’Curry, he envisaged Flann, as a teacher, composing them to ‘enshrine [...] knowledge’, derived from sources like the annals.

Much more recently, Daniel McCarthy has traced Flann’s Tara Diptych’s (2:2.2.1) core king-list back to a list from the now-lost tenth-century *Saltair Caisil* (‘Psalter of

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Flann’s use of a pre-existing text, with unnoticed inconsistencies, led McCarthy to question explicitly his status as master historian and chronologist; such broader questions are asked much more rarely in early scholarship, however.

MacNeill’s examination of the Invasion Synchronisms led to him distancing them from Flann. The Provincial Synchronisms provide a further example of the subsequent treatment of such material. On account of their Alban king-list, the Provincial Synchronisms had long been recognised as an important Scottish historical source (6:3.2.1). William Skene had extracted and printed the king-list under the title ‘the Synchronisms of Flann Mainistrech’ in 1867 and dated it to the early eleventh century. The final section, which reaches 1119, he regarded as a ‘continuation’. He was followed in this by Alan Anderson in 1922.

Anderson’s colleague (and wife), Marjorie Anderson, came to treat the tract rather differently. For much of her career, she regarded it as being by Flann. However, by 1973, she was, for some reason, much more cautious.

The Dál Riatan lists are all descended from one which must have been extant in Ireland in the eleventh century. It was a source of the Middle Irish work known as the Irish synchronisms, sometimes called by the name of Fland Mainistrech. Nonetheless, she continued to date the text to the eleventh century and regarded the shorter version as the original. This residual link with Flann was finally severed by Dauvit Broun in 1999, who argued for the priority of the longer version. Broun did not even mention Flann: the author was an Irish ‘scholar writing in or soon after 1119’. Yet, even for the Andersons, the text never seems to have been significant.

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73 Skene (ed. and trans.), Chronicles, pp. xxxi, 18–22.
74 See also Thurneysen, ‘Synchronismen’, pp. 81–83.
75 Alan O. Anderson, Early Sources of Scottish History: AD 500–1286, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1922), I, lvi.
because of its author but because it is early compared to other Scottish historical
documents.\textsuperscript{80} Flann’s purported authorship was little more than one of several dating
criteria. Indeed, even as an early twelfth-century work, Broun still treats the
\textit{Provisional Synchronisms} as an important text.

Flann’s authorship was thus often not refuted but simply circumnavigated. In
a final example, a heated exchange took place between Tomás Ó Concheanainn and
Máire West on the textual history of \textit{Aided Nath Í ocus a adnacol} (\textit{ANÍ}; \texttt{2:4.2.2},
\texttt{4:2.1.5}). The text is described as Flann’s work in some manuscripts but this is of
very limited relevance to Ó Concheanainn and West, who focus on textual criticism.

\subsection*{3.2.2 Dating texts and attributing authorship}

With access ever increasing to primary materials and philological data and insights,
authorship came to be bound up in the development and critique of methodologies
for dating texts. An authorial attribution, internal or in manuscript, can constitute
evidence for dating a text, while the date deduced can support or undermine an
attribution. Attributions, of course, can be problematic in their own way. Texts are
not uncommonly attributed to fantastical authors or different authors in different
manuscripts, for example. The author thus resumed prominence in scholarship not as
a transcendent source of context and legitimacy but rather as a piece of data in a
text’s profile, often itself inviting scrutiny.

The strategies specifically involved in dating and attributing Middle Gaelic
texts were reviewed by Gearóid Mac Eoin in 1982.\textsuperscript{81} After demonstrating the
ambiguities and problems with internal or external attributions, historical references
in-text, and linguistic dating, Mac Eoin concluded that no one method can safely be
employed in isolation, only as wide a range as possible.\textsuperscript{82} Authors were, however,
central to his approach. Specifically, he called for more medieval poetry to be
published in ‘editions of the type “The Poems of...”’, which would establish an

\textsuperscript{81} Gearóid Mac Eoin, ‘The Dating of Middle Irish Texts’, \textit{PBA}, 68 (1982), 109–37. See also Katherine
\textsuperscript{82} Mac Eoin, ‘Dating’, p. 137.
Literature Review

author’s ‘canon’ through comparing texts alongside known historical information. This proposal was later endorsed by Liam Breatnach.

Before 1982, Mac Eoin had already deployed an eclectic range of methods in studies of two texts attributed to Flann. He rejected the external attribution in the fifteenth-century, sole extant version of ‘Luid lasón ina luing lóir’ (4.2.3.2) after detailed linguistic and stylistic analysis of the text, comparing it with LL’s ‘dánta Fhlainn’. However, he accepted ‘Cruithnig cid dos farclam’ (3.2.1) as Flann’s work on the basis of an external attribution and an internal reference to the still-living Mac Bethad (Macbeth), king of Alba (1040–57), while admitting that the linguistic evidence might place it anywhere between 900 and 1200.

Shortly after the publication of Mac Eoin’s 1982 study, James Carney produced a periodised list of Old and Middle Gaelic poems datable by non-linguistic criteria, such as ‘reliable’ manuscript attributions or historical references. The list was intended as ‘anchorage’ for assessment of more debatable linguistic criteria. Since the texts’ linguistic and non-linguistic periodisations largely align, he advocated cautious confidence in both methods.

Authors were also central to Carney’s list. The majority of the poems he used have named authors and their floruits largely define his periods. Indeed, some periods consist entirely of a single author’s ‘reliable’ oeuvre. Flann’s period has only one poem, out of ten in total, not attributed to him. While providing more detail concerning other poets, Carney never set out what makes a reliable manuscript attribution to Flann. LL attributes eight of his nine listed poems to him, LU

89 Carney, ‘Dating’, p. 182.
corroborating one attribution, although Carney ignored four further examples from *LL*. This manuscript’s early date and generally acknowledged quality may have been a prominent factor for him, as it was for others. Also, Carney’s nine poems are mostly attributed to Flann both internally and externally (2:2.2). Carney seems to have deliberately avoided making assumptions about Flann’s expected language, style, or subject-matter and instead focused on identifying corroboratable attributions via manuscript provenance. His list was not determined by how he understood Flann, as an author, but about what he defined as reliable evidence. This was then used to date the texts and provide his desired non-linguistic framework.

No attempt at a comprehensive assessment of Flann’s corpus had appeared since the bio-bibliographies by O’Reilly, O’Curry, and Moore. Nonetheless, during this period, Flann acquired a reputation for having work erroneously attributed to him. For Mac Eoin, ‘Flann is one of those poets to whom scribes often attributed poems of unknown authorship’. Francis J. Byrne expressed a similar view and supplied several examples. Interestingly, Byrne saw factual inaccuracy or poor stylistic quality as reasons to disassociate a poem from Flann. Brian Ó Cuív also observed gradations in metrical quality in poems attributed to him. From the additional presence of anachronistic material in the less technically accomplished poems, he suggested that they might be misattributed. Otherwise, it is unclear whence came this conviction that Flann’s work could be defined by quality.

Despite their different approaches, all these scholars broadly tend to agree on what attributions were not to be trusted (see Appendix 2). Dóra Pődör is something of an exception. She is the only scholar who subsequently adopted anything resembling the broad comparative approach to Flann’s corpus recommended by Mac

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91 The exception is ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (1:6.3, 3:2.1, 4:2.3.1).
94 Mac Eoin, ‘Dating’, p. 139.
Literature Review

Eoin and Breatnach (her doctoral supervisor). For practical reasons, however, her study was restricted to one manuscript. Examining the language and metrics of poems attributed to Flann in LL,\(^9\) she directly opposed Ó Cuív and Byrne’s scepticism and argued that her corpus’ twelve poems dated to Flann’s lifetime and that all could be by the same author, who was probably, therefore, Flann. She concluded, in the process, that Flann composed in a conservative form of Middle Gaelic somewhat akin to the language of Saltair na Rann.\(^9\) The variation in metrical quality noted by Ó Cuív was confirmed by her study but Pődör argued that the same author need not have always used similar metres.\(^9\) Specifically in the case of ‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’, her arguments have been critiqued and rejected by Peter J. Smith, who edited the poem from all available manuscripts.\(^1\) He reiterated the call for more comparative, author-based work.

Even on the basis of the texts scholars have examined, the questions of what Flann composed and how that is to be determined remain unresolved. It should also be noted, however, that the overwhelming focus of attention has been on poems from the three major Middle Gaelic manuscripts: LU, Rawl.B.502, and LL. This is perhaps because the manuscripts are early or because they were available in diplomatic editions or published facsimile.\(^1\) Yet new attributions of poems and prose to Flann continue to appear in the extant record right through the Middle Ages and into the modern manuscript tradition and early printed scholarship. While students of medieval Gaelic materials have long accepted that early works can be preserved in very late codices,\(^2\) this evidence, as Mac Eoin briefly notes,\(^3\) often remained (and


\(^2\) Elizabeth Boyle and Deborah Hayden, ‘Introduction: Authority and Adaptation in Medieval Ireland’, in Authorities and Adaptations: The Reworking and Transmission of Textual Sources in
remains) unevaluated and unintegrated into discussions of Middle Gaelic authors’ corpora.

While most scholars refer to varied evidence when considering an attribution to Flann, the text’s language and style are usually prominent. When applied specifically to assessing authorship rather than date, these criteria are rooted in the premise that we can access an author’s authentic linguistic formations. This is argued to be achievable either through selection of an early or well-regarded manuscript, such as Pődör’s choice of LL,104 or through editorial reconstruction of an archetype. In the wider world of textual criticism, however, both approaches have been critiqued and it has been argued that an archetype, let alone an authorial original, is often not recoverable.105 While it could be argued that a metrical text’s very purpose was to preserve the original author’s words, even poetry could be amended or supplemented and still attributed to the original author. This must qualify any implied claims to access to an author’s exact words and typical language and style via later manuscripts. These issues will be discussed further in this thesis but, for now, we can note that the conception of authorship generated by the need to date texts did not necessarily match its conception in the Middle Ages.

3.3 Characterisations of Flann

While discussions of linguistic dating and authorial attributions were ultimately text-focused, authors did come to be examined as historical characters by scholars considering the cultural affiliations of medieval Gaelic literature and of the personnel behind it. Scholarship produced in this context (and unrelated to it) places an interesting range of emphases when assessing Flann’s identity and has been formative in contemporary academic conceptions of him.

3.3.1 ‘A filli in monk’s clothing’: how ecclesiastical was Flann?

Flann’s precise relationship with the church had long been discussed. Neither O’Curry nor Moore was comfortable seeing Flann as purely a monk (LR:2.3).

Medieval Ireland, ed. by Elizabeth Boyle and Deborah Hayden (Dublin: DIAS, 2014), pp. xvii–xlvi (xxi–xxiii).

105 On these issues in relation to medieval Gaelic literature, see Kevin Murray, ‘Reviews, reviewers, and critical texts’, CMCS, 57 (Summer 2009), 51–70.
O’Curry argued generally that medieval Irish learning was not confined to the church but permeated society. While Flann was based at Monasterboice, ‘it is well known that he was not in orders. He is never mentioned as an ecclesiastic; and we know he was married and left issue [...] In fact, his employment was simply that of a lay teacher in a great school; and he filled the office of Fer leighinn, or Chief Professor’. Moore posits a secular, dissolute youth prior to joining Monasterboice’s community: Flann ‘began life as a poetical historian, wandering through the northern half of Ireland’. O’Curry referred to the attestation of Flann’s offspring, while Moore’s evidence is not identifiable.

As time went by, however, Flann became increasingly associated with monasticism, perhaps influenced by the wider historiographical tendency to see monasticism as dominating church and society in early medieval Ireland. Macalister painted an idyllic picture of Flann gaining lifelong inspiration from Monasterboice’s famous high crosses while being ‘nurtured’ by the community’s library. Examining the annals and the genealogies, Margaret Dobbs explored the political control of Monasterboice by Flann’s wider kin-group, the Ciannachta. Gerard Murphy included a short note emphasising Flann’s connection with Monasterboice in his edition of ‘Uasalepscop Érenn Áed’ (1:3).

Later, attempts were made to differentiate between ecclesiastical (or monastic; the terms are often used interchangeably in this context) and secular scholars’ respective output. MacNeill’s concept of ‘synthetic history’ was viewed as instrumental. The compilation of traditional narratives and lore into history or canonical literature, such as Lebor Gabála Érenn (LGÉ) or the more developed sagas, was distinguished from preserving the traditions themselves and performing the direct social functions of praise and satire. MacNeill and O’Curry had understood

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106 O’Curry, Manners, p. 56; cf. Hyde, Literary History, p. 445.
the filid – secular, learned professionals – as fulfilling all these roles. Critiquing this interpretation, Seán Mac Airt argued that synthetic history is fundamentally ecclesiastical, being external to secular tradition itself. Alongside named authors’ extant output, he also sought to identify divergent learned traditions in the medieval sources’ distinctive terminology. For example, titles like fer léiginn (lit. ‘man of reading’; a textual scholar in a monastic school) or suí filidechta agus senchasa (‘master of poetry and history’) he viewed as monastic, while fili (‘poet’) or éices (‘sage’) denoted someone in the secular tradition. This line of enquiry was later developed by Michael Richter, who likewise strictly distinguished two traditions.

Proinsias Mac Cana agreed with Mac Airt in identifying syntheticism as ‘the great differentiating factor’ between ecclesiastical and secular learning. However, he saw the two classes’ relationship as both unstable and open to cross-fertilisation. Ecclesiastical scholarship adopted both the traditional materials and the artistic forms and styles of the filid, while the filid accepted and employed their counterparts’ medieval Christian historiographical framework. Following the twelfth-century’s reforms in the Irish church, both were consolidated into hereditary specialised learned families modelled on the ethos and professional organisation of the filid.

Within this framework, Mac Airt took issue with O’Curry’s downplaying of Flann’s identity as an ecclesiastical scholar. While such personnel are occasionally called filid, ‘in all probability they had very little connexion with secular schools’. Mac Cana agreed, refusing to regard Flann ‘simply as a fili in monk’s clothing’ but seeing him as typically monastic. On the other hand, he also implicated Flann in the considerable cross-fertilisation that had developed, by the Middle Gaelic period, between ‘the work of filid like Cinaed úa hArtacáin and Cuán úa Lothcháin and on

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118 Mac Airt, ‘Filidecht’, p. 150 (n. 5).
the other that of Flann mac Maelmaedóc and Flann Mainistrech himself.\(^{121}\) Flann is not prominent syntactically in this quotation’s context nor in Mac Cana’s argument overall, so the emphatic use of ‘himself’ implies that he was still, for Mac Cana, the archetypal ecclesiastical scholar. Yet Mac Cana’s overall point was that personnel apparently distinguishable in milieu operated in a common literary and historiographical culture. Distinctions in terminology might be because of ‘social or professional affiliation’ rather than cultural affiliation or repertoire.\(^{122}\)

It came to be generally agreed that the expertise and functions of *filid* and *fir lèiginn* merged, lost their distinction in our sources, or had never really been separate. Interestingly, Flann (among others) is often found at the resulting intersection, with his ecclesiastical credentials once again called into question. Richter, despite maintaining that ‘there had been no merging’ of ecclesiastical and secular learning even as late as the twelfth century, conceded the existence – again, in the Middle Gaelic period – of a ‘grey zone in the documentation’ consisting of descriptions of scholars employing terms from both categories of learning,\(^{123}\) Flann appearing as an example.\(^{124}\) Kim McCone, who argued that ecclesiastical connections can be identified for all known *filid*, cited Flann as exemplifying the interdisciplinary learning of ‘monastic types’.\(^{125}\)

Donnchadh Ó Corráin also favoured collapsing the distinction between ecclesiastical and secular scholars. He argued that native, secular learning had assimilated with ecclesiastical scholarship at a very early date in Ireland, resulting in a single ‘mandarin class’ that was literate, Christian, produced by and in control of the monastic education system, and highly political.\(^{126}\) Indeed, since medieval ecclesiastical institutions were themselves politicised, distinguishing secular and ecclesiastical elite power is not always meaningful. They employed ‘synthetic history’ in order to promote an over-kingship of Ireland and the power of major

dynasties in general, responding to the needs of influential elites.\textsuperscript{127} They were also capable of shaping events: Ó Corráin understood the Irish \textit{natio} as their invention before it gained political currency.\textsuperscript{128}

Like Mac Cana, Elva Johnston saw social and political roles and means of influence as distinguishing different categories of medieval Gaelic learned personnel. While critiquing the excessive uniformity and insularity of Ó Corrán’s ‘mandarin class’ model,\textsuperscript{129} she also traced how \textit{filid} and ecclesiastical scholars were conceived in the literature as united, along with secular rulers, in membership of elite communities of learning, power, and cognisance of the social hierarchy that supported them.\textsuperscript{130} Both Ó Corráin and Johnston saw Flann as a leading member of the elite communities they respectively envisaged but also continued to see him as operating in an ecclesiastical milieu. Ó Corráin described Flann as a ‘churchman’, while noting the tendency for less successful royal dynasties to engage in politicised ecclesiastical scholarship, thus blurring distinctions.\textsuperscript{131} For Johnston, he is a ‘clerical writer’ who nonetheless worked at the top of the social hierarchy.\textsuperscript{132}

Here, therefore, as with scholarship on dating texts, Flann was often implicated in models of the literature’s origins in the absence of comprehensive assessments of his identity, significance, or even corpus. For all the extant evidence’s incompleteness, he was sometimes regarded as a strongly ecclesiastical or monastic figure. However, recalling O’Curry and Moore’s reluctance to categorise him as such unequivocally, he came to exemplify the intersection of political ideology and other cultural influences within ecclesiastical scholarship that constituted the way forward from the confrontation between nativism and anti-nativism. The conception of him as a synthesist, which was key to these aspects of his identity, thus endured in evolved form. Indeed, Máire Herbert has presented the Middle Gaelic period as characterised


\textsuperscript{128} Ó Corráin, ‘Nationality’, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{129} Johnston, \textit{Literacy}, pp. 23–24.

\textsuperscript{130} Johnston, \textit{Literacy}, esp. pp. 131–156.

\textsuperscript{131} Ó Corráin, ‘Nationality’, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{132} Johnston, \textit{Literacy}, p. 151.
by the re-interpretation and compilation of a literary heritage to address contemporary concerns, an agenda that Flann’s work exemplifies.\textsuperscript{133}

This emphasis on authors being defined by contemporary concerns and relationships is particularly significant. In this view, authors like Flann derived both the agenda for their work and their personae in authentic sources from their political and social relationships, rather than from affiliation to a particular learned tradition, whether ecclesiastical or secular. Flann’s significance is to be found in his more immediate connections and circumstances, rather than in defining categories in which he has been placed. He is to be approached as a three-dimensional historical character possessing perspectives, assumptions, and loyalties, basic considerations that had, nonetheless, generally been neglected before this point.

As a result, just as Mac Eoin had favoured focused, author-based studies of language and style, both Breatnach and Johnston called for more attention to be given to reconstructing individual authors’ biographies and contexts with less focus on their membership of broad categories.\textsuperscript{134} A solid corpus of such studies has since appeared,\textsuperscript{135} with four concerning Flann.\textsuperscript{136} When not based around editions or textual studies, they focus on authors’ potential corpora, the inevitable attributional and identification issues, what is known of their backgrounds and careers, and how their work is to be read in their immediate contexts.

\textsuperscript{133} Máire Herbert, ‘Crossing Historical and Literary Boundaries: Irish Written Culture around the Year 1000’, CMCS 53/54 (2007), 87–102 (pp. 92–93).
3.3.2 Other characterisations
We have been considering treatments of Flann in the course of an intensely charged and formative wider debate. It is also worth examining, in cognisance of this ongoing context, how he is characterised elsewhere, in scholarship on specific texts and topics.

3.3.2.1 Latent authority as a historian
Despite the predominant sense that Flann worked within textual traditions, he was still sometimes presented as providing a direct and translucent perspective on the past. For example, in James Hogan’s study of royal succession in Cenél nÉogain, Flann’s poems on this kingdom featured prominently: ‘the source materials of no other dynasty can compare in duration, abundance and reliability’.137 More forcefully and explicitly, Byrne, as already mentioned, believed Flann to be so competent and ethical a historian that seriously inaccurate works can simply be excluded from his corpus. Due to factual errors and problematic chronology, ‘Síl nÁedo Sláine na sleg’ is ‘a libel on that scholar’s learning’, there being ‘no reason to saddle Flann with responsibility for its blunders’.138 Again citing their quality, Byrne later expelled ‘a pedestrian list of Patrick's household’ (‘Muinter Pádraig na paiter’) and ‘a piece of historically inaccurate doggerel listing the kings of Cashel’ (‘Inn éol duib in senchas sen’).139 The implication is that Flann’s genuine work can be assumed to be very accurate. This seems to be connected to his status as an ecclesiastical scholar: Byrne even denied that the terms *fili* or *poeta* could be applied to him, as they are ‘almost certainly not titles that an ecclesiastical *eccnaid* like Flann would have wanted to claim’.140

Yet enthusiasm among modern scholars for Flann’s purported texts as straightforward historical sources has been generally subdued. In the entire multi-authored volume in which Byrne makes some of the above remarks, Flann’s work (as opposed to his biography) is only cited as historical evidence on one occasion.141

139 Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p. 865.
140 Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p. 867.
141 Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p. 868.
Literature Review

Byrne’s own *Irish Kings and High Kings* pays him no attention.142 Considering other major works on early Irish history, Flann appears once in Thomas Charles-Edwards’ *Early Christian Ireland*, for repeating a common error in his Tara king-list,143 and once in Bart Jaski’s *Early Irish Kingship and Succession*, where his accuracy is also called into question.144 Historians engaged in reconstructing early medieval Irish political history seem to have either not considered him reliable or preferred to cite his identified sources, such as the annals, directly.

3.3.2.2 Witness to the ‘Gaelic tradition’

Flann is more commonly cited for eleventh-century snapshots of certain literary themes or cultural motifs’ long-term development. For example, ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’, listing the *aideda* (‘death-tales’) of the nobles of the Túatha Dé Danann, is often used in studying both literary traditions concerning these individuals and in medieval Irish interpretations of pre-Christian religion.145

Elsewhere, his works are identified as manifestations of multifarious textual or narratival traditions. Alfred Anscombe, in a study of St Patrick’s genealogy, the subject of Flann’s ‘Padraig abb Érenn uile’ (*5:2.1.2*), demonstrated that the poem represents but a particular variant of the genealogy.146 During a study of the different versions of Lóegaire Mac Néill’s *aided*, Mac Eoin cited the Tara Diptych but identified the narrative contained therein as one of several variants.147 These he traced back to early medieval Patrician hagiography.148 Considering the various pseudo-historical accounts of the Picts’ origins, the subject of Flann’s ‘Cruithnig cid dos-farclam’ (*3:2.1*), Mac Eoin, again, understood them as a single original legend mutating, Flann’s poem itself adding only ‘minor points’.149

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These studies sought an overall perspective on medieval Gaelic culture. Under such an approach, an author like Flann is merely a witness to a tradition at a particular stage or branch of its development. While he might occasionally be presented as a distinctively widely-read synthesist or, as by Byrne (LR:3.3.2.1), as a reliable historian, he was also often understood as having produced but one of several variants on a wider tradition, with no particular command over that tradition. In these instances, he relied not only on pre-existing sources but on a certain strand within a corpus of sources.

### 3.3.2.3 Political engagement

Flann thus came to be seen increasingly as providing an eleventh-century perspective on literary history. Given Ó Corráin, Johnston, and others’ conception of a highly politicised learned class, one might expect some exploration of Flann’s engagement with his political context. O’Curry, O’Reilly, and predecessors had taken his purported compositions largely at face value (6:4.4). On the other hand, Moore had noted Flann’s potentially partial interest in the Uí Néill and Dobbs had explored his family and institution’s political connections. Later, Carey and Byrne, despite the latter’s zeal for Flann’s reliability as a historian, considered the dynasties to which he may have had an allegiance.

The implications of this aspect of Flann’s character for reading his work have only occasionally been addressed in detail. As a ‘monastic’ writer and a ‘national’ synchronist, the notion may have existed that he somehow transcended actual politics. In one example, however, Seamus Boyle examines ‘Énna dalta Cairpri cruaid’, on the seventh-century Battle of Lethirbe, which he supposes was attributed to Flann (however, see 6:4.2). He argued that it is ‘an accurate portrayal of an eleventh-century memory of a seventh-century event’, via comparisons with genealogies and annals. Yet the role of Cenél nÉnnai, a usually minor northern Uí Neill polity, has been considerably inflated in the poem. As they enjoyed renewed prominence in the early eleventh century, the poem is, for Boyle, a ‘charter’ for their

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151 Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p. 867; Carey, ‘Legendary history’, p. 43.
aspirations, implying that Flann was actually composing source-based propaganda.

Some scholars have seen Flann engaging with contemporary politics at a significantly deeper level than simply offering his support to certain factions. Byrne and Smith have both suggested that he might have invented the idea of an ancient, continuous kingship of Tara under an Uí Néill monopoly in the Christian era. Carey commented in general that, after this monopoly’s end, his ‘poems reflect the changed political landscape’, in that regional kingships become their subjects and he comments explicitly on Ireland’s plurality of kings. Indeed, Broun has located him, and then Gilla Cóemáin mac Gilla Samthaine (fl. 1072) and successors, within a general shift in historiographical focus from dynasties to kingdoms, from genealogies to king-lists. Broun treats this as an early example of a development in the conception and use of the past across the Insular zone in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, placing Flann in an unprecedentedly broad intellectual context, although Broun does not argue for direct influence between the authors involved.

3.4 Impersonal scholarship: conclusions

Much of the twentieth-century scholarship that makes reference to Flann does so either while focusing on specific texts or discussing much broader issues than his meaning and biography, making it sometimes difficult to identify clear views on him. It is also difficult to tell what sources and information scholars had at their disposal overall but their attention was primarily drawn to material in pre-1200 manuscripts. This is problematic. Flann’s interests, as they emerge from these manuscripts, are not entirely representative of the topics with which he is associated elsewhere (Chapters 4–6). Furthermore, as we shall see (Chapter 2), despite being verifiably early, this material does not provide as secure evidence for Flann’s eleventh-century compositional activity as seems to have been assumed.

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156 Carey, ‘Flann’; Carey, ‘Legendary history’, p. 44.
Some points of consensus concerning Flann emerged. He was persistently
understood as ecclesiastical, to a greater or lesser extent, and as a literate textual
scholar. In fact, the focus on him as compiler and versifier of texts seems to have
undermined his authorial integrity for some scholars and may have been behind a
relative lack of interest in him as a primary source. As part of broader developments
in scholars’ understanding of medieval Gaelic learned culture, acknowledgement
came of his complicity in elite politics and of his engagement with a broader range of
literary themes and styles than had been considered stereotypically ‘ecclesiastical’.
Indeed, he was often cited as a prime example of a synthesis of interests and
traditions.

Nonetheless, Flann’s authorial intentions were rarely explored in relation to
individual works, even by Ó Corráin and Johnston, whose approaches are based
around identifying medieval authors’ specific social and political interests. In many
cases, one might suspect that this was because ‘monastic types’ were simply
expected to produce texts while operating in a cloistered environment. One might
even postulate the revenant influence of the never properly dismissed ‘Synchronisms
of Flann’, as an overarching, disinterested work on structural national and universal
history.

Finally, the scholars we have examined were invariably concerned with
reconstructing the original historical or textual realities of authorship. The evidence
involved was often approached critically but was still treated straightforwardly as
evidence, whether of greater or lesser value. How attributions and authorial (self-)
representation might themselves be forms of literary and rhetorical expression rather
than helpful metadata is considered in the next section.

4 It matters who speaks:¹⁵⁸ uses and constructions of
authorship

One response to the categorical approaches of the nativist versus anti-nativist debate
has been the increased interest in bio-bibliographies of individual authors. In another
development, recent decades have also seen analysis and discussion of authorship’s

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Michel Foucault, ‘What is an author?’, in Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, ed. by Donald
significance and value within the Middle Ages. Indeed, this has been a feature of recent scholarship on medieval literature in general, beyond Gaelic contexts.\footnote{A particularly prominent example is Alastair J. Minnis, \textit{Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages}, 2nd ed. (Aldershot: Wildwood House, 1988).} It has been recognised that medieval evidence about authors and their works has not just been mediated through protean scribal transmission within partially preserved textual traditions. Rather, it forms its own discourse, formed out of literary and rhetorical purposes more relevant to their own intellectual context than to modern scholars’ need for bibliographical information.

Interest has also developed in the experience and adaptation of texts beyond their original composition. There has been a growth in studies on medieval Gaelic texts’ readers, commentators, scribes, redactors, and compilers, and also on codices’ patrons and owners.\footnote{For example, Patrick K. Ford, ‘Medieval Irish Manuscript Culture’, in \textit{Field Work: Sites in Literary and Cultural Criticism}, ed. by Marjorie Garber, Paul B. Franklin, and Rebecca L. Walkowitz (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 164–67; Schlüter, \textit{History}; Bernadette Cunningham and Raymond Gillespie, ‘The Uí Dhomhnaill and their books in early sixteenth-century Ireland’, in, \textit{Princes, Prelates and Poets in Medieval Ireland: Essays in Honour of Katharine Simms}, ed. by Seán Duffy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), pp. 481–502 (495–501); Kevin Murray, ‘The Reworking of Old Irish Narrative Texts in the Middle Irish Period: Contexts and Motivations’, in Boyle and Hayden (eds), \textit{Authorities}, pp. 291–306.} At a more theoretical level, medieval Gaelic concepts and methods of literary criticism have also been considered.\footnote{For example, Morgan T. Davies, ‘Protocols of Reading in Early Irish Literature: Notes on Some Notes to \textit{Orgain Denna Rig} and \textit{Amra Coluimm Cille}’, \textit{CMCS}, 32 (Winter 1996), 1–23; Erich Poppe, ‘Reconstructing medieval Irish literary theory: The lesson of \textit{Airec Menman Uraird maic Coise}’, \textit{CMCS}, 37 (Summer 1999), 33–54.} Both, again, follow trends occurring across medieval studies and wider literary theory.\footnote{For example, John Dagenais, \textit{The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture: Glossing the ‘Libro de Buen Amor’} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Suzanne Reynolds, \textit{Medieval Reading: Grammar, Rhetoric and the Classical Text} (Cambridge: CUP, 1996).} Texts have come to be of interest not just for what they once were but for what they could become and how they might be understood in different contexts. Such approaches open up new dimensions in their meaning and offer new ways to understand the contexts into which they were received. They also call into question the extent to which a text’s original author and context continue to define it.

While authors and their acts of composition can be investigated as historical individuals and events, as we have seen, it is also evident that both had other dimensions to their existence. It is a basic phenomenological question, whether meaning is inherent or located in perceptions. The issue is practical, as well as
philosophical, however. Later sources and manuscripts mediate all material by or about Flann and most other medieval Gaelic authors. Concepts of authorship and textuality, modes of interpretation, and the possible rhetorical uses of authorship and author-figures all potentially impact upon this evidence for their historical activities.

4.1 Names and masks: authorial attributions and implied context

Medieval Gaelic poems are found not infrequently in manuscripts with attributions, internal or via scribal superscription, to impossible authors. The poem’s language and ideas might be too anachronistic to be credible or the purported author might be legendary and never have existed. Mac Eoin took this as reason to be sceptical of all manuscript attributions.163

While agreeing that such attributions are not literally true, others have analysed them as a form of literary expression. Maria Tymoczko, in a study of lyric poetry, has described some non-literal attributions as constituting ‘a poetry of masks’.164

In order to express most of the range of human affective experience to be shared intersubjectively in poetry, rather than present such emotions directly through a persona particular to the self, Celtic poets assumed the persona of a traditional fictional character. This assumption of a persona associated with a pre-existing or established character from history we can call a “traditional poetic mask”.165

In other words, certain literary characters invoke particular situations or stances.166 This theory can surely be applied productively in contexts beyond strictly personal lyric poetry. However fictional he or she might be, an author-figure has a biography, loosely defined, which the learned reader might know. This forms a setting that enhances the poem by providing it with pseudo-historical meaning and reference points. As a result, the poem also constitutes a meditation on a particular theme or

166 For examples, see Tymoczko, ‘Poetry’, p. 197
episode in the biography. This use of author-figures to invoke admittedly stylised human situations provides an interesting counterpoint to Alistair Minnis’ understanding of the ‘human author’ as a late medieval development.  

Also considering quasi-personal poetry, Herbert has examined certain Middle Gaelic poems on exile attributed to Colum Cille (ob. 597). Here, Colum Cille’s well-known banishment from Ireland frames the poems’ reflections with a recognisable situation. As well as expressing timeless personal sentiments, Herbert read these texts as related to emerging conceptions of the Irish nation in the period’s historiography, meaning Colum Cille ultimately lends his sanctity and antiquity to contemporary socio-political ideas and thus renders them less dangerously novel.

Máire Ní Mhaonaigh has considered a corpus of poems implausibly or impossibly attributed to Cormac mac Cuilennáin (ob. 908). Cormac was remembered as moving in multiple spheres, as king of Munster, bishop, and scholar. Two of the poems dwell, from a twelfth-century reformist perspective, specifically on tensions between political responsibility and the religious life, a topic for which Cormac is a distinctively suitable author-figure. Yet others seem derive their associations from particular aspects of his reputed life: for example, some focus on him as a poet, specifically of *dindsenchas*, to the exclusion of all else. If his full identity was not understood by those responsible, the attribution’s intended significance becomes unclear: does Cormac’s name effectively constitute one mask or several?

Like any way of making meaning, particularly within a fragmentary manuscript literature, the ‘poetry of masks’ has its problems of interpretation. In another problematic case, Aideen O’Leary identified three separate poets, of which at least one may be fictional, whose names include the element ‘Mac Coise’. Yet, apparently from an early stage, the manuscript tradition hopelessly conflates their

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172 Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Cormac’, pp. 120–21.
varied personae.\textsuperscript{173} The reverse can happen: scholars have long debated whether the arguably distinct Middle Gaelic poets, Eochaid úa Flainn and Eochaid úa Flannucáin (\textit{ob. 1004}), were originally the same person.\textsuperscript{174} An author-figure can also evolve and expand their interests over time. Seamus Mac Mathúna has explored how Gearóid Íarla’s (\textit{ob. 1398}) original focus on love poetry very possibly then expanded via later manuscript attributions and imitation to include genres such as satire.\textsuperscript{175} Christopher Yocum has shown how Fithal, originally a legendary jurist, became a more generic wisdom-figure during the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{176}

Whether or not they are accurate, authorial attributions can be highly meaningful as a form of commentary on either the text or the author-figure. However, such an analysis has typically only been employed as a last resort, when an attribution manifestly cannot be taken literally. It is also most fruitfully employed when the author-figure has a biography or looser set of associations that are known to have been commonly understood in learned circles. While neither is true, in most cases, for Flann (only a couple of poems unquestionably cannot be by him), it is worth considering how many attributions, even those that look credible, use him as a mask, for his implied backstory, as a meaningful author-figure rather than as a historical author. The possibility that some poems were attributed to him because he carried authority has, as we have seen, been considered. Yet it is clear that poems were associated with figures like Colum Cille or Cormac because of traits individually specific to them. The traits that might have been understood to be specific to Flann, the visage of the mask he offered later poets and compilers, are yet to be investigated.

Even if an attribution is a true and authentic bibliographical datum, with no intent to supply a backstory, backstories would still have been supplied by the attributions’ readers. The author-figure becomes a mask as soon as he or she is

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\textsuperscript{174} Ó Mainnín, ‘Eochaid’.


supplied, regardless of intention and provenance. Attributions to Flann, internal or external, are rarely detailed and information about him is widely scattered through the manuscript tradition and far from comprehensive and unambiguous, even when brought together. This opens to interpretation his social meaning, what his name would have supplied to a text in the experience of its medieval readers.

4.2 ‘As the poet said...’: evidential and corroborative verse

In medieval Gaelic manuscripts, verse explicitly attributed to authors does not always appear free-standing but is often cited within other texts. The dynamics of such prosimetric works have been the subject of some discussion. As they involve an author-figure and his purported work being related to a wider narrative or argument, they yield valuable insights into the role of author-figures in medieval Gaelic literary theory and practice.

Attributed verse can enhance or authorise prose, which is invariably anonymous. The form can convey characters’ intensive or heightened speech or their eye-witness accounts. Performance of poetry can itself be an act within a story. Verse can also be attributed to a scholar, named or implied, who post-dates the events themselves. In other words, verse can be quoted or cited. Proportions can vary, from predominantly prose works with brief verse speeches or citations to lengthy poems with a short contextualising prose preface via balanced ‘prose-poetic units’. Lengthy tales or treatises can be expressed virtually in parallel through prose and verse, resembling the highly-regarded medieval *opus geminatum*.

Looking specifically at citations of verse within prose pseudo-history, Gregory Toner has examined how compilers evaluated different verse citations’ levels of authority, with a view to establishing an acceptably veracious account of the past. Eye-witness testimony was particularly valuable, while accounts merely from

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179 Toner, ‘Authority’.
later scholars (Flann appears as an example) could only be corroborative. Both were authenticated by the stable metrical form. Beyond this distinction, however, Toner detects greater credibility being given both to verse and to codices when cited under the name of a known author or compiler. A humanised history behind a source seems to have made it particularly convincing.

Prosimetre’s dynamics have also been examined by R. Mark Scowcroft, with special reference to the intensely prosimetric \(LGÉ\). Responding to the view that \(LGÉ\) had existed first as a corpus of poetry, Scowcroft suggested that the prose, verse, and prosimetric iterations of the text were composed in response to each other and potentially by the same people (3:1.1). They are distinguishable not, necessarily, in provenance but in function. The verse texts are often attributed to named authors (again, including Flann). They are thus authoritative statements from particular scholarly perspectives on defined topics, which are explicated and reconciled by the prose. Mirroring the medieval curriculum’s foundation in the interpretation of (ideally ancient) \textit{auctores}, compilations like \(LGÉ\) expanded upon and connected formal contributions ostensibly from figures with identifiable claims to authority. Prosimetric form does not reflect simply the prior availability of a corpus of verse authorities but an entire exegetical approach to knowledge. If \textit{auctores} had not existed, it would have been necessary to invent them.

These studies yield important insights into medieval Gaelic concepts of authorship. Toner has shown that author-figures’ identities and primary or secondary perspectives mattered to the compilers who cited them. Scowcroft, meanwhile, has shown that the author-figure’s apparent role and contribution can be constructed by

183 Scowcroft, ‘\textit{Leabhar Gabhála I}’, pp. 90–93.
the needs and dynamics of the text within which he is cited. Of course, a cited author might well have been known for their contributions as an authoritative scholar before they were ever cited, although Toner has suggested that citation might have increased some author-figures’ standing.\textsuperscript{187} Incidentally, while authors’ treatment in prosimetric contexts is particularly amenable to study thanks to being set out explicitly, these conclusions could be viably related to the compilation of collections of ostensibly free-standing verse within wider manuscript contexts as well.\textsuperscript{188}

The author mattering while also being susceptible to re-interpretation is part of medieval writing’s complex relationship with authorities identified. As well as their authorial function, the author-figure’s purpose can also be constructed by later readers and compilers via how the poem is introduced or the context in which it is located. The \textit{intentio auctoris} is a common category of information in medieval literary criticism but is more often identified with the literal meaning of the text than with any motivation on the actual author’s part.\textsuperscript{189} I myself have examined the ascription of multiple ‘intentions’ to one of Flann’s poems in different recensions of \textit{LGÉ}.\textsuperscript{190} In addition, there has been some debate over whether certain poems in the late Middle Gaelic prosimetric \textit{Acallam na Senórach} were appropriated from another context.\textsuperscript{191} David Dumville has examined the re-contextualisation of early Gaelic poetry in medieval chronicles.\textsuperscript{192} Dáibhí Ó Croínín has traced the subsequent transmission and usage of the twelfth-century historical poem, ‘Eól dam seiser cloinne Cuinn’.\textsuperscript{193}

\textsuperscript{187} Toner, ‘Authority’, p. 62.
\textsuperscript{188} For example, Schlüter, \textit{History}, pp. 15–21, 137–38.
\textsuperscript{190} Eystein Thanisch, ‘Flann Mainistrech’s \textit{Götterdämmerung} as a Junction within \textit{Lebor Gabála Érenn}’, \textit{Quaestio Insularis}, 13 (2012), 69–93 (\textbf{Appendix 32}).
\textsuperscript{192} David Dumville, ‘What is medieval Gaelic poetry?’, in \textit{Explorations in Cultural History: Essays for Peter Gabriel McCaffery}, ed. by David F. Smith and Hushang Philsooph (Aberdeen: Centre for Cultural History, University of Aberdeen, 2010), 81–153.
These studies collectively ascribe to later compilers considerable power to interpret an author-figure’s function and his work’s meaning, and that before any interference with the text itself is even considered.\textsuperscript{194} This does not make him less authoritative, however, medieval learned culture being based around the interpretation and reconciliation of authorities, not around reading them as absolutely prescriptive. It does, however, mean that an author’s meaning and identity are not entirely within their own control but must needs be sought partially in the contexts with which they interact.

Authority and corroboration, alongside adherence to convention,\textsuperscript{195} are routinely mentioned as being what cited authors offer the texts in which they appear. Yet authority perhaps should not be regarded as a monolithic medieval concept. Jan Ziolkowski has recently argued for a plurality of medieval ‘cultures of authority’, citing, for example, fervent twelfth-century debates over the relationship between canonical texts’ \textit{uctoritas} and \textit{rationes} (‘reasons’).\textsuperscript{196} It is also worth considering whether authority really was a single, transferable common currency, varying only in quantity, or whether it could be in some way qualitative and specific to individuals. Toner has explored compilers’ interests in whether an author is an eyewitness or a secondary commentator. Going further, and marrying the personal subjectivity of the ‘poetry of masks’ to the citation of named individuals, like Flann, in historical writing, author-figures become not simply representatives of learned tradition or veracious beings that exist through their texts but sources of particular perspectives from commonly understood contexts.

4.3. Pieces in whose games? Authorial construction and self-construction

Scowcroft argued that the different aspects of \textit{LGÉ} were produced either by the same individuals or, at least, by closely connected groups (LR:4.2; 3:1.2), rendering artificial any hard distinction expressed in the compilation between named poets and anonymous prosaists. Other scholars, too, have blurred such distinctions in relation to other texts and manuscripts by exploring the common historiographical categories

\textsuperscript{194} For further studies on this theme, see \textit{Authorities}, ed. by Boyle and Hayden.


\textsuperscript{196} Ziolkowski, ‘Cultures’, pp. 423, 442–46.
and conventions under which both operate. While author-figures have come to be understood as used or constructed by those who cite them, the results suggest that authors even construct themselves.

The idea that medieval authors, scholars, and others worked by re-working established traditions and models from authoritative sources is hardly controversial. They can thus be expected to present themselves and their work not as individual and distinctive but as conventional and generic. In terms of material specifically relevant to us, Smith has produced an account of the development of medieval Irish historical poetry as a genre and offered a reconstruction of its categories, forms, and critical terminology utilised and developed throughout the early Middle Ages. Importantly, Smith drew examples from medieval poetry, apparatus around poetry, and independent prose. This common historiographical discourse animated the work of medieval Gaelic historians, whether engaged in the composition of poetry or in the compilation of texts and manuscripts. It is used not only to describe or structure historical poets’ material but also in their formal presentations of their motives, methods, and audience.

Similarly, Schlüter has suggested that LL’s compilers valued historical poetry not just for its content but for the methodologies and intellectual ideologies its author-figures expressed, implicitly or explicitly; Flann is cited as a particularly prominent example. The compilers considered themselves to be in close affinity with the named historical poets, as preservers of cultural memory through careful engagement with a literary heritage for the benefit of society. This, again, operates alongside their manipulation of some attributions and their imposition of their own interpretative arrangement on the material.

More generally, scholars have explored the complex interplay between interpretation and composition in medieval textual culture; both, after all, were

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199 See also Mark Zumbühl, ‘Contextualising the Duan Albanach’, in Cànan & Cultar/Language and Culture: Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 3, ed. by Wilson C. McLeod, James E. Fraser, and Anja Gunderloch (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2004), 11–24 (pp. 18–21).
200 Schlüter, History, pp. 140–43.
governed by the principles and strategies of *grammatica*. Ziolkowski has noted how twelfth-century Latin writers designed their texts to become authoritative through making them particularly amenable, if also challenging, to contemporary interpretative methods. Seth Lerer has explored how fifteenth-century poets and compilers crafted, authenticated, and canonised Geoffrey Chaucer’s (*ob. 1400*) corpus and persona. While they partly responded to their era’s political and social issues, Lerer points out that they also adhered closely to Chaucer’s own self-presentations. Interactions between medieval authors and readers were often far from being defined straightforwardly by domination or appropriation but, instead, by self-awareness and careful construction.

The applicability of studies in medieval ideas expressed in Latin or other European vernaculars to Gaelic materials is often unclear. Recent studies have stressed the Gaelic world’s participation in wider medieval literary and rhetorical culture. Equivalent tropes (e.g. 2:3.2) and terminology – like *ugdar*, the Gaelic derivative of *auctor* (‘author, authority’) – are used in Gaelic primary sources. Yet the same meaning may not have been intended. While wider medieval literary theory is very useful for illustrating possibilities, it must be used with caution.

**4.4 Uses and constructions of authorship: conclusions**

It is clear from these various studies that medieval Gaelic authors cannot be regarded simply as historical individuals. Author-figures, named or generalised, were a highly meaningful aspect of the argumentation or poetics of subsequent works, particularly prosimetric compilations. In fact, subsequent readers and compilers canonised or even, perhaps, interpolated and created an author-figure for a poem via citation and

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206 Thanisch, ‘*Götterdämmerung*’, pp. 90–93.
could exert a considerable amount of interpretative power over an authored poem’s meaning and thus over the rhetorically potent *intentio auctoris*.

Yet authors were by no means entirely at their readers and compilers’ mercy. It has been shown that an author’s identity genuinely mattered. In pseudo-history, his versified testimony could be assessed for its relative value based on its author-figure. The author-figure’s understood persona could also be used to provide a narrative context and thus historical meaning for a poem. Furthermore, it has been observed that texts’ composers crafted author-figures themselves, via references in-text to sources or intended audience, for example. However, this was done according to conventions often shared with compilers who later cited and used the texts. In short, it seems safest to regard most statements about authors in medieval Gaelic sources, even purportedly by the authors themselves, as constructed and rhetorical.

The studies surveyed here thus lead us away from authors’ actual biographies and affiliations, the focus of much recent scholarship, and into their work’s reception and their social meaning as author-figures. Understanding this dimension of authorship better, as a form of expression rather than as simply erroneous scribal behaviour, not only yields insights into medieval Gaelic learned culture but may facilitate historical investigation of the actual authors.

5 Flann Mainistrech as author-figure: this thesis’ objectives

Flann Mainistrech has been implicated in many of the major issues in modern scholarship on medieval Gaelic literature and intellectual history. In fact, while useful information about him has been yielded, his modern profile has been very much shaped by broader debates and priorities. The recent emphasis on author-focused research thus seems highly apposite. Such research on the historical Flann could follow various fruitful avenues already indicated in scholarship, such as assessing his work within the unstable eleventh-century political environment, further investigating his own social connections, or developing ways to establish his corpus and source materials more securely.

Before such studies can continue, however, the primary evidence’s total extent and basic nature must needs be understood. Flann and his work, as with many
medieval Gaelic authors, exist for us in manuscript through interpretation and use by later commentators and compilers. Author-figures, in medieval textual culture, were both open to interpretation and to being utilised to bring contextual meaning to a text. The Flann that is accessible to us is perhaps more the author-figure of subsequent learned culture than the historical author. This is worth understanding both to facilitate research into the historical Flann and because his subsequent reception itself existed as an influential idea in its own right. In fact, given that he was clearly regarded in medieval sources as an authoritative source, understanding how he and his work were perceived could yield insights into medieval Gaelic learned concepts of authority generally.

Following the diachronic reception of one well-attested author is not only practical for a doctoral thesis but permits greater focus on continuity and change in their reception. This, in turn, allows us to assess whether a named, individual author maintains their connection with a consistent identity or perceived biography. Therefore, in this thesis, I survey the texts attributed to Flann and the material about him in Gaelic manuscripts and in early printed scholarship. In so doing, I analyse how he and his work are presented and used in different periods and in specific manuscript contexts. As I argue, alongside much adaptation, even appropriation, a consistent characterisation of Flann might be said to emerge in a sufficient variety of sources to imply that he retained a definable persona as an author-figure, whether or not this reflected his historical reality.
Methodology Review

1 Intentio auctoris, constructio auctoris: what does Flann mean?

Flann Mainistrech has been implicated prominently in many of the major issues in modern scholarship on medieval Gaelic literature and intellectual history and his profile therein has been very much shaped by its broader debates and priorities. As a counter-balance, the recent emphasis on research focused on single authors in their own contexts is very welcome. Potential topics for such specific studies, in Flann’s case, are suggested above (LR:5).

Yet, it is perhaps more important to investigate how Flann was understood or used within medieval Gaelic manuscript culture. As with the majority of ancient or medieval authors, we access him through sources, redactions, and compilations that are generally much later than his own time. In addition, how the veracity of authorial attributions might be determined remains uncertain. Thus, to varying and somewhat unknown extents, we read Flann through others’ interpretations or even appropriations.

Recent studies have also emphasised that named author-figures mattered within medieval Gaelic literature and historiography. Historical testimony was assessed based on its purported provenance and known author-figures were capable of giving a multivalent text contextual meaning. Furthermore, authorial self-presentation was part of a composition’s rhetoric. Thus, even if we were somehow able to know when we were reading Flann’s exact, intended words, we could not trust him to be entirely honest with us concerning himself. He is engaged in constructing an author-figure as much as any later handler, if not more so.

For Dumville, ‘the questions “What is …?” and “What was mediaeval Gaelic poetry?” should be kept apart and answered separately’.208 Similarly, but at a more specific level, we are left asking not who Flann was historically but what he means, what he could be made to mean, and how he might have been interpreted within the textual and manuscript contexts in which we find him. Rather than ask whether an

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208 Dumville, ‘What is medieval Gaelic poetry?’, p. 153 (Dumville’s emphasis).
attribution is accurate, we might instead ask why it matters whether it is accurate and why this piece of purported information about the text has been included.

Such questions are truer to the the extant material’s nature and provenance and, as they concern this material’s underlying purposes, they ought to be addressed prior to further biographical investigations using it. They also touch upon wider issues in medieval Gaelic learned culture. It is clear that Flann is often presented as authoritative or cited to corroborate certain arguments or narratives. By examining which characteristics are most important for his fulfilment of such functions – and whether any individual characteristics are relevant at all – we gain insights into authority’s conceptions and articulations within medieval Gaelic historiography. Furthermore, concepts of authorship and the degree of emphasis placed on a single author-figure are inseparable from concepts of textuality. How medieval compilers and redactors understood the activity of an author to whom they attribute texts could well be expected to influence how they then interpreted his and perhaps other texts. This relates particularly to the dynamics of medieval Gaelic codices, peopled as they often are with authorial attributions. Finally, tracking Flann through the tradition brings into relief the wide variety of historiographical and literary contexts in which he appears. This might reflect his mutability as an author-figure but it might also be reason to question our sub-divisions of the literature.209

2 Investigating Flann’s meaning

In this thesis, therefore, I investigate Flann’s social meaning as a cited author-figure in Gaelic manuscript culture and early printed books on Irish history. This investigation involves three main strands. In one strand, I consider the context, perspective, or narrative that an attribution to Flann might be used or understood to invoke within medieval Gaelic learned discourse. If Colum Cille can invoke pious exile and Cormac mac Cuillennáin can invoke tension between worldly and spiritual goals, what can Flann Mainistrech invoke, for the citator or for the reader? This is, in a way, a study of Flann’s characterisation, although it goes beyond his conventional appearances as a character within literary texts to include his role as texts’ author-

figure and his appearances in attributional or prefatal apparatus. However, in most of his appearances in any of these categories, his characterisation and the context he invokes is implicit or ambiguous. Therefore, I seek to understand his potential social meaning through identifying consistently recurring themes across this material.

In another strand, I am interested in conflicts between external interpretations of Flann’s texts and texts’ implied authorial intentions or their interpretations elsewhere. Such instances illustrate the extent to which later composers and compilers re-interpreted or even appropriated Flann. His work’s perceived relevance within medieval and post-medieval reading is also a facet of his social meaning, alongside what is explicitly stated about him.

Relatedly, in the third strand, evidence permitting, I attempt to assess the impact and usefulness of Flann’s work within subsequent texts and compilations. Essentially pitching rhetoric against reality, or at least its best reconstruction, I consider in each case whether Flann’s designation as an authoritative scholar and the citation of his work is indicative of its genuine utility. In other words, I consider whether it is the context that Flann’s name invokes, or his actual purported texts, or a combination that generates his enduring stature.

As discussed below, this thesis is structured chronologically, not thematically, so these strands of investigation are pursued together in relation to successive corpora of material. I combine close reading of specific sources on Flann with surveys of his overall role in entire compilations and, ultimately, across the entire extant manuscript tradition. In so doing, it proposes new dimensions in the study of a medieval author, exploring his identity, cohesiveness, power, and utility and their impact on how he is presented and how he is understood.

3 Approaches and methods

3.1 Corpus formation

Given that this thesis is concerned with reception and perceptions, any reference to Flann Mainistrech is considered, regardless of apparent authenticity. Ambiguous references to ‘Flann’ are assessed on a case-by-case basis (e.g. 3:2.2). References to authors take a number of different forms in the manuscript tradition, the form
determining the type of information offered even before content is taken into account. While this thesis is not concerned with assessing attributions’ veracity, they also vary in their traceability. Brief, general definitions of each type of reference are set out below. None, incidentally, is exclusive to Flann.

### 3.1.1 Simple attributions

Poems appearing independently in manuscript collections can be attributed to an author-figure via a short superscription at the poem’s commencement, invariably ‘X cecinit’ (‘X sang’). Despite my nomenclature, simple attributions present various problems. First, since a simple attribution is external to the poem, we cannot be sure how long they have travelled together, unless the poem’s stemma codicum implies as much. More a textual variant than a fixed piece of data, such superscriptions’ provenance can be highly questionable. Indeed, some simple attributions to Flann are in secondary hands (2:4.2). Superscriptions can also become displaced within a series of poems during copying.

Secondly, a simple attribution appears to designate what follows as the work of a single, named individual. Yet the nature of this work is not clear. Despite the profusion of such superscriptions in Gaelic manuscripts, there has been no investigation of the possible critical meaning of cecinit in this context. It often seems to have been taken, by recent scholars, as ascribing absolute responsibility for the content, form and language of a poem – in short, virtually modern, copyrightable authorship – to the named individual, when medieval conceptions of the relationships between authors and texts have been shown to be much more complex. For example, many texts derive their presence in Carney and Pődör’s corpora (LR:3.2.2) from such attributions and they are then treated as closely exemplifying their specified authors’ language. Whether the ‘X cecinit’ formula can be legitimately interpreted solely via this model is a subject for a more general discussion than is possible here.

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3.1.2 Detailed attributions
Detailed attributions are like simple attributions in that they constitute external apparatus for an independent text. However, they include more information than the author-figure’s name, such as a summary of the text or additional details about the author, and offer a wider variety of verbal phrases to describe his responsibility for the text. They are thus valuable as explicit critical presentations. Both simple and detailed attributions can be denoted by the medieval term *titulus*, which refers not just to a text’s ‘title’ but to other data concerning its authorship and transmission.\(^{212}\)

3.1.3 Prosimetric attributions
As discussed (LR:4.2), poetry is often cited, in part or *in extenso*, within a prosimetric composition. Even if details provided about the poem and its author-figure are sparse, such attributions allow us to assess its relevance and importance within the prosimetric composition’s development and wider argument.

3.1.4 Internal attributions
Some poems contain one or more quatrains naming the author-figure and giving sundry other circumstantial details. Compared to external attributions, internal attributions’ embedment within a poem’s metrics might more strongly guarantee such material’s long-standing authenticity within the poem’s textual tradition. However, often appearing at the poem’s conclusion and beyond a *dúnad*,\(^{213}\) internal attributions’ later addition can rarely be ruled out (e.g. 2:4.2). It is also possible that the poem’s composer was donning a ‘mask’, in Tymoczko’s sense (LR:4.1). Naturally, prose texts’ colophons (e.g. 2:4.2.2, 4:2.1.4–5) can be even more ambiguous. Furthermore, in some cases (e.g. 4:2.1.3, 4:2.1.6.1), I argue that what has traditionally been read as an internal attribution is actually a citation (MR:3.1.5).

3.1.5 Indirect citations
An author-figure can be cited as authorising certain arguments or data without any text attributed to them being written out or even specified. While highly ambiguous in terms of provenance, such citations are significant evidence for understanding the citators’ concepts of authorship, as they show that an author-figure was not accessed


only through texts attributed to him but could be considered directly responsible for ideas and information manifestable in multiple textual forms.

3.1.6 Independent texts
We also have a small number of texts in which Flann appears not as an author-figure but primarily as a character.\(^{214}\) Whether such texts are best regarded as literary, historical, or pseudo-historical is often unclear. As a character, he is still invariably a scholar or a historian in such texts and often imparts information. Like citations, however, independent texts show that the medieval relationship with author-figures did not have to be via their purported direct compositions. They evidence interest in locating Flann within a social setting and within wider learned culture.

3.2 Structure
This thesis is structured around corpora of evidence rather than topic. This better facilitates the detailed textual analysis that some sources require, being either little understood textually or, sometimes, entirely unedited.\(^{215}\) In Chapters 2–5, its structure is derived from the dates of the manuscripts in which relevant material appears. **Chapter 2** considers manuscripts produced before 1200. **Chapter 3** focuses on prosimetric uses of Flann’s work in *LGÉ*’s medieval recensions; most of its major developments are datable to the Middle Gaelic period but its actual manuscripts are mostly late medieval. **Chapter 4** concerns other later medieval manuscripts (1200–1600). **Chapter 5** covers Gaelic-language manuscripts post-1600.

I use the dates of manuscript versions because of difficulties in reliably dating many individual texts and because this thesis is concerned not with texts’ origins but with their reception and interpretation. Many of the features via which such phenomena are studied − attributions’ precise forms or texts’ physical context − are particular to certain manuscripts. They thus make much more sense as this investigation’s primary unit of study. Consequently, the location of the discussion of

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\(^{214}\) This is not common for a historically-attested medieval Gaelic poet; however, for other examples, see O’Leary, ‘Identities’; Peter J. Smith, ‘Flann mac Lonáin (d. 891x918)’, *ODNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17683] [accessed 20 June 2015].

\(^{215}\) Editions of several such texts relevant to this study appear, with detailed commentary, in Gisbert Hemprich, *Rí Érenn, König von Irland: Fiktion und Wirklichkeit*, 2 vols (Berlin: Curach Bhán, 2015). However, this work has been published too late for it to be used in this thesis.
a text in this thesis should not be taken as dating its composition, it being widely accepted that early Gaelic texts are often preserved in late manuscripts.

In each chapter, a number of different aspects of the relevant periods’ Flann-related material are considered, in line with the strands of investigation set out above (MR:2). First, I take a broad survey of the material and interests attributed to Flann within each period’s manuscripts and address any major textual issues. Then, I examine Flann’s author-figure’s apparent self-presentation, that is, how texts attributed to Flann implicitly or explicitly present their author. Then, I consider the evidence presented by the period’s manuscripts for how these texts were understood and used, via their attributional apparatus, context, and textual variants. Flann’s presentation in independent texts is also considered alongside this evidence. I also attempt to make some observations on the actual, rather than proclaimed, utility of texts attributed to Flann in each period.

Combining these various approaches offsets their potential limitations. For example, overall surveys of the manuscript tradition might be somewhat untrue to the medieval subjective experience of working within manuscript culture and thus produce an impression of Flann that no medieval individual actually held. However, this type of information is then set alongside the close examination of specific responses to him and his work and both are set alongside intellectual activity’s discernible realities.

Also, while Flann’s apparent self-presentation and his treatment by commentators are dealt with separately, I treat both as presenting us with constructions and analyse neither as primarily about the historical Flann. This is due to ongoing attributional uncertainty and the possibility that we are, in some cases, encountering Flann’s imitators. Furthermore, as discussed (LR:4.3), medieval authors like Flann purposefully constructed themselves according to commonly understood categories and conventions.

**Chapters 1 and 6** are slightly different; in a way, both are about the manuscript tradition’s limitations for understanding a figure like Flann. **Chapter 1** identifies three independent texts most likely to contain near-contemporary material on him but shows that they not only operate within their own discourse and perspective but respond to aspects of the historical Flann’s biography. His
subsequent reception may thus in part derive from invisible factors not related to any extant texts attributed to him. Chapter 6 examines Flann’s profile in early printed works on Irish and Scottish history down to the late nineteenth century. In this medium, references to Flann are dominated by two bodies of material – the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ and the ‘Donegal Series’ – whose associations with him in the medieval manuscript tradition are extremely tenuous. However, in each case, it is possible that now-lost medieval manuscripts were behind the emergence of these attributions, raising questions concerning how well surviving manuscripts represent his original profile in learned tradition.

3.3 Techniques

This study thus purposefully takes a range of approaches. Furthermore, material relevant to Flann is quite varied in subject-matter, genre, and the means and extent of its transmission to us. Therefore, on the small-scale within this thesis, the exact methodologies deployed must necessarily respond to the evidence’s nature.

In general, I proceed, as discussed, through a combination of overall surveys of Flann’s corpus, close reading of specific passages internal and external to his purported work, and consideration of manuscript and textual context. In many cases, close reading necessarily calls for certain points’ developed literary or historical explication. Discussion of physical or textual context necessitates due cognisance of a manuscript’s codicology and palaeography or a text’s history. I also deploy targeted textual criticism in specific instances while discussing whether a text’s extant form is authorial or the product of subsequent compilation.

Furthermore, a number of texts relevant to Flann remain entirely unedited. Diplomatic editions, with translations, of unedited material are included as Appendices, while the main text includes highly provisional suggestions regarding their date and genre. Interestingly, most of the unedited material is not directly attributed to Flann but instead consists of citations or independent texts; its previous unavailability might explain why prior studies have underestimated or oversimplified Flann’s literary and scholarly afterlife.
Methodology Review

4 Methodology review: conclusion

This composite, diachronic study traces Flann’s reception and utility as an author-figure throughout Gaelic historiography, exploring how he purportedly presented himself and the strategies, models, and agendas that defined how later compilers interpreted him and his work. It thus offers insights into a named individual’s coherence, dynamism, significance, and authorising power and thus into fundamental issues of authority and textuality.

It is, of course, a single case study, so comparison with other authors or further examination of some of the concepts involved would usefully develop or contextualise its conclusions. In the meantime, this thesis maintains its focus on Flann: not only is a single case-study more practical for a doctoral project but, as we have seen, the extent to which ‘Flann Mainistrech’ consistently denotes a coherent individual is itself a major issue. It is intended not only to provide insights on the topics and themes discussed but also as a methodological experiment into how we might investigate medieval Gaelic authors given the material’s multi-dimensional nature.
Chapter 1

Fer Léiginn and Final Sage: Three Early Sources for the Historical Flann Mainistrech

1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine three sources that are particularly likely to preserve perspectives on Flann Mainistrech from his lifetime or very soon thereafter, although this does not at all imply that material examined in subsequent chapters is categorically inauthentic. They are Flann’s obits in the medieval Irish chronicles (1:2); ‘Úasalepscop Érenn Áed’, a panegyric for Áed úa Forróid (bishop of Armagh, 1032–56; 1:3); and the Irish genealogies edited as Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae (CGH; 1:4). Even in these early sources, Flann, as the texts present him, is prestigious but also multi-faceted and amenable to sources’ agendas. Importantly for our consideration of what he means as an author-figure, they show that he is also the subject of historico-literary interest independent of his purported texts.

2 Flann’s chronicle obits

2.1 Textual history (1)

A large proportion of the entries in the medieval Irish chronicles consist of death-notices, or obits, for kings, ecclesiasts, prominent scholars, and other elite figures. Almost all the chronicles covering the early Middle Ages originate physically from secular learned contexts in the fourteenth century or later but it is generally agreed that they were compiled out of earlier chronicles from ecclesiastical centres.216 While

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retrospective chronicling or emendation did occur,\(^{217}\) much material is thought to be originally near-contemporary with what it describes.

Six medieval Irish chronicles contain obits for Flann Mainistrech (Appendix 3). Each ascribes him titles and areas of expertise and provides a death-formula, as is standard when noting a scholar or ecclesiast’s death.\(^{218}\) However, each obit also varies significantly. The feasibility of reconstructing Flann’s original obits is discussed below (1:2.3). For now, the chronicles containing Flann’s obits can be split into three groups on the basis of textual history.

2.1.1 The ‘Armagh Group’
The ‘Armagh Group’ consists of the *Annals of Ulster* (*AU*) and the *Annals of Loch Cé* (*ALC*).\(^{219}\) These are both descended from (and continue) an Armagh-Derry Chronicle that was kept at Armagh during the eleventh century and transferred to Derry around 1189, ending in the 1220s.

2.1.2 The ‘Clonmacnoise Group’
The ‘Clonmacnoise Group’ consists of the *Annals of Tigernach* (*AT*) and *Chronicum Scotorum* (*CS*).\(^{220}\) Their textual history is generally more obscure.\(^{221}\) They seem to descend from a chronicle maintained at Clonmacnoise throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries and ending before 1200. That multiple pre-1200 Clonmacnoise chronicles influenced the tradition has been proposed.\(^{222}\) However, Nicholas Evans has shown that such a hypothesis is unnecessary,\(^{223}\) so we will assume the existence of a single Clonmacnoise Chronicle. Both the Armagh and Clonmacnoise Group

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\(^{217}\) For example, Evans, *Present*, p. 144.

\(^{218}\) For further examples, see Richter, ‘Personnel’.


\(^{221}\) Evans, *Present*, pp. 67–90, 249.

\(^{222}\) Dumville and Grabowski, *Chronicles*, pp. 153–226.

Chronicles used the hypothetical CI, which ended in 911, although Evans has suggested that written reports continued to circulate between chronicling centres thereafter down to the mid-eleventh century.

2.1.3 Late chronicles
Two seventeenth-century chronicles may draw on both groups. The *Annals of the Four Masters (AFM)* were compiled from a range of sources, including AU and ALC and a now-lost Clonmacnoise Group chronicle. The *Annals of Clonmacnoise (AClon)* is a Hiberno-English translation of a medieval Gaelic chronicle. According to McCarthy, this medieval chronicle used both the Armagh-Derry Chronicle and various Connacht sources related to the Clonmacnoise Group. AClon, however, remains particularly in need of further investigation.

2.1.4 Grouping the obits
Credible lines of textual transmission thus run from contemporary chronicling at Armagh and Clonmacnoise at the time of Flann’s death to the various extant chronicles. In structure and terminology, Flann’s Armagh and Clonmacnoise Group obits align according to the groups’ textual histories and thus may well derive from the two archetypal Chronicles. On the same basis, his AFM obit aligns with the Clonmacnoise Group. Since AClon might draw on both chronicle groups, its obit is more problematic. Reverse translated, it could resemble Flann’s obits in the Armagh Group but also his obit in CS: AClon’s lector appears as fer léiginn in cognate entries, its chronicler as suí senchusa or senchaid.

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2.2 Flann from his obits

It is worth discussing the terminology used to describe Flann in his obits not only to appreciate their testimony and variants but because this terminology will recur in other sources examined in this thesis.

2.2.1 ‘Textual study’, ‘historical tradition’
All of Flann’s obits – including AClon, reverse translated – ascribe Flann expertise in léigenn and senchas. Léigenn (‘textual study’, from Latin legendum) denotes formal textual study, often of authoritative texts and with ecclesiastical connotations.230 It is sometimes translated ‘Latin learning’, but I know of no evidence justifying such a restriction.231 Senchas (‘historical tradition’) refers to (quasi-)traditional, communally-sanctioned, although by no means necessarily oral, information of, and ostensibly from, the past, often aetiological.232 This information could resemble what we would call history, although can relate to diverse subjects, such as law.

2.2.2 ‘(Arch-)textual scholar’
In all chronicles except AT (and, technically, AClon), Flann is a fer léiginn (lit. ‘man of reading’; ‘textual scholar’); in AU and ALC, he is an ard-fer léiginn (‘arch-textual scholar’) while, in CS and AFM, he is specifically fer léiginn of Monasterboice. Fer léiginn is sometimes misleadingly translated ‘lector’,233 denoting either a liturgical reader or a teacher.234 A fer léiginn seems to have been both a teacher within a monastic school and a scholar and senior administrative figure in the community overall.235 Some fir léiginn also seem to have been primarily attached to secular kingdoms.236 The curriculum studied and taught by a fer léiginn is conjectural but

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233 eDIL s.v. fer.
236 For example, AFM 1070.2, 1088.1, 1106.2, 1137.4; cf. LL, I, p. xvi.
could have resembled *grammatica.* The term *fer léiginn* appears in most chronicles in the tenth century and appears most often in the eleventh and twelfth. Johnston correlates this with increased vernacular literary activity and education’s centralisation in major ecclesiastical centres.

*Ard-fer léiginn* apparently does not mean anything qualitatively different. *AT* and *CS* never use it in any entry, so it may be more stylistic than reflective of social reality. Since, in *AU, ALC,* and *AFM,* an *ard-fer léiginn* tends to appear in a more prominent monastery, like Armagh or Clonmacnoise, it may be connected to institutional power as well as scholarly ability.

### 2.2.3 ‘Ireland’s history’, ‘the Gaels’ history’

In the Armagh Group, Flann is *suí senchusa Érenn* (‘master of Ireland’s history’), while, in the Clonmacnoise Group, he is expert in *senchas* among the Gaidil. Taken literally, this denotes someone expert either in the traditions of every part of Ireland and every sept of its people or in the constructed, united pseudo-history of the island and its eventual inhabitants, as per such texts as *LGÉ.* It is also used to describe Eochaid ua Flannucáin (*ob.* 1004), a key early contributor to *LGÉ,* and Gilla na Naem úa Duinn (*ob.* 1160), known for metrical regnal histories and a metrical digest of *dindsenchas.*

Carey has suggested that the title, *suí senchusa,* in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, was only held by one individual at a time, as it appears in scholars’ chronicle obits roughly once a generation. This case seems difficult to sustain. The work of scholars with this title is quite varied, as Carey admits. The term also appears in more individuals’ obits than appear in his list. Furthermore, his list draws eclectically on multiple chronicles, without any textual explanation of how the record of a continuous institution became so widely scattered. The term seems to

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239 For example, *AU* 1046.5, 1102.12; *AFM* 1106.6.
240 *AFM* 987.2, 1003.4; *CS* 1004; Carey, ‘Legendary history’, pp. 41–42.
241 *AT* 1160.8; Bhreathnach, ‘Two contributors’, pp. 107–08.
243 Carey, ‘Legendary history’, p. 43.
244 *CS* 1024; *AFM* 1083.1.
have been open to more general usage. The significance of its specifically island-wide or pan-Goidelic scope in the case of Flann remains unclear.

2.2.4 ‘Arch-poet’, ‘poetics’
Interestingly, each group is split within itself on whether Flann is an ard-fili (‘arch-poet’; ALC, versus AU) or expert in filidecht (‘poetics’, ‘the profession of poetry’; AT and AFM, versus CS). Fili is thought to denote someone formally trained in metrics and linguistics who performs the social functions of praise and satire, making him comparable to a rhetorician.245 In the past, it has been taken as a distinctly secular category.246 However, recent studies have stressed the prominence of ecclesiastical institutions in a fili’s formation and career.247 These terms, when applied to Flann, could mean that he engaged in public, politically charged poetic discourse or simply that he was trained in the composition and interpretation of poetry. AT and AFM’s pairing of filidecht with airchental might imply the latter.

2.2.5 ‘Poetic composition’
Airchetal (‘poetic composition’; lit. ‘chanting forth’) seems to relate to the more technical aspects of filidecht, alongside which it is used in Flann’s obits in AT and AFM. It generally denotes the composition or performance of a poem, with no particular religious connotations.248 However, on the three other occasions it is used in the chronicles, airchetal is practised by evidently ecclesiastical individuals.249 It might thus refer to liturgical chant or mnemonic versification in a monastic school. Alternatively, it may be a corruption of forcetal (‘teaching’).250

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246 Johnston, Literacy, pp. 16–18.
249 CS 1085; AFM 1103.1, 1168.1.
250 ‘Mac Dá Chéirde and Cummaine Foda’, ed. and trans. by James. G. O’Keeffe, Ériu, 5 (1911), 18–44 (p. 32 (n. 4)).
2.2.6 ‘Final scholar’, ‘authority’, ‘master-sage’
The Clonmacnoise Group is distinguished by the use of pan-Goidelic titles in its obits for Flann that also describe his level of expertise in the various listed disciplines, even though the title is different on each occasion. *Tiugsuí (CS)* only ever refers to Flann, in any source. It also appears in ‘Flann a primchill Buiti binn’, a quatrain cited under his obit in *AFM* (see also 5:3.1) and constituting part of ‘Úasalepscop Érenn Áed’ (1:2). In the quatrain within Flann’s *AFM* obit, O’Donovan translates *tiugsuí* as ‘last sage’.251 Murphy’s translation of ‘Úasalepscop Érenn Áed’ has ‘final sage’,252 an epithet that Murphy suggests Flann obtained through compositions ‘summarising [...] all available tradition’.253 This interpretation is attractive and interesting, as we shall see. Yet, Hennessy, in the context of his *CS* obit, inexplicably translates ‘great sage’; *tiug* could also mean ‘difficult’, perhaps suggesting that Flann’s scholarship is obscure.254

Supremacy in learning is also implied by *ugdar* (‘author’, ‘authority’; Lat. *auctor*), in *AT*’s obit. This can simply denote a text’s composer but can also take on the sense of its Latin root. This designates an acknowledged expert and thus authority worthy of imitation in particular disciplines, also passing into the more impersonal sense of a citable source.255 *Ugdar* is used on only two other occasions in the chronicles in relation to non-legendary individuals.256 Both appear in the Clonmacnoise Group; one is a *fer léiginn*, the other an *ollam*, presumably in poetry.257

*Suí ecna* (‘master-scholar’ or ‘master of wisdom’), in the *AFM* obit, is more common in the chronicles. *Ecna* connotes divine, religious wisdom (*sapiens, sapientia*).258 Furthermore, it is often used in the chronicles in relation to individuals with formal ecclesiastical roles.259

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251 *AFM* 1056.3; *eDIL* s.v. *tiug*; see also Appendix 28.
252 Murphy (ed. and trans.), ‘Poem’, q. 31 (p. 155).
253 Murphy, ‘Poem’, p. 160.
254 *eDIL* s.v. *tiug*.
256 Cf. *AFM* 266.1.
257 *CS* 1067; *AT* 1160.8.
258 *eDIL* s.v. *ecna(e)*; Richter, ‘Personnel’, p. 276.
259 For example, *AFM* 946.6; *AU* 1005.4; *ALC* 1030.5; *AT* 1098.2.
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2.2.7 Flann’s attributes: agreement and variance

At the core of all his obits, therefore, Flann engages with texts (léigenn) and with traditional accounts of the past (senchas), very possibly pursuing the latter through the former. He, or his work, or both, are consistently of ‘national’ importance either to Ireland or to the Gaídil. He is also consistently ecclesiastical (fer léiginn, süí ecna, perhaps airchetal), although this is notably downplayed in AT.

In terms of variance, both groups disagree internally on whether Flann was a fili or qualified in filidecht. As discussed, this disagreement’s significance is unclear. If these terms were taken as meaning that Flann’s work was distinctly politicised or secular, they might have been avoided by chroniclers envisaging a distinction between such activity and some ideal of ecclesiastical scholarship. Indeed, quite remarkably, Flann is the only fer léiginn called a fili or ascribed expertise in filidecht throughout the medieval Irish chronicles, implying that the two categories were not generally considered compatible, at least not by some chroniclers. On the other hand, if filidecht simply connotes training in linguistics and metrics, then their incompatibility with the rest of his character is not obvious. The groups’ disagreement, of course, may simply arise from a stylistic choice between brevity and verbosity (1:2.3.1).

While the Armagh Group hardly plays down Flann’s significance, he is emphatically pre-eminent in the Clonmacnoise Group. The vocabulary used in AT, CS, and AFM’s verse citation is not only rare in the chronicles but itself denotes a scholar in command of his designated disciplines. The sense of his importance is further enhanced in AT and AFM by their precise dates for his death.

The two groups’ obits for Flann also differ structurally. The Armagh Group employs only titles (e.g. ard-fer léiginn) whereas the Clonmacnoise group ascribes Flann both titles (e.g. fer léiginn) and levels of expertise (e.g. ugdar na nGáidel) in disciplines (e.g. senchas). Ostensibly, the Armagh Group is concerned primarily with Flann’s social roles, while the Clonmacnoise Group is additionally concerned with scholarly disciplines, its obits also describing Flann via the disciplines in which he was adept. Indeed, the terms tiugsuí and ugdar both describe Flann’s relationships with bodies of texts and learned disciplines rather than any institutional function. In

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other words, the Armagh Group obits are more biographical while the Clonmacnoise Group obits focus on intellectual matters. Whether anything should be read into this is not clear; after all, the Armagh Group obits’ titles, ard-fer léiginn and sui senchusa, are also both ultimately based around disciplines. Wider research is needed into such obits’ structures before this observation can be taken further.

2.3 Textual history (2)

All of these obits were written down in the later medieval or post-medieval eras. As such, they constitute interesting evidence of what their respective scribes and compilers collectively thought was legitimate material on Flann. It might also be possible, however, to reconstruct what was in Flann’s archetypal obit in each group.

In the case of the Armagh Group, it is generally agreed that AU and ALC have a common source in the Armagh-Derry Chronicle ending in the 1220s. The Clonmacnoise Group is more problematic but may have a twelfth-century common source (1:2.1.2). Prior to these archetypes, except where entries appear in both Groups from a further common source (e.g. CI), editorial interventions are rarely straightforwardly discernible. This includes anything altered between the initial, presumably contemporary, records of Flann’s death and the groups’ archetypes. The latter are, however, the closest we can get to contemporary records.

2.3.1 Flann’s obit in the Armagh-Derry Chronicle

Since they appear in AU and ALC, we can assume that the Armagh-Derry Chronicle contained the words ‘aird-fer leighinn 7 sui senchusa Erenn, in uita eterna requiescit [or, ‘requieuit’]’. Also, AClon seems to translate the part prior to the death-formula.

ALC’s ard-fili is not in AU. AClon could have loosely translated ard-fili as ‘best learned’ but this lacks corroboration. It is, however, by no means certain that ard-fili was not in the Armagh-Derry Chronicle obit. ALC uses neither ard-fili nor fili to describe any other individual, although it does mention expertise in filidecht.261 It also attributes some verse citations to ‘in file’ (see below). Prior to the 1220s but before 1014, when ALC begins, AU uses ard-fili twice;262 both individuals are absent

261 For example, ALC 1086.1.
262 AU 1048.2, 1088.5.
from \textit{ALC}. Pre-1014, \textit{AU} also uses \textit{fili} on two further occasions.\textsuperscript{263} In general, \textit{ALC} mentions significantly fewer scholars than \textit{AU} for 1014x1224, 32 versus 57.\textsuperscript{264} In one exception, \textit{ALC} includes 12 \textit{ollaim} (sing. \textit{ollam}; ‘expert’, highest grade of \textit{fili}) compared to \textit{AU}’s 8 over the same period.\textsuperscript{265} While the overlap suggests that the series was in the Armagh-Derry Chronicle, \textit{ALC} either retained it more fully or sourced information on additional \textit{ollaim} from elsewhere.

Thus, both \textit{ard-fili}’s presence in, and absence from, the Armagh-Derry Chronicle obit raise issues. If it was not there, then \textit{ALC} interpolated a term it otherwise avoided and quite possibly expunged from its source, although \textit{ALC} is evidently not completely dismissive of poets. If it was, then \textit{AU} omitted it in Flann’s case despite using it elsewhere. None of those \textit{AU} designates (\textit{ard-}fili resemble Flann in any other way, except perhaps for the early pseudo-historian, Máel Muire Othna (\textit{ob. 887}),\textsuperscript{266} so \textit{AU}’s compilers may have been operating according to a particularly strict definition. On balance, \textit{ard-fili} cannot be dismissed as a late insertion into \textit{ALC} but may also have been in the Armagh-Derry Chronicle and thus possibly in the contemporary obit.

If \textit{ALC}’s compilers did interpolate the term, however, they may well not have intended any controversy. Between 1233 and 1293, \textit{ALC} cites a quatrain from ‘Éistid a ëigse Bhanbha’ on the death of each Ó Conchobair king of Connacht.\textsuperscript{267} There, they are attributed to ‘in file’ or ‘poeta’, specified once as Donnchad Baccach Úa Maoilchonaire (\textit{ob. 1404}),\textsuperscript{268} \textit{ollam} to Ó Conchobair.\textsuperscript{269} Hardly arcane, it is a metrical Connacht king-list recording each king’s \textit{aided} and is thus closely comparable to work attributed to Flann (e.g. \texttt{2:2.2.1}), although the poets possibly

\textsuperscript{263} \textit{AU} 887.5, 1009.10.
\textsuperscript{264} These observations are based on searches for \textit{léigenn, senchas, fili, filidecht, airchetal, ughdar, tiugsuí, ecna, éces, ollam and dán} (including declined forms and orthographic variants) in the electronic texts of the editions of the chronicles on \textit{CELT}.
\textsuperscript{265} \textit{ALC} 1016.1, \textit{AU} 1016.3; \textit{ALC} 1030.9, \textit{AU} 1030.8; \textit{ALC} 1041.2, \textit{AU} 1041.2; \textit{ALC} 1048.1; \textit{ALC} 1079.1, \textit{AU} 1079.1; \textit{ALC} 1088.3; \textit{AU} 1100.1; \textit{ALC} 1119.3, \textit{AU} 1119.3; \textit{ALC} 1130.3; \textit{ALC} 1177.8, \textit{AU} 1177.4; \textit{AU} 1178.8; \textit{ALC} 1181.4; \textit{ALC} 1185.5; \textit{ALC} 1281.1.
\textsuperscript{266} \textit{AU} 887.5; Carey, ‘Máel Muru Othna’.
\textsuperscript{268} \textit{ALC} 1278.1.
\textsuperscript{269} \textit{AFM} 1404.7.
differed in social role. As we have discussed, the semantic field of *fili* is quite broad and *AU* and *ALC* may well use it in different ways.

### 2.3.2 Flann’s obit in the Clonmacnoise Chronicle

Flann’s obit in the Clonmacnoise Chronicle probably resembled *AT*’s and *AFM*’s prose. *AT*’s omission of *fer léiginn* can be explained by its general disinterest in ecclesiastical material, *CS*’s omission of *filidecht* and *airchetal* by its tendency to abbreviate. *AFM*, meanwhile, includes all these elements, although its Clonmacnoise source remains obscure. As the extant chronicles split evenly between *ugdar*, *tiugsui*, or *sui ecna*, it does not seem possible to identify which of these terms is the original, although *tiugsui*’s status as Flann’s personal epithet might slightly recommend it.

*AT* and *AFM* both also include precise calendrical dates for Flann’s death, potentially providing a useful clue as to their material’s provenance. Flann’s death occurs on the seventh kalends of December (24th November) in *AT* but the fourth kalends (27th November) in *AFM*. *AT* also specifies the sixteenth of the moon. In 1056, this occurred on 26th November, that is, the sixth kalends of December. All this is within the scope of observational or scribal error, especially if Roman numerals (.,.,.,.) were used. The three dates thus seem to derive from the same piece of information and, being in *AT* and *AFM*, it was presumably in the Clonmacnoise Chronicle. However, the Clonmacnoise Chronicle does not seem to have included many such entries. Other than a small corpus apparently from *CI*, calendrical dates are very sparse in post-911 *AT* and *CS* and, where they do appear, tend to be paralleled in *AU*. *AT* and *AFM*’s calendrical death-date for Flann thus may well have been obtained elsewhere.

It may have come from an Armagh source. It is not known where Flann died, but Monasterboice or possibly Armagh seem most likely (1:3). For the tenth and

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270 Evans, *Present*, p. 52.
272 *Time and Date*, ed. by Steffan Thorsen
273 For example: *CI* 617.1 (p. 129); 637.3 (p. 141); 716.5 (p. 190); 763.1 (p. 231); 862.5 (p. 315); 879.1 (p. 329).
274 For example: *CS* 916 (cf. *AU* 916.1); *CS* 1022 (cf. *AU* 1022.3). For *AT*’s use of epacts, see McCarthy, *Irish Annals*, p. 190.
eleventh centuries, *AU* preserves several precise calendrical dates for events at Armagh and across the north, although without lunar data.\(^{275}\) These were presumably recorded at Armagh or within its *familia*. Furthermore, Evans has identified an annalistic document, with coverage up to *c*. 1060, which was used in both the Armagh-Derry and Clonmacnoise Chronicles.\(^{276}\) Several of *AU*’s entries containing precise calendrical dates seem to have been in this shared source.\(^{277}\) They lack calendrical dates in *AT* or *CS*’s corresponding entries but the shared source did not necessarily omit them.

In this context, it seems perfectly credible that Clonmacnoise’s chroniclers received the precise date of Flann’s death from Armagh. Even lacking the evidence cited, this sort of detail might be expected to originate ultimately from a chronicling centre near the incident. This raises the question of how much of Flann’s obit in the Clonmacnoise Chronicle was devised at Clonmacnoise and how much was received from Armagh. We might have been considering the view of one chronicling centre on Flann, not two. Furthermore, as we will see (1:3), Flann was evidently closely involved with Armagh, raising the possibility of bias in his favour.

### 2.4 Flann’s obits: conclusions

Flann’s chronicle obits provide us with a series of rough sketches of his interests and social roles, as we have discussed. Engagement with historical traditions and formal, pedagogical interpretation of literature are consistent elements, as is the ‘national’ scope or relevance of his activities.

Much remains uncertain, however. Other than these core elements, it is difficult to say with confidence what was or was not in any near-contemporary obits. In particular, both the authenticity of his designation as an *ard-fili* or as expert in *filidecht* and what this might mean are open to interpretation. We have also observed that the obits may be derived from two perspectives, one defining Flann in terms of his roles, the other in terms of his interrelationships with a schema of learning.

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\(^{275}\) Deaths of Armagh scholars: *AU* 1056.2 (in verse), 1064.5, 1086.1 (in verse). Other Armagh events: *AU* 989.1, 1020.4, 1092.7. Northern events: *AU* 926.6, 1004.5.

\(^{276}\) Evans, *Present*, pp. 244–46.

\(^{277}\) *AU* 989.1, 1004.5, 1020.4.
Finally, the institutional provenance of this material has also been called into question.

Further uncertainty emerges when one considers Flann’s obits in the wider context of the chronicles’ coverage of Middle Gaelic scholars and poets generally. Many authors with similar and apparently influential works in the manuscript tradition are absent from the chronicles, including Eochaid Éolach úa Céirín (2:2.2.3), Gilla Cóemáin, Tanaide Éolach, and Gilla Mo Dutu úa Casaide. This implies that factors not immediately discernible from authors’ texts might determine their inclusion: social prestige, political activities, or connections at a chronicling centre, for example. Coverage of Flann in the chronicles thus cannot be related directly to his role as an author of texts.

3 ‘Úasalepscop Érenn Áed’

It is to Flann’s connections at such a chronicling centre that we now turn. In ‘Úasalepscop Érenn Áed’, we have an apparently contemporary snapshot of Flann moving among Armagh’s ecclesiastical elite. This is an anonymous praise-poem for Áed úa Forréidh, bishop of Armagh from 1032 until his death in 1056. It is preserved uniquely in the seventeenth-century manuscript RIA B.iv.2. Nonetheless, the text is regarded as genuinely contemporary with Áed’s episcopacy; the obscure historical personages it mentions and its irrelevance to any subsequent political context make it unlikely to be a later fabrication. Murphy dates it specifically to 1032x1042.

The poem is mainly concerned with Áed’s generosity, piety, and erudition. Echoing secular panegyric, images of the enjoyment of alcohol in his presence recur throughout, culminating in the poet’s request for an exquisite drinking-horn (qq. 1–22). There then follow seven quatrains (qq. 23–29) on the extended family of Armagh’s Clann Sinaich abbot, Amalgaid mac Máel Muire (ob. 1049), then four (qq.

278 Smith, Three Historical Poems.
279 Carey, ‘ Legendary history’, p. 44.
280 Murray, ‘Gilla Mo Dutu’.
283 Murphy, ‘Poem’, p. 140.
30–33) on personnel from other churches in east Ulster and Louth. Among the latter, we find Flann Mainistrech (q. 31). It is never explained why these precise individuals are included alongside Áed, beyond involvement with Armagh and its network.

The quatrain on Flann, ‘Flann a primchill Buiti binn’, is also cited in his AFM obit and elsewhere (5:3.1). It has been translated by John O’Donovan and Alan Mac an Bhaird from Flann’s AFM obit and by Gerard Murphy from ‘Úasalepscop Érenn Áed’. Their translations are printed in Appendix 4. Despite its various manuscript versions being very similar, translations of the quatrain vary quite significantly, particularly at line c. In general, O’Donovan rejects any involvement of alcohol. He seems to derive mid-, ‘contemplative’, from midithir (‘judges, measures’), although no other examples of such a usage are apparent; however, can mean ‘honourable’ as well as ‘mead’. He reads ‘suidhes’ (‘who sits’) instead of RIA B.iv.2’s ‘súiges’ (‘who drinks’), even though, as Murphy points out, we might still expect saides rather than suides for ‘who sits’ in the early eleventh century. An interest in libations is also appropriate to the quatrain’s context in ‘Úasalepscop Érenn Áed’. I am thus more inclined towards Murphy and Mac an Bhaird’s interpretation on this point.

Less plausible is Mac an Bhaird’s reading of side as literally denoting underground fairy realm (gen. sing. of síd) in this context. It is not clear whether Murphy’s ‘magical’ is literal or figurative. The genitival adjective, side, can simply mean ‘wondrous’, which seems safer. O’Donovan’s anaphoric pronoun (‘side’) is not possible, as -i- is required for the rhyme with ‘tire’.

Line d, while commanding more agreement among the translators, is difficult to interpret. We have already discussed tiugsú (1:2.2.6). Murphy glosses ‘the three

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285 AFM 1056.3; Murphy (ed. and trans.), ‘Poem’, q. 31 (p. 155); ‘Dán Direach agus Ranna as na hAnnála 867–1134 AD’, ed. and trans. by Alan Mac an Bhaird, Éigse, 17 (1977), 157–68 (p. 165).
286 I am grateful to Prof. Gregory Toner for this explanation.
287 eDIL s.v. 2 mid; 1 mid.
288 For O’Donovan’s version of AFM, see Cunningham, Annals, pp. 74–76.
289 Murphy, ‘Poem’, p. 155 (n. 31c).
291 eDIL s.v. sid.
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Finns’ land’ as ‘a common poetic name for Ireland’, as if the poem echoes Flann’s ‘national’ status in the chronicles. The ‘three Finns’ – Bres, Nár, and Lothar – were indeed sons of Eochaid Feidlech, legendary king of Tara. However, the allusion may be specifically to the north of Ireland. For Kelleher, the Three Finns’ triple incest with their mother symbolises unity between the Connachta, Uí Néill, and Airgialla within Leth Cuinn. The allusion might even be to Armagh itself, as the Three Finns are sometimes associated with Emain Macha, in Armagh’s immediate vicinity.

Despite these issues, it is clear that Flann is very much an ecclesiast, as well as a formidable scholar, in this poem. All other identifiable characters are of ecclesiastical rank. Flann is named alongside some of Armagh’s most senior personnel, although he retains his association with Monasterboice. Corroborative evidence from the tenth century suggests that Monasterboice fell within Armagh’s jurisdiction at that point. In further indication of close ties, some important figures from Patrician hagiography are ascribed origins among the Ciannachta.

Flann, as depicted in his chronicle obits, is partially recognisable in ‘Úasalepscop Érenn Áed’. Moving in an ecclesiastical environment, he is a summative scholar who, again, may be of ‘national’ relevance, depending on how one interprets tír Trí Finn. However, he does not appear in the poem primarily through being a great historian but because of some role or favour at Armagh’s episcopal court and perhaps to enhance Áed’s prestige.

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295 ‘Druim Criaich, cét cét cúan’, ed. and trans. by Edward J. Gwynn in The Metrical Dindshenchas, 5 vols (Dublin: Hodges and Figgis, 1903–1935) [hereafter MD], IV, 42–47 (q. 5 (pp. 44–45)). However, the common name for this threesome, Tri Find Emain, is instead generally etymologised from emon (‘triplet’; i.e. ‘the three bright triplets’): eDIL s.v. 1 emon. I am grateful to Dr Kicki Ingridsdotter for her input on this point.
296 AU 924.5; Etchingham, Church Organisation, pp. 210–13.
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4 Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae

We also encounter Flann in an early source via his genealogical identity. An extensive collection of genealogies, appearing in LL, Rawl.B.502 (both twelfth-century), and a number of later manuscripts, has been edited as Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae (CGH). Flann appears in a pedigree included therein, which reaches his son, Echthigern, and, in Rawl.B.502, his grandson, Éogan. Further descendants and collateral relatives can be identified from other sources.

Flann appears among the Ciannachta, Tadg mac Céin’s descendants. Cían was the son of Ailill Aulomm, king of Munster, by Sadb, daughter of Conn Cétcathach and was thus descended from both the northern and southern royal lines founded by Míl’s leading two sons, Érimón and Éber respectively. In tradition, Tadg fought for Cormac mac Airt, a legendary king of Ireland, against the Ulaid and, in recompense, received land north of the River Boyne. His descendants there became known as the Ciannachta Breg and, later, after territorial losses in the early Middle Ages, as the Fir Arda Ciannachta. Another branch, the Ciannachta Glinne Geimin, somehow settled in the north-west, south of Lough Foyle. The Ciannachta’s origin-legend reflects their medieval situation under Úi Néill overlordship, despite their status as a fortúath. The Fir Arda Ciannachta were in control of Monasterboice by the eleventh century, as Flann’s father and descendants occupied various senior positions in the community. Accordingly, it was asserted

298 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl.B.502, saec. XI, XII.
300 CGH, pp. 246–48 (Rawl.B.502 154a18–21). O’Brien’s edition is referenced via the manuscript facsimile whence comes his main text; Flann also appears in the other manuscripts. In current foliation, his pedigree is at Rawl.B.502, fol. 83v18–21.
301 Dobbs, ‘Pedigree’.
305 Byrne, ‘Ciannachta Breg’, p. 121; Byrne, Irish Kings, pp. 68–69.
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that St Buite himself had been of the Ciannachta, although, for Mac Shamhráin, this was a fabrication in support of Monasterboice’s eleventh-century rulers.

CGH itself tells us nothing about Flann beyond setting out his purported pedigree, plus two subsequent generations. Yet, again, it is noteworthy that he is included at all. Historical poets are even rarer in CGH than in the chronicles; I have only been able to identify Eochaid úa Flannucáin therein. The inference is that Flann is once more appearing for reasons external to his textual output.

The Ciannachta’s sheer venerability may alone have warranted the inclusion of Flann’s lineage. However, Jaski has tentatively suggested that Flann or his offspring may in fact have redacted CGH, as we have it, themselves. CGH is derived from a northern redaction of a late tenth-century Munster genealogical collection and theirs is the only identifiable northern lineage to reach the late eleventh or (in Rawl.B.502) early twelfth century. This Munster genealogical collection was part of the now-lost Saltair Caisil, other purported contents of which may also have been copied or adapted by Flann and his circle. If this is CGH’s history, Flann’s appearance therein, very much against the trend for historical poets, is explicable by the context of its production. Even if it is not, the lineage traced for the Ciannachta in CGH (and elsewhere) implies that Flann did not stand or fall by scholarly talent alone but was also a member of the aristocracy.

5 Flann’s sobriquet

In his chronicle obits, in every text of CGH except LL’s, and in many other sources, Flann appears as Flann Mainistrech (‘of the monastery [of St Buite]’; i.e. Monasterboice). In contrast, he is never ‘Flann mac Echthigirn’ in medieval sources

310 CGH, p. 420 (LL 334b45–63). A search was made for Máel Muru Othna, Airbertach mac Cosse, Cínaed úa hArtacáin, Flann mac Máel Máedóc, Eochaid úa Flannucáin, Gilla Cóemáin mac Gilla Samthaimne, Gilla Mo-Dutu úa Casaide and Gilla na Naem úa Duinn.
beyond \textit{CGH}. ‘Mainistrech’ is retained in his sons’ patronymics, ‘mac Flann Mainistrech’.\textsuperscript{314} Yet none of his known descendants bear it in their own right, despite occupying senior positions at Monasterboice.\textsuperscript{315} Three individuals who do not appear to be Flann’s close relatives appear in the chronicles bearing it: Ailchú Monistrech Buiti (\textit{ob. 723}),\textsuperscript{316} Éogan Mainistrech (\textit{ob. 834}), fer lèiginn at Monasterboice and abbot of Armagh,\textsuperscript{317} and Cormac Mainistrech (\textit{ob. 1092}), Monasterboice’s abbot.\textsuperscript{318}

Its precise significance is thus not clear: it is applied universally neither to Flann’s immediate family nor to Monasterboice’s senior personnel. Kathleen O’Brien has observed that ‘geographic by-names’, the category in which she includes ‘Mainistrech’, are very rare in medieval Gaelic sources.\textsuperscript{319} I am not aware of any others relating to an ecclesiastical centre. There is thus little opportunity for analogy. One possibility is that it denotes someone from Monasterboice who was also prominent in wider networks. In any case, some unknown social convention seems to have shaped how Flann Mainistrech’s very name is preserved for us.

\section*{6 Historical sources: conclusion}

Arguably originating from very close to Flann’s lifetime, the sources discussed here present him as an important ecclesiastical scholar of texts and historical traditions. He may also have been some sort of professional poet. His work pertained to Ireland or the Gáidhil as a whole and, indeed, in \textit{CGH}, he has his own pseudo-historical, Milesian lineage via the Ciannachta.

These sources also give the impression of not really being about Flann strictly as an author but deriving from his richer historical existence. Many comparable authors are absent from the chronicles and \textit{CGH} and his appearance in ‘Úasalepscop Érenn Æed’ is apparently to do with ecclesiastical politics. Their presentation of Flann arises out of their own agendas and contexts, possibly including the historical

\textsuperscript{314} \textit{AU} 1067.1, 1104.1.
\textsuperscript{316} \textit{AU} 723.2; cf. \textit{AT} 723.2.
\textsuperscript{317} \textit{CS} 827, 834; \textit{AFM} 825.5; \textit{AU} 831.9, 834.2.
\textsuperscript{318} \textit{AI} 1092.8; \textit{CS} 1092; \textit{AFM} 1092.3. This data on these individuals was gathered via \textit{Index of Names in the Irish Annals}, ed. by Kathleen. M. O’Brien <medievalscotland.org/kmo/AnnalsIndex/> [accessed 17 July 2014].
\textsuperscript{319} O’Brien (ed.), \textit{Index} <medievalscotland.org/kmo/AnnalsIndex/DescriptiveBnames> [accessed: 17 July 2014].
Flann’s own career. At the same time, he is integrated into a number of constructs. It has been suggested that annalistic terminology is not simply descriptive of reality but deliberately limited and standardised to emphasise historical continuity.\textsuperscript{320} Ériu and the Gaidil, in whose senchas he is suí, were themselves pseudo-historical concepts.\textsuperscript{321} Flann himself is located within them even after possibly assisting in their elaboration. Indeed, the \textit{tir Trí Finn} allusion illustrates this discourse’s thoroughly literary nature.

Other aspects are simply inexplicable. For some reason, some chroniclers presented him as a \textit{fili} and some did not. The meanings of terms like \textit{fili}, \textit{tiugsuí}, \textit{ugdar}, even \textit{Mainistrech}, are uncertain and thus subjective. The Clonmacnoise Group chronicles render him distinctive, even imposing, within their coverage of Irish intellectual history; what he was thought to have done that merited this and whether it survives for us in the form of a text will never be entirely clear.

Therefore, even when we seek out the most reliably early sources, we encounter agendas, constructs, and ambiguities in presentations of Flann. Despite this, one important point can be securely made. None of these sources, copied and adapted throughout the Middle Ages, are about Flann as author of any specific texts. For chroniclers, genealogists, and a near-contemporary poet, he was primarily a character, rather than an author. He was not simply a function of his texts’ literal meaning. This is an important insight with which to approach actual texts attributed to him.


Chapter 2

'An audience that will become auctores':

Flann Mainistrech in Pre-1200 Manuscripts

1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine Flann’s texts in Middle Gaelic manuscripts. These were produced in ecclesiastical environments during a period of intense historiographical activity and fierce political competition among Ireland’s kingdoms for regional and national domination. In considering Flann’s texts, I begin within them and move outwards. That is, I begin by surveying their subject-matter and arguments (2:2.2, 2:2.3). I then consider authorial self-representation (2:3), before comparing this to their composition and authorship, as denoted or implied by external apparatus and context (2:4, 2:5). At this point, I consider some of the attributions’ authenticity. Finally, I examine instances in which Flann’s texts can be shown to have influenced other pre-1200 compositions (2:6).

2 Flann’s pre-1200 corpus

2.1 The manuscripts

All four Gaelic-language manuscripts produced between Flann’s lifetime and the beginning of the thirteenth century contain either texts attributed to Flann or some reference to him. These are:

322 2:5.3.

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− Rawl.B.503. The codex consists of the *Annals of Inisfallen (AI)*. It was compiled around 1092 at an ecclesiastical centre in Munster and continued periodically thereafter into the fourteenth century.

− RIA 23.E.25. *LU*, now fragmentary, contains pseudo-history, religious texts, and saga literature. It has traditionally been regarded as the consecutive work of three scribes – A, M, and H – the latter two continuing, glossing, and amending the material they found. M is often identified as the Clonmacnoise scholar, Máel Muire mac Meic Cuinn na mBocht (*ob. 1106*), although a case has been made for this being H. However, in a recent re-analysis, Elizabeth Duncan has divided H into nine separate hands (H1–9). The scribes’ activity has been dated variously to between the late eleventh and the early thirteenth century and located at Clonmacnoise or in Connacht.

− Rawl.B.502. Within this composite manuscript, Flann-related material appears in Section B, a twelfth-century historical and genealogical compilation by a single scribe. Although Section B’s identification with the ‘Book of Glendalough’ is disputed, its Leinster provenance is generally agreed.

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332 Ó Cuív, Catalogue, I, 163–81.
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- TCD 1339. $^{334}$ LL contains a very wide range of historical and literary texts. It was created by a circle of scribes between the later twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. $^{335}$ Like Rawl.B.502, it is invariably ascribed a Leinster provenance, but views on the precise centre vary. $^{336}$

$\textbf{2.2 Texts, topics, and interests}$

$\textbf{2.2.1 Historical poetry on Irish kingdoms}$

For a summary of Flann’s texts in LU, Rawl.B.502 and LL (for Rawl.B.503, see 2:6), see Appendix 5. Most concern Irish kingdoms in the post-Patrician era, especially Uí Néill kingdoms. They either narrate a kingdom’s origins or trace its continuity by relating the dindsenchas of its major royal site or by cataloguing the aideda of its kings. $^{337}$ Several of the poems attributed to Flann extend, in some or all versions, to cover events that occurred after Flann’s death in 1056. This issue is discussed further below (2:4.1), as are the poems’ relationships with the contexts in which they appear within their respective manuscripts (2:5).

By far the most attributions to Flann are found in LL and all but one of the texts in this manuscript attributed to him are in hand U, whose activity has been dated to 1151x1164. $^{338}$ Within LL, we first encounter the metrical regnal history of the kingship of Tara formed by ‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tnú’ and ‘Ríg Themra tóebaige íar ttain’, which are attributed to Flann both internally and externally. $^{339}$ I collectively term both poems the Tara Diptych. It runs from the prehistoric Eochaid Feidlech through about eighty reigns to the return of Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill (ob. 1022) after Brian Bóruma’s death in 1014. It ascribes the Uí Néill’s various branches a near-monopoly over Tara in the Christian era and, prior to that, has Niall Noigiallach’s lineage alternate with intruders from unrelated dynasties from across

$^{334}$ Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1339 (olim H.2.18), saec. XII [hereafter, LL].


$^{337}$ Zumbühl, ‘Contextualising’, p.20.

$^{338}$ Duncan, ‘Reassessment’, pp. 51–53.

$^{339}$ LL, III, ll. 15640–987 (pp. 504–15); Pődör (ed. and trans.), ‘Twelve Poems’, I, 279–303. For some reason, Pődör does not include ‘Ríg Themra tóebaige íar ttain’. Otherwise, limited access to Pődör’s unpublished thesis has meant I have unfortunately not always been able to consult her texts and translations.
Ireland. The Tara Diptych thus also implies that the kingship of Tara is a kind of island-wide overlordship.

‘Mugain ingen Choncraid cháin’, with a simple attribution in LL to ‘Flann’ (for the LU text, see below), narrates the miraculous birth, in the sixth century, of Áed Sláine, son of Diarmait mac Cerbaill, and ancestor of the Síl nÁedo Sláine, the southern Uí Néill rulers of Brega. It includes a prophecy that his descendants will contend for the kingship of Ireland; indeed, Síl nÁedo Sláine supposedly provided some early kings of Tara, whose achievements were later briefly matched by Congalach Cnogba mac Máele Mithig (ob. 959).

‘Inn éol duib in senchas sen’, in LL, bears a simple attribution to ‘Fland’. This is the only evidence for its authorship but it has generally been interpreted as referring to Flann Mainistrech, perhaps on account of its ending in the mid-eleventh century. Interestingly, this poem does not concern the Uí Néill at all. It names the kings of Cashel, in succession, from Cashel’s first Christian king, the fifth-century Óengus mac Nad Froích, to Donnchad mac Bríain Bóruma (ob. 1064).

The northern Uí Néill kingdom of Cenél nÉogain receives particularly lavish attention via a series of five poems in LL (‘Cía triallaid nech aisnis senchais’ to ‘A ngluind, a n-échta, a n-orgni’), termed the Cenél nÉogain Suite by Schlüter. With a simple and internal attribution to Flann, they detail Cenél nÉogain’s kings, their major battles, and those that had become kings of Ireland, introduced by a metrical dindsenchas of their seat at Ailech. It is followed in LL by two poems (‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’ and ‘Síl nÁedo Sláine na sleg’), bearing simple attributions to Flann, on the major southern Uí Néill kingdoms of Clann Cholmáin and Síl nÁedo Sláine respectively, giving names, reign-lengths, and aideda. I refer to all seven as the Uí Néill Series.

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343 For references, see Pödör, ‘Twelve Poems’, I, 323; Schlüter, History, p. 136.  
346 LL, IV, ll. 23853–4196 (pp. 803–14); MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Poems’, pp. 82–99; Smith (ed. and trans.), ‘Mide’ [‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’ only].
Beyond LL, ‘Mugain ingen Chonraid chán’ appears in LU as Genemáin Áeda Sláine’s metrical counterpart. Here, it is attributed to ‘Flann Mainistrech’. In Rawl.B.502, ‘Inn éol duib in senchas sen’, ‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’, and ‘Síl nÁeda Sláine na sleg’ all also appear within a series of metrical regnal histories on Irish kingdoms. All lack attributions and the first two extend much further than in LL, to the reign of Cormac Mac Carthaigh (1125–38) and the death of Donnchad mac Murchada Móir Úa Máelsechnaill (ob. 1106) respectively. In the Rawl.B.502 series, Cenél nÉogain is covered by ‘Cetri ro gabh Érinn uile’ (Appendix 12), here unattributed but attributed to Flann Mainistrech in some later manuscripts (5:2.1.3).

Containing the only actual reference to Flann in Rawl.B.502 outside CGH (1:4), ‘Druim Cetta, cett na noem’ is a complex poem. It appears as part of the preface to Amra Choluim Chille, an elegy for Colum Cille (ob. 597) composed, according to the medieval commentary, in response to events at the assembly of Druim Cett in 575. ‘Druim Cetta, cett na noem’, meanwhile, is a dindsenchas of Druim Cett (modern Co. Derry), within the territory of the Ciannachta Glinne Geimin. It contains a detailed account of the assembly (qq. 8–24) but traces the site’s significance back to much earlier events (qq. 1–7) and concludes with an assertion of the Ciannachta’s prestige, based on their descent from the royal lineages of both northern Leth Cuinn (i.e. the proto-Uí Néill) and southern Leth Moga (qq. 25–28; 1:4). The illustrious events that occurred within their kingdom at Druim Cett enhance their significance yet further. Thus, while it might have found its way into Rawl.B.502 (and later manuscripts: 4:2) through its testimony on the well-known assembly, it can be read as, in fact, promoting the Ciannachta. It concludes with a quatrain (q. 31) that could be either an internal attribution or a citation, naming

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347 SG, I, 82–84; II, 88–91; LU, II, 4205–334 (pp. 133–36).
348 LU, II, 4273–74 (p. 135).
‘Flann’ and Echthigern. Given that both Flann Mainistrech’s father and his son were
called Echthigern, that the poem is about the Cianachta, and that it potentially
refers to other eleventh-century events, it seems reasonable to take this as Flann
Mainistrech.

2.2.2 Lebor Gabála Érenn (LL)
Also in hand U, LL’s version of LGÉ (Scowcroft’s version N) contains two poems
with prosimetric attributions to Flann. These are concerned with more ancient
history. ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’ relates the aideda of the nobles of the Túatha Dé
Danann, while ‘Toisich na llóngse tar ller’ lists the aideda of the leaders of the
Gaidil’s invasion of Ireland in which the Túatha Dé Danann were overthrown.

2.2.3 Other
Two further texts attributed to Flann in pre-1200 manuscripts also relate ostensibly to
the pre-Christian past. ‘A gillu gairm n-ilgrada’, which begins a simple attribution
to ‘Flann Mainistrech’, is uniquely preserved in LL but in hand T2, whose activity
(1181x1224) is potentially the latest in the manuscript. The poem’s wider meaning
and purpose are unclear. It lists and mocks an apparently risible ‘munter mallacta’ of
itinerant craftspeople through highly alliterative casbairdne. O’Curry and Myles
Dillon took this as referring to the story later preserved as Tromlám Guaire, set in
seventh-century Ireland. However, Thurneysen and Seán Ó Coileáin convincingly

353 CGH, p. 247 (Rawl. B. 502 154a19–20); Byrne (‘Ireland’, p. 865), for some reason, understands
this Echthigern to be Flann’s son.
355 Carney, Poems, p. xii; Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p. 868.
357 LGÉ, IV, pp. 224–41; LL, I, ll. 1306–455 (pp. 41–46); Pődör (ed. and trans.) ‘Twelve Poems’, I,
233–62.
358 LGÉ, V, pp. 104–11; LL, I, ll. 1920–91 (pp. 60–62); Pődör (ed. and trans.) ‘Twelve Poems’, I,
263–78.
359 LL, I, ll. 3418–518 (pp. 108–11). Pődör also omits this text.
360 Duncan, ‘Reassessment’, p. 54.
361 LL, I, l. 3499 (p. 110): ‘cursed company’ (my translation). Unless otherwise indicated, quoted text
from LU or LL is from the relevant diplomatic editions.
362 O’Curry, Manners, II, 150–51; ‘The Yew of the Disputing Sons’, ed. and trans. by Myles Dillon
Ériu, 14 (1946), 154–65 (p. 154).
relate the poem, instead, to Tochmarc Étaine, set amidst interaction between the Túatha Dé Danann and the early Gaídil.

LU’s Aided Nath Í ocus a adnacol (‘Nath Í’s death and burial’; hereafter, ANÍ) is more complex. It begins, in hand M, with an account of the death in the Alps of Nath Í mac Fiachrach, the semi-historical last pre-Patrician king of Ireland, and his burial at Cruachu. There then follows a series of poems, with prose explications, listing others buried at Cruachu and elsewhere, with brief accounts of the circumstances of their composition. Duncan’s hand H1 then adds further material. This includes a colophon describing the text’s compilation by ‘Flann’, invariably taken as Flann Mainistrech, and Eochaid Éolach úa Céirin, a poet-scholar from Leinster, and the subsequent loss of two of the codices they consulted.

ANÍ, as extant, also focuses on Ireland’s pre-Christian past. One of the poems explicitly concerns the ‘tri réilce idlaide’. Of the identifiable interrees named in the text, Nath Í is chronologically the latest. Some are of the Túatha Dé Danann. Of those of the Gaídil, many are of the Ulster Cycle era.

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363 IHK, p. 256; Seán Ó Coileáin, ‘The making of Tromdámh Guaire’, Ériu, 28 (1977), 32–70 (p. 43 (n. 34)).
365 LU, ll. 2783–924 (pp. 90–94); ‘Die Legende Von König Dathi’, ed. and trans. [German] by Vlad Bănăţeanu, ZCP, 18 (1930), 160–88. For more information, see Nicholas J. Evans, ‘Circin and Mag Gerginn: Pictish Territories in Irish and Scottish Sources’, CMCS, 66 (Winter 2013), 1–36 (p. 11 (n. 33)).
368 LU, ll. 2919–24 (p. 94): ‘Flann, indeed, and Eochaid Éolach úa Céirin, it is they who compiled this from the books of Eochaid Ua Flannucáin in Armagh and from the books of Monasterboice and from certain other books besides, that is, the Yellow Book that was stolen from the strongroom in Armagh and the Short Book that was in Monasterboice, which the student took in theft across the sea and of which nothing is heard subsequently. So that is the history of the tombs’ (my translation).
369 LU, ll. 2867–70 (p. 92): ‘three pagan cemeteries’ (my translation).
2.3 Genres and purposes

Flann’s texts in pre-1200 manuscripts tend to catalogue different categories of historical characters and certain pieces of information about them. His metrical regnal histories, amidst much stereotyped panegyric, also provide an order of succession. Most also include aideda and sporadic genealogical information and two give aideda and reign-lengths. Aetiological narrative also features, in most cases related directly to the kingdoms charted in the regnal histories. As such, his poetry accords with forms and styles well-attested from Middle Gaelic historical poetry generally.370

While they generally lack explicit statements of purpose and can feel like information for information’s sake, a political purpose for the regnal histories and associated aetiological narratives seems highly credible. For one thing, such poems proclaim many of the dynasties covered to be eligible to provide kings either of Tara or of Ireland (2:3.3.3). More generally, this sort of poem essentially asserts a kingdom’s legitimacy, either by tracing the continuity of its royal succession or by demonstrating the antiquity of its territorial boundaries and royal centre. ANÍ’s identifications of dynastic tombs in ancient sites could be read in a similar way. Broun has suggested that poets like Flann were engaged in promoting the concept of kingdoms over dynasties.371 His interpretation also explains their incessant cataloguing of royal aideda, as this emphasised the ‘institutional longevity of a kingship in contrast with the mortality of kings’.372 Conceptions of broader political units may also have been influential. Smith sees eleventh-century historical poetry as a continuum, with histories of dynasties and kingdoms produced so that they could be synchronised and correlated into a single history of Ireland and the Gaídil.373

Alongside apparently legitimising kingdoms as entities, texts attributed to Flann can make more particularistic political arguments. The Tara Diptych, for example, is not just about the kingship of Tara’s antiquity or the validity of Uí Néill claims thereupon: it concludes with open celebration specifically of Máel Sechnaill’s

371 Broun, Scottish Independence, pp. 39–47.
372 Broun, Scottish Independence, p. 45.
373 Smith ‘Historical verse’, pp. 338–41.
return to the kingship as ‘Hérend oenrí’ and ‘ar n-ardrí’ in 1014. His own Uí Néill sept, Clann Cholmáin, is presented as particularly significant; for example, his great-grandfather, Flann Sinna (ob. 916), is said to be ‘de chlethchlaind Chuind Chétchathaig’. Similarly, ‘Inn éol duib in senchas sen’ concludes with support for the apparently contemporary Donnchad mac Briáin. ‘Druim Cetta, cette na noem’ (q. 30) asserts the Ciannachta’s right to enter ‘Cainduimm’ (i.e. Tara?), its promotion of their status being expressed through a specific institutional issue.

More puzzling is the political relevance, if any, of the conclusion to ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’, in which prayers are invoked for ‘mac meic Flaind a laech Luignib’, Luigne being a sub-kingdom of Mide. Possible identifications of this individual include the tenth-century poet, Eochaid úa Flainn, Máel Sechnaill (great-grandson of Flann Sinna), some grandson of Flann Mainistrech himself, or, perhaps most applicable, a son of Cernachán mac Flainn, ‘tigerna Luighné’ (ob. 1001/1012). Proposing this latter identification, Carey remarked that eleventh-century Irish political instability must have reduced Flann to seeking such a minor king’s patronage. As it happens, one of the toisich in the poem is called Luigne. Were he supposed to have given his name to the kingdom, this, alongside the concluding invocation, might also have pleased Cernachán’s son (however, see also 3:2.1, 5:2.1.1).

The purposes of ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’ or ‘A gillu gairm n-ilgrada’ are less clear, since any direct eleventh-century political relevance is not obvious and few clues are provided by the poems themselves. The relationship of Flann’s LGÉ poems, both in N and elsewhere, with the wider LGÉ project is a matter for discussion

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374 LL, III, ll. 15971, 15976 (p. 515): ‘Ireland’s only king’ and ‘our high-king’ (my translation).
376 LL, III, ll. 19426–27 (p. 636).
377 LL, I, l. 1989 (p. 62); LGÉ, V, pp. 110–11 (q. 18): ‘the grandson of Flann from heroic Luigne’.
379 Pődör, ‘Twelve Poems’, I, 264; Pődör ascribes ‘mac meic’ the sense of úa (‘grandson’, ‘descendant’).
380 AFM 1012.7.
381 Carey, ‘Legendary history’, p. 44.
382 LL, I, l. 1964 (p. 61); LGÉ, V, pp. 108–09 (q. 12).
383 The poem does not specify that this is the case, although, since other toisich have names like ‘Brego’, ‘Muirthemne’, and ‘Cualgne’, it may well be (LL, I, l. 1940–41 (p. 60); LGÉ, V, pp. 106–07 (q. 6)).
(Chapter 3). However, the two poems’ attributions to him in N imply that he was understood by the twelfth century to be an authority on the developing unified pseudo-history of the Gaídil,\textsuperscript{384} which is also possibly implied by his chronicle obits (1:2.2.3). This itself was political and associated with the construction of the idea of a kingship of Ireland.\textsuperscript{385} ‘A gillu gairm n-ilgrada’, meanwhile, can at present only really be taken as associating him with literary traditions at some remove from direct political or national history.

**2.4 Flann’s pre-1200 corpus: conclusion**

This survey of Flann’s interests and approaches, as they emerge from pre-1200 manuscripts, is based upon acceptance of all attributions to him in these manuscripts. The Flann that emerges has command of large quantities of historical information that he uses to draw lines of continuity legitimising various medieval political entities. His involvement is also attested in more abstract projects in national pseudo-history and literature. However, issues around the relevant attributions’ authenticity imply that this Flann might, to some extent, be a later construct. Furthermore, manuscript compilers’ contextualisation of some of these texts sometimes contrasts interestingly with how we might read them in isolation. These dimensions are discussed further below.

**3 Flann’s constructions of his own author-figure**

**3.1 Personal information**

First, I examine Flann’s presentation as author-figure within his texts. On a few occasions, these include biographical data relating to him. The Tara Diptych includes a prayer for Flann’s salvation, in which he is described as the son of a \textit{fer léiginn}.\textsuperscript{386} As we have seen (2:2.2.1), his father, Echthigern, may also make an appearance in ‘Druim Cetta, cèste na noem’. Here, intriguingly, Flann and Echthigern are presented as working or performing at Tara. The internal attribution in ‘A ngluind, a n-échta, a

\textsuperscript{384} Carey, ‘Legendary history’.
\textsuperscript{385} Scowcroft, ‘\textit{Leabhar Gabhála II}’, pp. 49–53.
\textsuperscript{386} \textit{LL}, III, l. 15986 (p. 515).
Chapter 2

n-origni’ (Cenél nÉogain Suite) explicitly describes Flann as *fer léiginn* of Monasterboice.\(^{387}\) In two further poems, Flann appears to locate himself at Monasterboice or in the environs.\(^{388}\) These scattered references imply that basic details of Flann’s identity were relevant in some way to his compositions.

### 3.2 The author-figure in Flann’s poetry

Several commentators have been drawn to Flann’s texts and others like them in these manuscripts on account of the allusions they make to their authors’ scholarly ethos. It seems most efficient to summarise their findings, rather than conduct a full review of the primary evidence. Key themes identified include his open, critical use of pre-existing texts and their invocation of audience and historical tradition to frame their author’s place in society as a professional.

In the 1880s, Zimmer examined Flann’s self-presentation while attempting to identify Flann as the compiler of a manuscript that constituted a major source for *LU;\(^{389}\)* a theory that has not met with widespread support (**LR:2.2**). However, in setting it out, Zimmer identified some interesting aspects of the texts attributed to Flann. He discusses multiple instances where Flann cites a written source or makes it clear that he is selecting his narrative from among several possible versions.

This presentation of Flann occurs most fully and clearly in H1’s colophon to *ANÍ (2:2.2.3).*\(^{390}\) In another example, in ‘Mugain ingen Choncraid cháin’, while Mugain, mother of Áed Sláine, is said to be from Munster,\(^{391}\) the poem concludes with the alternative view that she is from Connacht.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Is sí seo cen bétblaid mbrath} \\
\text{céf fearful senchad} \\
\text{cona hollaltaib cen ail} \\
\text{ba de Chonnachtaib Mugain.}^{392}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{387}\) *LL*, IV, ll. 23713–14 (p. 802); MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Poems’, pp. 74, 82

\(^{388}\) ‘Éstid a colchu cen ón’: *LGÉ*, IV, q. 26 (pp. 234–35); *LL*, I, l. 1406 (p. 44). ‘Síl nÁeda Sláine na sleg’; *LL*, IV, l. 24141 (p. 812); MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Poems’, q. 22 (pp. 94, 97).


\(^{391}\) *LL*, III, l. 18209 (p. 590).

\(^{392}\) *LL*, III, ll. 18264–67 (p. 590): ‘This is, with no treacherous deed, | the opinion of other historians | with mighty stanzas, beyond reproach, | that Mugain was of the Connachta’ (my translation); Zimmer, ‘Über den compilatorischen Charakter’, p. 682.
Accounts of Diarmaid mac Cerbaill’s wives do indeed vary, suggesting that this arose out of a wider historiographical issue.

Thurneysen, critiquing Zimmer, legitimately argues that collation of texts is but standard medieval monastic historiographical practice. Nonetheless, it is referenced with sufficient frequency in relation to Flann for it to have been considered particularly characteristic of him.

For Schlüter, historical poems in *LL* are ‘connected not only by their interest in the country’s past but also by a reflexion of the methods of the transmission of poetic knowledge about the past’. Schlüter cites the Uí Néill Series as particularly illustrative. As she demonstrates, in the course of this series, Flann’s author-figure carefully negotiates his relationship with historical tradition, with his learned colleagues, and with the past he is charting. He implies that the kingdoms inherited by the Uí Néill are so ancient and their kings’ deeds so numerous that their history is sometimes not recoverable. His various works are carved out in spite of this and in spite of the high standards of accuracy to which he claims to adhere.

This is not simply a medieval modesty topos. Emphasising the magnitude of such tasks is both a form of praise for the poems’ subjects and an assertion of the importance of historical poets’ role in Irish elite society. Memory and community are also repeatedly mentioned. Poets like Flann present themselves as both drawing upon and memorialising communal traditions, as enmeshed within society through preserving its collective past. In *LU*, the prosimetric attribution to him of ‘Mugain ingen Choncraid cháin’ frames his composition in terms of memorialising (‘do chumnigud’) the events in question. Such sentiments are also echoed in ‘Druim Cetta, cett na noem’, often ignored in surveys of Flann’s corpus. There, Flann and Echthigern are said to have provided ‘senchas cuimnech’ and blessings are invoked ‘dona clannaib a Cáindruimm’.

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394 *IHK*, p. 27.
398 *LU*, l. 4272 (p. 135); Toner, ‘Authority’, p. 62.
399 Stokes (ed. and trans.), *Bodleian Amra*’, pp. 240–41 (qq. 30–31): ‘mnemonic history’ [alternatively, ‘memorable history’]; ‘to the clans in Cáindruim’ (i.e. Tara?).
Chapter 2

In Flann’s poetry and beyond, history’s recoverability is described as being achieved via *rim* (‘enumeration’) and *riagal* (‘rule, measure’).\(^{400}\) These terms relate to the processes of corroboration and calculation that purportedly underpin sound metrical regnal histories and battle-lists. The implication is that such poems are not simply derived, fully formed, from tradition but are created out of contemporary scholars’ careful selection, analysis, and arrangement of received material.

Allusion is made, in one of Flann’s texts, to the value and validity of these activities of selection and arrangement. ‘Cía triallaid nech ainsis senchais’ begins with Flann framing his work via a topos typically used to illustrate and defend the strategy of *compilatio*.

\[
\text{Cía triallaid nech ainsis senchais} \\
\text{Ailig eltaig} \\
\text{d’eis Echdach áin. is gait a chlaidib} \\
\text{a lláim Hectoir.}\(^{401}\)
\]

In an anecdote repeated in various forms by Jerome, Macrobius, Isidore of Seville, and others, Virgil, accused of plagiarising Homer, supposedly retorted that the one who can take the club from the hand of Hercules is himself stronger than Hercules, thus validating the re-use and re-arrangement of material from accredited authors.\(^{402}\)

His use of this topos thus implicates Flann in the critical discourse around *compilatio*. It is difficult to be certain of its precise meaning in the context of this poem, as neither Eochaid nor the work referenced here under his name has been convincingly identified,\(^{403}\) so it is unclear how, if at all, Flann is meant to have put theory into practice.\(^{404}\) It can be taken as simply honorific. For Toner and Schlüter, Flann is deferring to Eochaid,\(^{405}\) while, for Brent Miles, Eochaid is being likened to Homer and Flann to Virgil.\(^{406}\) Indeed, it is never claimed that Flann actually took the

\[^{400}\text{Smith, ‘Historical verse’, pp. 337–38; Poppe, ‘Grammatica’, p. 207.}\]
\[^{401}\text{MD, IV, pp. 100–01 (q. 1); LL, IV, ll. 23344–45 (p. 782); Pódör (ed. and trans.), ‘Twelve Poems’, I, 1, 14: ‘Whoever attempts the telling of the story of Ailech of the herds after the noble Eochaid, it is robbing the sword from the hand of Hercules’ (Gwynn’s translation). All manuscripts except LL have Hercules instead of Hector.}\]
\[^{402}\text{On this tradition, see Ó Cróinín, ‘Na Mainistreacha’, pp. 23–24; Irvine, Making, pp. 242–43; Brent Miles, Heroic Saga and Classical Epic in Medieval Ireland (Cambridge: Brewer, 2011), pp. 40–43; Burnyeat, “‘Wrenching’”, pp. 198–202.}\]
\[^{403}\text{O’Curry, Manners, II, pp. 153–54; MD, IV, p. 401; Miles, Heroic Saga, pp. 40–41.}\]
\[^{404}\text{There are potentially more informative examples of possible adaptations by Flann (e.g. 5:2.1.1).}\]
\[^{405}\text{Toner, ‘Authority’, pp. 62–63; Schlüter, History, p. 139.}\]
\[^{406}\text{Miles, Heroic Saga, p. 41.}\]
‘sword’ from Eochaid’s hand. For Abigail Burnyeat, however, the presented relationship is more dynamic, as the Latin anecdote is generally used to imply that a compilator can actually surpass their source. She also suggests that its importance lies less in any personal politics and more in its expression of Flann’s strategy in this and other texts.407 It is potentially significant that ‘Cía triallaid nech ainsis senchais’ is structured in question-and-answer form. While the questioner and respondent’s identities are unclear, this form, like the opening quatrain, sets out a dialogic relationship with established authorities.

The poems attributed to him present Flann in terms of values attested for Middle Gaelic historical poetry and scholarship more widely. He places himself within a professionalised, learned tradition and, on occasion, openly notes and discusses the sources available to him. As well as stressing these learned credentials, the social utility of his work is also asserted. The texts’ explicit statements, on which such observations are based, are broadly supported by the texts themselves. As we have seen, they are often catalogues of data quite possibly culled from different sources or traditional narratives re-expressed in metre and acutely relevant to contemporary polities’ sense of legitimacy and identity.

### 3.3 The polycentric author-figure: text-specific self-representation

While useful in many ways, these studies fail to bring out the extent to which certain texts emphasise certain aspects of Flann’s author-figure. Rather than fragments that can be reconstructed into a single professional existence, many of Flann’s authorial self-references arguably constitute ‘masks’ or personae designed for particular contexts. This is not to say that they were uniquely crafted for the purpose, as they are largely in line with the wider common discourse which framed Middle Gaelic historiography. However, it does imply that authorial self-referencing in these texts is bound up in the rhetoric of the text itself, as also exemplified in _ANÍ (2:5.2.1)_.

#### 3.3.1 Written evidence and the Tara Diptych

Among his poems in pre-1200 manuscripts, Flann’s references to pre-existing, explicitly written materials largely occur in the Tara Diptych and specifically within

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407 Burnyeat, “‘Wrenching’”, p. 203.
the first poem, ‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tnú’. Its two references to physical writing are both made when the written source has somehow proved inadequate. In one instance, Núadu Necht merits inclusion as a king of Tara on the basis of a Leinster-based tradition ostensibly preserved via orality. However, the *scribinn* (‘writings’) give no details of his death and, since Flann has included Núadu anyway, this is presumably to be interpreted as their deficiency.

Atberat Lagin na llecht
robo ri ced Nuadu Necht;
a aided cen chobraind cain
ni fogbaim i scribennaib. 408

When a specific text is cited, it also fails to agree with Flann’s other sources.

Marb iarna rigad don tslóg
Eocho minglan Mugmedon;
ro firad cid cruth aile.
ro scríbad issin Scálbaile. 409

The text cited here may not be directly identifiable with the text now known as *Báile in Scáil* (‘the phantom’s frenzy’), a prose regnal history in the form of a prophecy. As extant, its editor, Kevin Murray, dates it to 1022x1036. 410 Since the Tara Diptych was likely composed between 1014 and 1022, during Máel Sechnaill’s second reign, the ‘Scálbaile’ must be an earlier recension of *Báile in Scáil*, if not something else entirely. Given the laconic accounts both texts provide of Eochu Muigmedón’s death, 411 what the disagreement might have been remains opaque.

Many of the Tara Diptych’s other accounts of royal deaths doubtless reference narratives preserved in some other literary form. 412 Indeed, each death-tale is designated an *aided*, 413 which is well-attested both as a category of information

408 *LL*, III, ll. 15657–60 (p. 504); Pödör (ed. and trans.), ‘Twelve Poems’, I, 297: ‘The Leinstermen of the graves say it: | even Núadu Necht, he became king; | his death, without a fine portion, | I do not find in the writings’.
409 *LL*, III, ll. 15765–68 (p. 508); Pödör (ed. and trans.), ‘Twelve Poems’, I, 302–03: ‘After his installation as king, | at the hands of the army died gentle-bright Echu Mugmedón; | it was fulfilled, although it was another form | which was written in Baile in Scáil’.
411 Murray (ed. and trans.), *Báile in Scáil*, §17 (pp. 38, 55–56).
413 *LL*, III, ll. 15641 (p. 504), 15782 (p. 509).
handled by historical poets and as an element of titles for prose narratives, as if this form of catalogue poem is interlocked generically with the saga tradition. Yet the only references to the material’s written provenance occur when written sources have caused some sort of problem.

Fleeting reference is apparently made in ‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tún’ to an early *fianaigecht* narrative, preserved as *Scéil as-a:merar combad hē Find mac Cumaill Mongán* (‘the story by which it is known that Mongán is Find mac Cumaill’).

> Án flaith Fothud Cairpdech crech  
> corod caith Fothud Airgdech;  
> maíti in tAirgdech a díth de  
> la Cailte i crích Cruithne.

In this Old Gaelic text, a dispute erupts between Mongán mac Fiachna (*ob. 625*), the king of Dál nÁraide, and Forgoll, his poet, on the location of Fothad Airgtech’s death. It is resolved by the arrival of the *féinnid*, Cailte mac Ronáin, who confirms the king’s assertion that it occurred in Dál nÁraide territory on the grounds that it was he, Cailte, who killed him. As the Dál nÁraide were traditionally considered Cruithni, Flann is probably referencing this narrative. Nonetheless, no reference is made to physical texts, only to Cailte’s boasts, with which Flann registers no disagreement.

While only mentioned twice, written evidence appears on both occasions as the object of critical comparison. In the more positive reference to Cailte, meanwhile, Cailte is an eye-witness to the event in question. As Toner points out, this renders his testimony compelling, in medieval historiography’s terms, and very possibly more compelling than mere *scribinn*. In reference to Nuadu Necht, he also openly

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415 *Compert Mongáin and Three Other Early Mongán Tales*, ed. and trans. by Nora White (Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2004), pp. 73–75, 79–81.
416 *LL*, III, ll. 15745–48 (p. 507); Pődör (trans.), ‘Twelve Poems’, I, 302: ‘A splendid ruler, Fothud Cairpdech of plunder, | until Fothud Airgdech exhausted (?) him; | Airgdech, his death was boasted of on account of it, | by Cailte in the territory of the Picts’.
Chapter 2

compares oral and written sources. In this poem, therefore, Flann evaluates a variety of historical evidence according to an attested medieval value system.

Curiously, no references to any sort of source occur in ‘Ríg Themra toebaige iar tain’, the Diptych’s post-Patrician component. This might not be very meaningful, as such references are fairly infrequent in the first component. Yet it might also be because the historical record for Ireland’s Christian era was perceived to be more secure, meaning Flann did not need to comment so openly on the evidence before him. Given its limited appearances, Flann’s open citation and assessment of sources should not be considered simply a character trait, evidenced at random moments in his corpus, but a response to specific historiographical situations. His author-figure is shaped by the texts produced out of such situations.

3.3.2 Rím and the Cenél nÉogain Suite

Rím and its various derivatives frame Flann’s activity in several texts. ‘A gillu gairm n-ilgrada’ enumerates (‘tuirmem’) the risible ‘munter mallacta’. In H1’s addition to ANÍ, the text’s author-figure states of the catalogues of Ireland’s various cemeteries ‘ni thic dim a n-áirim uli’, meaning either that he is not responsible for counting the interrees listed or that the actual total of interrees is uncountable. While not using this term specifically, there are also a number of instances where Flann comments on chronology.

In the Cenél nÉogain Suite, references are made to rim in three of the four non-narrative components. Here, it can describe either the curated data a poem contains or an unattainable historiographical ideal. Tensions over whether Cenél nÉogain’s history can be subject to rim, and whether Flann is capable of making it so, together articulate the relationship noted by Schlüter between historical poets, contemporary elite society, and a past that is perhaps only semi-tractable.

419 LL, I, l. 3423 (p. 108).
420 LU, l. 2916 (p. 94): ‘I did not count them all’ (my translation).
421 This may also be a précis of a line from a cited poem: LU, l. 2867 (p. 92).
Chapter 2

In ‘Cind cethri ndíni iar Frigrind’, the subject of *rím* and *áirem* is the sixteen Cenél nÉogain kings who were also kings of Ireland, with which the poem concludes.424

**Rím** Aed Uaridnach Subne Mend
is Fergal fossad
Aed Ollán riam
7 a brathair Níall Frossach.

[...]

Derb ro sechnus drem na llethríg
ciabtar lanfir
ardgus n-eolaig
connachas tarddus i n-arium.425

*Rím*/Áirem thus seems to involve selection and definition, as well as straightforward listing. The implication here is that it has been successful. However, it is different with the metrical battle-list poems. Two begin by stating that the kings’ martial deeds are uncountable.

**Áirem** Aní doronsat do chalmu
cloanna Eogain.
cia ’meradid
ni etat a arim eolaig.426

[...]

Angluind a n-echta a n-orgni
batar infir
is lia turim
connachas clunid o filid.427

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425 *LL*, IV, ll. 23473–74 (p. 787), 23877–78 (p. 787); MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Poems’, pp. 49–50, 53–54 (qq. 30, 32): ‘Reckon [with them] Aed Uaridnach, Subne Menn, and staunch Fergal, Aed Ollán beforehand and his brother Niall Frossach’; ‘Truly I have omitted the list of half-kings, though they were whole men, a learned man's high task, so that I have not brought them into reckoning’ (my emphasis).
426 *LL*, IV, ll. 23575–78 (p. 791); MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Poems’, pp. 58, 63 (q. 1): ‘What Eogan’s race have done of valiant deeds, though ye bear it in mind, the learned cannot recount’ (my emphasis).
427 *LL*, IV, ll. 23711–14 (p. 797); MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Poems’, pp. 70, 75 (q. 1): ‘Their deeds, their death-dealings, their devastations that were manly, their numbering is too great for you to hear them from a poet’ (my emphasis).
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The latter quatrain can be taken various ways, depending on whether Flann is understood as a fili. If so, he is declaring himself incapable of enumerating Cenél nÉogain’s martial deeds. If not, he is perhaps declaring that he can succeed where mere filid have failed. Indeed, he occasionally expresses confidence in his materials. In ‘Aní doronsat do chalmu’, he states of the battles of Muirchertach mac Erca ‘is a dó ro rath rele recta’. In ‘Ascnam na seol sadal’, Cenél nÉogain’s deeds are to be recounted ‘iarsain slich cen breobail [...] cen didail’, perhaps referring to them being presented chronologically. Alternatively, ‘slich’ can also mean ‘version’ or ‘recension’, so this might instead be about Flann’s adherence to a certain source.

Yet, at the Suite’s conclusion, Cenél nÉogain’s martial deeds remain without number:

Áirim a crech
ní étann nech ní nach ada
cid as aidblí coro áirmi
gainmi in mara.

Collectively, these references to rím imply that it is possible to put in order a matter like Cenél nÉogain’s kings of Ireland but that any account of the wider doings of Cenél nÉogain will never be definitive.

As suggested above, this careful disposition of certainty and wonder may well be rhetorically purposeful. Specifically in the Cenél nÉogain Suite, Flann presents himself as grappling with complex and mutable historical traditions. As with his assessment of evidence in the Tara Diptych, this might well partially reflect the conventions and anxieties of the historical Flann and scholars like him but it seems to be given emphasis in this context for some specific reasons. In neither case are the reasons definitely identifiable. Assessment of evidence might be important specifically to ‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tnú’ because it is concerned with the distant past or, as has been suggested, because Flann was constructing the first continuous

429 LL, IV, I, 23484 (p. 788); MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Poems’, pp. 54, 56 (q. 1): ‘it is no easy undertaking – according to sequence, without flaw’.
430 MacNeill, ‘Poems’, p. 56 (n. 3).
431 LL, IV, II, 23845–46 (p. 802); Mac Neil (ed. and trans.), ‘Poems’, pp. 74, 82 (q. 67): ‘The reckoning of their forays – we find nothing that is not lawful – what is more measureless till thou number the sands of the sea?’ (my emphasis)
Tara king-list for this period.\textsuperscript{432} Ambiguity around the full recoverability of Cenél nÉogain’s history, as has been suggested, might be a panegyric strategy or, indeed, a strategy of self-promotion. In each case, however, Flann’s author-figure seems to have been crafted in a particular way.

\subsection*{3.3.3 Political subjectivity}
We have already considered the potential political interests animating much of Flann’s corpus in pre-1200 manuscripts, as well as the explicit support expressed therein for certain factions or individuals. Such interests provide apt interpretations for many of the poems, whose purposes are regularly non-explicit, and are in keeping with the close relationship envisaged in recent studies between medieval Irish scholars and secular elites.\textsuperscript{433}

However, when considered collectively, political plurality and subjectivity across Flann’s corpus mean that his textual persona cannot be characterised by a consistent political stance. This might be because some of the poems have been misattributed,\textsuperscript{434} but it is also arguably historically realistic. Political actors are sometimes compelled to switch sides, especially in turbulent contexts like eleventh-century Ireland. In either case, taking Flann as he is presented in pre-1200 manuscripts and in U’s contribution to \textit{LL} in particular, the views he seems to express are not necessarily to be traced back to a coherent persona but either to later textual developments (2:4) or to specific, politically subjective moments in the historical Flann’s career. Like the different rhetorical self-constructions employed in Flann’s poetry, the impressions we get of Flann’s political interests are mediated by the needs of the texts that present them.

The starkest contradiction exists between the Tara Diptych and ‘Inn éol duib in senchas sen’. As we have seen, the Diptych offers developed support to Uí Néill claims on Tara’s kingship and to the idea that this kingship had long constituted the

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{432} Smith, ‘Historical Verse’, p. 341.
\bibitem{433} Ó Corráin, ‘Nationality’; Johnston, \textit{Literacy}.
\bibitem{434} Particular scepticism has been expressed concerning Flann’s authorship of the following poems: ‘Inn éol duib in senchas sen’ (Ó Cuív, ‘Some developments’, p. 285; Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p.865; Pödör, ‘Twelve Poems’, II, 189), ‘Ascnam ni seol sadal’ (MacNeill, ‘Poems’, pp. 38–39. However, see also Schlüter, \textit{History}, p. 137 (n. 177)), ‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’ (Smith, ‘\textit{Mide}’, p. 110), and ‘Síl nÁedo Sláine na sleg’ (Byrne, ‘Historical Note’, p. 392). For a defence of all four, see Pödör, ‘Twelve Poems’.
\end{thebibliography}
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overlordship of Ireland.\textsuperscript{435} Not only does it conclude by proclaiming Máel Sechnaill, of Clann Cholmáin, to be Ireland’s \textit{ardrí} but it shows the kingship to have been consistently held by the Uí Néill or proto-Uí Néill throughout the period it covers. While the Diptych never definitively equates the kingship of Tara with a kingship of Ireland, a few of Tara’s kings are identified as kings of Ireland individually.\textsuperscript{436} Furthermore, non-Uí Néill intruders come from across the island, implying a ‘national’ significance. All this is in keeping with the policy of the Diptych’s honorand, Máel Sechnaill, of promoting the Tara kingship’s antiquity and cultural significance, alongside Uí Néill solidarity, in the face of Brian Bóruma’s more tangible successes.\textsuperscript{437} The Tara Diptych includes Brian’s reign over Ireland and presents it in a very positive light.\textsuperscript{438} However, its overall scheme of consistent Uí Néill kingship accommodates such occasional intruders, so his significance is safely contained.

In ‘Inn éol duib in senchas sen’, the historiographical perspective is very different. Rather than fleetingly claim a long-standing Uí Néill prerogative, in this poem, Brian unifies the \textit{cóicid} (‘provinces’) of Ireland himself. No pre-existing overlordship or centre is mentioned.

Ro innsaig Brian Banba mbind
ar ríge Chasil chendfind;
7 is é thall a mbarr
do choic coicedaib Herend.\textsuperscript{439}

The poem concludes by envisaging an island-wide role for the youthful Donnchad mac Bríain,\textsuperscript{440} whose reign as king of Cashel began sometime in the late 1020s.\textsuperscript{441} In short, it very much favours Dál Cais.

The dissonance with the Tara Diptych is evident. Yet a biographical context in which the historical Flann could have composed such a poem can be envisaged. No Uí Néill candidate for the kingship of Tara or of Ireland emerged after Máel

\textsuperscript{436} For example, \textit{LL}, III, ll. 15780 (p. 508), 15851 (p. 511).  
\textsuperscript{438} \textit{LL}, III, ll. 15961–67 (p. 514).  
\textsuperscript{439} \textit{LL}, III, ll. 19419–20 (p. 636); Pődör (ed. and trans.), ‘Twelve Poems’, I, 338: ‘Brian [Bóruma] attacked sweet Banba | after gaining the kingship of bright-headed Cashel | and it is he who took away their supremacy of the five provinces of Ireland’.  
\textsuperscript{440} \textit{LL}, III, ll. 19426–27 (p. 636); Pődör (ed. and trans.), ‘Twelve Poems’, I, 338.  
\textsuperscript{441} Máire Ni Mhaonaigh, \textit{Brian Boru: Ireland’s Greatest King?} (Stroud: Tempus, 2007), pp. 101–07.
Sechnaill’s death in 1022 and Flann had reason to favour Dál Cais through his connections at Armagh. However, Flann Mainistrech’s authorship of this poem is particularly uncertain. It is only ever attributed to ‘Fland’ in LL and there is no further evidence of any medieval tradition of Flann Mainistrech’s authorship; a poet of this name more often associated (anachronistically) with Dál Cais is Flann mac Lonáin (ob. 891/918). Its eleventh-century end-date presumably led to the superscription’s ‘Fland’ being identified in modern scholarship, rightly or wrongly, as Flann Mainistrech. It is thus uncertain whether any medieval scholar ever proposed him as this poem’s author, let alone whether such a proposition would have been accurate. Indeed, its incongruities may have led the superscriptor to name only ‘Fland’.

Elsewhere, Flann also notes the eligibility for island-wide kingship of Síl nÁedo Sláine in ‘Mugain ingen Choncraid cháín’. He does the same for Cenél nÉogain in ‘Cind cethri ndíni iar Frigrind’. For all the Tara Diptych’s promotion of Máel Sechnaill, ‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’, in passing, names only Flann Sinna as a Clann Cholmáin king of Ireland, making no statement applicable his dynasty in general. The idea that the kingship of Tara or of Ireland was open to multiple branches of the Ui Néill or even to other factions is, of course, widely attested. Flann also never implies that any one Ui Néill dynasty’s eligibility is exclusive. However, other than in the Tara Diptych, Flann concentrates only on a single dynasty’s eligibility in any given text. Indeed, even the Tara Diptych is weighted towards Clann Cholmáin, as we have seen (2:2.3).

He thus comes across in each case as a particular dynasty’s advocate. This impression reinforced by the panegyric language used to describe virtually every king, although this is normal for medieval Gaelic historical poetry. Flann seems to frame each poem as if the kingdom or dynasty in question is central to history. This situation could be interpreted biographically; the historical Flann may have at some

442 Ni Mhaonaigh, Brian Boru, pp. 46–48.
443 Smith, ‘Flann mac Lonáin’.
445 LU, I. 4327 (p. 136); LL, III. l. 18260 (p. 591).
447 Smith (ed. and trans.), ‘Mide’, q. 34 (pp. 119, 131).
448 Jaski, Early Irish Kingship, p. 214.
point have had professional reason to assert the claims of each different dynasty. Alternatively, this may be but a generic feature of historical poetry. His political loyalties thus either changed in the course of his life or are conditioned by the requirements of the text he is producing. In both cases, we struggle to pin down a single persona through considering specific political interests, although more general interests in the Uí Néill and in national kingship are consistently attested.

### 3.4 Flann’s author-figure: conclusion

Flann’s author-figure within his texts in pre-1200 manuscripts does not contain many direct contradictions. Both the substance of his texts and the self-referencing within them imply that he gathered and ordered material from pre-existing sources, which previous investigations of specific texts have often confirmed (LR:3.2). This is made out to be difficult. Written sources do not always agree; it is not always possible to be confident that a complete account has been established. It is also interesting that he is twice presented as collaborating with another scholar; to these two we might add ‘Eochaid’ from the Cenél nÉogain Suite (2:32) and we shall encounter another instance in a text from later manuscripts (4:2.1.3). This is not at all common in medieval Gaelic sources and so his operation within social networks seems to be a distinctive aspect of his persona and prestige.

Politically, these manuscripts’ extant texts tend to focus on the Uí Néill and a northern, Tara-based kingship. Different political interests motivate ‘Druim Cetta, cette na noem’, while ‘A gillu gairm n-nilgrada’, ANÍ and his LGÉ poems concern a more general Gaelic past. ‘Inn éol duib in senchas sen’, if it really was ever attributed to Flann, would present a more serious divergence from his general agenda.

These are the themes that emerge from a general survey. We have, however, also seen that Flann assumes particular stances and personae in particular texts, fronting certain methodological issues and empathising heavily with his subjects’ political agendas. What seems to be a medieval text’s author can be constructed or manipulated for certain contexts. It is not clear how medieval readers would have approached the resulting polycentric author-figure. We can never really know if

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449 For example, Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p. 868.
medieval readers would have been able or inclined to gather and compare clues about Flann from multiple texts as we have done. The evidence that we do have for these texts’ reception is presented below.

4 Flann and his compilers (1): attributional apparatus

This study has hitherto taken at face value the attributions to Flann in the three manuscripts under consideration. There are, however, multiple instances that lead us to conclude or suspect that an attribution might be secondary to a text’s composition or even to its transcription, as we have it. There are also instances where extraneous or anachronistic material is presented under Flann’s name.

This thesis does not aim to delineate Flann’s corpus. However, our survey of Flann’s collective textual persona must needs be qualified by the varied, sometimes suspicious circumstances under which texts come to be associated with him. Furthermore, evidence of the ongoing, dynamic reconfiguration of Flann’s authorship and corpus supports our discussion of the meaning made by later compilers in their treatment of his work (2:5).

4.1 Impossible attributions

As is evident from Appendix 5, a number of poems attributed to Flann by LL’s hand U include coverage of events that post-date his death in 1056. This does not rule out Flann’s authorship of the pre-1056 sections. However, the addition of continuations to poems under his name or the attribution to him of anachronistic poems each imply that his historical identity was either partially obscure or not of primary importance among the texts’ handlers.

In LL, ‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’ bears the superscription ‘Fland cecinit’. However, it ends with the death of Conchobar úa Máil Sechnaill in 1073. In other manuscripts, it continues to various points in the twelfth century. Smith has argued that the LL text represents the extent of the archetype and therefore

450 Immediately following the Cenél nÉogain Suite, it seems fair to take this ‘Fland’ as Flann Mainistrech.
451 Smith (ed. and trans.), ‘Mide’, qq. 49–51 (pp. 121, 132–33).
rejects Flann’s authorship. He and Schlüter both suggest that the attribution was made because the poem follows the Cenél nÉogain Suite. Previously, MacNeill and Pődör had both defended the attribution. Both postulate that the reference to Conchobar’s death is a later interpolation, the poem having been composed by Flann during his reign (1030–73).

A similar issue is also encountered within the Cenél nÉogain Suite itself. While q. 59 of ‘Aní do ronsat do chalmu’ concerns events in 1003x1004, qq. 61–69 jump forward to 1061x1099. MacNeill argued that it originally ended at q. 60. This quatrain is phrased like a conclusion and, in accordance with the Cenél nEogain Suite’s fidrad freccomail (alliteration between quatrains), its last line (‘fora nglúnib’) alliterates with the opening line of the next poem, ‘A ngluind, a n-échta, a n-orgni’.

In both cases, therefore, attributions to Flann are incompatible with the undifferentiated inclusion of events postdating his death. Explanations have been offered that accommodate Flann’s authorship. Yet the fact remains that the material was presented this way in LL, suggesting either that Flann’s historical identity was imprecisely understood or his authorship consciously expanded.

**4.2 Secondary attributions**

Some attributions are themselves problematic, irrespective of the content of the text they describe. Palaeographically, they appear secondary to the text’s transcription. In the case of the Cenél nÉogain Suite and ANÍ, there is reason to suspect that the text presented as Flann’s work was compiled out of different components. Unlike the features discussed in 2:4.1, these do not rule out Flann’s authorship of the material but some manipulation or supplementation can be suspected.

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457 LL, IV, ll. 23693–94 (p. 795); MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Poems’, pp. 63, 69 (q. 60)
4.2.1 The Book of Leinster

4.2.1.1 The Book of Leinster’s secondary attributions

In LL (LGÉ N), ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’ is introduced, ‘is do haidedaib na toisechsa anuas ro chan in senchaid so sis’; according to both Macalister and LL’s editors, ‘in senchaid’ (‘the historian’) is glossed ‘.i. Fland Ma n’. This gloss is certainly rendered clearly in the lithographic facsimile. However, only very slight traces are visible in the manuscript as digitised on ISOS (Appendix 6.1). These traces’ interpretation is corroborated by the same poem’s attribution to ‘Flann’ in LGÉ F, the other main version of LGÉ recension a, within an otherwise very similar introductory formula (Appendix 10.1). Yet the gloss was clearly added after the writing of the main text and may have been added in a different ink, given the relative lack of damage to the surrounding lines.

LL’s simple attributions for ‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’ and ‘Síl nÁeda Sláine na sleg’ are also potentially secondary. Both superscriptions, ‘Fland cecinit’ and ‘Fland Mainistrech cecinit’ respectively, are in red ink (Appendix 6.2–3). It has been suggested that the first has been erased, although, in Smith’s opinion, it is simply faded. I know of no comment on the second other than Byrne’s denial of its existence.

Throughout LL, simple attributions are otherwise in black ink encased by a red box. Furthermore, hand U originally left no space for a simple attribution of ‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’. ‘Fland cecinit’ only just fits in towards the left of the column, between the initial ‘M’ and the last line of ‘Angluind, a n-échta, a n-orgni’ (Appendix 6.2). It happens to appear directly beneath the phrase ‘Fland fer legind’ and so might relate to this internal attribution and not to ‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’ at all, resolving the difficulties discussed in 2:4.1. ‘Síl nÁeda Sláine

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458 LGÉ, V, §502 (pp. 194–95 n. 16): ‘It is on the deaths of those leaders above that the historian sang this’; LL, I, ll. 1918–19 (p. 60).
459 Atkinson (ed.), Book of Leinster, p. 16 (ll. 6–8).
460 LL, p. 16v6–8.
461 LL, pp. 184b19, 185b1.
463 Byrne, ‘Historical Note’, p. 392.
464 LL, p. 184b18.
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na sleg’ begins a new column, within which no space has been left for the superscription.\textsuperscript{465} However, this is \textit{LL}’s standard layout.\textsuperscript{466} I have no palaeographic evidence against these two superscriptions being, like their texts, in hand U, although the small sample size frustrates definite conclusions. Yet rubrication distinguishes them visually from other simple attributions and the unplanned position, in one case, suggests that their inscription was somehow secondary to the texts’ initial rendering.

4.2.1.2 Textual history of the Cenél nÉogain Suite

While it is presented as a single unit in \textit{LL}, there is reason to suspect that the Cenél nÉogain Suite’s overall integrity as a single work by Flann is a secondary construct. Smith and Schlüter have already suggested that the attribution to Flann of the entire Uí Néill Series might be motivated by the compilers’ objective of presenting an amalgamated history.\textsuperscript{467} The same centripetal forces may have been at work on the Suite itself at some previous stage.

To recapitulate (see also Appendix 5), the Suite begins with a simple attribution to Flann and concludes with an internal attribution to him. Each component ends on a marked \textit{dúnad} linking back the Suite’s opening (‘Cia’), with the exception of ‘Aní doronsat do chalmu’, which ends ‘co hArd Macha. A.’.\textsuperscript{468} MacNeill has already demonstrated that the Suite was open to supplementation prior to its inclusion in \textit{LL} from ‘Ascnam na seol sadal’ and the ‘Aní doronsat do chalmu’ continuation (2:4.1).

Under further examination, other poems in the Suite give cause for suspicion that they did not originally belong in such a context. Such suspicion is aroused by the conclusion to ‘A ngluind, a n-échta, a n-orgni’ (qq. 67–69), including the internal attribution to Flann.

\begin{verbatim}
Áirim a crech
ní étann nech ní nach ada.
cid as aidbli coro àirmi
gainmi in mara.
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{465} \textit{LL}, p. 185\textsuperscript{1}.
\textsuperscript{466} Cf. \textit{LL}, pp. 47ra1 (scribe A), 149\textsuperscript{1} (U), 181\textsuperscript{1} (U).
\textsuperscript{467} Smith, ‘\textit{Mide}’, p. 110; Schlüter, \textit{History}, pp. 137–38.
\textsuperscript{468} \textit{LL}, IV, l. 23712 (p. 796); MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Poems’, p. 63 (q. 69).
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Meraid co bráth
a n-adchoad do chach dia nglonnaib
ní ara n-écnach
ní écind cétmad dia nglonnaib.

Fland fer legind ó Manistir
rod mór Dia.
iss é dosróna
dia n-iarfaíse nech croda cia. C.469

Q. 68 ends on a weak, unmarked, but possible dúnad (‘dia nglonnaib’) linking back to the poem’s beginning (‘A ngluind’). Furthermore, the poet uses the first person in q. 68 (‘adchoad’), before Flann appears in the third person in q. 69. Finally, as MacNeill notes, fidrad freccomaill is lacking between qq. 68 and 69.470 ‘A ngluind, a n-échta, a n-orgni’ may thus have once been an independent poem and, during its incorporation into the Suite, q. 69 may have been added to supply both a suitable dúnad and an overall author.

A possible counter-argument is provided by q. 69, although this counter-argument raises its own problems. MacNeill translates line c’s infixed object pronoun as a third-person plural but it could also be third-person singular. Q. 69 contains no nouns to which this could credibly refer but qq. 67–68 contain both plurals (‘crech’ (‘plunders’), ‘glonnaib’ (‘deeds’)) and a feminine singular (‘árim’ (‘enumeration’ thereof)). All describe the contents of ‘A ngluind, a n-échta, a n-orgni’. Thus, q. 69 is most naturally read as stating that Flann composed this poem in particular, unless it is a synecdoche. Its dúnad still binds ‘A ngluind, a n-échta, a n-orgni’ into the Suite as a whole but, otherwise, it need not be read as describing the Suite. Indeed, in none of its five poems is the Suite as a whole referenced directly.

Turning to ‘Cind cethri ndíni iar Frigrind’ and ‘Aní doronsat do chalmu’, their textual history is also more ambiguous than is often assumed. While it is well-known that ‘Cía triallaíd nech aísinis senchais’ appears in various later compilations

469 LL, IV, ll. 237313–14 (p. 802); MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Poems’, pp. 74, 82: ‘The reckoning of their forays – we find nothing that is not lawful – what is more measureless till thou number the sands of the sea? What I have told to all of their feats will live till doom; it is not in censuring them that I would not tell the hundredth of their deeds. Flann the Lector from Monaster that God hath magnified, he hath compiled them, if any brave man ask who’.

of metrical *dindshenchas* as Gwynn’s Ailech II, very few scholars who discuss the Cenél nÉogain Suite seem to be aware of two later medieval manuscript versions of the other two poems (Appendix 7). These later medieval versions contain no mention of Flann and potentially suggest that LL’s closely integrated Cenél nÉogain Suite is a later construct.

In the *Book of Lecan* (Lec.), ‘Cind cethri ndíni iar Frigrind’ immediately follows ‘Cia triallaad nech ainsnis sencchais’, within the Ailech article in the manuscript’s type-C prosimetric *dindshenchas*. Here, ‘Cind cethri ndíni iar Frigrind’ is presented as a component of ‘Cia triallaad nech ainsnis sencchais’: it has a smaller initial ‘C’ and the *dúnad* ‘cia C.I.A.T.R.I.A’.

‘Aní doronsat do chalmu’ appears elsewhere in Lec.. It follows an unedited prosimetric tract which Lec. entitles ‘Catha Cenel Eogain andso o Eogan Mac Neill co Muirchertach mac Neill meic Domnaill’ (hereafter, *Catha Cenél Éogain*), within the manuscript’s genealogical collections. *Catha Cenél Éogain* summarises the battles fought by each king of Cenél nÉogain and each king’s aided, from the eponymous Éogan mac Néill to Muirchertach mac Lochlainn (ob. 1166). In Lec., the poem is introduced ‘conad do cuimnedud na cath sin do can in file’. Beginning on fol. 59, it consists only of qq. 1–10 and 12, compared to LL’s 69 qq., and lacks a *dúnad*. It seems to be incomplete. The remainder of fol. 59 is blank; fol. 60 commences with Uí Maine genealogies.

The sixteenth-century RIA D.ii.2 also contains a type-C *dindshenchas* collection. Here, ‘Cia triallaad nech ainsnis sencchais’, ‘Cind cethri ndíni iar Frigrind’, and ‘Aní doronsat do chalmu’ all appear within the article on Ailech. Here, ‘Ani

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472 One exception is Gwynn (*MD*, V, 145).
475 *Lec.*, fol. 254⁴³³, 254⁴⁵⁰.
478 A sample entry is printed and translated from three manuscripts in Appendix 25.
479 *Lec.*, fol. 59⁵¹-sixteen: ‘so it is to remember those battles that the poet sang’ (my translation).
480 Dublin, RIA, MS D.ii.2 (1222), saec. XVI, fols 59⁵²–⁶¹th24.
doronsat do chalmu’ consists of the same eleven quatrains that appear in Lec.. Again, the latter two poems are visually subordinated to the former; in fact, the manuscript’s cataloguer does not even list the lattermost poem as a separate text. The configuration of dúinte is complicated (Appendix 7 and below).

For the purposes of this account, I designate LL, Lec., and RIA D.ii.2’s respective versions of these poems as T, R, and D. x is the archetype of all three. By Gwynn’s reckoning, the dindsenchas collections in Lec. (his ‘Lc’) and in RIA D.ii.2 (his ‘S’) have a common source (ϵ). ‘Cind cethri ndini iar Frigrind’ thus presumably followed ‘Cía triallaid nech aisnis senchais’ in ϵ also; whether ‘Aní doronsat do chalmu’ was in ϵ is uncertain but unlikely, as we shall see. I designate ϵ’s version of these two or three poems e.

In terms of the first two poems, R and D (i.e. e) generally agree against T, although both can agree with T against each other. Nonetheless, it seems likely that ‘Cía triallaid nech aisnis senchais’ and ‘Cind cethri ndini iar Frigrind’ were paired in x. These two poems thus have a history together independent prior to the Cenél nÉogain Suite.

As for ‘Aní doronsat do chalmu’, the e-texts, R and D, also tend to agree against T. The sudden discontinuation of R’s text on a subsequently blank page is presumably the result of a scribal accident unique to R. On that basis, R appears to have been the ultimate source for D’s matching text, although not its usage, of ‘Aní doronsat do chalmu’. Meanwhile, the context is partially that of T. D (or some intervening version) may have united this poem with the first two on account of their common subject-matter and metre (snédbairdne). However, that D should do so despite R’s inadequacies implies a conviction that these three poems belonged together, a conviction prompted, perhaps, through indirect influence from T or ancestors thereof.

So far, comparison of these three versions supports, sometimes tenuously, their association pre-T (i.e. LL’s Cenél nÉogain Suite’). However, the e-texts of

482 MD, V, p. 53.
483 Gwynn nowhere suggests that ‘S’ might be dependent on ‘Lc’.
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‘Cind cethri ndíni iar Frigrind’ conclude in a manner that suggests that it might once have been an independent text, even though both these versions present it as part of the previous poem. Both contain an extra quatrain (q. 33a; Appendix 7.2). Significantly, q. 33a supplies an unmarked dúnad (‘flaithchind’) linking back to the beginning of the poem. Furthermore, D omits q. 34, which supplies the Suite’s dúnad. It is possible that q. 33a represents the original ending of the independent poem.

This hypothesis is not unproblematic. Being in both R and T, q. 34 was presumably in x; q. 33a, meanwhile, can only be shown to have been in e. This suggests that q. 33a is more likely to be the later addition. Yet R’s arrangement of q. 34 after q. 33a breaks fidrad freccomaill; q. 33 and q. 33a, meanwhile, maintain it. Thus, even if q. 34 had been in x, it could still be an addition. The T tradition could have removed q. 33a, the original ending. It is also unclear why anyone would have needed to invent q. 33a with q. 34 already present.

To summarise, the conjunction of ‘Cía triallaid nech aisnis senchais’ and ‘Cind cethri ndíni iar Frigrind’ goes back to x and predates T (LL’s Cenél nÉogain Suite). It is also supported by their visual presentation and dűinte in T, R, and D. However, as with ‘A ngluind, a n-échta, a n-orgni’, the quatrain on which this conjunction depends looks like a subsequent addition. D’s addition of ‘Aní doronsat do chalmu’ has been shown to be secondary and unrelated to e. The rest of the Suite and any references to Flann are nowhere to be seen in R and D.

In light of evidence from other manuscripts, LL’s Cenél nÉogain Suite (T) is a particularly closely consolidated, unitised edition of these poems, which MacNeill has already shown to contain multiple strata. This conclusion, in turn, renders problematic the simple (but not necessarily the internal) attribution to Flann, as this is tied to the idea that the Suite is a single work. In fact, the projection of his authorship may be part of the text’s unitisation. The Uí Néill Series’ secondary attributions to Flann following the Suite may be the beginnings of another such endeavour, as Smith and Schlüter have suggested.

That being said, Flann could also have authored many or all of the components texts independently. Indeed, Pődör’s demonstration of their similar language and style and their ongoing interest in rim (2:3.3.2) mediate in favour of
common authorship. Later compilers seem to have appropriated his authorship through adding further material and also adapted the texts so as to emphasise his single authorship more strongly.

4.2.2 Lebor na hUidre

LU also potentially presents a secondary attribution. ‘Mugain ingen Choncraid chain’ is attributed prosimetrically to ‘in senchaid inso .i. Fland Mainistrech’. This is all within the main text, in M’s regular script. Yet its syntax perhaps suggests that ‘.i. Fland Mainistrech’ is a textually non-original explanatory gloss. Zimmer interpreted it thus, although mainly because he believed that Flann authored the prose and would not have named himself. The suppletive form may, of course, be simply a feature of prose style.

H1’s three-paragraph continuation of ANÍ, including the colophon naming Flann and Eochaid as compilers, is of uncertain provenance, as is the marginalia added by both H1 and M. The two recognised versions of ANÍ in later medieval manuscripts (4:2.1.5) contain H1’s continuation, although only one includes the colophon, mid-text. Both contain within their main texts material that appears as marginalia in the LU version. For Ó Concheanainn, LU’s ANÍ is the archetype of all subsequent versions, a thitherto non-existent product of H[1]’s response to M’s text and also the dense annotation both scribes provide: H[1] added his continuation, including the colophon, on the basis of his own information and sources. Meanwhile, Oskamp and West (for different reasons), argue that LU’s ANÍ reflects a pre-existing textual tradition from which both M and H[1]’s contributions derive, West suggesting that they were working to reconcile two recensions. This interpretation mediates in favour of the colophon’s long-standing place in the textual tradition. However, both Oskamp and Ó Concheanainn ruled out the colophon’s

485 LU, p. 53’1–2; ll.4274–75 (p. 135): ‘this historian i.e. Flann Mainistrech’.
487 For example, LU, ll. 10114–15, 10711 (pp. 307, 326).
489 Ó Concheanainn, ‘Scribes’, p. 147.
composition by Flann and Eochaid themselves.\textsuperscript{491} The colophon is thus in general regarded as a secondary interpolation.

4.3 Attributional apparatus: conclusion

Several attributions of texts to Flann can be shown to have been introduced secondarily to the texts’ initial transcriptions. Several texts, possibly by Flann, may have been consolidated and expanded by later compilers, while retaining or inserting him as ostensibly their single author. The historical Flann’s contribution remains a matter for another study. For now, we can conclude that attributional apparatus was, where Flann was concerned, not simply transmitted but a site of active interest and intervention among compilers. Meanwhile, alongside previously discussed instances of texts’ wholesale misattribution (2:4.1), the boundaries of works attributed to Flann sometimes seem to have been malleable.

5 Flann and his compilers (2): contexts

We have seen that later compilers were willing and able to take control of Flann’s author-figure and of his corpus’ boundaries. Extra meaning is often imputed into Flann and his work via the contexts in which they are placed. I examine two forms of such contexts. In the first, his texts contribute particular strands of information within larger scale collections. In the second, extended narratives can be discerned which detail how the material within Flann’s texts came to be known and transmitted to and by him. As a result, we can consider presentations of Flann’s work both in terms of its place in historiography and some of the mythology created to support its claims to historiographical truth.

5.1 Flann’s work within intracodical networks

Texts attributed to Flann are necessarily placed in some sort of context in their respective manuscripts. \textit{LU}’s history of fragmentation, supplementation, and re-arrangement makes its medieval structure(s) difficult to determine at present.\textsuperscript{492}

\textsuperscript{491} Oskamp, ‘Notes’, p. 125; Ó Concheanainn, ‘Scribes’, p. 146.
\textsuperscript{492} Abigail Burnyeat, ‘\textit{Compilatio} and the Creation of \textit{Lebor na hUidre}’, (unpublished conference paper, ‘\textit{Lebor na hUidre}: A Conference’).
Rawl.B.502 and LL offer more potential. Indeed, Schlüter has analysed LL as a whole in terms of thematic clusters. 493 Below, I consider some instances in which a particular interpretation of Flann’s work is implied by its manuscript context and compare this to the texts themselves.

In LL, the Úi Néill Series, about which we have had much to say thus far, occurs between two texts so utterly unrelated that Schlüter understands it to constitute its own unit within the codex. 494 The Tara Diptych, meanwhile, is part of a more interrelated metrical collection. It is summarised in Table 1. 495

**Table 1: The LL Dúanaire: the Tara Diptych in Context**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LL, IV, ll.</th>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Subject-matter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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493 Schlüter, *History*.
494 Schlüter, *History*, p. 137.
495 For editions and discussion, see Schlüter, *History*, pp. 128–33.
Chapter 2

This series (hereafter, the *LL Dúanaire*) constitutes an encyclopaedic corpus on the past of the Gaídil and of Ireland set within a universal history, comparable in scope and interests to *LGÉ*. Flann’s Tara Diptych seems to provide but one strand of information therein. For Schlüter, however, these poems complement and thus corroborate each other. It is also worth noting that the poems are all attributed to late ninth- to mid-twelfth-century scholarly author-figures, often overtly ecclesiastical, hailing from across Ireland. The *LL Dúanaire*’s composite history of Ireland, therefore, is the product of the Middle Gaelic period and of a particular social group. Flann’s inclusion is in line with what we know of his biography. It is also compatible with the self-presentations in his texts, in which he is set within learned networks and traditions. In a way, such networks and traditions are replicated on the manuscript page in series such as this.

It is interesting that the *LL Dúanaire*’s compilers were happy to include the Tara Diptych’s conclusion, with its express, direct support for Máel Sechnaill (2:3). None of the other poems are so specifically politicised, the series as a whole adopting a very broad historiographical scope. While we might see politicisation as compromising a historical work, the Diptych’s conclusion does not seem to have had this effect, at least not to a great extent. In fact, the specific political and authorial context it provides may have enhanced the Diptych’s prestige or been of interest itself as a piece of intellectual history.

*LGÉ* N presents a similar example in its treatment of ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’. N is distinctive, within *LGÉ*, in that it separates lengthy poems from the prose and groups them at the conclusion of major sections of the compilations; other versions cite poetry where it becomes relevant. N’s account of the Túatha Dé Danann concludes with such a collection.

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496 Schlüter, *History*, p. 128 (n. 110).
497 Schlüter, *History*, p. 130.
Table 2: *LGÉ* N’s metrical coverage of the Túatha Dé Danann

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LL, I, II.</th>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Subject-matter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1190–261</td>
<td>‘Ériu co n-úaill co n-idnaib’</td>
<td>‘Is dósain ro chan in senchaid’ [elsewhere, Eochaid úa Flainn (ob. 1004)] 500</td>
<td>Arrival and prominent nobility of the TDD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1307–455</td>
<td>‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’</td>
<td>‘Fland Manistrech cecinit’ [ob. 1056].</td>
<td>Aideda of the nobility of the TDD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, Flann provides a particular, complementary category of information in the company of other Middle Gaelic author-figures. His poem overlaps slightly with ‘Túatha Dé Danann fo diamair’ but, as with the Tara Diptych and Gilla Cóemáin’s work, their relationship could be understood as corroborative. Indeed, the deaths in Flann’s poem seem to occur in chronological order, as compared to the prose and other poems. 503 It thus corroborates not only the specific narratives of the *aideda* but the overall framework of *LGÉ* N’s prose and verse accounts.

In both these examples, there is no serious dissonance between the content of Flann’s poems and the manuscript contexts in which they are placed (with the possible exception of the Diptych’s conclusion). The contexts indicate the kind of uses and connections that might be made in response to them. In illustration of how context can vary texts’ meaning, we can consider the interconnections implied by Rawl.B.502’s presentation of the two Uí Néill Series poems, ‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’ and ‘Síl nÁedo Sláine na sleg’. In Rawl.B.502, they are part of a series of seven poems on Irish kingdoms (*Appendix 5*). 504 This more egalitarian series presents Uí Néill kingdoms side-by-side with the likes of the Ulaid, Connacht, and Cashel, the latter represented by ‘Inn éol duib in senchas sen’. Different political and historiographical schemes are at work here and in LL, and Flann’s texts, although anonymous in Rawl.B.502, play their part in both.

A dissonant example is ‘Druim Cetta, ceste na noem’. As we have seen (2:2.2.1), this can be read as Flann and Echthigern’s assertion of the Ciannachta’s

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500 For example, *LGÉ c: LGÉ*, IV, §366 (pp. 182–83).
501 ‘On this, the historian sang’ (my translation).
502 Carey, ‘Legendary history’, p. 44.
503 Thanisch, ‘Götterdämmerung’, pp. 87–89.
honour and political rights. Yet, in Rawl.B.502 (and in later manuscripts; 4:2), it is a component of the formal preface to *Amra Choluimb Chille*. As is common, the preface includes extensive information on the *Amra’s causa scribendi*, which concerns the convention of Druim Cett. According to our poem’s superscription, its purpose is to provide information on this event: ‘do tathmet na rig na noeb batar sin mórdail inso sis’. It serves this purpose adequately enough but it is questionable whether that is why it was originally composed. In fact, Caoimhín Breathnach has suggested that some of its material on the convention was added to the original poem to enhance its usefulness within the preface.

### 5.2 Flann’s work within compositional narratives

#### 5.2.1 Aided Nath Í

According to H1’s colophon to *ANÍ* (2:2.2.3), the text is derived from Flann and Eochaid’s manuscript-based project of *compilatio*. However, various other characters within *ANÍ* proper are also involved in the transmission of the information it contains. In fact, if we elide M and H1’s contributions together and treat *LU’s ANÍ* as a single text, then buried within its catalogue of cemeteries is a stylised historiographical mythology.

Nath Í dies after disturbing the meditations of Forménus, the king of Thrace, in the Alps. Forménus prays that Nath Í’s reign be ended and that his grave be obscure. Nath Í’s former retainers return his body to Ireland and inter it at Cruachu. Yet the curse is subsequently proved ineffective. Two poets, Torna Éces and D Orbán Fili, ‘tria fisidecht’, each reveal the location of his tomb and the tombs of many other pseudo-historical kings and notables both at Cruachu and, in D Orbán’s case, beyond. Each poet preserves their findings in two poems, one in *rosce* and one in syllabic verse. *ANÍ* essentially summarises the circumstances of their composition, cites the poems *in extenso*, and then replicates and expands upon the details in

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505 For which, see Herbert, ‘Preface’; Davies, ‘Protocols’.
506 Stokes (ed. and trans.), ‘Bodleian Amra’, pp. 136–37: ‘to commemorate the kings and saints who were at the Convention, this below’.
508 *LU*, II. 2783–2802 (p. 90).
509 *LU*, II. 2808, 2852 (pp. 91–92): ‘through his [the poet’s] visionary powers’ (my translation).
prose.\textsuperscript{510} To this, H1 adds the colophon on Flann and Eochaid, after two largely recapitulatory paragraphs.\textsuperscript{511}

We can discern three, perhaps four, stages through which the information on the tombs passes. At the primary stage, in Forménus’ despite, Torna and Dorbán are direct, mantic eyewitnesses to the tombs’ configuration and compose their poetry in response. Their poetry is somehow written down at the secondary stage. At the tertiary stage, the textualised information has become scattered through multiple codices and Forménus’ curse (we might imagine) must once again be averted by Torna and Dorbán’s ecclesiastical, more manuscript-orientated successors, Flann and Eochaid. A quaternary phase is implied by the colophon and perhaps by the glosses, in which their compilation itself becomes the object of study. Indeed, the colophon’s composer is divided from Flann and Eochaid by the fact that the manuscript sources they consulted are, for him, no longer extant.

History’s transmission from eyewitness to scribe and thence to textual scholar is, as we shall see (\textsuperscript{2.5.2.2–3}), attested elsewhere. \emph{ANÍ} sets a medieval act of compilatio within such a broad narrative. However, rather than minimising Flann and Eochaid’s role, this narrative serves to authorise them. Their key manuscript sources’ theft, inaugurating the quaternary phase, means that their compilation is now the only complete link back to Torna and Dorbán’s direct experiential knowledge. Its transmission has bottle-necked with them and their compilation, \emph{ANÍ}, is the authoritative version, the only alternatives being in lost manuscripts or presumably unrepeatable mantic experiences. We have postulated above that Flann’s authorship may have been used to give unity to the Cenél nÉogan Suite; here, the presented circumstances of \emph{ANÍ}’s compilation by him and Eochaid turn a work of compilatio into an originative text.

\subsection*{5.2.2 ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’}

The implied context of ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’ within \emph{LGÉ N} arguably constitutes a similar narrative to that embedded in \emph{ANÍ}. The poem catalogues the names and \emph{aideda} of the toisich (‘leaders’) of the Goidelic invasion of Ireland. These individuals’ identities and whether they were loyal to Érimón or Éber are matters of

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{510} \textit{LU}, ll. 2803–2907 (pp. 90–94). \textsuperscript{511} \textit{LU}, ll. 2907–24 (p. 94).}
close interest in LGÉ. In addition to our poem, N provides no less than three prose lists analysing the toisich according to various criteria during its main account of the invasion.\textsuperscript{512}

N does not cite ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’ while discussing the invasion but later, following N’s account of the reign of Ethriel mac Irieóil Fátha, Ireland’s fifth Goidelic king.\textsuperscript{513} However, the toisich it names are closely cognate with those in the prose lists, although every list contains unique variants. The poem’s prosimetric attribution seems to refer back to the earlier lists, ‘is do haidedaib na toisechsa anuas [...]’,\textsuperscript{514} as all the identifiable deaths in the poem occur between the invasion and Ethriel’s reign.

During its discussion of the invasion, N (like other versions of LGÉ) sets out how the information on the toisich was obtained from Fintan mac Bóchra and Túan mac Cairrill, who each came to Ireland before and shortly after the Flood respectively and had thus witnessed the Goidelic invasion, among much else.\textsuperscript{515} Their testimony was written down through the offices of two saints, Finnia of Mag Bile and Colum Cille.\textsuperscript{516} It was then ‘made known’ (‘ro innisetar’) by six scholars who were, at that time, ‘daltai Fhinniain ⁊ Túáin’ (‘the pupils of Finnia and Túan’), who seem to represent early Christian Ireland’s learned class. They include the eighth-century Laidcend mac Baircheda, attested as author of early Leinster genealogical poetry.\textsuperscript{517} They also include the seventh-century Cendfaelad mac Ailella, known for his supreme powers of memorisation and for his synthesis of textual study, law, and poetry.\textsuperscript{518} In other contexts, he has been described by Johnston as embodying an idealised symbiotic organisation of learning,\textsuperscript{519} while Burnyeat understands him as an expression of grammatica, ‘the common intellectual basis of medieval literate scholarly activity’.\textsuperscript{520}

\textsuperscript{512} LGÉ, V, §385 (pp. 22–29); LL, I, ll. 1490–520, 1670–745, 1779–800 (pp. 47–48, 53–54, 56).
\textsuperscript{513} LGÉ, V, §502 (pp. 194–95); LL, I, ll. 1912–19 (pp. 59–60).
\textsuperscript{514} LGÉ, V, §502 (pp. 194–95 (n. 16)); LL, I, ll. 1918–19 (p. 60): ‘of the deaths of these chieftains down to this [...]’.
\textsuperscript{515} LGÉ, V, §385 (pp. 22–23); LL, I, ll. 1490–500 (p. 47).
\textsuperscript{517} Ó Corráin, ‘Nationality’, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{519} Johnston, Literacy, pp.102–04.
\textsuperscript{520} Burnyeat, ‘Early Irish’, p. 216.
As Toner discusses,\(^{521}\) *LGÉ* N supports its account of the invasion’s *toisich* with both eyewitness testimony and textual tradition. Flann’s poem is cited at a physical remove from the relevant passage and the gloss naming him is of unknown provenance. Nonetheless, composing several centuries later, the implication is that he based it on the tradition that the ‘daltai Fhinniaín 7 Túain’ supposedly established. Interestingly, given that his poem includes more *toisich* than any prose list in *LGÉ* (2:6.2), he appears to be a leading authority on their tradition.

### 5.2.3 Flann as tertiary author: conclusion

In both *ANÍ* and *LGÉ* N, therefore, Flann can be termed a tertiary author: he is not a direct witness, nor does he encounter direct witnesses, but expressly works with textual evidence derived from such encounters. *ANÍ* specifies that such texts, like eyewitnesses, are mortal and require reproduction, collation, and synthesis. Allusion is made to these themes within texts attributed to Flann. As we have seen (2:3.3.1), Flann, in the Tara Diptych, treats written evidence critically but presents supposed eyewitness testimony as convincing. In the Cenél nÉogain Suite, he presents himself as a *compilator* and history’s recovery as ever incomplete.

This three-stage development of historiography defines Flann’s place on multiple occasions but it is not unique to him. A closely comparable account occurs in ‘Éitset áes ecna aibind’, Eochaid úa Flainn’s (*ob*. 1004, if identified with Eochaid úa Flannucáin\(^{522}\)) metrical recapitulation of *LGÉ*.\(^{523}\) The poem’s content is said to have been textualised during encounters between Fintan, Túan, Colum Cille and Finnia. It was then interwoven (‘ros n-úaigset’) and discussed (‘lúaidset’) by unnamed ‘authorities’ (‘auctair’) through textual study (‘légend’). Eochaid’s account is likely closely related to N’s narrative, given the poem’s relationship with *LGÉ*.\(^{524}\) Yet it is useful in that, unlike N, it specifies that transmission between the secondary and tertiary phases was textual and, indeed, via léigind, with which Flann’s obits universally associate him (1:2.2.1). More importantly, just as *ANÍ*’s narrative

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\(^{522}\) Ó Mainnín, ‘Eochaid’.


\(^{524}\) Scowcroft, ‘Medieval Recensions’, pp. 8–9.
ultimately authorises Flann and ‘Eochaid’, Eochaid locates the ‘authorities’ in the tertiary phase: they are not mystified ancients at the tradition’s origins but relatively recent scholars who have gained command of it through textual study. As Scowcroft comments, they are ‘an audience that will become auctores [...] authors as witnesses to a common heritage’.525

6 Influence and relevance

We have considered how Flann’s author-figure is presented in texts attributed to him and how he and his work are contextualised by some Middle Gaelic scholars who encounter them. Furthermore, in 1:2.2.6, we saw that his chronicle obits present Flann as a particularly imposing scholar. I now attempt to compare presentation to reality and assess the actual contribution made by Flann’s texts to historiography and literature before 1200. This cannot be done comprehensively, given problems with dating material and ruling out common sources. Nonetheless, there are a number of instances that could form the basis for discussion.

6.1 Limitations: Flann’s Diptych and Gilla Cóemáin’s Triptych

At the outset, it is worth noting that the mere appearance of texts attributed to Flann in pre-1200 manuscripts implies that his work was considered relevant and useful. Elsewhere, I have shown that ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’ may have been used in the compilation of a prose regnal history preserved in LL.526 However, the reverence expressed for Flann in some of his chronicle obits (not to mention in some secondary literature) is not always matched by his work’s technical usefulness.

A generation after Flann, Gilla Cóemáin (fl. 1072) composed two metrical regnal histories of the kings of Ireland, ‘Hériu ard inis na ríg’ and ‘At-tá sund forba fessa’,527 and a third poem, ‘Annálad anall uile’, on Irish history overall. These appear in the LL Dúanaire alongside the Tara Diptych (Table 1), which is paralleled in Gilla Cóemáin’s work. For the duration of their common coverage, Gilla Cóemáin’s king-list is very similar and he likewise divides his history into pre- and

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525 Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála II’, p. 65 (n. 173) (Scowcroft’s emphasis).
526 Thanisch, ‘Götterdämmerung’, pp. 87–89.
post-Patrician periods. However, Gilla Cóemáin’s work is more elaborate. He expressly lists the kings of Ireland, not the kings of Tara, and his king-list extends much further back, before the Gaidil, to the Fir Bolg, who supposedly established the kingship of Ireland.\footnote{528} Flann does not state that Eochaid Feidlech founded the kingship of Tara but this is where his text begins.\footnote{529} Gilla Cóemáin also provides chronological data, including reign-lengths, for each king, as well as aideda in ‘Hériu ard inis na ríg’. ‘Annálad anall uile’ presents a general chronological framework, synchronising the kingship of Ireland both internally and with universal history.

Gilla Cóemáin’s work is significantly more advanced chronologically than Flann’s Tara Diptych and seems to have had influence on various subsequent compositions, including LGÉ.\footnote{530} It is not even clear whether Gilla Cóemáin drew upon Flann’s compositions. Smith describes his work as a ‘response’ to Flann.\footnote{531} He lists the Tara Diptych and ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (2:6.3, 3:2.1, 4:2.4.1) as ‘possible sources and analogues’ but this category includes many other texts.\footnote{532} Most relevant, in Smith’s opinion, are the Laud Synchronisms, LGÉ, and certain king-lists.\footnote{533} The Tara Diptych may not even have provided the central foundation for Gilla Cóemáin but simply been one of several comparable sources, if indeed it was used at all.

Yet that does not mean Flann was to be discarded by LL’s readers. As Schlüter notes,\footnote{534} even though Gilla Cóemáin’s triptych supersedes Flann’s Diptych, their king-lists are so similar that they may serve to corroborate each other within the LL Dúanaire. Furthermore, ‘At-tá sund forba fessa’ does not provide aideda for post-Patrician kings, while ‘Ríg Themra toebaige íar ttain’ does. While the Tara Diptych admittedly fails to emerge as the definitive work we might expect from tiugsuí na nGaídel, it still has its uses within a wider network of texts. Yet, as we shall see (3:2.1), this study will continue to raise questions about its usefulness.

\footnote{528}{Cf. Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála I’, p. 108.}
\footnote{529}{For ‘Érimón is Éber ard’, which precedes the Tara Diptych in some later manuscripts, see Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála I’, pp. 131–32; McCarthy, Irish Annals, p. 271.}
\footnote{530}{Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála I’, pp. 119–21; Murray, ‘Gilla Mo Dutu’, p. 156; McCarthy, Irish Annals, pp. 271–303.}
\footnote{531}{Smith, ‘Historical Verse’, p. 341.}
\footnote{532}{Smith, Three Historical Poems, pp. 79–86.}
\footnote{533}{Smith, Three Historical Poems, pp. 87–88; cf. McCarthy, Irish Annals, pp. 282–85}
\footnote{534}{Schlüter, History, p. 130.}
6.2 Flann’s provision of surplus material in *Lebor Gabála Érenn N*

In both of his poems within *LGÉ N*, Flann provides more information than is integrated into the corresponding prose (Appendix 8).\(^{535}\) Of the sixty-seven deaths in ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’, seventeen occur under the same circumstances in N’s prose account of the Túatha Dé Danann.\(^ {536}\) The circumstances in verse and prose differ in two cases; thirty-seven characters who die in the poem appear in N’s prose but with no account of their deaths; eleven characters from the poem are not in N’s prose at all. ‘Toisich na ll翁se tar ller’ includes Palap,\(^ {537}\) who does not appear in N’s prose. In assessing Flann’s influence, this can be interpreted various ways. On the one hand, Flann does not reiterate the same prose tradition in which he is cited and evidently has access to additional, more obscure sources. On the other, N’s compiler and predecessors were unable or unwilling to integrate his extra information into their account. Indeed, his information might be so obscure as to lack corroboration.

A similar dynamic occurs when q. 20 from ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’ appears, without attribution, among the fragments of *Tochmarc Étaine* in *LU* (hand M).\(^ {538}\) In *Tochmarc Étaine*, the Mac Óc hunts down Midir’s estranged wife, Fuamnach, in Oenach Bodbgnai and slays her for banishing Midir’s other wife, Étain. However, a ‘version elsewhere’ (‘i slicht i n-inud aile’), cited via q. 20 of Flann’s poem, has Manannán slay both Midir and Fuamnach at Brí Léith. The prose provides no information that could not have been culled from q. 20 and I am yet to encounter the ‘version elsewhere’ in another text. For the composer of *Tochmarc Étaine*, therefore, ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’ was citable but it did not override his main narrative. In Toner’s assessment of such situations,\(^ {539}\) this could be to do with the accounts’ perceived relative authority. Alternatively, it may simply have not been possible for a single quatrain to provide sufficient detail and context for a developed prose

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\(^ {535}\) On such divergences elsewhere in LGÉ, see Scowcroft, ‘LeabharGabhála I’, p. 90.

\(^ {536}\) *LGÉ*, IV, §§304, 306–07, 309–16 (pp. 106–31); *LL*, I, ll. 1049–89 (pp. 33–37). *LGÉ*, V, §469 (pp. 152–55); *LL*, I, ll. 1803–13 (pp. 56–57).


\(^ {539}\) Toner, ‘Authority’, pp. 68–70.
narrative to be altered. Again, Flann provides hard-to-find information but this does not prove particularly helpful.

6.3 Usage and adaptation of ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’

Even though it does not actually appear in full in a pre-1200 manuscript, ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ is still of relevance in this context. In later medieval manuscripts, where it is attributed to Flann Mainistrech (3:2.1; 4:2.3.1), this substantial poem, following the Eusebian tradition, traces a continuous world-kingship held successively by the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, the ‘Greeks’ (Alexander and four diadochene states), and, finally, the Romans. It gives a reign-length and often an *aided* for each world-king but also contains a number of digressions that narrate particular episodes or recapitulate chronology. It ends in the ninth year of the reign (AD 717–41) of the Byzantine Emperor, Leo III, the end-point of Bede’s *Chronica Maiora*. Otherwise, its sources are not immediately discernible. It may be derived directly from Latin universal histories or from Gaelic world-chronicling.

Jürgen Schmidt has questioned whether the poem’s five cantos were always understood as comprising a single work with a single author, raising issues similar to those we have discussed in relation to *LL*’s Úi Néill Series (2:4.2.1.1–2). We thus


545 Schmidt, ‘Zu Réidig’, pp. 216, 220–44.
cannot be sure in what form the poem would have been, pre-1200. With that caveat, however, the influence and use of something like it is detectable.

6.3.1 Re-use of the poem's incipit
Two other poems on world history from pre-1200 manuscripts open with an identical or very similar incipit to Flann’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim | co hémidh a n-indisin’. All three include a rhyme between réidig and éimid (‘swift’) in the second line. In Rawl.B.502 (and elsewhere), ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim | co hémid, ní hindeithbir’ concludes *Sex Aetates Mundi (SAM)*, a Middle Gaelic treatise on world history, and also appears independently in the *LL Duanaire* (*Table 1*). The poem is generally understood to be the work of Dublittir hÚa Uathgaile (*fl*. late eleventh century). His poem is about the genealogies of the world’s ethnic groups and thus barely overlaps with Flann’s poem on world-kingship in any way in subject-matter.

The other Réidig dam... poem is slightly more similar. ‘A Rí richid, reidig dam | tria gné n-eimid n-eladan’ is also preserved, uniquely this time, in the *LL Duanaire*. There, it is attributed to Gilla in Choimded úa Cormaic, an obscure figure dated by Smith to c. 1050x1150. Lacking a single theme, it is a panoramic collection of information from classical and Gaelic literature, as well as some information on Eusebian world-kings. It is thus closer to Flann’s interests, although it does not in any way purport to be a chronological history.

This incipit continues to be re-used in the context of world history in the later Middle Ages (4:3.3). That Flann’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ is probably its earliest appearance might suggest that this poem was influential in medieval Gaelic scholarship on world history. Its influence could not have been direct, given the variations in subject-matter, but might be more to do with the poem’s scope and ambition. Indeed, the incipit itself is an appeal for divine assistance (‘elucidate, for me, o God from heaven’). This is but a hypothesis, however, particularly given that

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546 *LL*, IV, ll. 17439–725 (pp. 563–73); *SAM*, §70 (pp. 97–108, 132–37): ‘Make easy for me, o God, from heaven, it is not uncertain, it is a pure deed’; Schmidt, ‘Zu Réidig’, p. 258.
548 *SAM*, pp. 70 (pp. 97–108, 132–37): ‘Make easy for me, o God, from heaven, it is not uncertain, it is a pure deed’; Schmidt, ‘Zu Réidig’, p. 258.
many incipits to historical poetry follow certain formulae (e.g. \textit{At-tá sund...}, \textit{Ériu...inis na...}).

6.3.2 Citations in the \textit{Annals of Inisfallen}

\textit{AI} (Rawl.B.503), compiled, initially, in 1092 in Munster, begins with a fragmentary Latin chronicle on pre-Patrician history with a generally universal scope drawing ultimately on writers like Eusebius-Jerome, and Bede.\textsuperscript{551} This chronicle is supported by Gaelic citations and prose summaries from Flann’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’.\textsuperscript{552}

Yet \textit{AI} does not name him, citing instead ‘in file’ or ‘poeta’. For Byrne, these are inappropriate terms for Flann, an ecclesiastical scholar, meaning \textit{AI}’s compiler must have not known him to be the author.\textsuperscript{553} As we have seen (LR:3.3.1), the usefulness of such a strict sub-division of medieval Gaelic learned culture has been questioned. Furthermore, the material \textit{AI} cites is self-evidently concerned with Eusebian universal history, suggesting that the \textit{AI} compiler’s conception of a \textit{fili}’s purview was sufficiently broad for Byrne’s distinction to be rendered irrelevant. Flann thus may or may not have been the poem’s author for \textit{AI}’s compiler.\textsuperscript{554} With that caveat, \textit{AI}’s use of material from ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ provides a valuable opportunity to analyse the repeated and detailed use of what might have been (known as) Flann’s work in a wider historiographical project and consider its utility therein.

Material in \textit{AI} corresponding to ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ is summarised in \textbf{Appendix 9}. Some is definitely from some iteration of the poem. In several instances, quatrains appear \textit{in extenso} or material from the poem is summarised in Gaelic prose within the otherwise predominantly Latin world chronicle. In these instances, I regard the poem’s influence as ‘definite’.\textsuperscript{555} Latin prose in \textit{AI} can also correspond so closely to the poem that its influence might be suspected, although so might that of a common source. These are classified as ‘possible’. All of \textit{AI}’s ‘definite’ uses of the poem occur in relation to the Persian and Greek world-kingships. Indeed, prior to the Persians, the world-kings are not consistently tracked in \textit{AI}. Possible influence might be identifiable elsewhere in the texts’ common

\textsuperscript{551} \textit{AI}, pp. 1–54; Ó Cuív, \textit{Catalogue}, I, 201.
\textsuperscript{552} \textit{AI}, pp. xvii–xxi.
\textsuperscript{553} Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p. 867.
\textsuperscript{554} See also Schmidt, ‘Zu Réidig’, pp. 212–13.
\textsuperscript{555} Hereafter, ‘the poem’ refers to ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’, as available in later medieval manuscripts.
coverage of universal history, although I have not found any particularly compelling instances. It thus seems most useful to concentrate, for the present study, on these two cantos.

The material *AI* cites corresponds with the poem, as it appears in later manuscripts, to various extents. When *AI* cites quatrains in full, they generally agree in all significant respects with the poem; where the poem’s manuscripts disagree amongst themselves, *AI*’s quatrains tend to follow the older recension represented by UM and Lc2,\(^{556}\) as Schmidt observes.\(^{557}\) Yet *AI*’s prose summaries of material from the poem can differ compared to the poem on exact figures and details (e.g. *D1*, *D5*, *P1*). This could reflect variants in the text of the poem that the *AI* compiler used but such variants’ absence when the quatrains are cited *in extenso* implies that his text was not particularly divergent, at least not from UM/Lc2 (although see below). In fact, he may have turned to prose in some instances in order to amend testimony in his text of the poem. On the other hand, his Gaelic prose summaries can agree with the poem (e.g. *D2*, *D5*), suggesting brevity and clarity might also have been factors.

In both the Persian and Greek cantos, *AI* uses the poem to provide overviews of each world-kingship. That of the Persians concludes in *AI* with quatrains cited from the poem giving a chronological recapitulation in years and number of kings (*D4*). The Greek world-kingship is introduced with Gaelic prose and quatrains both describing Alexander’s conquests and including a chronological precapitulation, also in years and number of kings (*D5*). The Greek world-kingship’s conclusion in *AI* is lost in a physical lacuna.\(^{558}\)

As well as chronological data, the poem is also a source, for *AI*, of narrative and sundry information relating to specific world-kingships and reigns. It is used to supply, *inter alia*, the origins of the Persians (*D1*); the story of Judith, during the reign of Cambyses (*D2*); the story of Esther, during the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon (*D3*); possibly data on Xerxes’ military (*P1*); and the details of Alexander’s conquests (*D5*). The chronicler thus sought testimony from the *fili/poeta* both on the chronicle’s overall structure and for narrative on specific historical episodes.

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556 Schmidt’s sigla; see Schmidt, ‘Zu Réidig’, p. 212 and Appendix 9.
558 *AI*, p. 30.
As is evident from Appendix 9, AI’s entries on the commencement of each Persian and Greek world-king’s reign each include a short Latin section giving their name and reign-length and occasionally other details. Their reign-lengths generally agree with those in the poem. Such entries also appear sporadically concerning kings before the Persian world-kingship, particularly the kings of Judah, who were not world-kings. They appear much more consistently concerning Roman world-kings. While this information might have been extracted and translated from the poem, it seems more likely that it represents a terser Latin world chronicle which, in AI, is both corroborated and expanded with vernacular material from the poem (and Latin material from other sources). Importantly, AI’s extracts from the poem do not simply provide decoration and colour but engage with the chronicle’s fundamental, technical details.

Yet, despite this intense engagement in certain sections, AI’s use of the poem is actually quite limited, overall. As already mentioned, there is no clear evidence of the poem’s influence outside the Persian and Greek cantos, despite its other cantos containing similar narratival digressions and, naturally, chronological data. Furthermore, the world-kingships do not actually dominate AI’s chronological framework. AI notes some world-kings’ commencement via manuscript headings but similarly notes other eras, like the aetates mundi, which do not feature in the poem. Furthermore, AI’s succession of world-kings is not consistently maintained beyond the Persian and Greek cantos. For example, AI notes the Medes’ world-kingship and their first world-king, Arbatus, but omits the poem’s nine subsequent kings. Sardonapollus is said to be AI’s thirty-sixth Assyrian world-king but only seven have been mentioned previously. The poem’s testimony is thus used very selectively by the chronicler. This might lend support to Schmidt’s suspicions that the poem did not always circulate as a single work but it could also be

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559 For example, AI, §§11, 59, 79, 90–171 (pp. 3, 8, 10, 12–22).
560 AI, §§201–344 (pp. 30–42).
561 For example, Mac Airt (ed. and trans.), ‘Poem [1]’, I:30–59 (pp. 268–80); ‘Poem [2]’, II:16–20 (pp. 24–27). Citations from Mac Airt’s edition are by canto number (Roman), followed by quatratin number (Arabic).
562 World-kingsdoms: AI, §§89, 165, 204 (pp. 12, 21, 30). Other eras: AI, §§139, 185 (pp. 18, 20, 26).
563 AI, §127 (p. 16); Mac Airt (ed. and trans.), ‘Poem [2]’, II:1–22 (pp. 18–29).
564 AI, §127 (p. 16). Some may have been lost with the manuscript’s initial folios.
because AI’s world chronicle only sporadically covered the world-kingship, meaning the poem did not always provide helpful corroboration.

Another aspect of the poem’s relationship with AI might also validate Schmidt’s suspicions. The poem’s chronological recapitulation of the Persian world-kingship in III:33 (D4) is not accurate for the poem’s account but is accurate for AI. The quatrain counts twelve Persian world-kings. Twelve are named in AI (including the magi), while fifteen appear in the poem (including the magi) in all manuscripts. The poem’s III:33 counts either ten or twelve in different manuscripts (see D4). In both the poem and AI, III:33 states that their world-kingship lasted 230 years. In the poem, the combined reign-lengths total 240 years (rounding up) but 230 in H; in AI, they total 227 years. The discrepancy is produced by variations in Xerxes’ reign-length (see P1) and the absence of three kings from AI. Since AI’s account is closer to the poem’s recapitulatory quatrain (III:33), the poem indeed seems to have undergone subsequent development, either since AI used it or since their common source.

‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’, therefore, was treated by the compiler of AI’s world chronicle as a useful source for both the structure and the substance of world history, if only, for some reason, in relation to two specific world-kingdoms. Yet its role is still ultimately to support the Latin chronicle. The compiler stops short of wholesale re-structuring or re-framing based on the poem, despite its consistent coverage of the world-kingships. This could be because the whole poem was not available or perhaps because it would have been too difficult to synchronise accurately with AI’s existing material where a framework of world-kingships was not already included.

6.4 Influence and relevance: conclusion

The influence, as far as it is detectable, of work associated with Flann on other texts in pre-1200 manuscripts seems to have been characterised by integration. His works rarely seems to dominate prosimetric or manuscript contexts in which they appear. He tends to offer one category of information or one variant version of a narrative among several. In the case of the Tara Diptych, by the time of compilation, he has in

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some ways already been superseded. Just as some of his authorial self-presentation and the apparatus around his texts presents him engaging with sources, traditions, and others scholars, so his testimony, in practice, is set alongside other accounts. While his testimony might appear, it cannot be shown to prompt revision or suppression of alternatives. Presentations, ancient and modern, of Flann as supremely authoritative historian thus do not play out in practice.

7 Conclusion: Flann in pre-1200 manuscripts

In this chapter, from various perspectives, we have been considering Flann Mainistrech’s author-figure in material attributed to him in pre-1200 manuscripts. Essentially, how was he understood in the learned culture of the period and what did he bring to texts presented under his name?

Certain points of consistency emerge that might give us some idea of how he was understood. In terms of subject-matter, his pre-1200 corpus is dominated by king-lists and aetiological narratives relating to what were, for the compilers, recent or contemporary Irish kingdoms. Political meaning was surely attached to such work at the time and, indeed, Flann occasionally expresses explicit support for certain dynasts and polities. His contributions to the LGÉ project can be read in a similar light, since its synthesis of a ‘national’ history was partly ideologically-driven. Yet this does not account for all the attributions to him. An interest in the ancient past is maintained beyond LGÉ; he potentially composes on an episode in Tochmarc Étaine and another of his poems is cited within the same text, for example. Also, while much of his corpus can be described as political, a consistent propagandistic agenda is hardly apparent in his work. There might be biographical or attributional reasons for this but it does mean that political stance does not characterise his textual persona. Indeed, as we shall discover (4:1.2), subject-matter and political interests are among the most changeable aspects of material associated with Flann across different periods.

He is generally presented less in terms of his individual merits and characteristics but rather in terms of his relationships with tradition, communal memory, written sources, and his scholarly collaborators. We have encountered some
particularly emphatic evidence in this regard. In two cases, narratives of medieval Gaelic historiography’s development identify him as what I have termed a ‘tertiary author’, whose authority openly derives from textual study. While collaborative authorship was doubtless common in reality, such origins for material are, as far as I can tell, nowhere else detailed explicitly in medieval Gaelic literary discourse. Thus, two, maybe three, attestations of Flann collaborating with another scholar render this a distinctive aspect of his persona.

A text attributed to Flann might have been understood as the work of one situated within a learned, literate network engaged with wider elite society. This conception of him, I argue, is also manifest in how compilers arrange and use his work and that of similar authors. In prosimetric or manuscript context, Flann’s texts often provide one certain strand of information among several, a supplement to an existing text, or a variant version of a narrative. Just as he conducts source-based work in collaboration with others, so his texts are set within assistive networks of reading.

Flann is characterised by his integration into an ethos and a system of learning, rather than by his own biography. Superficially, this contrasts with the rather high and lonely figure presented in his chronicle obits (1:2.2). It also contrasts with the simple attributions to him encountered throughout the manuscript tradition, in which a text is taken back only to him, with no room for sources or collaborators. In particular, we have encountered multiple instances where material seems to have been consolidated or expanded under an attribution to Flann. The trend was towards expanding and appropriating his authorial responsibility, not analysing and sub-dividing it.

It may be that Flann’s perceived stature as a scholar and as an author-figure was derived from an understanding of his intellectual connections and context. Indeed, as we have seen (2:5.3), Eochaíd úa Flainn, in ‘Éitset áes ecna aibind’, designates as ugdair (‘authorities’) those who occupy the same tertiary phase as Flann and explicitly notes scholarly exchange as a feature of their activities. Far from

567 It is, naturally, difficult to make definitive statements about the presence or absence of an idea in the literature.
deconstructing Flann as pre-eminent scholar, the perceived characteristics we have been discussing may have established him as such.

The quantity of material we have found to analyse within and around Flann’s texts, alongside the sources considered in Chapter 1, demonstrates that Flann’s authority was not simply generic but defined and located by himself and by others. Indeed, it was of sufficient interest for it to be appropriated, on occasion. Its reception in other texts and in later contexts, as we shall discover in subsequent chapters, shows both continuity and development compared to what we have considered here.
Chapter 3

Erudition and Elucidation:
Flann Mainistrech in Lebor Gabála Érenn

1 Introduction

I treat LGÉ separately both because it constitutes a single, if complex, textual tradition and because the material of interest to us therein is of uncertain date. The major developments that produced its various extant recensions and individual versions are generally dated to the Middle Gaelic period.\(^{568}\) Indeed, version N is in LL (2:2.2.2), LU once contained a version,\(^{569}\) and Rawl.B.502 contains a related fragment.\(^{570}\) Otherwise, the compilation’s Middle Gaelic development is witnessed only via manuscripts from the late fourteenth century onwards.\(^{571}\)

Yet major developments need not be behind the attributional aspects that interest us. Indeed, Macalister has commented that a continuing, dynamic interest in the compilation’s verse components is evidenced by ‘the diversity of the formulae introducing the poems [in LGÉ], even in mss. that otherwise have close verbal similarity’.\(^{572}\) Many aspects of Flann’s role within the compilation are thus difficult to date. Outwith N, any given piece of evidence relating to him could be eleventh- or twelfth-century to late medieval. It is thus safest to treat LGÉ as potentially straddling the periods covered by Chapters 1, 2, and 4 in this thesis. On a more positive note, its multiple versions and extant developmental strata provide an invaluable case study in medieval Gaelic textual scholarship and, for us, reception of authored works.

1.1 Lebor Gabála Érenn: content and structure

LGÉ runs from Creation until the eleventh or twelfth centuries. It narrates the ancestry and migrations of the Gaídil and the history of their kings in Ireland. It also


\(^{569}\) Carey, ‘LU Copy’.

\(^{570}\) Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála Part 1’, p. 87.


\(^{572}\) LGÉ, I, x.
provides similar accounts of the previous inhabitants, of which there had been four or five successive groups. These interlocking narratives are supported by genealogies, synchronisms, scriptural exegesis, and etymology. Poetry, attributed to a variety of authors, is frequently cited both in support of particular points and in general overview. For Macalister and Carey, LGÉ existed first purely as poetry, which later formed the basis for the prosimetric compilation. Scowcroft, while accepting that much is derived from a learned verse corpus, also emphasised the dependence of some poems on pre-existing prosimetric versions, the forms actually supporting and inspiring one another.

1.2 Recensions and textual history

The compilation’s rich content is matched by its complex textual history. Scowcroft hypothesises a terse, prose original (ω), adapted and expanded twice in the eleventh century to produce the equally hypothetical α and μ. Each expansion arose from distinct interests. Closely related to the work of Eochaid úa Flainn (ob. 1004) and thus possibly by him, α focused on the pre-Goidelic invaders and the lineages founded by the early Gaidil. Meanwhile, μ was based around the imagined kingship of Ireland. Finding the kingship’s origins during the Fir Bolg settlement, μ charted its continuous history into the eleventh century. It is closely related to the work of Gilla Cóemáin and so Scowcroft likewise suggests that he might have been behind it. As a result of their distinct emphases, μ emerged with the more robust chronology, while α was richer in historical detail.

Moving into extant recensions, each represented by multiple manuscripts, m is derived from μ while b is derived from α. a (which includes N) is an attempt to reconcile α and μ, retaining μ’s basic chronology while interpolating material from α. c is a further attempt at reconciliation, this time between representatives of a and b. Both a and c seem to date from the twelfth century, although c draws upon a

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573 For an overview, see Carey, ‘Legendary history’.
575 LGÉ, I, x; Carey, ‘ Legendary history’, p. 44.
577 Scowcroft, ‘Medieval Recensions’, pp. 6–12.
version of \(a\) and so must be later.\(^{579}\) Some \(b\) manuscripts also interpolate passages from \(a.\)^\(^{580}\) Furthermore, a prose-poetic synchronistic collection (hereafter, the \((LGÉ\ b)\) Appendix), as well as recension \(m\), were appended to the \(b\) archetype, apparently to correct its chronology.\(^{581}\) Given that the Appendix is based around poetry attributed to Flann Mainistrech (3:2.1), both Scowcroft and Schmidt have suggested that he was the compiler of \(b\), as extant.\(^{582}\) Finally, recension \(d\) was compiled in the seventeenth century by the Four Masters, again reconciling a range of medieval sources; this version will be considered in Chapter 5 (5:2.1.1).

Importantly, \(LGÉ\)’s development was thus largely not the result of chance and error but of conscious efforts to reconcile and explicate available materials. We thus have reason to anticipate dynamic engagement on the part of \(LGÉ\)’s various compilers with the texts attributed to Flann Mainistrech employed therein.

2 Flann’s corpus

Eight poems are attributed to Flann Mainistrech by name across \(LGÉ\)’s various versions. A number of others are attributed more ambiguously to ‘Flann’ or ‘Flann fili’. In 3:2.1, I examine poems definitely attributed to Flann Mainistrech in terms of their content and context in \(LGÉ\)’s textual history. Texts that are the subjects of more ambiguous attributions are briefly surveyed in 3:2.2. The situation is summarised in Appendix 10, which is subdivided accordingly.

2.1 Definite attributions\(^{583}\)

Poems attributed to Flann Mainistrech or the attributions themselves can be traced to different stages of \(LGÉ\)’s development. As we have discussed, under Scowcroft’s model, \(LGÉ\) developed as an integrated prosimetric compilation while, under Carey’s model, it drew, at least in its earlier stages, on an independent canon of learned verse.

\(^{580}\) Scowcroft, ‘\textit{Medieval Recensions}’, pp. 5, 15–16.
\(^{581}\) Scowcroft, ‘\textit{Leabhar Gabhála I}’, pp. 125–32.
\(^{582}\) Scowcroft, ‘\textit{Leabhar Gabhála I}’, p. 131; Scowcroft, ‘\textit{Medieval Recensions}’, p. 12 (n. 42); Schmidt, ‘\textit{Zu Réidig}’, pp. 219–20.
\(^{583}\) ‘Definite’, that is, in the sense that the attributions definitely mention Flann Mainistrech, not that he is definitely the poems’ author.
Flann’s corpus is varied in this respect: some of his poems become fixtures of LGÉ at an early stage, while others can be shown to be later imports.

The two poems whose association with him can be traced back furthest are those we have already considered within LGÉ N. The presence of ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’, consistently attributed to Flann, throughout both m and a implies that it was in μ; Scowcroft has described it as a ‘later addition’ to μ, without going into detail.584 The role of this poem, as I have demonstrated elsewhere,585 varies in different versions of LGÉ. In developmentally earlier versions (m and N), it simply concludes LGÉ’s account of the Túatha Dé Danann, while, latterly (F and c), it is cited during discussions of whether the Túatha Dé Danann are human. Paradoxically, m actually also puts this interpretation on it internally. There, it concludes with four additional quatrains asserting that the Túatha Dé Danann are in hell and rebuking those who see them as immortal síd-folk.586 Although LGÉ m is developmentally early, Carey warns that these quatrains may not be an authentic part of the poem, as they are absent from versions beyond m and appear independently elsewhere.587 ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’ was thus of interest to medieval scholars investigating the Túatha Dé Danann from a variety of perspectives.

‘Toisich na llóngse tar ller’ appears in both a and b. This might mean that it was in α; it certainly suggests it is an early feature of LGÉ. It is attributed to Flann across recension a only,588 as well as in D (recension b), interpolating from an a-text,589 and in Lc. Despite all this, Carey (at one time) and Scowcroft have attributed ‘Toisich na llóngse tar ller’ to Eochaid úa Flainn,590 due to the poem’s concluding reference to ‘mac meic Fhlainn’ (2:2.3). For my solution to this issue, see 5:2.1.1.

In F, as in N (2:2.2.2), the poem follows the account of Ethriel’s reign. In b, however, it supports the account of the invasion itself.591 In recension b’s Y, Lb, and D, the poem follows a passage cognate with that in N (2:5.2.2) detailing the data’s transmission from Fintan and Túan. Absent from b’s E and R, this passage was

585 Thanisch, ‘Götterdämerung’.
587 Carey, Single Ray, p. 18 (n. 25).
588 However, see 2:4.2.1.1.
590 Carey, ‘Lebar Gabala’, p. 51 (however, see also Carey, ‘Legendary history’, p. 44); Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála I’, p. 120 (n. 114).
591 LGÉ, V, §385 (pp. 26–27).
presumably interpolated from an *a*-text.\textsuperscript{592} Y, Lb, and D also omit the final precatory quatrain (2:2.3; 5:2.1.1), perhaps due to perceived incompatibility with these versions’ ascriptions of great antiquity to the material.

Most versions of *m* attribute only ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’ to Flann Mainistrech. Uniquely, Rm concludes a prose discussion of the origins of the Cruithni with ‘Cruithnig cid dos farclam’, attributed to Flann Mainistrech.\textsuperscript{593} While Rm is physically sixteenth-century, we can date the inclusion of ‘Cruithnig cid dos farclam’ to sometime after the early twelfth century, as Scowcroft assigns this date to *G*,\textsuperscript{594} r’s (R/Rm’s source) common source with the rest of LGÉ recension b.

Rm (and R) abbreviates cited poems to their initial quatrains but a long poem with the same initial quatrain appears in two manuscripts of Lebor Bretnach (*LB*), the Middle Gaelic adaptation of Historia Brittonum.\textsuperscript{595} Neither mentions Flann, however. In long form, the poem contains the well-known story of the Cruithni’s voyages to Ireland, their friendly interactions with the Gaidil, their conquest of Alba, and their intermarriage with women provided by the Gaidil in return for enacting matrilineal succession.\textsuperscript{596} Alba was eventually seized from them by Cínáed mac Ailpin, presented here as being from Dál Riata.\textsuperscript{597} In *LB* B,\textsuperscript{598} two further quatrains enumerate the kings of Alba from the Cruithni and then those from Dál Riata. ‘Mac Bretach’ (= Mac Bethad (Macbeth), who reigned 1040 – c. 1057?) is named as the most recent.\textsuperscript{599}

Other than *m*, the synchronistic Appendix, and interpolations from *a*, LGÉ *b* contains only one text potentially attributed to Flann Mainistrech. This is the single quatrain ‘Ochtauín August in rí’, which dates the life of Christ by reigns of Roman emperors. This becomes relevant in *b*’s prose during a discussion of the date of the

\textsuperscript{592} Scowcroft, ‘Medieval Recensions’, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{593} LGÉ, V, §492 (pp. 176–79).
\textsuperscript{594} Scowcroft, ‘Medieval Recensions’, pp. 16–17.
\textsuperscript{596} For context, see Mac Eoin, ‘Irish Legend’.
\textsuperscript{598} *LB* sigla are as in Dumville, ‘Textual history’.
\textsuperscript{599} van Hamel (ed.), Lebor Bretnach, §7 (p. 14); Mac Eoin, ‘Irish Legend’, p. 139.
reign of Conchobar mac Nessa. It is printed here from Y (the quatrains’ versions contain no meaningful variants): 600

Ochtauín August in ri
in n-are ro gab Crist cri.
Tibir Cessair co curp nglan
i n-are ro chessartar. 601

This is technically only ever attributed to ‘Flann’ but, since it is about world history (4:2.3), Flann Mainistrech is by far the most likely identification. As this quatrain appears in a passage unique to b, 602 Flann may not have appeared in α at all. Indeed, if Scowcroft is right to associate α with Eochaid úa Flainn, α itself might simply have predated the historical Flann.

The LGÉ b Appendix consists of prose synchronistic tracts, the Tara Diptych, and a full-length version of ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (from Ninus son of Belus, first Assyrian world-king, to the ninth year of Leo III of Byzantium; (2:6.3)), the latter two attributed (internally or externally) to Flann Mainistrech. The Tara Diptych is preceded by the unattributed ‘Érimón is Éber ard’, which carries the Diptych’s king-list back to the Goidelic invasion. 603 This Appendix seems to have been added to resolve b’s chronological inconsistencies and omissions, particularly in its réim rigraide (‘king-list’) of Ireland’s Goidelic kings, and also formed the basis for certain revisions within b proper. The poetry provides a continuous list of such kings and another of the world-kings. These two regnal histories, as well as the pre-Goidelic settlements, are synchronised in the prose tracts. 604 Alongside the Appendix, sections from one of its prose synchronistic tracts, ‘Comaimserad rig in domain ocus Gabál

600 See also Dublin, RIA, MS 23.P.16 (1230), An Leabhar Breac, saec.XV, p. 143.
601 Dublin, RIA, MS D.iv.1 (538), saec.XIV/XV, fol. 7vb11–13: ‘Octavian Augustus was the king when Christ took flesh; Tiberius Caesar, of the pale body, was king when Christ suffered’ (my translation). Jaski (‘Genealogical section’, pp. 329–30 (n. 121)) erroneously states that ‘Ochtauin August in ri’ is part of the same poem as ‘Ochtauin August cen aíl’ within the Laud Synchronisms (‘The Laud Synchronisms’, ed. by Kuno Meyer, ZCP 9 (1913), 471–85 (p. 472)); both quatrains only ever appear independently.
602 LGÉ, V, §594bis (pp. 322–25); by bis, Macalister designates material in b independent of b’s common source with mac. Scowcroft (‘Leabhar Gabhála Part 1’, p. 120) points out that bis material is shared but augmented by all recensions. ‘Ochtauin August in ri’ and its prose context is one such augmentation by b.
Scowcroft has shown that the Appendix’s use of Flann’s poetry is more complex than first appears. Indeed, the Tara Diptych may not have been treated as one text. ‘Ríg Themra toebaige iar tain’ effectively forms a prosimetric unit with another synchronistic tract, ‘Comaimserad rig n-Érenn 7 rig na coiced iar cretim’ (Scowcroft’s Tract V(B); I refer to this as the Provincial Synchronisms (LR:3.2.1; 6:3.1.4)), and may be its source.606 ‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tru’, meanwhile, aligns with no particular component in the Appendix nor any in b proper; it appears to be merely a supplement. ‘Érimón is Éber ard’ loosely resembles b’s réim rígraide but they need not have a direct relationship. Meanwhile, both Scowcroft and Schmidt identify ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ as a major source for the Invasion Synchronisms,607 although Schmidt sees its direct influence as confined to the Roman era.

Thus, while b’s Appendix might appear to be composed of prose and verse counter-parts, its creation was more complex. Flann’s texts can still be regarded as playing a major role, however. As already mentioned, this has prompted suggestions that he was actually responsible for compiling the Appendix and integrating it into b. m was also appended to b as an additional chronological supplement. Being based around Gilla Cóemáin’s more extensive Irish king-list, m eclipses Flann’s Tara Diptych in the Appendix in terms of scope (cf. 2:6.1). Indeed, LGÉ R omits the Appendix and instead includes Rm alongside a terse king-list from either a or c which reaches Ruaidri Úa Conchobuir (ob. 1183).608

Recension c drew upon both a and b. Both recension c manuscripts, like a, attribute ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’ to Flann Mainistrech. B is laconic at the point at which Lc also attributes ‘Toisich na Ilongse tar Iler’ to Flann and adds ‘Anmann na toxin delm tenn’ to his corpus for the first time, both via extended prefaces (3:4). As in a, both appear following the account of Ethriel’s reign (2:2.2.2) within c’s réim

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Since neither poem appears elsewhere in B, they probably occupied the same position in c’s archetype. The latter poem had previously appeared, unattributed, in m, as part of its account of the Goidelic invasion. Indeed, it is similar to ‘Toisich na llongsé tar ller’, which occupies a parallel position in b. Both concern the leaders of the invasion, the latter naming twelve toisich (‘leaders’) along with ten ócthigeirn (‘minor lords’) and the forts they built.\(^609\) Uniquely, Lc also cites the quatrain ‘Suibne go sloghadh dia soí’ in the account of the reign of Suibne Mend mac Fiachna (\textit{ob. 628}) in its \textit{réim rigraide}.\(^610\) This is actually from Flann’s Tara Diptych but is anonymous in Lc.\(^611\)

In c, both Lc and B make their own attempts to resolve \textit{LGÉ}’s chronological conflicts.\(^612\) Within its own embedded synchronistic tract related to b’s Appendix, B cites two quatrains from ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’, attributed to ‘poeta’. Giving the Assyrian and Medean world-kingships’ lengths, each concludes the relevant sections of the tract.\(^613\)

\section*{2.2 Problematic attributions}

In those instances, poems are attributed to Flann Mainistrech by name or there is a particularly good reason for taking ‘Flann’ as referring to him, such as when Flann Mainistrech is specified in other manuscripts. \textit{LGÉ} contains at least two further, more ambiguous attributions to ‘Flann’. I am not convinced that either (\textbf{Appendix 10.2}) relate to Flann Mainistrech and so will not be discussing the texts further in this thesis. However, it is worth noting their presence, not least because later readers of the manuscripts could potentially understand them as such. Flann Mainistrech is the only clearly identifiable Flann cited in \textit{LGÉ}, so the name ‘Flann’, without further specification, could legitimately be read as indicating him.

‘Augaine mór mac ríg Érenn’, the first of three unedited poems on the history of the \textit{bóroma} tribute in Lc, is ‘do rér Fhloind’ (‘according to Flann’) in a

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\textit{LGÉ}, V, §628 (pp. 376–77), pp. 536–37.
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\textit{LL}, III, ll. 15846–49 (p. 511).
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\textit{LGÉ}, III, §§273, 275 (pp. 160–63); Mac Airt (ed. and trans.), ‘Poem [1]’, I:28 (pp. 267–68); ‘Poem [2]’, II:10 (pp. 22–23).
\end{flushleft}
superscription.614 Some scholars list this poem as Flann Mainistrech’s work.615 However, others date it to earlier than the eleventh century.616 Fland mac Máelmaedoc (ob. 979) – a Leinster poet, appropriately enough – has been proposed as the ‘Flann’ in question.617 There is also the matter of whether the superscription relates just to the first poem or to all three.

H, a fragmentary version of LGÉ loosely related to c,618 attributes ‘Togail tuir Chonaind co ngail’ to ‘Fland fili’.619 This poem concerns the attack by descendants of Nemed, the third pre-Goidelic people to settle Ireland, on Conand’s tower, stronghold of the oppressive Fomori. It seems very unlikely that this is Flann Mainistrech: the poem is generally attributed by modern scholars to Eochaid úa Flainn,620 as it is LGÉ d.621 Yet Johnston sees ‘Fland fili’ as specifically designating Flann mac Máelmaedoc.622 It can also designate Flann mac Lonáin,623 Flann file Ó Ronáin,624 ‘Fland fili do Ulltaibh’ (‘Flann the poet of the Ulaid’),625 and the poet behind a number of later medieval poems prophesying Ireland’s liberation from the Normans.626 Such a ubiquitous style cannot reliably designate any particular person.

614 Lec., fol. 303r37–304v50. The first poem also appears (unattributed) in LL as two separate texts: LL, I, ll. 4872–994 (pp. 159–64). The last nine and a half quatrains of the second poem appear in LGÉ B (Dublin, RIA, MS 23.P.12 (536), the Book of Ballymote, saec.XIV/XV [hereafter, BB], fol. 31r1–20) following a major physical lacuna, implying that this was in some way a feature of c’s archetype. For literature on the bórama, see Elin I. Eyjolfsdottir, ‘The Bórama: the poetry and the hagiography in the Book of Leinster’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 2012), pp. 11–63.


617 Mac Eoin, ‘Mysterious Death ’, p. 29; Johnston, Literacy, p. 56 (n. 162).


620 LGÉ, III, 205; Carey, ‘Lebar Gabala’, p. 51; Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála I’, p. 120 (n. 114).


623 Katherine Simms, From Kings to Warlords: The Changing Political Structure of Gaelic Ireland in the Later Middle Ages (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), p. 27.
2.3 Flann in Lebor Gabála Érenn's textual history

Thus, while some poems appear under Flann’s name from LGÉ’s very early discernible stages, others are brought in during its elaboration or, indeed, its emendation and correlation with other versions. Flann was an established authority inside and outside the compilation, although his poems’ changeable contexts in its various versions imply that the exact use to which they were put was in the control of its compilers. The semi-canonicity of the positions and roles of Flann’s (and presumably others’) LGÉ poems is illustrated by Lc’s preface to ‘Anmann na toisech delm tenn’,627 in which the prefator expresses regret that the poem had not been included earlier but notes that it still suits the position he has given it.

Indeed, the historical Flann was himself possibly behind the emendation and correlation specifically of LGÉ b. As this is nowhere stated in a medieval source, only inferred by Scowcroft and Schmidt, it raises a similar problem to that encountered in Chapter 1 (1:6), that of aspects of Flann’s activity that are not directly visible textually but which could have impacted upon his medieval textual persona. It is also highly relevant to anyone interested in reconstructing his actual intellectual biography.

3 Flann’s author-figure

Although authorial self-references are relatively sparse in many of Flann’s poems in LGÉ, themes comparable to those discussed in 2:3 and 2:5.2 can be identified. ‘Anmann na toisech delm tenn’ emphasises its author’s own great knowledge and its subject-matter’s widespread relevance.628 Like ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’, ‘Cruithnig cid dosfarclam’ (LB Lb) locates its author at the Boyne estuary,629 not far from Monasterboice. Also, this poem, like ‘Cía triallaid nech aisnis senchais’, is in question-and-answer form. The interlocutors’ intended identities are even less obvious but history is again presented as the product of inquiry and discussion. Also, the Tara Diptych in the LGÉ b Appendix contains, as in LL (with minor variants), the

627 LGÉ, V, §503 (pp. 198–99).
628 LGÉ, V, 132–33 (q. 6).
629 van Hamel (ed.), Lebor Bretnach, §7 (p. 14); Todd (ed. and trans.), Leabhar Breathnach, pp. 146–47.
concluding celebration of Máel Sechnaill’s return with the same information on Flann (2:2.3).

In his texts in pre-1200 manuscripts (2:2.2), Flann typically supplies narrative and information, relentlessly gilded with panegyric, although ‘A gillu gairm n-ilgrada’ is apparently satire. Much of his contribution to LGÉ is similar, although, in m’s additional quatrains in ‘Éstid a colchu cen ón’, he comes across as much more forthright.

Gideraid sund iar saine
sáebuide na senchaide
sídh ag lucht na trist na treabh
ni maith la Crist in creideam.630

Flann may not have authored them but m presents them under his name. Elsewhere, he openly cites divergent opinions and makes occasional reference to divine sovereignty. Yet, m’s presentation of him is a notable departure, in that he not only comments on historiographical opinions but reads spiritual implications both into history and into historians’ stances.

‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ contains the most detailed presentation of Flann and his work in LGÉ, perhaps in his entire corpus. It merits extended treatment here, although the recension of the poem (Schmidt’s UM and Lc2) that occurs independent of LGÉ contains some relevant variants; these are discussed in 4:2.3.1.

Flann opens ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ with a direct appeal to God the Holy Spirit to ‘make easy’ or ‘elucidate’ (‘réidig’) the difficult matter he is going to relate, the ‘senchus deigríg in domuin’.631 His goal, unattainable without such assistance, is the kings’ enumeration (‘thuirim’, ultimately from rím; 2:3.3.2). He seeks the ‘gift of knowledge’ (‘aeb cólusa’),

corbam finnf[h]sid each fir
dia n-innisin na rig-sin.632

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630 LGÉ, IV, 240–41 (q. 41): ‘Though they say here in various ways, false men of history, that the people of the curses, of the dwellings were sid-folk, the belief is displeasing to Christ’.
631 Mac Airt (ed. and trans.), ‘Poem [1]’, I:1–3 (pp. 257–58): ‘the history of the goodly kings of the world’. Mac Airt takes the poem in Scowcroft’s LGÉ D (Mac Airt’s D) as his main text and records variants from his L (mostly the poem in Scowcroft’s LGÉ Lb; see Appendix 9). His edition thus broadly presents the poem as it is in LGÉ.
632 Mac Airt (ed. and trans.), ‘Poem [1]’, I:3 (pp. 257–58): ‘so that I may be truly familiar with each one in order to recount those kings’ (amended).
Flann’s author-figure here prays for knowledge and powers of expression, which are apparently interrelated. He calls on God to make the ‘recounting of them’ (‘a n-indisin’) easy, while the couplet I have quoted implies that their recounting will arise out of ‘true familiarity’. This positioning in relation to God and history has a number of interesting implications.

If this history can only be composed and expressed with divine assistance, the material involved must be obscure, complex, or disparate. Indeed, the poem’s sources are not obvious and scholars are still in search of them. The occasional hint appears. For instance, the poem maintains that the Chaldean kings were not world-kings but subordinate to the Medes. However, reference is made to a record of Chaldean kings presented as such elsewhere (‘cia dorónad a ndíne’). Here, we might recognise the Flann of the Tara Diptych, the discerning source critic. Self-representation along these lines, however, is otherwise very hard to find in this poem.

The emphasis on Flann’s dependence on God, combined with vagueness concerning human sources, is perhaps intended to designate ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ as originative and foundational. The ANÍ colophon presents Flann and Eochaid’s sources as disparate and, at the time of writing, lost, rendering their compilation the last and thus most authoritative version standing (2:5.2.1). Similarly here, Flann achieved another difficult act of compilatio only by the grace of God. Again, I argue, through the individual circumstances of its creation, a compilation has become a canonised, authoritative work.

The interconnection between knowledge and expression recurs at the poem’s conclusion, in which Flann is lauded in the third person. He is said to have enumerated (‘ros rim’) the world-kings ‘o Nin co Leomain’ (‘from Ninus to Leo’), as ‘Flann alone’ (‘aenFlann’), ‘sweet of word’ (‘feidbind’), ‘the wise man’ (‘inteolas’). The elucidation of the world-kings’ regnal history is a verbal, as well as a historiographical, achievement:

635 Mac Airt (ed. and trans.) ‘Poem [2]’, II:22 (pp. 28–29): ‘although their series has been compiled’.
ro-gle triana gnim a guth
re cach rig do reidiugud.637

It is also interesting that we now find Flann behind the réidigud (‘elucidation, explanation’). At the beginning, he called on God to elucidate the subject; now he himself has elucidated it. The need for a dúnad meant that this term’s recurrence was inevitable but its altered usage fits with the conclusion’s new-found emphasis on Flann’s achievement. Indeed, it is worth noting that he is not here a collaborator but ‘Flann alone’.

Furthermore, the conclusion gives some attention to Flann’s historical identity. It is stated that he is fer léigind of Monasterboice. The poem’s composition is also dated, via a quatrain naming ‘the kings of that [D: ‘this’] time’ (‘rig na re sin’; D ‘sea’).638 The named Irish kings collectively delineate the early 1040s to the early 1060s.639 Finally, allusion is potentially made to Flann having been authorised by a scholarly community; in the LGÉ version of the poem, he is ‘Flann feidbind romben brig breath’.640 The retrospective feel of some of these remarks might suggest that the poem’s conclusion is not Flann’s own self-assessment but a later addition in his honour, although firm proof either way does not seem attainable.

In LGÉ Lb and D’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’, in its totality, Flann is presented as both knowledgeable and eloquent concerning world-history, which is interestingly reminiscent of his chronicle obits’ unique conjunction of léigenn and filidecht (1:2.2.7). At the poem’s opening, he is bereft of such attributes, as far as the task at hand is concerned, and seeks them from God but, in the conclusion, he is praised for possessing both. He also has a distinctive historical identity: a profession, an institutional affiliation, an era, a reputation. This is a succinct and pious thumbnail sketch of him as a character, although its provenance is somewhat uncertain.

This focus on Flann’s own struggles and circumstances effectively makes him the text’s human originator, in contrast to some of the more circumspect presentations of his role that we have encountered. The resulting poem can indeed be

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637 MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Irish Historical Tract’, p. 138: ‘his voice through his work hath made clear the explanation of each king's time’.
640 MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Irish Historical Tract’, p. 138: ‘Flann, sweet of voice, the strength of judgements hath sounded him’.
shown to have been influential on material surviving in pre-1200 manuscripts (2:6.3) and on material appearing later (4:3.2–3). Its constructed foundational status may thus have been reflected in real intellectual practice. Again, we see Flann’s author-figure implicated in rhetoric specific to its textual situation.

4 Flann’s poems in context

Considering the role and treatment of Flann’s work in the contexts in which it appears in LGÉ, a number of general and specific observations can be made. First, LGÉ is an integrated prosimetric text, so Flann’s poetry is invariably cited to conform or expand upon its information or wider structure. The points made in relation to his texts in pre-1200 manuscripts and their presentation as components of wider textual networks are thus also applicable here (2:5.1).

Specifically in LGÉ, Flann often provides the kind of material previously lacked by the recension in which it appears. α needed to be ‘rescued’ from a self-contradictory and obsolete chronology; Flann’s poetry is integral to the synchronistic Appendix and embedded apparatus added, to this end, in b. Interestingly, ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ re-appears anonymously in LGÉ B as part of the revision of b’s chronological tract. μ’s comparatively basic regnal chronicle was consistently supplemented throughout the tradition with narrative and sundry data; the poems attributed to Flann in mac play this role. Their role here is less pivotal than in b, however, as many sources enriched mac. Also, as I have argued elsewhere, lists of aideda can have a chronological function.641

Lc has a particular tendency to introduce poems with particularly lavish prefices.642 Such treatment is given, in this version, to ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’ and ‘Anmann na toisech delm tenn’. The poems require some contextualisation, since the fifth reign in the réim rigraide is not their natural narratival context.643 Lc’s introductions not only provide this but catalogue in detail the information they

\[\text{\footnotesize 641 Thanisch, ‘Götterdämmerung’, pp. 85–89.}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 643 Recension c also includes the passage (LGÉ, V, §385 (pp. 20–27)) naming Túan and Fintan as the revenant eyewitness sources for information concerning the toisich. The same points could thus be made here as in 2:5.2.2.}\]
themselves provide. For example, where a’s prefaces simply identify aideda and anmanna (D only) in ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’, Lc’s preface identifies their aideda, anmanna, and places of death, the battles in which they died, and their killers’ identities. Its prefaces promote the poems as rich sources of information and may have a pedagogic function. They set out what the reader – or audience – will learn from the poem and how the data might be structured. Indeed, the categories could almost be arranged in the arcade-like medieval mnemonic model explored by Mary Carruthers.644

This treatment of the verse contrasts interestingly with that in LGÉ R. R’s practice of reducing poems to their first quatrain implies either that corroborative verse’s mere existence is all that need be noted or that the verse was expected be readily known by the reader. Lc, meanwhile, sets out some poetry as a learning opportunity in its own right. A parallel from Flann’s pre-1200 corpus is the attribution to Flann, by LU’s scribe M, of ‘Mugain ingen Choncraid cháin’ (2:3.2), where Flann’s role is presented as memorialising the narrative. Again, the focus is on the content, not the medium nor the author.

The author might be of more relevance in F’s attribution to Flann of ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’, in which Flann’s dúan is ‘ga foirgeall’ (‘providing authoritative testimony on [the deaths of the Túatha Dé Danann]’).645 However, it is difficult to unpack what F means by this. Is the poem’s testimony authoritative because it is by Flann or in its own right? There is more immediate evidence for the latter. As we have seen (2:5.1), the poem constitutes a formidable corpus of names, not to mention aideda, compared to N’s prose and seems to have a similar relationship with F (Appendix 11). It could thus easily come across as based upon superior knowledge of the Túatha Dé Danann. Alternatively, since F actually cites the poem while arguing that the Túatha Dé Danann were demons with human bodies, Flann might be providing a useful intervention by verifying their mortality.646 The extent to which he imputes authority to the text in this instance is unclear.

645 My translation; see eDIL s.v. forgell.
5 Conclusion: Lebor Gabála Érenn

In the course of the LGÉ project, we can identify a number of characteristics of Flann’s treatment. His poetry, or attributions to him, can be shown to enter LGÉ’s recensions at different points in their development, implying that he was an authority-figure across medieval Gaelic historiographical culture, not simply fossilised within the LGÉ tradition. Indeed, there are specific indications that his work was drawn upon when revising the compilation. However, little interest in Flann as an author-figure is detectable in his texts’ external apparatus beyond his identification by name. More interest is shown in the texts themselves and their contribution to LGÉ’s account; this is particularly exemplified in the tendency of some, especially ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’, to change context in different recensions. The compilers’ text-focused approach contrasts with the particularly intense interest in Flann’s author-figure that opens and concludes ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’. In some ways, his presentation therein parallels that in materials we have examined from pre-1200 manuscripts, in that he is a tertiary author elucidating an existing tradition. Yet the absence of human collaboration or actual sources, the emphasis on piety and eloquence alongside learning, and the inclusion of biographical data, combine to present Flann’s authority in way that focuses on him particularly strongly as an individual.
Chapter 4

'Tell me, Flann...': Flann Mainistrech in the Later Middle Ages (c. 1200–1600)

1 Introduction

1.1 Historical overview

The later twelfth century has traditionally been considered a watershed in Irish political and intellectual history. During this period, Norman invasions led to the foundation of permanent English colonies, particularly in the east and south, and aborted various Gaelic dynasties’ efforts to unify Ireland. Church reforms distanced ecclesiastical centres from secular politics and thus from the study and production of associated literature and historiography.

Yet this was not the end. English colonisation stalled and stagnated until the later sixteenth century and the remaining Gaelic lordships’ power and confidence revived. Serving their ideological, propagandistic, and administrative needs were hereditary learned families, often patronised by noble dynasties, and specialising in history, poetry, law and so forth. For example, the Meic Fhirbigh, particularly prominent in this chapter, supplied historians to Úi Dhubhda, the ruling house of Úi Fhiachrach Mhuaidhe in north Connacht.

The period’s intellectual culture and literary output reflect its professionals’ gravitation towards particularist secular politics and their sense of the early medieval Gaelic past and its authorising power in their present. The period’s manuscripts preserve numerous Old and Middle Gaelic texts and older manuscripts were prized in

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648 Paul Walsh, Irish Men of Learning: Studies, ed. by Colm Ó Lochlainn (Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles, 1947).

649 Ó Muraíle, Celebrated Antiquary, pp. 1–56.
both intellectual and material terms. However, later medieval codices have been recognised as not simply repositories for texts but as creative and purposeful in their arrangement, while later medieval compositions show a similar tendency to re-work their literary inheritance. Bardic poetry, rich in apologies from the historic and legendary past, was used to articulate dynasts’ and polities’ aspirations and tensions, although this genre and social function may well have also existed in pre-Norman Ireland. Old and Middle Gaelic material was sometimes overhauled according to underlying contemporary political needs. Chronicles from before 1200 were adapted and continued, again often tracing the fortunes of a certain dynasty. Indeed, this is how the majority of extant chronicle material even concerning the earlier period is preserved (1:2.1).

Not all late medieval literary activity was overtly political. For instance, works synchronising the Gaelic past with world history and adaptations of Latin texts into Gaelic continued to be produced, the latter coming to include other medieval European vernaculars. Furthermore, despite the Hiberno-Norman presence having rendered unachievable the already problematic aspiration towards a kingdom of Ireland, LGÉ and similar pseudo-histories, presenting a unified history of Ireland, continued to be studied and developed (3:1.2), and the unified history they set out still provided other literature with a wider framework.

1.2 A new Flann? Continuity and development

In this chapter, I consider extant later medieval manuscripts’ presentations of Flann Mainistrech’s corpus and of his textual persona. That is, I consider his perceived role

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650 For example, Cunningham and Gillespie, ‘Ui Dhomhnaill’, pp. 495–501.
652 For a parallel study of the Middle Gaelic treatment of Old Gaelic literature, see Herbert, ‘Crossing’.
656 McCarthy, Irish Annals, pp. 304–41.
657 For example, Erich Poppe, ‘The early modern Irish version of Beves of Hamtoun’, CMCS 23 (Summer 1992), 77–98.
and significance in a period characterised both by intense study of the established literary tradition of which he was part and by its highly purposeful application to contemporary circumstances. Compared with the earlier materials we have considered in Chapters 1 to 3, there are distinctive points of continuity in the overall genres in which Flann is implicated and in his characterisation. However, his later medieval persona also differs significantly in multiple respects.

In terms of subject-matter, for instance, he is still a historian of specific Irish polities, of their origins and continuity, but the polities have changed. Material is attributed to him on world history, but it has become more plentiful and more varied than ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’, while the latter’s Middle Gaelic textual history is itself uncertain (2:6.3.2). Multiple late medieval sources assume, in passing, that Flann is an authority on genealogies, something nowhere directly stated in earlier manuscripts.

This variance could have come about for a variety of reasons. His changed corpus of texts and areas of expertise might be the product of appropriation, adaptation and erroneous attribution by subsequent compilers and composers, who have long since departed from historicity. Indeed, as we have seen, the authenticity and veracity of many of the attributions to Flann found in earlier manuscripts are not unquestionable (2:4). Furthermore, we rely on one scribe (LL’s U) for most of his pre-1200 material (2:2.2). Alternatively, different corpora of manuscript evidence or different sources might provide perspectives that are generally accurate but ever partially, never completely, true to historical reality. Despite its profound implications for how we understand what might have produced the evidence relating to Flann, this cannot be resolved within the present study and the evidence need not be all of one nature anyway. Yet this is what is potentially at stake when we consider material relating to Flann from different eras.

Beyond specific areas of expertise, how one might access Flann is presented differently. Other than the sources discussed in Chapter 1, Flann’s purported work, in pre-1200 manuscripts and in LGÉ, is generally presented to us ostensibly as his own preserved speech via simple attributions (MR:3.1.1). This form is still well-attested in later medieval manuscripts but, specifically in three poems in the late fourteenth-century Book of Uí Maine (UM), Flann is instead cited as a character,
sometimes even framed within a social setting, as if it is possible to bypass his textual existence and engage with him directly (4:2.1.6.1–2, 4:2.3.3). In contrast, however, there are also instances of Flann being cited explicitly via a text (4:2.1.4, 4:2.2.2, 4:2.2.4). These varied presentations of Flann imply a creative interest on the part of medieval scholars in his identity as an author-figure and in how he is to be accessed.

1.3 Late medieval manuscript material

Much relevant material in later medieval manuscripts is unedited, partially edited, or, as I demonstrate, poorly understood. For this reason, the present chapter necessarily devotes more attention to basic textual interpretation (4:2) prior to discussing the material’s contribution to the thesis’ central questions (4:3). Also, the increased frequency of allusions or citations in our corpus blurs the distinction between internal and external references to Flann made in previous chapters. Finally, it has not been possible within this doctoral project to edit the relevant texts or date them with much certainty. This being the case, a text’s presence in this chapter should not be taken as implying that it was composed post-1200 (see also MR:3.2). As discussed, while Flann’s overall profile in later medieval manuscripts might be distinctive, in any given case, a text could be derived from much earlier sources. We are interested in their selection for inclusion in this period’s manuscripts and in their intracodical connections therein, not in their origins.

2 Flann in late medieval manuscript material

Some historical poems attributed to Flann in pre-1200 manuscripts or LGÉ – including ‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’, material from the Cenél nÉogain Suite, and ‘Cruithnig cid dosfarclam’ – continue to appear in later medieval and modern manuscripts but without any further attributions to Flann.658 ‘Druim Cetta, ceste na noem’, complete with the reference to Flann and Echthigern (2:2.2.1), appears in two sixteenth-century manuscripts, that is, in RIA C.iii.2’s preface to Amra Choluim

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Chille and independently in a collection on Colum Cille in Laud Misc. 615.\(^659\) Where it appears independent of LGÉ, ‘Réídig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (4:2.2.1) also retains its internal attribution to Flann. ANÍ retains its association with him in later medieval manuscripts but under complex circumstances requiring detailed analysis (4:2.1.5).

Otherwise, the texts attributed to him during this period are hitherto unattested in his pre-1200 corpus, although they often echo it in genre, style, or approach. The late medieval corpus of material attributed to or otherwise associated with Flann is surveyed below. It has been categorised according to the polity, dynasty, region, or ethnic group to which the material pertains. This subdivision is guided by the material’s subject-matter, its contexts in manuscript, and current understandings of late medieval scholarship’s social context (4:1.1).

2.1 Histories of Irish kingdoms

Many of the texts that are attributed to Flann or that cite him in later medieval manuscripts are directly concerned with the history of a particular kingdom or dynasty. This, indeed, was the case for much of Flann’s pre-1200 corpus. However, in the present corpus, his work is of relevance to a different, although overlapping, series of kingdoms and, in some cases, has potentially been adapted to strengthen its relevance.

2.1.1 Continuing interest in the history of the kings of Ireland

First, despite the Tara Diptych apparently having been superseded within a century of its composition (2:6.1), two references preserved in later medieval manuscripts imply that Flann retained reputed expertise on pseudo-historical kings of Ireland. The historiographical distinction between the king of Tara and the kingship of Ireland, incidentally, appears to have dissolved in the course of the eleventh century.\(^660\)

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2.1.1.1 *More aideda of Tara’s kings?*

A quatrain attributed to Flann on the death of Diarmait mac Cerbaill (*ob.* 565), an early Uí Néill king of Tara, corroborates the account of his death in *Aided Diarmata meic Cerbaill II*, preserved in the late fifteenth-century *Book of Lismore* (*Lis.*).\(^{661}\)

\[
\text{[...]} \text{ amail ro gheall Bréinainn do Fhlann mainisdrech. Ut dixit:}
\]

\[
\text{Aed dubh mac Suibhne na sreath}
\]

\[
\text{ba rí Ulaid airmiteach}
\]

\[
\text{is e sin gan diamair daill}
\]

\[
\text{do marbh Diarmaid mac Cerbhaill.}^{662}\]

Naturally, the idea of a sixth-century saint ‘prophesying’ about sixth-century events to Flann Mainistrech has proved unacceptable among modern commentators.\(^{663}\) Carey amends the prose’s conclusion to ‘[...] amail ro gheall Bréininn dó. Ut Flann Mainisdrech dixit’.\(^{664}\) Nonetheless, if *Lis.*’s anonymous scribe believed that Brendan could have prophesied to Flann Mainistrech, then it implies that Flann Mainistrech was not universally recognisable, as when he is mistaken for Flann Fina in *BB* (4:2.1.2).

The quatrain’s original context is unclear. That Diarmait’s entire killing fits into one quatrain suggests it is from a catalogue poem akin to the Tara Diptych. Both Áed Dub and Diarmait receive equal attention, so it may concern either the kings of the Ulaid or the kings of Tara (or Ireland). Diarmait dies under basically the same circumstances in the Tara Diptych, but the quatrains are completely different.\(^{665}\)

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\(^{662}\) *SG*, I, 72; II, 76: ‘[...] according as Brendan prognosticated to Flann of the Monastery. As one said: “Black Aedh of the imposts, Suibhne’s son, | was Ulidia’s honourable king: | he it was (and this is no blind darling mystery) | that slew Dermot son of Cerbhall”’; cf. Wiley (trans.), ‘Stories’, p. 58.


\(^{664}\) Carey (trans.), *Celtic Heroic Age*, p. 214: ‘[...] as Brendan prophesied to him [Diarmait]. As Flann Mainistrech said [...]’.

\(^{665}\) *LL*, III, ll. 15806–09 (p. 509).
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2.1.1.2 Cú Chulainn’s life in heroic saga and Irish regnal history

We find Flann, on one occasion, cited as an authority on the pseudo-historical context for Cú Chulainn. In a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century section of the composite TCD 1336, within an unedited genealogical collection on the Gailenga, a quatrain mentions Cú Chulainn’s presence at the Battle of Leitir Ruibhe, in which Eochaid Feidlech slew Fachtna Fathach, the previous king of Ireland. This creates problems, as the battle otherwise involves personnel from the generation previous to Cú Chulainn. Fachtna, for example, is Conchobar mac Nessa’s father, in some sources, while Eochaid is Medb’s father. The tract (itself of uncertain date) thus sets about elaborating a compliant chronology for Cú Chulainn. It begins with the Battle of Druim Criaich, which must post-date Leitir Ruibhe, as Eochaid Feidlech is, by then, king of Ireland; Cú Chulainn, it is asserted, was twelve at the time. The tract continues to give Cú Chulainn’s age at certain historical events, correlated with the likely time elapsed between them. While, as O’Curry points out, he dies at twenty-seven in other sources, in this extended biography, Cú Chulainn dies at the age of seventy-one, in Conaire Mór’s twenty-sixth regnal year. In support, two authorities are cited, Neide Úa Maelchonaire and Flann Mainistrech (‘conad amail sin imurro, do reir Neide hi Maoilchonaire ocus Flainn Mainisdreach’). This maverick tract contains varied data from saga tradition and the regnal history of the kings of Ireland, so it is not obvious what Flann’s specific contribution was understood to have been, although it is tempting to associate him with the material on the kings of Ireland (see also 6:3.2.2).

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667 TCD 1336, col. 764.41–43. I am indebted to Dr Fangzhe Qiu (DIAS) for kindly providing me with images of the relevant section of this manuscript. For the battle, see ‘La bataille de Leitir Ruibhe’, ed. and trans. [French] by Margaret Dobbs, Revue Celtique, 39 (1922), 1–32; Edel Bhreathnach, ‘Tales of Connacht: Cath Airtig, Táin Bó Flidais, Cath Leitreach Ruibhe, and Cath Cumair’, CMCS, 45 (Summer 2003), 21–42 (p. 24).
671 O’Curry (ed. and trans.), Manuscript Materials, pp. 507–08; ‘So that that such is the fact, according to Neidlu [sic] O’Maoilchonaire, and Flann of the Monastery’. Several poets named Neide Úa Maelchonaire appear in medieval sources. The one whose interests most closely match those of the TCD 1336 tract died in 1136 (Ó Cróinín, ‘Eól dam’, p. 211).
2.1.2 Cenél nÉogain’s kings of Ireland
‘Cetrí ro gabh Érinn uile’ lists the sixteen kings of Cenél nÉogain who were also kings of Ireland, first giving their names (qq. 1–6) and then their *aideda* (qq. 7–14),\(^{672}\) from Muirchertach mac Erca (*ob.* 536) to Domnall úa Neill (*ob.* 980). As we have seen, in Rawl.B.502, this poem introduces a series of metrical histories of Irish kingdoms, including several items attributed to Flann in *LL* (**2:2.2.1**; **Appendix 5**). There, like the others, it is anonymous.

In the later Middle Ages, the poem appears in *UM* and *BB*.\(^{673}\) In *UM*, the poem (still anonymous) concludes a collection of Úi Néill genealogies.\(^{674}\) These are described in a note as the ‘recenti genealogia’ (‘new genealogies’) and apparently near-contemporary with *UM* itself, ending with Niall Mór mac Áedha Ó Néill (*ob.* 1398), king of Tír Éogain, the successor kingdom to Cenél nÉogain.\(^{675}\) In *BB*, the poem concludes *Catha Cenél Éogain*,\(^{676}\) the tract concluded by ‘Aní doronsat do chalmu’ in *Lec.* (**2:4.2.1.2**). In *BB*, the poem is attributed to ‘Flann Fina’, the Gaelic name for Aldfrith son of Oswiu (*ob.* 704/5), king of Northumbria. While anachronistic, this is not inappropriate, as Aldfrith’s mother was of the Cenél nÉogain.\(^{677}\) It seems legitimate to postulate ‘Flann cecinit’, in an exemplar pre-dating *BB*, being expanded to ‘Flann Fina’. ‘Flann Mainistrech’ may well have originally been intended, particularly as the poem is attributed to Flann Mainistrech in the seventeenth-century *Ó Cléirigh Book of Genealogies* (**5:2.1.3**).\(^{678}\)

As a king-list with *aideda*, ‘Cetrí ro gabh Érinn uile’ resembles multiple texts in Flann’s pre-1200 corpus and is similar in topic and outlook to *LL*’s Cenél nÉogain Suite. Indeed, an identical list of Cenél nÉogain kings of Ireland concludes the Suite’s ‘Cind cethri ndíni iar Frigrind’.\(^{679}\) However, the present poem cannot simply be derived from the Suite (or vice-a-versa); the latter omits *aideda*, the former omits regnal years.

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\(^{672}\) Currently unedited; for diplomatic transcripts from Rawl.B.502, *UM*, and *BB*, see **Appendix 12**.


\(^{675}\) Mulchrone, *RIA Cat.*, fasc. XXVI, 3315–16.

\(^{676}\) *BB*, fols 48rb1–49ra22.


\(^{678}\) Pender (ed.), *‘O Clery Book*’, §§407–455 (pp. 27–37).

The scribe behind BB’s version of ‘Cétrí ro gabh Éirinn uile’, Robeartus mac Sithigh, apparently planned to update it. He left space for two more quatrains between those listing the kings’ names and those listing their aídeda (i.e. between qq. 5 and 6; Appendix 12.2). In addition, his q. 6 counts ‘tri fir dég is coígur’ (‘eighteen men’) in the preceding list where other manuscripts count sixteen (e.g. UM: ‘da fir dheg is ceathrar’). Indeed, a later hand has added the line from the other witnesses above q. 6 in BB. The gap was thus perhaps to make room for two additional kings. Two twelfth-century Cenél nÉogain rig co fressarba (‘kings [of Ireland] with opposition’) suggest themselves, Domnall (ob. 1121) and Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn (ob. 1166), with whom Catha Cenél Éogain ends. We have seen that metrical regnal lists can be extended subsequent to their composition (2:4.1). Here, we catch the process in action. Furthermore, this particular extension was apparently due to take place during BB’s very compilation in the late fourteenth century, implying active engagement in this sort of text on the part of the manuscript’s compilers. It is also interesting that Mac Sithigh still includes an attribution, despite planning on altering the text.

2.1.3 Conall Gulbán’s battles

Cenél nÉogain are joined in the corpus of texts attributed to Flann in the later Middle Ages by at least one work concerning the other major northern Uí Néill kingdom, Cenél Conaill. This polity had supplied some early kings of Tara, before being eclipsed by Cenél nÉogain, then gradually re-emerging in the eleventh century. In the thirteenth century, it became the lordship of the Uí Dhomnaill, rulers of Tir Conaill and purported descendants from Cenél Conaill. Conel Conaill is not particularly prominent in Flann’s pre-1200 corpus. His Tara Diptych duly notes their kings of Tara, while ‘Druim Cetta, cette na noem’ involves both their venerated

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680 Mulchrone, RIA Cat., fasc. XIII, 1627.
681 BB, fol. 49v38.
relative, Colum Cille, and the convention of Druim Cett, held under the auspices of a Cenél Conaill king.686

Yet this changes in the *Book of Fenagh (Fen.)* and Rawl.B.514.687 *Fen.* was compiled in 1516 by Muirgheas mac Paidin Ó Maoilchonaire (*ob.* 1543) for Tadhg Ó Rodaighe, *comarb* of the church of Fenagh in Breifne. It contains a prosimetric Life of St Caillín, Fenagh’s founding saint, and was based on an older, disintegrating collection of poems about him, the *Senlebor Caillín* (now lost).688 Rawl.B.514, written in 1532 by Giolla Riabhach Mór Ó Cléirigh,689 contains *Beatha Colaim Chille*, the new life of Colum Cille compiled under the direction of Maghnus Ó Domhnaill (*ob.* 1564), lord of Tír Conaill.690 In both manuscripts, the hagiography is followed by a malleable series of poems on the history of Cenél Conaill and the northern Uí Néill more generally, which, both manuscripts imply, were also in the *Senlebor*.691 This I designate the Donegal Series.692 Its poems invariably favour Cenél Conaill and, specifically, Uí Dhomhnaill’s ancestors.693 Indeed, Rawl.B.514’s poems follow the Uí Dhomhnaill down to the sixteenth century (this extension I designate the Ó Domhnaill Dúanaire).694

In both manuscripts, Flann appears in association with the Series’ opening poem, ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’.695 This poem narrates the war of the sons of Niall Noigiallach against the Ulaid and their conquest of what then became the northern Uí Néill heartlands, led by Conall Gulbán (ancestor of Cenél Conaill). It

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686 Jaski, ‘Druim Cett’.

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also argues that Conall was Níall’s rightful successor at Tara but that he was usurped by Conall’s brother, Lóegaire. The poem concludes with a caithréim (‘battle-list’) of Conall’s victories throughout Ireland.

Deich catha ocus da chet sin,
ar na rim a Manistir,
d’Oengus maraen is do Flann,
ro chom in gres do Chonall.696

Rawl.B.514 adds a simple attribution to Flann Mainistrech at the poem’s commencement.

Much might seem familiar to us here. Flann is based at Monasterboice, he is collaborating with another scholar (Óengus is otherwise unidentifiable), and their work is defined as rím and comprises the cataloguing of martial deeds while narrating a kingdom’s origins (2:2.2.1, 2:3.2, 2:3.3.2, 2:5.3). Yet the poem’s explicit support for Cenél Conaill is a new departure for Flann.

Flann possibly appears in another Donegal Series poem, ‘A liubair atá ar do lár’,697 found in both Fen. and Rawl.B.514, as well as in the sixteenth- or potentially fifteenth-century NLS Adv. 72.1.28 alongside two other Donegal Series poems.698 This poem prescribes the stipends and services owed by Cenél nÉogain and Cenél Conaill to one another in the event of either holding the kingships of Ailech or of Ireland. Ailech now represents not just the kingship of Cenél nÉogain but the overlordship of the northern Ui Néill. Should either hold the kingship of Ireland, they should privilege, in this order, the other northern Ui Néill faction, then Clann Cholmáin, the rest of Dál Cuinn (i.e. the Connachta, the Airgialla, and any remaining Ui Néill septs), the Ulaid, and the kings of Munster and Leinster. This is all said to have been inscribed by ‘Flann’, or ‘Fland fili’ (Rawl.B.514), in what is presented as

696 Hennessy and Kelly (ed. and trans. [amended]), Book of Fenagh, pp. 330–31: ‘Ten battles and two hundred are these, | as counted in Manister, | by Oengus, together with Flann, | who composed the work concerning Conall’. The editors prefer forty (‘da fichet’) over two-hundred (‘da chet’); indeed, this is the Rawl.B.514 (fol. 61’13) reading.
697 Edinburgh, NLS Adv., MS 72.1.28, saec.XV/XVI, fol. 4’1–16; Fen., fols 43’919–43’913;
Appendix 14.
a supremely authoritative book containing ‘senchus comuaige comlan’.\(^{699}\) In *Fen.*, the northern Úi Néill kings owe the book honour, while, in Rawl.B.514, those so obliged are ‘ughdair eolaid’.\(^{700}\) It is not clear if this is to be taken as attributing the poem to Flann or as describing a source upon which the poem is based.

While a legitimate interpretation in light of ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’, this may not be Flann Mainistrech. *Flann fili*, as we have seen (3:2.2), can indicate a variety of poets, including Flann mac Lonáin, who is also associated with several other poems in Rawl.B.514’s Ó Domhnaill *Duanaire*.\(^{701}\) An unidentified Flann is also attested commenting on northern politics.\(^{702}\) If *Flann fili* were here taken as Flann Mainistrech, however, this poem would constitute a distinctive presentation of his author-figure. He would emerge not simply as an authority on tacitly politicised history but as openly setting the terms of diplomatic relationships. Furthermore, this would constitute an unusual portrayal of his work as an act of physical inscription.

Books’ authority is a somewhat distinctive interest of the Donegal Series: ‘A éolcha Chonaill cheólaigh’ cites ‘Lebar Cilli Mic nEnan’ in similarly reverential terms and ‘Atá sund senchas nach súaill’ apparently cites *Lebor na Cert*.\(^{703}\)

The history and provenance of ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ and ‘A liubair atá ar do lár’ are unclear. Katherine Simms dates most of the Donegal Series to the late twelfth or thirteenth century, based on the implied political context.\(^{704}\) References in other material supposedly derived from it imply that the *Senlebor Caillín* cannot date from before the thirteenth century.\(^{705}\) Due to references to the *Senlebor* in *Fen.* and Rawl.B.514, it has been taken as the archetype of both manuscripts’ versions of the Donegal Series.\(^{706}\) Furthermore, Bernadette Cunningham and Raymond Gillespie have stated that Rawl.B.514’s Series was derived from

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\(^{700}\) Rawl.B.514, fol. 63’25: ‘learned authors’ (my translation).

\(^{701}\) Ó Cuív, *Catalogue*, I, 271.


\(^{704}\) Simms, ‘Donegal poems’, p. 42.

\(^{705}\) Simms, ‘Donegal poems’, p. 38.

However, this reconstruction cannot be accepted in the case of the two poems under discussion, given the serious textual variants that distinguish their respective versions in *Fen.* and Rawl.B.514 (Appendices 13 and 14). There is thus no reason at present to postulate a thirteenth-century archetype. Beyond the antiquated semi-diplomatic edition from *Fen.*, the Series has never been edited, so discussion of its textual history, the date of the archetype, and thus the true provenance of its reference to Flann must be deferred until such work’s completion.

2.1.4 Uí Dhiarmata’s genealogies
Flann is also cited via a physical codex elsewhere. Within their closely related genealogical collections (hereafter designated, by incipit, as *Diluuium factum est*), both *Lec.* and *BB* include a tract on Síl Muiredaig, the ancestral kindred of several royal dynasties of medieval Connacht. This includes genealogies and sundry historical matter on the Uí Dhiarmata, the descendants of a Síl Muiredaig king of Connacht, Diarmait Finn mac Tomaltaig (*ob. 833*). Towards this tract’s conclusion, there occurs a colophon, printed from both manuscripts in Appendix 15. It states that the Uí Dhiarmata genealogies have been collected from a variety of ancient manuscripts, including the ‘books of Flann Mainistrech’ (*Lec.* only), and carried back to Noah (*Lec.*) or Gáedel Glas (*BB*).

The *Lec.* colophon seems to imply that books associated with Flann, among others, were mined for information on Uí Dhiarmata. Yet the genealogical matter specifically pertaining to Uí Dhiarmata in *Diluuium factum est* does not extend nearly as far back as the colophon claims. Even its tract on Síl Muiredaig as a whole only traces the eponymous Muiredach Muillethan (*ob. 702*) back to Eochu Muigmedón. The colophon is only accurate if read in the context of *Diluuium factum est* overall, whose introduction indeed traces Muiredach Muillethan back,
ultimately, to Noah, via the apical figures the colophon names.\textsuperscript{716} Primarily concerned with 	extit{Diluuium factum est} itself, the colophon’s material was potentially adapted and moved so as to focus on Úi Dhiarmata. We might consequently postulate that this recension of 	extit{Diluuium factum est} was made for an Úa Diarmata patron, a leading candidate being Domnall mac Uatach (ob. 1316), king of Úi Dhiarmata, whose pedigree follows the colophon in both manuscripts.\textsuperscript{717} This politicised bibliography may be meant to enhance Úi Dhiarmata’s prestige by implying that the kingdom featured in great historical codices of the past. I know of no work attributed to Flann that mentions them.

The ‘books of Flann Mainistrech’ (in Lec.’s reading) were probably cited originally to trace the provenance of 	extit{Diluuium factum est} in its entirety, a compilation of such vast historiographical scope that it is not easy to determine what specific information they provided. If, as Jaski tentatively suggests,\textsuperscript{718} Flann was involved in redacting the 	extit{Saltair Caisil}’s genealogical material – this codex also appears in the colophon – then his books may have been reputed as a major source for genealogies in general. Otherwise, either his metrical regnal histories or matter relating to LGÊ could potentially have been relevant to genealogists.

Yet only Lec. even mentions the ‘books of Flann Mainistrech’; BB has the ‘books of Monasterboice’. With the testimony evenly split, this cannot be resolved. Reference is made to the ‘books of Monasterboice’ in unrelated contexts in two other manuscripts,\textsuperscript{719} while this is the sole attestation of ‘the books of Flann Mainistrech’ other than in an abbreviated version of the same colophon in Dubhaltach Óg Mac Firbhisigh’s (ob. 1671) \textit{Leabhar Mór na nGenealach}.\textsuperscript{720} At the very least, however, Giolla Íosa Mór Mac Firbisigh (ob. 1418), the Lec. scribe and compiler, as well as Dubhaltach Óg, did not find the concept of ‘the books of Flann Mainistrech’ unacceptable.

\textsuperscript{716} Lec., fols.53\textsuperscript{a}1–53\textsuperscript{b}44; BB, fols 43\textsuperscript{a}1–43\textsuperscript{b}25.
\textsuperscript{717} ALC 1316.6; Lec., fol. 68\textsuperscript{b}38–56; BB, fol. 61\textsuperscript{a}18–36. Lec. (fol. 68\textsuperscript{b}38–41) leaves space for four more names.
\textsuperscript{718} Jaski, ‘Genealogical section’, pp. 331–32.
\textsuperscript{719} Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore, ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), ll. 3297–302 (p. 98); LU, l. 2920 (p. 94).
2.1.5 ANÍ and the kingdom of Connacht

Concerning as it does the ancestor of Uí Fhiachrach, a major dynasty of medieval Connacht, and his tomb at Cruachu, Connacht’s ancient centre (2:2.2.3), ANÍ is inherently about Connacht. Yet, in three later medieval manuscripts (YBL, Lec., BB), the basic story of Nath Í’s death and burial is integrated into the history of Uí Fhiachrach, where it seems to articulate the dynasty’s place within this regional kingdom. This might always have been ANÍ’s intention, but its arrangement and that of related material in these manuscripts emphasises such an intention yet further. Flann’s involvement fares differently in different contexts, raising questions concerning both the nature of his original work and his later medieval reception.

Although their exact relationships have been debated (2:4.2.2), the versions of ANÍ in LU, YBL, and BB have been recognised as ultimately belonging to a definable textual tradition. There are, however, further texts in YBL, Lec., and BB that narrate Nath Í’s death and burial that include multiple components of ANÍ.722 Again, ANÍ awaits a full edition that might elucidate all these texts’ relationships, although the core material’s apparent adaptability might well frustrate such an undertaking.723

Of the recognised versions of ANÍ, we have already discussed the LU version (2:5.2.1; termed U here). There are two others.724

– Y, the YBL text of ANÍ, is in the hand of Giolla Íosa Mór Mac Firbisigh and is entitled Suidigud Tellaig Cruachna (‘the establishing of the demesne of Cruachu’). The colophon attributing the compilation to Flann and Eochaid follows ‘Atá fotsu rí fer Fail’, Torna Éces’ second poem, but the tract then continues, broadly as in U. Y is followed by a militarily orientated account of the reigns of Nath Í and his son, Ailill Molt (Evans ‘The reigns of Nath Í and Ailill Molt’).725

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722 In what follows, I refer to all this material in general as ANÍ.
723 For a comparable situation, see Helen Imhoff, ‘The different versions of Aided Chonchobair’, Ériu, 62 (2012), 43–99 (pp. 90–95).
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− B¹, the BB text, is in the hand of Maghnus Ó Duibgeanainn, one of the manuscript’s main scribes. Its title is Oidhid Dathi (‘the violent death of Nath Í’). The colophon is omitted.

U’s glossing, marginalia, and emendations are either unrepresented or part of the main text in Y and B¹.\(^\text{726}\)

Two unedited texts are comparable to UYB¹ in content, although often not in language:\(^\text{727}\)

− L, in Lec.,\(^\text{728}\) is part of the Uí Fhiachrach section of Diluuium factum est (4:2.1.4).\(^\text{729}\) It is also in the hand of Giolla Íosa Mór Mac Fhirbisigh. Its heading seems to refer to the Uí Fhiachrach genealogies overall: Síl Dathi andso (‘Nath Í’s seed, here’). ‘The reigns of Nath Í and Ailill Molt’, appended to Y, is integrated into L.\(^\text{730}\)

− B² (Appendix 16) introduces a tract, distinctive to BB,\(^\text{731}\) within the Uí Fhiachrach section of Diluuium factum est.\(^\text{732}\) This tract lacks any cognate in Lec. It is also in the hand of Maghnus Ó Duibgeanainn. It is titled Geinealaig Ua Fiachrach do reir Flaind (‘the genealogies of Uí Fhiachrach according to Flann’), whom both Ó Concheanainn and Ó Muraíle cautiously identify as Flann Mainistrech.\(^\text{733}\)

UYB¹LB² have in common the basic narrative of Nath Í’s death in the Alps, his burial at Cruachu, and the poems ‘Celis cach a Chruacho chroderg’ and ‘Atá fotsu ri

\(^{727}\) A full survey would also include: LGÉ, V, §613 (pp. 350–53); Cóir Anmann: A Late Middle Irish Treatise on Personal Names, ed. and trans. by Sharon Arbuthnot, 2 vols (London: ITS 2005 and 2007), II, §150 (pp. 42–3, 116–7).
\(^{728}\) Lec., fol. 70⁴v¹–70⁵b⁵¹. A text identical in content, with only slight differences in language and phrasing, can be found at LMG, II, §§249–51.13 (pp. 570–77). Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbisigh seems to have had indirect access to material from Lec. when compiling LMG (Ó Muraíle, Celebrated Antiquary, pp. 177–78).
\(^{729}\) Lec., fols 69⁴b¹–76⁴b⁴⁵.
\(^{730}\) Lec., fol. 70⁴v⁵–8.
\(^{731}\) BB, fol. 63⁵v¹–33.
\(^{732}\) BB, fol. 63⁵v¹–63⁶v⁴.
\(^{733}\) Tomás Ó Concheanainn, ‘Scriobhaithe Leacáin’, Celtica, 19 (1987), 141–75 (p. 157); Ó Muraíle, Celebrated Antiquary, p. 29.
fer Fail’, attributed to Torna Êces; only UYB\textsuperscript{1} include surveys of other Irish cemeteries. In terms of this core narrative centred around Nath Í, L is the most lavish, containing much information absent from other versions, while B\textsuperscript{2} is extremely terse.

YL B\textsuperscript{2} are, in their own ways, pivoted towards Connacht and its history, as opposed to showing a general, literary interest in royal aïeda or burial sites, for example. LB\textsuperscript{2} are aetiological narratives that introduce the genealogies of Úi Fhiachrach and so, naturally, they include only material relevant to Nath Í and Cruachu. Furthermore, L uniquely stresses the importance of Cruachu as a burial site, stating that Nath Í was buried ‘a reilic na Cruachna i fail i rabadur rigraid Sil Erimon durmor’.\textsuperscript{734} Y’s distinctive title also gives its text a Connacht focus, relating it to Cruachu’s foundation or layout, unlike UB\textsuperscript{1}’s titles, which link to Nath Í.

Giolla Íosa, whose hand produced both Y and L, had a particular interest in connecting Nath Í to Connacht via Cruachu. He was hereditary historian to the Úi Dhubhda, Úi Fhiachrach’s ruling dynasty in the later Middle Ages, who, naturally, claimed descent from Nath Í, as, in fact, did the Meic Fhirbisigh themselves.\textsuperscript{735} Cruachu, however, had long lain in the territory of Úi Briuin Aí, then of their offshoot, Sil Muiredaig, and subsequently of their offshoot, the Úi Conchobuir.\textsuperscript{736} Presenting Úi Fhiachrach’s ancestor, even in death, as somehow foundational to Cruachu is an assertion of Úi Fhiachrach’s continued relevance in Connacht politics. At the same time, Nath Í’s prestige is enhanced by his burial alongside his fellow kings of Ireland.

Indeed, an allusion to Nath Í appears in ‘Iomdha gabhlán do chloinn Chuinn’, composed by Giolla Íosa for the 1417 inauguration of Tadhg Riabhach Ó Dubhda as king of Úi Fhiachrach.\textsuperscript{737} It is preserved among the genealogies introduced by L.\textsuperscript{738} As Ó Muraile has pointed out,\textsuperscript{739} Giolla Íosa specifically notes the discovery of Nath Í’s story via textual study.

\textsuperscript{734} Lec., fol. 70\textsuperscript{vb}1–2: ‘in the cemetery at Cruachu, where the kings of hardy Érimón’s seed were buried’.
\textsuperscript{736} Byrne, Irish Kings, pp. 250–51; Charles-Edwards, Early Christian Ireland, pp. 473–74;
\textsuperscript{737} Ó Muraile, Celebrated Antiquary, pp. 25–30.
\textsuperscript{738} Lec., fols 74\textsuperscript{rb}11–76\textsuperscript{rb}9.
\textsuperscript{739} Ó Muraile, Celebrated Antiquary, p. 28.
Here, Nath Í is a king of Tara, but Giolla Íosa goes on to urge Tadhg Riabhach to occupy Cruachu while still remembering Uí Fhiachrach’s heartlands in Magh Muaidhe. Nath Í, as a proto-Uí Fhiachrach king of Tara buried at Cruachu, is an apologue for every level of this political idealism. In this poem, interestingly, Giolla Íosa never names Flann, instead emphasising written sources.

Given this material’s evident politicisation, it is interesting that we find Flann’s area of authorial responsibility also focused on Cruachu. Assuming that a colophon refers to text just passed, rather than text to come, its position in Y implies that Flann and Eochaid only compiled the information on Nath Í and Cruachu, the section of the text also designated by Y’s title. This is also the section corresponding in basic content to L and B², the latter likewise appearing under Flann’s name.

We might read this as appropriation of Flann’s authority in line with late medieval political interests: Flann and Eochaid originally had no particular interest in Uí Fhiachrach’s place in Connacht politics and compiled a text about royal cemeteries. Yet we return, again, to ANÍ’s intractable textual history. For Oskamp and West, Y’s colophon marks the original extent of the text being attributed to Flann and Eochaid and it focuses on Nath Í. YB² thus give a more accurate impression of Flann’s work than U. Ó Concheanainn, meanwhile, understands U to be the archetype and U does not divide the material on Cruachu from the rest of the text. As far as I know, he never explained why the colophon would then have moved to its position in Y. Under his interpretation, it would require a secondary intervention, perhaps motivated by the political interests discussed above.

B² potentially yields insights into what could previously have been attributed to Flann (and Eochaid), although these insights offer anything but resolution. Ó

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740 LMG, I, §294.7 (pp. 672–73): ‘No more native to you is Magh Muaidhe | than the land of green-sided Tara | – as has been found by my school in its manuscripts – | and the territory eastward to the old Alps’. Ó Muraíle edits from LMG but this stanza is in Lec. (fol. 76r²25–26) without significant variants.

741 LMG, I, §§293.8, 293.10–11 (pp. 670–71), 294.8–9 (pp. 672–73); Lec., fol. 76r²1–2, 5–9, 27–30.


743 Ó Concheanainn, ‘Scribes’.
Concheanainn has described B\(^2\) as an ‘abridged version (generally related to [L])’ of \(ANÍ\).\(^{744}\) It is definitely terser than other versions but it does not particularly resemble L; it lacks L’s distinctive additional material and barely overlaps in phraseology. Instead, it seems to represent an independent branch of the wider \(ANÍ\) tradition. B\(^2\) describes Amalgaid as Nath Í’s brother, whereas he is Nath Í’s son in all other versions. However, as Ó Concheanainn demonstrates, he is only Nath Í’s son in U via scribe H[1]’s interventions.\(^{745}\) Amalgaid, he argues, was originally Nath Í’s brother but, for various political reasons, the eleventh- or twelfth-century Meic Fhirbhisigh promoted the doctrine that he was his son, which somehow influenced H[1]. B\(^2\) may thus derive from a version independent of YLB\(^1\)U, which all present us with Amalgaid mac Nath Í. B\(^2\) cannot be eleventh-century in its present form, however, as the tract it introduces includes a pedigree of Ruaidhri Ó Dubhda (\(ob.\) 1417), Tadhg Riabhach’s predecessor as king of Uí Fhiachrach.\(^{746}\)

If B\(^2\) is a developmentally early witness to what Flann produced, then his work might simply have focused on Cruachu and Nath Í. However, B\(^2\)’s superscription associates with Flann not just the \(ANÍ\) narrative but ‘Geinealaig Ua Fiachrach’ (‘the genealogies of Uí Fhiachrach’), the entire Uí Fhiachrach genealogical tract that is distinctive to BB’s version of \(Diluvium factum est\). Indeed, B\(^2\) not only introduces a genealogical tract but itself begins with genealogical data.\(^{747}\) Given the other evidence for Flann being regarded as an authority on genealogies (4:2.1.4, 4:2.1.6.1–2), this reading seems supportable. If Flann’s – and perhaps Eochaid’s – original, purported compilation was a genealogical tract, perhaps covering much more than Uí Fhiachrach, with a brief, embedded narrative that became \(ANÍ\), then U, Y, and L represent substantial secondary elaborations.

What is appropriation and what is authentic in the textual tradition, let alone what Flann and Eochaid actually did, is thus not apparent and, as we have seen, could be far from what it seems. This is partly because the material preserved in \(ANÍ\), often under Flann’s name, was of interest in later medieval Connacht for specific political reasons and seems to have been re-worked and re-used intensively. In YB\(^2\),

\(^{744}\) Ó Concheanainn, ‘Genealogies’, p. 4.
\(^{745}\) LU, II. 2797–98 (p. 90); Ó Concheanainn, ‘Genealogies’, pp. 1–17.
\(^{746}\) BB, fols 63\(^a\)a1–63\(^b\)b15; Ó Concheanainn, ‘Genealogies’, pp. 4–5. For background, see Ó Concheanainn, ‘Scrubhthaite’, pp. 157–58; Ó Concheanainn, ‘Genealogies’, p. 5.
\(^{747}\) BB, fol. 63\(^a\)a1–5; Appendix 16.
Flann’s authority was considered relevant to this articulation of contemporary concerns.

### 2.1.6 Airgialla: family, faith, and fatherland

In *UM*, Flann appears in two texts providing scholarly testimony relevant to the affairs of Airgialla. Airgialla was a fractious federation of polities in central Ulster, mostly attested, in the early Middle Ages, as privileged vassals of the Uí Néill, especially Cenél nÉogain, with whom they nonetheless engaged in a lengthy power-struggle for influence at Armagh. In the later twelfth century, shortly before the Norman invasions, Airgialla achieved relative unity and regional influence under Donnchad Úa Cerbaill (1125–68), spawning various late medieval successor dynasties and factions.

Many of eleventh-century Armagh’s senior personnel, among whom ‘Úasalepscop Érenn Áed’ presents Flann, were from Airgialla, while the Tara Diptych includes one of their legendary ancestors, Colla Uais. Otherwise, Flann is not previously attested as having any interest in this kingdom and, indeed, the two texts to which we now turn are somewhat distant in their citations of him.

*UM*, which is of some importance in this chapter, was compiled in the 1390s for Muirchertach Ó Ceallaigh (ob. 1407), Bishop of Clonfert (1378–93) and then Archbishop of Tuam (1393–1407). It is the work of multiple scribes but Adam Cusin conducted the bulk of the writing and the overall compilation. Over the following centuries, numerous folios were lost. Of what remains, a corpus of material relates to the patron’s Ó Ceallaigh dynasty, rulers of the east Connacht

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752 Murphy (ed. and trans.), ‘Poem’.


kingdom of Uí Maine. This includes texts asserting the prerogatives of Airgialla, from whom Uí Maine’s ruling houses claimed descent.757

2.1.6.1 Airgialla’s birth
Our first citation of Flann occurs in ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’ (Appendix 17),758 a poem on the war against the Ulaid by Airgialla’s legendary ancestors, the three Collas, in which Airgialla was carved out as a kingdom. It also asserts Airgialla’s medieval status in the north of Ireland, claiming parity for the kingdom with the Uí Néill and the Connachta. A thorough linguistic study has not been conducted but the poem seems to be in later Middle Gaelic. For example, it contains no infixed pronouns but almost no independent object pronouns (but see q. 15).

In UM, the poem appears among a series of poems on both Airgialla and the Uí Cheallaigh.759 Otherwise, another version is preserved, with numerous variants, in the seventeenth-century Tinnakill Duanaire (TD).760 In addition, several quatrains appear in Dubhaltach Mac Firbhisigh’s LMG.761 Despite their variants, the UM and TD texts are sufficiently similar for separate analyses to be redundant. As this chapter is concerned with later medieval manuscripts, the text will thus be discussed here with reference to both versions, while its context in UM and TD will be discussed here and in Chapter 5 (5:2:2) respectively.

The three Collas’ story appears in multiple sources.762 In most versions, they are exiled after assassinating their uncle, Fiachu Sraiptine, the king of Ireland and son of Cairbre Lifechair, and seizing the kingship. Muiredach Tírech, Fiachu’s son and successor, choosing not emulate the Collas’ kin-slaying by avenging his father, pardons them and permits their conquest of a new homeland from the Ulaid. They

758 London, BL, MS Egerton 90, saec. XIV, XV, XVI, fol. 18v46–18v42. For the original location of the UM fragment bound in Egerton 90 (fols. 17–19), see Mulchrone, RIA Cat., fasc. XXVI, 3327; O’Sullivan, ‘Book’, p. 162.
761 LMG, II, §§303.6 (pp. 6–7), 332.2–5 (pp. 70–73).
are thereafter barred from the kingship of Ireland and are subjugated, with privileges, to Muiredach’s descendants (i.e. the Uí Néill).

Our poem begins by proclaiming the Collas’ victory over the Ulaid (q. 1) and then details their background and upbringing (qq. 2–14), before narrating their conquest of Ulster (qq. 16–22). This is all presented in a very positive light. Mention is made neither of their kin-slaying, nor of Muiredach’s authorisation of their campaign, although the Airgialla are said to be from Tara (q. 1). Interwoven into the poem’s account is an assertion of Airgialla’s parity with other northern kingdoms. Airgialla is heir by conquest to the Ulaid’s ancient kingdom. In an apparent reference to events of Táin Bó Cúailnge, the Collas’ defeat of the Ulaid is presented as a defeat by proxy of the Connachta (q. 17) and, presumably, their offshoot, the Uí Néill. This is buttressed by the common descent of the Connachta, Uí Néill, and Airgialla from Conn Cétcathach (qq. 16–18). Just as the poem’s language apparently implies a twelfth-century date, this exuberant assessment of Airgialla’s place in the political firmament could perhaps be associated with their rise to regional hegemony during the same century. Interestingly, the century prior to UM’s compilation also witnessed significant gains by Uí Maine at the expense of the Ó Conchubuir kings of Connacht, so the Collas’ defeat by proxy of the Connachta might also speak to the manuscript’s context.

Where the focus switches from the Collas’ background information to the war against the Ulaid (q. 15), Flann is identified as a source.

### Table 3: Flann cited in ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UM q. 15.</th>
<th>TD q.15.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag sin dib seanças na saercland do ger an glanaistreach, mar do cuala me, in cland cliarach, le Fland miadach Mainistrech.</td>
<td>As e sin sencus na saerclann fir na gciolecrann nglainescreach, mar do cualus, in chlann cliarach, re Flann miadach Maineisdreach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘That, for you, is the noble offspring’s history</td>
<td>that shortens the complete journey,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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763 Quatrains numbered as in Appendix 17.
764 In general, see Katherine Simms, ‘Propaganda use of the Táin in the later Middle Ages’, Celtica, 15 (1983), 142–49.
Flann is thus not the poem’s author. Rather, its author claims to be summarising what Flann imparted during a personal encounter. The UM text’s preface also fronts Flann’s testimony as an interlocutor, not an author: ‘mar adeir Flann Mainistrech andsa duain seo sis’ (Appendix 17).\(^{766}\) Indeed, the first part of the poem, giving the three Collas’ background information, takes the form of questions (qq. 3–5) and answers (qq. 6–14), the answers being introduced in the first-person singular. No speakers are marked in the manuscript but it seems plausible that this dialogue is being described in q. 15.

However, as with ANÍ (4:2.1.5), it is not certain what Flann is understood to provide. He could be a general source for the poem overall, or for the invasion narrative and assertion of Airgialla’s prerogatives that follows q. 15, or for the information on the Collas that precedes it. Different interpretations are possible, but I am inclined towards the lattermost. This correlates with the apparent dialogue structure before q. 15. Furthermore, q. 15’s ‘sin’ generally refers to material already mentioned.\(^{767}\) Finally, the UM text’s preface specifically cites Flann Mainistrech for his testimony on the Collas’ maternity, which appears in q. 7. It would be interesting, particularly in light of ‘A liubair atá ar do lár’ (4:2.1.3), if Flann was being treated as an authority on Airgialla’s rights, but it seems more likely that he is being treated as an authority on their legendary ancestors. Incidentally, the questions’ respondent, whom we are taking to be Flann, refers to himself as tracing their genealogy (q. 7). The Collas’ are said to descend from Conn Cétcathach but only in q. 16. Nonetheless, this is interesting, given the tendency of other texts in late medieval manuscripts to associate Flann with genealogies (4:2.1.4, 4:2.1.5, 4:2.1.6.2).

2.1.6.2. St Tigernach’s genealogy

Flann appears again in UM in relation to matters of interest to Airgialla. ‘Scela cluana clog mbind’ (Appendix 18) is an otherwise unknown poem’s acephelous conclusion, consisting of only one couplet and eight full quatrains beginning UM’s eleventh gathering’s last and sole surviving leaf (4:3.2).\(^{768}\) What survives of the poem concerns St Tigernach of Clones, although the poem’s overall purpose remains

\(^{766}\) ‘as Flann Mainistrech says in this poem’.

\(^{767}\) eDIL s.v. sin.

\(^{768}\) UM, fol. 56a1–19; O’Sullivan, ‘Book’, p. 159.
unknown. The opening line, repeated as a dúnad,\textsuperscript{769} mentions a clúain ('meadow'). This is a common component of ecclesiastical toponyms, but it could refer to Tigernach’s main foundation at Clúain Eois (Clones).

Tigernach was the son of a Leinster mercenary and the daughter of the king of Uí Chremthainn, a kingdom in western Airgialla. In his mother’s homeland, he supposedly founded three churches at Kiltierney, Galloon, and Clones. The latter was prominent in the early Middle Ages as Uí Chremthainn’s main ecclesiastical centre and as a counter-weight to influence from Armagh, which was controlled by Uí Chremthainn’s eastern Airgialla rivals, the Airthir, in tense alliance with the Uí Néill.\textsuperscript{770}

Our poem, as extant, provides sundry data on Tigernach. For example, it alludes to the ‘tri fuind dob ands leis riam’ (q. 2),\textsuperscript{771} perhaps the three aforementioned churches. It lists the ‘se minna Ailligh’ (q. 4), which Tigernach apparently venerated.\textsuperscript{772} Flann Mainistrech appears (q. 8) following Tigernach’s patrilineal lineage, traced back to Cathair Már, king of Ireland and ancestor of Leinster’s royal dynasties (qq. 6–7). Strikingly, he is described by the same adjective as in ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’ (‘miadach’; \textbf{4:2.1.6.1}).

\begin{verbatim}
berar in duan sa maseach
gu Fland miadach Mainistrech
Is se scribhá do dena
mar do sil in soiscela\textsuperscript{773}
\end{verbatim}

The poet then reveals himself to be Dallán Forgaill (q. 9), better known as the eulogist of Senán and Colum Cille.\textsuperscript{774} Obviously, it makes no sense for Dallán Forgaill to be citing Flann Mainistrech; this perhaps implies that the poem is composed of previously separate elements.

\textsuperscript{769} \textit{UM}, fol. 56r\textsuperscript{16–17}.
\textsuperscript{771} ‘three foundations ever dear to him’. Quatrains are numbered as in \textit{Appendix 18}.
\textsuperscript{772} ‘six relics of Ailech’.
\textsuperscript{773} ‘May this poem be carried, in turn, | to the noble Flann Mainistrech. | It is he who drew boundaries | as he spread the Gospel’. Tigernach, slightly confusingly, must surely be the second couplet’s subject.
Like ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’, this poem seems to be in later Middle Gaelic. The interest in relics also implies a twelfth-century date, as these rose in prominence in the medieval Irish church during this period.\textsuperscript{775} Furthermore, the poem (q. 1) refers to households that Patrick gave to Tigernach, as if Clones is subordinate to Armagh. Such a relationship was resisted by Clones until Clones was placed within Armagh’s province in 1111 at the Synod of Ráith Bresail.\textsuperscript{776}

In terms of Flann’s relevance, it is not made obvious what is being ‘carried’ to him and whether he is expected to corroborate it, oppose it, or let it enhance his own work. This cannot be answered for certain without the rest of the poem. However, as it follows Tigernach’s genealogy, and as Flann appears as an authority on genealogies elsewhere (4:2.1.4, 4:2.1.5, 4:2.1.6.1), this might be a roundabout way of claiming his approbation for this component. What we can state with more certainty is that Tigernach was closely associated with Airgialla and that this poem’s citation of Flann in relation to him implicates Flann, again, in some sort of articulation of the kingdom’s communal past.

2.1.6.3 Flann, Airgialla, and Uí Maine

The provenance of both these poems is obscure. Both relate to Airgialla and thus to a major concern of \textit{UM}’s compilers. Despite their possibly later date, both also invoke a curiously personal and familiar relationship with Flann Mainistrech. Once again, he is being used, in \textit{UM}, to support a late medieval Gaelic polity’s historico-political assertions. As we will see, however, Flann also appears elsewhere in \textit{UM} and not in relation to Airgialla. This codex had access to a range of texts in which Flann was a key authority.

2.2 Local affairs: The Ciannachta, the north Midlands, Armagh

Late medieval manuscripts thus associate Flann with works concerning kingdoms and dynasties with which he has little connection in earlier manuscripts. Yet we also find Flann associated with topics that correlate with aspects of his identity, as explored in Chapter 1. The conclusions to ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ (4:2.1.3) and ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (3:3) locate him at Monasterboice, for example.

\textsuperscript{775} Flanagan, Transformation, pp. 220–24.
\textsuperscript{776} Flanagan, Transformation, pp. 34–35.
Other texts attributed to him are connected to his genealogical and geographical identity and his association with Armagh. This is perhaps cause to regard these attributions as ultimately authentic, but it also shows that the historical Flann’s biography was reflected in what was ascribed to his author-figure.

### 2.2.1 The Ciannachta’s ancestors

Material is twice attributed to Flann concerning two legendary ancestors of his own kin-group, the Ciannachta (see also 5:2.1.4).

#### 2.2.1.1 Tadg mac Céin’s height

First, ‘Coica traighedh tólaibh tlacht’ is an excerpt from an otherwise unattested poem that apparently gave the height of certain literary characters. Only quatrains measuring Tadg mac Céin and Conchobar mac Nessa survive. Its extant versions are summarised in Table 4.

**Table 4: ‘Coica traighedh tólaibh tlacht’: summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS.</th>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dublin, RIA, MS D.iv.2 (1223), <em>saec. XV</em></td>
<td>q.q. 1–2; fol. 52r 11–16.</td>
<td>Tadg mac Céin, Conchobar mac Nessa</td>
<td>‘[...] ut dixit poeta i. Flann’.</td>
<td><em>Aided Chonchobuir</em> (version D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh, NLS Adv., MS 72.1.5, <em>saec. XV</em></td>
<td>q.2; fol. 8r 8–12.</td>
<td>Conchobar mac Nessa</td>
<td>‘[...] agus is de itbert Fland Mainistrech’.</td>
<td><em>Aided Chonchobuir</em> (version A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 610, <em>saec. XV</em></td>
<td>q.1; fol. 74r 1–3.</td>
<td>Tadg mac Céin</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In RIA D.iv.2 and NLS Adv. 72.1.5, the poem appears as part of versions D and A respectively of *Aided Chonchobair.*\(^{777}\) Laud Misc. 610’s *Aided Chonchobair* is closely related to version D, although the quatrains on Tadg occur independently within the same manuscript.\(^{778}\)

D, as Imhoff observes, focuses on the history of Mesgegra’s brain, the weapon by which Conchobar was slain.\(^{779}\) It culminates with ‘A chloch thall for

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elaid úair’, attributed to Cínaed úa hArtacáin (ob. 975) in LL,\(^{780}\) describing the brain’s re-discovery by St Buite, Monasterboice’s founder, and his re-use of it as a pillow; it subsequently became a holy relic.\(^{781}\) Tadg mac Céin’s only potential relevance to Aided Chonchobair is via his descendants, the Ciannachta. They supposedly included St Buite himself and had come to control Monasterboice by the eleventh century (1:4). Whatever the original purpose and intended context of ‘Coica traighedh tólaibh tlacht’, under Flann’s name, it not only involved the Ciannachta’s ancestor but was cited in a text focusing on one of their leading churches.

### 2.2.1.2 Tadg’s son and the lapdog’s skull

The second text associated with Flann on the Ciannachta appears in two manuscripts of Sanas Cormaic, the famous glossary. Its entry on ‘mug éme’ (‘blade’s bondsman’) provides an extended account of how Coipre Musc, son of Conaire Móir, acquired a lapdog from the Britons in compensation for a ruined knife (hence ‘blade’s bondsman’). This became the ancestor of all Ireland’s lapdogs. Its skull was later found by Tadg mac Céin’s son, Connla (also ancestor to the Ciannachta),\(^{782}\) who learned of its significance from a poet.\(^{783}\)

In two manuscripts, this is succinctly summarised in the four-quatrain poem, ‘Mug Ême a h-aínm, érim nglé’ (Appendix 19), which has been added in the margins by the main scribe in each instance. These are BL Harley 5280 (sixteenth-century) and the older section of TCD 1317.\(^{784}\) In each case, it bears the simple attribution, ‘Fland cecinit’. Robin Flower identifies this as Flann Mainistrech.\(^{785}\) The only positive evidence for the identification seems to be the connection to the Ciannachta. Paul Russell has suggested that the whole story is a parody of pseudo-

\(^{780}\) LL, III, ll. 19324–68 (pp. 633–34).


\(^{782}\) CGH, p. 246 (Rawl. B. 502, 153b51).


\(^{784}\) London, BL, MS Harley 5280, saec. XVI, fol. 75:\ Flower, BL Cat., II, 321. Dublin, TCD, MS 1317 (olim H.2.15b), saec. ?, XVII, p. 31: TCD Cat., pp. 92–94. I am yet to encounter a dating of the older section (for the younger, see Ó Muraíle, Celebrated Antiquary, p. 82).

\(^{785}\) Flower, BL Cat., II, 321.
historical origin legends.\textsuperscript{786} If so, an allusion to Flann Mainistrech (if that it be) might be part of the pastiche of this genre, but it is also possible that the historical Flann was in on the joke originally.

\textbf{2.2.1.3 Tadg's discovery of the history of the kings of Ireland}

Another text, which is in no way associated with Flann explicitly, tells how Tadg, the Ciannachta’s ancestor, came to possess special insights into Ireland’s regnal and national pseudo-history. While not directly implied in the text, it is very tempting to read this as an origin legend for Tadg’s descendants’ historiographical careers at Monasterboice. This would suggest that the learning and expertise of Flann, Monasterboice’s best-attested scholar, were sometimes interpreted in the context of his kin-group and institution, rather than in that of his own achievements.

\textit{Echtra Thaidg Mheic Chein} is an Early Modern Gaelic romance preserved uniquely in \textsl{Lis}.	extsuperscript{787} Set before his migration to north Brega, it is about Tadg mac Céin’s expedition from Munster to rescue members of his local community from captivity overseas. While on this expedition, he encounters an otherworldly island, Inis Derglocha (‘the island of the red lake’), where Ireland’s past kings reside, with space reserved for those to come.\textsuperscript{788} While no full lists are provided, the island’s arrangement constitutes an impressionistic outline of Ireland’s regnal history, as familiar from \textsl{LGÉ} and related works (\textbf{Appendix 20}). It does not particularly resemble Flann’s Tara Diptych, however, as the regnal history is carried back to Sláinge mac Dela, as in the work of Gilla Cóemáin and \textsl{LGÉ} (2:6.1, 3:2.1). Nonetheless, the general allusion to medieval Gaelic pseudo-history is unmistakable.

The following text in \textsl{Lis.} is \textit{Cath Crinna},\textsuperscript{789} which relates Tadg’s role in Cormac mac Airt’s war against the Ulaid and his resulting acquisition of territory in north Brega that would become the medieval kingdom of Ciannachta Breg, where Monasterboice would be founded. This might hint that \textit{Echtra Thaidg} also makes

\textsuperscript{786} Russell, ‘Poets’, pp. 10–11.
\textsuperscript{788} \textsl{SG}, I, 346–53; II, 390–95.
\textsuperscript{789} \textsl{SG}, I, 319–26; II, 359–68.
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reference to his descendants’ future. If this admittedly speculative reading is accepted, then these two texts express an interlinked sense of the Ciannachta’s identity, encompassing historiography, genealogy, and relationships with royal power. Indeed, Connla, in *Sanas Cormaic*’s ‘mug éme’ narrative (**4.2.2.1.2**), also plays the role of historical investigator on a matter of national relevance, even if his topic is somewhat absurd. This has all been associated with Flann in other sources, but these texts imply that such associations were made with his kin-group in general.

**2.2.2 North Brega**

Two sources potentially associate Flann with the Fir Arda Ciannachta’s wider region of north Brega, without immediate reference to his genealogy. One is an anecdote preserved in ‘The Lecan Miscellany’, a compilation in *Lec.* of genealogical and sundry historical material.790 It relates how Finmaith, daughter of the king of Corcu Duibne and a noted mother of sixth-century saints and royalty,791 also came to be known as Cumain (‘favour’) from the love she showed to her foster-father, Dallbronach. In her journeys to visit him, she is said to have gone ‘co hairm iraibi Fland Manistrach’.792

This seems to indicate the north Brega region but not precisely Monasterboice. In various sources, Dallbronach belongs to the Dál Conchubuir, a sept of the Déisi Breg, whose territory was on the upper Boyne and their church at Ardbraccan (modern Co. Meath), about 20 miles south-west of Monasterboice.793 Dallbronach might have had links with Monasterboice, Flann might have had links with Ardbraccan,794 or ‘the place in which Flann was’ might simply have been the

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792 Ó Raithbheartaigh (ed. and trans.), *Genealogical Tracts I*, §169 (pp. 181–82): ‘to the place where Fland Mainistrech was’.

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wider region. In any case, his only relevance to the anecdote seems to be as a geographic indicator.

The second text relating Flann to this region is ‘Búa, ingen Rúadrach rúaid’, which appears in some dindshenchas collections. The poem comprises two aetiological narratives for Cnogba (Knowth) and one for Dubad (Dowth); one set among the early Gaídil, the others among the Túatha Dé Danann. Both places are Neolithic tumuli in the Boyne Valley, not far from Monasterboice. Cnogba was the kingdom of Brega’s titular centre under Sil nÁedo Sláine. The poem has an internal attribution to ‘Flann’ and simple attributions to ‘Flann file’ (YBL; Gwynn’s Y) and Flann mac Lonáin (later manuscripts). The latter attribution has met with scepticism, as the poem is in Middle Gaelic, and Carey has suggested that this ‘Flann’ is to be understood as Flann Mainistrech. While the genre is not alien to him (2:2.2.1), this emendation remains speculative. If it is accepted, then Flann at some point came to be associated with north Brega’s legends and toponymy, although he was later to become disassociated from them again.

2.2.3 Armagh politics
Flann’s association with Armagh is celebrated in a probably near-contemporary poem (1:3), hinted at in his chronicle obits (1.2), and corroborated by historical context. In Lec., we find a poem attributed to ‘Fland’ which seems to arise out of a dispute between Armagh and Emly, one of Munster’s leading ecclesiastical centres.

‘Muinter Pádraig na paíter’ lists St Patrick’s seventy-two companions and their various roles in his household. In Lec., it is part of the Senchas Naem Érenn, a collection of genealogies and other materials relating to Irish saints, following a much shorter prose list of twenty-four individuals, several versions of

795 MD, III, 40–47; Carey, Celtic Heroic Age, p. 133.
796 MD, V, 36–37.
797 The text only mentions Dubad after emendation: Byrne, ‘Historical Note’, p. 387.
799 MD, III, 488.
800 IHK, p. 406; Byrne, ‘Historical Note’, p. 386.
801 Carey, Celtic Heroic Age, p. 133.
802 CGSH, §672 (pp. 119–22).
803 Lec., fols 34r1–52b10; this is the compilation edited, from various recensions and manuscripts, in Ó Riain (ed.), CGSH.
804 CGSH, §671 (pp. 118–19).
which appear elsewhere.\textsuperscript{805} It is introduced, ‘conad do chuimnedad na n-anmand sin 7 aesa uird Phatraic adbert Flann,’ an internal attribution to ‘Flann’ appears in the final quatrain,\textsuperscript{806} and the poem appears in later manuscripts attributed explicitly to Flann Mainistrech (5:2.1.2).

Ó Riain rejected this attribution for no clear reason, suggesting instead that a ‘clue to the real poet’s period may be contained in the allusions in [q.] 2 but, unfortunately, these are obscure’.\textsuperscript{807} Q. 2 addresses the poem to Clothna mac Máil Enaig. Byrne has since proposed identifying this individual with Clothna Muimnech, St Ailbe’s \textit{comarba} at Emly (1046 – ob. 1048),\textsuperscript{808} corroborating Flann’s authorship. Yet Byrne also rejects the attribution, branding the poem a ‘pedestrian list […] hardly worthy of Flann’.\textsuperscript{809} It is unclear why both scholars are so certain that Flann Mainistrech was not the author.

For Byrne, the poem was composed in response to Clothna’s ‘aspersions on the abbatial court at Armagh’.\textsuperscript{810} Indeed, information on Patrick’s household is relevant to Armagh’s relations with Munster elsewhere. A list appended to the late ninth-century \textit{Vita Tripartita Patrici} in Egerton 93 places the information in exactly this context.\textsuperscript{811}

\begin{center}
Ocus is íat sin lín dlegar i n-óentaid Iosep 7 is é lín dlegar im méis rig Caisil o re Feidlimid maicc Crimthain ille .i. rí da chóiced Mumun 7 rl.\textsuperscript{812}
\end{center}

Stokes identifies Joseph as the abbot of Armagh who died in 945 (\textit{recte} 936).\textsuperscript{813} Feidlimid mac Crimthainn (ob. 847), king of Munster, was heavily involved in


\textsuperscript{806} \textit{CGSH}, §§672, 672.30 (pp. 119, 122): ‘so it is to remember those names and the ordained companies of Patrick that Flann said’ (my translation).

\textsuperscript{807} \textit{CGSH}, p. 213.

\textsuperscript{808} Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p. 865; \textit{AI} 1046.2, 1048.3; \textit{AU} 1048.3.

\textsuperscript{809} Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p. 865.

\textsuperscript{810} Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p. 865.

\textsuperscript{811} London, BL, MS Egerton 93, saec. XV.

\textsuperscript{812} \textit{The Tripartite Life of Patrick}, ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes (H. M. Stationery Office: London, 1887), pp. 264–67: ‘And that is the number that should be in Joseph’s company, and it is the number that should be at the King of Cashel’s table down from the time of Feidlimid son of Crinthann, king of the two provinces of Munster &c’; Mulchrone (ed.), \textit{Bethu}, ll. 3144–46 (p. 155).

ecclesiastical politics and seems to have allied with Armagh or certain factions therein. The modelling of the king of Munster’s court on Patrick’s household, perhaps implying that he is equal to Patrick’s *comarba* in status, may have arisen out of such a context.

Meanwhile, in ‘*Muinter Pádraig na paíter*’, the implied relationship with Munster has changed. Patrick’s (much-expanded) household is apparently more impressive than anything Clothna can muster.

\[
\text{Ge dagne toách am’ thig,} \\
\text{a Chlóthna meic Mál Enaig,} \\
\text{mo sa munter sa, ni bréag} \\
\text{do Déochain mac Britneit.}
\]

815

Thus, if this is Flann Mainistrech, and he can be legitimately read as such, then we find him playing his familiar role of cataloguing and versifying information concerning a defined set of historical characters. On the other hand, the poem is deeply embedded in the context of Armagh politics, addressing a specific institutional relationship and employing and possibly adapting the discourse in which that relationship had traditionally been articulated. Such a close interest on Flann’s part in Armagh’s affairs is corroboratable by early evidence but attested here in the form of a text under his name for the first time.

### 2.3 World history

Expertise is ascribed to Flann on matters beyond Ireland entirely and concerned with the classical and biblical past. This expertise embraces not only Eusebian world-history, through ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (4:2.3.1), but also classical literature (4:2.3.2) and biblical apocrypha (4:2.3.3). In addition, not only does the subject-matter vary but also the contexts in which it is associated with Flann.

814 Damian Bracken, *Feidlimid mac Crimthainn (d. 847)*, *ODNB* [accessed 18 November 2014].

815 *CGSH*, §672.2 (p. 119): ‘Although you make [your] house multitudinous, | Clothna mac Mál Enaig, | greater this household here, no lie, | of Déochan mac Britneit’ (my translation). Ó Riain (*CGSH*, p. 213) suggests that ‘h. Déochain’ (‘the descendant of the deacon’; §672.3 (p. 119)), in the following quatrain, is Patrick. Patrick’s father, Calpurnius, was indeed a deacon, although why this should be Calpurnius’ household is not clear. Also, Calpurnius’ father was Potitus (Gaelic: Fotach).
2.3.1 ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’: independent versions

‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ appears independently of LGÉ in UM and Lec. (Mac Airt’s H and, partially, L; Schmidt’s UM and Lc2; see Appendix 9),\(^{816}\) as part of collections of material on world history in each case. Pointing out these versions’ similarities and their shared readings with AP’s citations (2:6.3.2), Schmidt suggests that they belong to an earlier independent recension.\(^{817}\) I am not in a position to discuss every variant, but some do relate directly to the poem’s presentation of Flann’s author-figure. For the independent versions’ wider context, see 4:3.2.

The UM version – transcribed by Adam Cusin – adds the superscription ‘Fland Mainisdreach cecinit’ (in Cusin’s hand) at the poem’s commencement.\(^{818}\) The two independent versions also contain internal attributions to Flann Mainistrech within their conclusions, similar overall to those in D and Lc1 (3:2.1, Appendix 10.1). They do, however, vary slightly. As we have discussed, D and Lc1’s line, ‘Flann feidbind romben bríg breath’, is taken by MacNeill as referring to the scholarly community’s approbation of Flann.\(^{819}\) Hinging on the nasalising relative clause’s absence, this line, in UM and Lc2, could acclaim his discernment as a historian or as a compiler: ‘Flann féigbind ro-ben bríg mbreth’, which Thurneysen translates ‘der scharfsinnig-gesangreiche Flann, der wuchtige Urteile gefällt hat (?)’.\(^{820}\) There might be no difference between the readings, given Middle Gaelic’s loss of nasalising relatives, but this possibly meaningful variant illustrates the burden of interpretation that fell to later medieval scribes.

Otherwise, the conclusions to UM and Lc2 include an extra quatrain.

\[
\text{Tri chét bliadan brethaib blat} \\
\text{is a cethair cethrachat} \\
\text{ó chond – is mórglice in mod –} \\
\text{cen chronic do réidugud.}\(^{821}\)
\]

---

\(^{816}\) Schmidt, ‘Zu Réidig’, p. 212. Schmidt’s sigla are employed for the purposes of this discussion. For Mac Airt’s sigla, see Appendix 9.


\(^{818}\) UM, fol. 44\(\text{b}\)1.

\(^{819}\) MacNeill (ed. and trans.), ‘Irish historical tract’, p. 138: ‘Flann, sweet of voice, the strength of judgements hath sounded him’.

\(^{820}\) Thurneysen (ed. and trans.), ‘Flann Manistrech’s Gedicht’, p. 272: ‘the perceptive, rich-voiced Flann who passes mighty judgements’ (my translation of Thurneysen’s German; Thurneysen’s uncertainty).

\(^{821}\) Thurneysen (ed. and trans.), ‘Flann Manistrech’s Gedicht’, q. X (pp. 271–72): ‘Three hundred years, by judgements of strengths, and forty-four from then onwards – the method is very cunning – without the elucidation of chronicling’ (my translation, based on Thurneysen).
This has generally been interpreted as dating the poem’s composition to three hundred and forty-four years after its end. The poem ascribes nine years to its last world-king, Leo III. This comes to AD 726 in most Irish sources, giving 1070. However, it has been suggested that the poet may instead have taken Leo III’s ninth year as 712, as Bede states that he is writing in Leo III’s ninth year in *Chronica Maiora* and this work’s completion is sometimes dated to 712, giving 1056, Flann’s final year. We have already discussed how the poem’s conclusion locates its composition within Flann’s professional life and historical context (3:3); the independent recension’s extra quatrain attempts to take this to an even greater level of exactitude. It also tacitly establishes a specific relationship with Bede’s *Chronica Maiora*, which we will discuss further below (4:3.1).

Finally, ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ is cited in *In Cath Catharda*, the medieval Gaelic translation of Lucan’s *Pharsalia*. This text is dated to the twelfth century but it is extant only in later medieval manuscripts. In an opening summary of the world-kingdoms, a quatrain from ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ decorates its account of the Assyrians. Interestingly, as in *AI* and *LGÊ B* (2:6.3.2, 3:2.1), it is attributed to ‘in fili’.

2.3.2 Classical studies: ‘Luid lasón ina luing lóir’

In terms of world history, elsewhere in late medieval manuscript tradition, we find Flann associated not just with Eusebian history but with adaptations and translations of classical literature. The sole copy of ‘Luid lasón ina luing lóir’, in the fourteenth or fifteenth-century NLS Adv. 72.1.19, bears the simple superscription, ‘Flann Mainistrech cecinit’. The poem narrates Jason’s quest for the Golden Fleece and the various Trojan wars. It is related to the complex *Togail Troí* tradition, some
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recensions of which cite it. 827 Its editor, Mac Eoin, rejects the attribution to Flann on linguistic and stylistic grounds, instead dating its composition to the twelfth century. 828

Yet it is interesting that the attribution was made at all, as it implies that Flann gained a reputation in the interconnected literary and historical approach to classical texts and history that Miles has termed ‘medieval Irish classical studies’. 829 Such interconnection is also evidenced in In Cath Catharda’s use of ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (4:2.3.1). ‘Luid Iasón ina luing lóir’, while technically about world history, makes no mention of the world-kingships and shows no interest in chronology. It is a narrative, with some embedded data (qq. 37–46), although this is normal for the Togail Troi tradition. 830 Thus, ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ does not constitute a close analogy for the attribution, as if it were based on a broader conception of Flann’s expertise that extended beyond regnal histories. 831 Alternatively, his expertise may have remained focused on history, in the citator’s mind, and the attribution to him might be intended to imply that the material contained within the poem is indeed history (historia rather than fabula), since Flann composed it. 832

The provenance and basis of the attribution of ‘Luid Iasón ina luing lóir’ to Flann can never be known for certain. It is possible, however, that the poem once appeared in UM. This would be significant, as the poem would then have been in the same codex as ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’. If ‘Luid Iasón ina luing lóir’ was attributed to Flann there too (this cannot be known), then UM would have presented two approaches to world history as taken by the same author-figure.

UM shed folios throughout its history, even after the manuscript entered Sir James Ware’s library in the seventeenth century. 833 An anonymous Gaelic-language

829 Miles, Heroic Saga, pp. 245–49.
830 Miles, Heroic Saga, pp. 102–05.
832 For a summary of discussion on the critical categorisation of Classical material as historia in medieval Ireland, see Burnyeat ‘“Wrenching”’, pp. 206–07; Erich Poppe, ‘Imtheachta Aeniasa and its place in medieval Irish textual history’, in Classical Literature, ed. by O’Connor, pp. 25–39 (25).
catalogue of its contents was made before this further loss occurred.\textsuperscript{834} This was translated into Latin, with additional notes, by Fr John Colgan (ob. 1658),\textsuperscript{835} although without direct access to the manuscript.\textsuperscript{836} Among the now-lost folios at the end of the manuscript, we find mention of an account of the quest for the Golden Fleece: ‘Sgéul an Chroicinn Órdha’ (‘Narratio ceu fabula Velleris Aurei’). This might be ‘Luid Iasón ina luing lóir’. Even though the poem is largely concerned with the Trojan wars, it opens with the quest for the Golden Fleece. \textit{UM}’s cataloguer elsewhere judges a poem’s subject-matter by its opening when he lists ‘Clanna Israél uli’ as ‘Imthechta no eachtra chloinne hIsraehel’;\textsuperscript{837} it is actually about the beheading of John the Baptist.\textsuperscript{838} He also fails to distinguish prose and verse: ‘Atá sund senchas na seang’, a poem attributed to Benen (St Benignus), is listed as ‘Senchus Bhinéin ar shocharaibh Átha Clíath 7 ar imthechtaibh Padruig 7 créd uma ttugadh Áth Clíath ar an mbaile’.\textsuperscript{839} Furthermore, \textit{UM} contains all four other poems recognisable within NLS Adv. 72.1.19, a badly damaged, isolated gathering.\textsuperscript{840} Future close editorial work would show whether they are actually closely related to their \textit{UM} counterparts.

On the whole, a \textit{UM} version of ‘Luid Iasón ina luing lóir’ closely related to the version in NLS Adv. 72.1.19 seems quite likely. If the \textit{UM} version was also attributed to Flann Mainistrech, then the manuscript would have presented him as a widely-read authority on world history, both in the Eusebian tradition and through literary works, if, indeed, such a distinction was made at all.

2.3.3 Tara and society’s universalised foundations
Within another text, uniquely preserved in \textit{UM}, we encounter Flann discoursing on yet another aspect of world history. In ‘Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’ (Appendix 21), he is a source of biblical apocrypha, specifically ‘foundational history’, that is,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{834} Flower (ed.), \textit{BL Cat.}, II, 602.  
\textsuperscript{835} Charles MacNeill (ed.), ‘Rawlinson Manuscripts: Class B.’, \textit{Analecta Hibernica}, 1 (1930), 118–78 (pp. 145–46). 
\textsuperscript{837} ‘the travels or the journey of the children of Israel’ (my translation).  
\textsuperscript{839} ‘Benén’s history of the revenues of Dublin and of the adventures of Patrick and how the town came to be called Áth Clíath’ (my translation); \textit{Lebor na Cert: The Book of Rights}, ed. and trans. by Myles Dillon (Dublin: ITS, 1962), pp. 114–19. 
\textsuperscript{840} Black, ‘Catalogue’. 
\end{flushleft}
the first examples of particular crafts, constructions, acts, or institutions.\textsuperscript{841} Also, as in ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’ and ‘Scela cluana clog mbind’ (4:2.1.6.1–2), he is an interlocutor within the text, rather than the purported author of it. In this particular dialogic encounter with Flann, however, a relatively detailed setting is provided.

‘Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’ follows on immediately from ‘Scela cluana clog mbind’ in fol. 56\textsuperscript{r};\textsuperscript{842} the potential relevance of this context is discussed below (4:3.2). It bears no superscription but has thrice been described as being by Flann Mainistrech.\textsuperscript{843} This is unlikely. The language seems like a later form of Middle Gaelic; there are no infixed pronouns, for example. Also, as far as I am aware, there are no other examples of a medieval Gaelic poet including themselves by name as a third-person character in their work.

The poem is in three parts. In Part 1 (qq. 1–7), Flann delivers a series of quatrains on customs associated with the oenach Temra (‘assembly of Tara’). In Part 2 (qq. 8–20), he is asked seventeen questions on foundational history. In Part 3 (qq. 21–35), he responds to all seventeen questions,\textsuperscript{844} and then names himself and a certain Máel Sechnaill as interlocutors (q. 36). Given Flann Mainistrech’s involvement and the Tara material, this is probably Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill (ob. 1022), the ‘last’ king of Ireland without opposition. Furthermore, q. 1 is addressed ‘a rí’ (‘o king’). There is, however, no apparatus designating speakers in the manuscript. In one exception, Part 1 ends on a marked dúnad (q. 7) and q. 8’s initial ‘M’ is slightly emphasised. Part 3’s beginning is unmarked but q. 36 ends on ‘aenach’, meaning that the poem was transcribed as one work.


\textsuperscript{842} Currently unedited; \textit{UM}, fol. 56\textsuperscript{r}27–56\textsuperscript{r}20.

\textsuperscript{843} \textit{The Book of Uí Maine, with Introduction and Indexes: Collotype Facsimile}, facs. ed. by Robert A. S. Macalister (Dublin; RIA, 1941), p. 10; Mulchrone, \textit{RIA Cat.}, fasc. XXVI, 3337; Carey, ‘Flann’.

\textsuperscript{844} Two marginal notes closely resembling his responses in qq. 23 and 25 occur in BL Harley 5280 (Flower, \textit{BL Cat.}, II, 322–23). Furthermore, a quatrain closely akin to to q. 30 appears in the unedited, anonymous, apparently late medieval poem, ‘Fuarus i Saltair Chaisil’ (RIA D. iv.2, fol. 1’6 and in later manuscripts); the same quatrain is also quoted, from ‘Fuarus i Saltair Chaisil’, by Keating (\textsuperscript{844} \textit{The History of Ireland by Geoffrey Keating}, ed. and trans. by David Comyn and Patrick S. Dineen, 4 vols (London: ITS, 1902–1914), I, 138–39). For this poem, see Ó Ruain, ‘\textit{Psalter}’, p. 107. The appearance of a quatrain from this poem in the mouth of Flann Mainistrech in ‘Aenach Temra na n-ocht n-ech’ is surely relevant to the question of whether the historical Flann used \textit{Saltair Caisil} (1:4, 4:2.14, 6:3.2.2).
The point being made in Part 1 is not obvious. It seems to offer pseudo-historical fragments concerning the relationship between the king of Tara, the oenach Temra, and Ireland’s provincial kings: qq. 1–3 are about the horses traditionally brought by the latter to the oenach, which had been established by Túathal Techtmar, while qq. 4–7 mention the birth of Tuathal’s great-great-grandson, Cormac mac Airt, his exile from Tara in Achall, and a confrontation with Medb Lethderg that prevented him from entering the oenach Temra. In less laconic accounts elsewhere, this Medb is one of Art’s wives. She seizes the kingship of Tara after Art’s death on behalf of the Laigin, defeating Cormac and driving him into exile. He is only able to claim Tara through marrying her (possibly referenced in q. 5).845 His exile at Achall, in other sources,846 concludes his reign, so the quatrains do not appear to track events chronologically.

Máel Sechnaill then asks Flann seventeen questions, mostly concerning the first example of a particular type of craftsman or the first occasion something was made or built. All of Flann’s answers come from the Book of Genesis or associated apocrypha and commentary. In the only question of specifically Irish interest, Máel Sechnaill asks who was the first to visit Ireland and Flann replies that it was Cain’s three daughters, accompanied by Seth (qq. 18, 30). The poem is akin in form and topic to other metrical Middle Gaelic question-and-answer dialogues on apocrypha,847 although both the focus on foundational history and the explicit setting are distinctive features.

The expertise attributed to Flann in this text is presented explicitly as world history. Both Máel Sechnaill and Flann repeatedly emphasise that they are speaking in terms of ‘the east’ (‘tair’), ‘the world’ (‘doman’), and ‘the seed of Adam’ (‘do shíl Adaim’). Yet it is world history distinct, again, from ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (3:2.1, 4:2.3.1) and ‘Luid Iasón ina luing lóir’ (4:2.4.2) and closer to Ireland’s early medieval traditions of literal biblical exegesis.848 The aspects of the universal past on

846 Ó Cathasaigh, Heroic Biography, p. 69.
848 For which, see Bernhard Bischoff, ‘Turning-Points in the History of Latin Exegesis in the Early Middle Ages’, trans. by Colm O’Grady in Biblical Studies: The Medieval Irish Contribution, ed. by
which Flann comes to be presented as an authority have thus grown more diverse still.

The setting for Flann and Máel Sechnaill’s dialogue is traditional in many respects. In medieval Gaelic literature and beyond, a question-and-answer dialogue between a king and a sage often frames legal and gnomic material, although Máel Sechnaill is better known for his somewhat more testy confrontations with Mac Coise. The scope of the dialogue’s subject-matter might be universal, but it is also potentially rooted in the traditions of its Irish geographical setting. Tara is frequently presented as a gathering place for professionals and craftsmen, almost a microcosm of society, and as a venue for formative, aetiological dialogues.

Yet, despite the presence of generic elements, the text also hints at a specific context for these characters’ dialogue. Máel Sechnaill makes much of Flann, repeatedly addressing him by name and using honorifics, such as ‘senchaid gan go’ (q. 14; ‘unlying historian’). In the final quatrain, Flann describes himself as ‘ard-ollam Eireann’ (‘Ireland’s arch-ollam’) and states that he has entered the ‘aenach’ (q. 36), presumably the oenach Temra from Part 1. The impression is that the dialogue is taking place at a public occasion at Tara, Flann’s presence possibly being related to his success in answering the king’s questions. Thus, the poem does not just embed learned apocrypha within a traditional setting but seems to imply a narrative context involving Flann that the reader is expected to appreciate. This raises the intriguing possibility that some medieval scholars felt they had a detailed and specific understanding of Flann’s biography or at least some conception of the settings in which he might appropriately be placed.

Indeed, aspects of this poem’s narrative setting echo material related to Flann in pre-1200 manuscripts. Not only does the Tara Diptych imply a special relationship between Flann and Máel Sechnaill but ‘Druim Cetta, ceste na noem’ ultimately asserts the Ciannachta’s right to enter Tara and this is what Flann seems to have accomplished in the present poem. Furthermore, Echtra Thaidg mheic

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Chein appears to bind the Ciannachta to the proto-Uí Néill via Tadg’s insights into the dynasty’s transcendant legitimacy \((4:2.2.1.3)\). The poem might thus derive from specific traditions concerning Flann’s career. It could also be placed alongside the evidence we have surveyed \((4:2.2.1)\) for Flann maintaining a lasting association with the history and politics of the Ciannachta.

### 2.4 Flann’s late medieval manuscript material: conclusion

When we consider the topics covered by texts directly attributed to Flann or the expertise indirectly associated with him in later medieval manuscripts, they are evidently much wider than what is attested in the four pre-1200 manuscripts or in \(LGÉ\). The material does not necessarily need to be divided the way it is here, according to political factions and geography. Categories could instead have been created based on manuscript or on genre, ‘the Ulster Cycle’ or ‘Hagiography’, for example. Nonetheless, however they are divided up, these materials give an impression of more diverse work and points of relevance being imputed to Flann.

It should thus perhaps be of concern that later medieval manuscript materials have received significantly less attention in modern studies relating to Flann \((LR:3.2.2)\), particularly those not directly attributed to him. We have identified some instances where Flann’s testimony seems to have been manipulated or contextualised according to the agenda of a later poet or compiler (e.g. \(4:2.1.5–6\)). However, we have also identified material attributed to Flann that correlates so well with early sources relating to him that its faithful derivation from much earlier traditions should be considered (e.g. \(4:2.2\), \(4:2.3.3\)). Yet its ultimate provenance is uncertain.

### 3 The late medieval Flann

We will now consider, as in previous chapters, Flann’s author-figure, the interaction of texts associated with him with their manuscript contexts, and his influence on compositions preserved in later medieval manuscripts. Given the quantity and diversity of the material covered in this chapter, this not a comprehensive survey but an exploration of points of particular interest.
3.1 Flann’s author-figure

As presented in later medieval manuscript materials, Flann’s author-figure is in several respects recognisable, as compared to some of the sources analysed in Chapters 1–3. Given the number of references to Flann which do not involve the attribution to him of specific texts, ‘author-figure’ here also covers how he is presented under such circumstances.

Just as fer léiginn is one of the most enduring elements across his chronicle obits (1:2.2.1), we still find Flann presented as a reader or a compiler. Indeed, the ANÍ colophon, one of the most detailed such depictions, continued to be of relevance, as we have seen (4:2.1.5). This is also a feature of his presentation in some texts appearing for the first time in later medieval manuscripts.

As discussed (4:2.1.3), the reference to Flann in ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ resembles the ANÍ colophon particularly closely, in that Flann is at Monasterboice, gathering information alongside a colleague. The sources they used are not actually mentioned. However, they are counting (‘rim’) Conall’s battles, so it is implied that they used multiple sources, which, given the ecclesiastical setting, are probably to be taken as texts. In the section on Conall’s battles, the information is stated to be ‘mar indisit na hugdair’.852 Who the ugdair might be depends on how one interprets the reference to Flann and Óengus. If they composed the poem, as Rawl.B.514’s simple attribution partially implies, these could be the authorities that they used as sources. If they composed a battle-list later used by the poem’s composer, they themselves might be the ugdair. Either way, the poem is framed as the synthesis of multiple authorities.

In ‘Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’ (4:2.3.3), Flann breaks off from answering Máel Sechnaill’s questions for one quatrain to allude to the intellectual context out of which his responses arise (q. 29).

Dim-sa dlear anois  
i ceasta and dindnisin  
mar fuilgeas in scribt gan ceas  
i. fuilleis in seancas.853

852 Hennessy and Kelly (ed. and trans), Book of Fenagh, pp. 330–31: ‘as the authors do relate’.
853 ‘I am now obliged | to relate some problems here, | just as the writing ceaselessly endures, | that is, as the senchas increases’ (my translation).
Flann appears to state that his knowledge of foundational history is derived from texts and that study of such texts expands communal historical knowledge (‘seancas’). Thus, despite the quasi-oral dialogue setting and Máel Sechnaill’s references to Flann’s personal prowess, in this literary portrayal, he is presented as a reader.

Finally, I have suggested (3:3) that LGÉ’s recension of ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ isolates Flann as the text’s originator in order to underline the poem’s foundational status. The extraquatrain (4:2.3.1) within the independent recension’s conclusion somewhat qualifies this reading. The three hundred and forty-four years from Bede’s supposed completion of *Chronica Maiora* to Flann’s composition of the poem are described therein as ‘cen chronic do réidiugud’.854 This presents Flann as Bede’s epitomiser and commentator or as elucidator of chronicling in general.855 His task is still difficult and, as supposedly the first to undertake such work in some time, he is still important. However, his importance now derives from successfully interpreting and summarising an existing text or wider tradition and thus empowering future scholars.856

Reference continues to be made to the relevance of Flann’s work to wider society. This is portrayed most dramatically in Flann’s apparently public scholarly duet with Máel Sechnaill at Tara in ‘Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’. Of more questionable pertinence to Flann Mainistrech (4:2.2.2), ‘Búa, ingen Rúadrach rúaid’ twice calls for the *dindsenchas* it contains to be publicised widely.857 ‘A liubair atá ar do lár’, also of questionable pertinence (4:2.1.3), directly prescribes political and diplomatic arrangements and thus invites interest from wider elite society. Finally, although without mentioning Flann, Giolla Íosa Mór Mac Firbisigh references ANÍ’s content in ‘Iomdha gabhlán do chloinn Chuinn’, which was quite possibly actually performed in public (4:2.1.5).

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855 For a later association of Flann with *croinic*, see 5:3.1.
857 *MD*, III, pp. 42–47 (qq. 11, 22).
Chapter 4

As we have discussed, much of Flann’s material here is highly politicised but this is often less to do with statements made within texts attributed to him, as in pre-1200 manuscripts (2:3.3), but rather with how the material is presented and used. For example, the ‘books of Flann Mainistrech’ were probably not as supportive of Uí Dhiarmata as is made out (4:2.1.4), and Flann’s apparent contribution to ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’ itself consists of fairly neutral background information (4:2.1.6.1). On the other hand, in ‘Muinter Pádraig na paíter’, Flann does not simply assert Armagh’s general status but engages with an apparently very specific, contentious, if also opaque, issue (4:2.2.3).

In another dimension, Flann is not just a reader but also someone who is read, an audience member that has indeed become an auctor. ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ presents Flann as both facing the task of elucidating the history of the world-kingship and performing that elucidation for others. In three poems in UM – ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’, ‘Scela cluana na clog mbind’, and ‘Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’ (4:2.1.6.1–2, 4:2.3.3) – no specific text is attributed to Flann. Instead, he is presented to us already being consulted as an authority, although something more complex might be going on in the latter poem. Also relevant in this regard are the two instances in which Flann is cited via the do réir (‘according to’) construction (4:2.1.1.2, 4:2.1.5; see also 3:2.2), as if it is not his exact words that are being supplied but his ideas or principles, which can circulate independent of his texts.

Both types of evidence suggest that a conception existed of Flann, behind his direct work, as an identifiable intellectual entity. His name was not just a piece of information that travelled with some texts; it denoted a commonly understood set of interests and expertises. Indeed, the quantity of material we have examined that correlates with the historical Flann’s known connections suggests that his identity was biographical, as well as intellectual.

In contrast, the Uí Dhiarmata colophon and, possibly, ‘A liubair atá ar do lár’ present Flann’s work within physical books. These references seem to emphasise that he is to be accessed precisely through his physically preserved texts and implicitly call into question whether he can be accessed as a personality, as the UM poems imply. In a further complication, what it might have meant for Flann to be preserved

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in a book is also ambiguous. On the one hand, ‘A liubair atá ar do lár’ presents its book as highly authoritative. On the other, from the Uí Dhiarmata colophon (Lec.), our first impression might be that the ‘books of Flann Mainistrech’ have joined a library of venerable, ancient codices. Yet the books alongside which they appear actually meet with a mixed reception elsewhere. Toner observes that one, Cín Dromma Snechtai, often appears supplying variant versions rather than main narratives, although the frequency of its citations by name imply it still carried prestige. Citations of another item from the colophon, Saltair Caisil, appear throughout medieval and immediately post-medieval Irish sources. However, Jaski has shown that it too often provoked dissent.861 Lebor Dún Dá Leathglas (‘the book of Downpatrick’) is otherwise unknown. Two out of the four codices are thus famous and citable, but also debatable, suggesting that Flann Mainistrech’s books might also have been approached critically.

The contrast between these different types of citation suggests that medieval Gaelic scholars engaged in active, critical consideration of engagement with author-figures. It is also worth recalling that most of the medieval Irish chronicles, as now extant, were physically compiled during this period (1:2.1). Flann’s obits therein have been shown to be based on earlier material, but later medieval chroniclers still decided to reproduce the complex variety of terminology describing Flann that we have already examined.

3.2 References to Flann in context

Many of the items considered here appear within prosimetric works or consist of citations of Flann within other texts. They thus play the role of supporting and illustrating subsequent compositions, as in LGÉ (3:4). Independent material associated with Flann is also often set thematically within a wider manuscript context. For example, ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’ appears as part of UM’s interlocking series of poems on the history, recent and ancient, of the Ó Ceallaigh dynasty, the manuscript’s patrons, back to their purported ancestors, the Airgialla (4:2.1.6).

860 Ó Riain, ‘Psalter’.
Similarly, in Rawl.B.514, ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ initiates an extended historical *dúnaire* on that manuscript’s patrons, the Uí Dhomhnaill (4:2.1.3). While containing less material explicitly about them, the Donegal Series in *Fen.* is also related to Ó Domhnaill interests.862 ANÍ B2, under Flann’s name, supplies a pseudo-historical introduction to Uí Fhiachrach or Uí Dhubhda’s genealogies (4:2.1.5). In each case, the running theme is an elite dynasty’s history, with Flann’s contribution specifically concerning that dynasty’s ultimate ancestor-figure(s).

We have considered the significance of ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (3:3, 4:2.3.1), ‘Scela cluana clog mbind’ (4:2.1.6.2), and ‘Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’ (4:2.3.3) as individual texts. All three also interlink with their manuscript context in a scheme seemingly orchestrated by Adam Cusin, the manuscript’s ‘architect’.863 They appear within gatherings 9–11 (fols 39–56); the first two are quaternions, the latter a bifolium of which only the latter folio remains. These are summarised in Appendix 22.

Concentrating on the two quaternions for now, gathering 9 was written by Adam Cusin, gathering 10 by Faelán Mac a Gabann na Scél (ob. 1423). Faelán seems to have written slightly earlier (1378x1392) than Adam (1392x1407), who integrated Faelán’s quaternion (gathering 10) into the manuscript via the addition of a catchword.864 Each quaternion includes material on medieval universal history, among which is found Flann’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (gathering 9; 4:2.3.1). Each also includes material on famous women from various historical traditions. Indeed, this seems to have been a particular interest of Faelán’s, as a simple superscription names him as the author of ‘Adham ar n-athair uile’, as transcribed by Adam, within gathering 9. Faelán’s poem is introduced as a response to the *Banshenchas*,865 which also appears in its metrical form in gathering 9.866 While the metrical *Banshenchas* mostly concentrates on women from Irish history, Faelán’s poem is about biblical and classical women.

‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ includes some diversions on women, such as the Amazons, Esther, and Judith. It might be included here for those diversions but it seems more likely that it is meant to constitute a parallel, masculine history of the world-kingship, which is its central theme and which is also followed consistently in *Adam primus pater* (gathering 10; 6:3.1.1). Indeed, many of these catalogue and chronicle texts seem to form an interconnected network. *Adam primus pater* synchronises Ireland’s kings and other characters from Irish history with the world-kings and selected events in sacred history, the series of world-kings corroborated in ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’. One could thus synchronise an Irish king’s wife in the *Banshenchas* with a world-king, for example. In addition, two tracts in Faelán’s gathering 10 concern mothers from Irish and world history.

Even though they are technically presented independently in the manuscript, the synchronistic use of these texts in conjunction with one another is very inviting. Flann’s account of the world-kingship is thus one of several catalogues of characters that *UM*’s compilers read as an interconnected history and, in at least one case, supplemented with their own work. Flann’s contribution is important therein, but, alone, it far from satisfied the compilers’ curiosity and ambitions.

‘Scela cluana clog mbind’ and ‘Aenacha Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’ might also relate to this section of *UM*. The last item in Faelán’s gathering 10 is the *Senchas Naem Érenn* (4:2.2.3). His version thereof is apparently complete, as it ends on fol. 55v with a short colophon in which Faelán names himself as the gathering’s scribe. After that comes a bifolium inserted by Adam (gathering 11), of which only fol. 56 (containing both our poems) remains. However, as O’Sullivan points out, Adam’s catchword on fol. 55v links to fol. 76r (i.e. gathering 15). Gatherings 11 to 14 (fols 56–75), which are all either by Adam or scribes clearly post-dating him, seem to be a later insertion. It is not clear how late an insertion they are, although they had taken this position before the seventeenth-century foliation was added; O’Sullivan hints

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that he does not believe that they were placed here by Adam himself. This, combined with the loss of the other folio of Adam’s bifolium, makes the context of our two poems difficult to assess. Gatherings 11 to 14 are otherwise almost entirely religious in theme, so our poems, on hagiography and biblical apocrypha, are not utterly incongruous therein.

However, Adam seems to have intended his bifolium (gathering 11), up to the end of fol. 56r, as a continuation of Faelán’s quaternion (gathering 10). This would mean, incidentally, that Adam himself assigned 11 to 14 to their present location, presumably after inscribing the catchwords. First, on fol. 56va, he adds the heading ‘Sequitur do Dhua na Bh Diadhachta. Gofraid Ó Cl[éirigh] cecinit’, introducing four poems by this author, implying that what comes before is of another genre and provenance. Secondly, at the foot of fol. 56ra, Adam has added a list of saints called Brigit, a list that appears in other manuscripts of the Senchas Naem Érenn. Finally, our poems’ interests correlate more closely with those of gatherings 9 and 10, which, as we have seen, contain much material on hagiography, saints’ genealogies, and Christian history. Specifically, Adam primus pater opens with a passage on foundational history, a topic amplified in ‘Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’.

The loss of the folio prior to fol. 56r frustrates definite conclusions but a good case can be made for ‘Scela cluana clog mbind’ and ‘Aenacha Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’ constituting a concluding supplement not just for the Senchas Naem Érenn but perhaps for Faelán and Adam’s wider project in gatherings 9 and 10. The fact that both not only contain appropriate material but also present this material being sought after and transmitted by recognised figures from political and cultural history might have been intended to in some way authorise their own work.

3.3 Flann’s influence

As ever, it is difficult to reach any overall conclusions regarding Flann’s influence on later medieval Gaelic manuscript materials. Much of the material we have considered in this chapter is in the form of an extract of a poem attributed to Flann embedded in

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871 O’Sullivan, ‘Book’, p. 155
872 Mulchrone (ed.), RIA Cat., fasc. XXVI, 3338: ‘there follows, from religious poems. Gofraidh Ó Cléirigh sang’ (my translation).
874 UM fol. 48r1–24; MacCarthy (ed. [from BB] and trans.), Codex, §a (pp. 286–87).
a prosimetric text or a direct citation of him. In such situations, we are witnessing Flann’s influence on subsequent compositions but, in most cases, we do not have access to the work whose influence is being felt. For example, for all the maelstrom of textual activity around _ANÍ_ in north Connacht at the end of the fourteenth century, we have concluded by questioning the very nature of the text at its heart (4:2.1.5).

Otherwise, some interesting examples of the influence of texts we can access in full do present themselves. Flann still sometimes comes across as able to access unmatched quantities of data. In ‘Muinter Pádraig na paiter’, seventy-two individuals are named as members of Patrick’s household, while only twenty-four appear in the widely circulated prose list which it follows in the _Lec._ text of _Senchas Naem Érenn_ (4:2.2.3). _UM_’s preface to ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’ states that Flann provides an alternative view on the three Collas’ maternity, a view towards which the prefator seems to lean (Appendix 17). The relationship of ‘Cetrí ro gabh Érinn uile’ with _BB_’s _Catha Cenél Éogain_ is more complex. In one respect, the poem offers a fuller _Cenél nÉogain_ king-list than the prose. Between Domnall and Fergus (both _ob._ 566), who have a joint reign in _Catha Cenél nÉogain_ but not in the poem, and Níall Frossach (_abd._ 770; _ob._ 778), the poem has seven kings (qq. 2–4) while _Catha Cenél nÉogain_ has two. However, _Catha Cenél Éogain_ extends much further, to Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn (_ob._ 1166), in terms of coverage, while ‘Cetrí ro gabh Érinn uile’ ends with Domnall Úa Néill (_ob._ 980). As we have seen, the _BB_ scribe, Robeartus Mac Sithigh, may have been moved to try reconcile the two by extending the poem (4:2.1.2).

‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ continues to attract attention and usage. As we have seen, it is cited in _In Cath Catharda_ and played a significant role in Adam and Faelán’s historical compilation in _UM_ (4:2.3.1, 4:3.2). It also appears to have influenced the historical and synchronistic studies of Giolla Íosa Mór Mac Firbisigh. _Lec._ includes an unedited poem beginning ‘Reidig dam a De do nim | cindead coir ar chomaimsir’, attributed to ‘Mac Firbisig’, whom Ó Concheanainn and Ó Muraíle believe to be Giolla Íosa. This incipit again connotes global scope (2:6.3.1), as the

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875 For example, Diane-Myrick, _From the De Excidio_, p. 83 n. 12.
877 _Lec._, fols 190ra33–191ra52.
poem synchronises Ireland’s kings down to Lóegaire mac Néill with Roman Emperors and with key events in Christian history. It is thus more complex, although less extensive, than Flann’s poem, to which it appears to pay homage.

The relationship of Flann’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ to certain synchronistic tracts preserved in later medieval manuscripts but potentially Middle Gaelic in date has been the subject of some discussion. Giolla Íosa’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ is regarded as a partial metrical counterpart, in Lec., to Comaimser ríg Asar re rigaib Érind (Schmidt’s S-Lc; my Assyrian Synchronisms (6:3.1.4)), which synchronises Irish history with the world-kingships from Cessair’s immediately pre-diluvian in Ireland arrival to Lóegaire mac Néill. Scowcroft, Ó Concheanainn, and Jaski regard the Assyrian Synchronisms as closely related to Adam primus pater (Schmidt’s S-UM/S-BB). In addition, Scowcroft demonstrates that these tracts represent the synchronistic principles that underlie the chronological overhaul of LGÉ in Lc. Meanwhile, both Scowcroft and Schmidt, as we have seen (3:2.1), view Flann’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ as closely related to the Invasion Synchronisms and the chronological overhaul of LGÉ b. While Schmidt believes that all these materials ultimately have a common source, as far as I can tell, there has been no discussion of how Flann’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ relates to Adam primus pater, the Assyrian Synchronisms, and to Giolla Íosa’s poem that bears its incipit. As things stand, however, Giolla Íosa seems to have re-used Flann’s incipit in the absence of the direct influence of the text involved.

Finally, the narratives and assertions in ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ (4:2.1.3) seem to have been of particular interest in the thirteenth century. The story of Conall Gubabn’s conquest of the north seems similar, from Brian Lacey’s summary, to that of Echtra Conaill Gulbain, an unedited prose history that Lacey dates to the mid-thirteenth century. During the same period, Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe (ob. 1272?) – sometime poet to Ó Domhnaill – composed a poem with an
identical incipit recounting essentially the same narrative while explicitly referencing contemporary northern politics; he omits mention of Flann and Oengus and does not include Conall’s *caithréim*.\(^{884}\) The *Senlebor Caillín*, as we have seen (4:2.1.3.1), apparently also dates from the thirteenth century.

Thus, in both the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries (when *Fen.* and Rawl.B.514 were produced), close interest was taken in the material embodied in ‘Conall cuingid clainne Neill’, perhaps due to the contemporary expansion of Ó Domhnaill power.\(^{885}\) At what point Flann’s authoritative presence became involved depends on this text’s history and one’s interpretation of its internal reference, and of that in ‘A liubair atá ar do lár’ (4:2.1.3). Whatever the nature of his involvement, he became a named authority for a matter that was of clear political import.

### 4 Conclusion: the late medieval Flann

How Flann is described and how he is treated within materials preserved in later medieval manuscripts is in many ways recognisable compared to materials we have examined previously. We have encountered Flann being presented as a reader and compiler, as a collaborator, and as a historian whose work has wider social import and pertinence to elite politics. This is reflected in the use of him or his work in later medieval manuscripts as part of compilers’ articulations of contemporary political agendas, even when this does not seem to have been the original nature of his contribution. In Chapters 2 and 3, we also encountered examples of Flann’s corpus being consolidated and re-contextualised in manuscript (e.g. 2:4.2.1.2, 3:2.1).

Indeed, one of the more distinctive features of the materials examined in this chapter is the frequency with which Flann is cited or used within another context, either via the prosimetric presentation of his texts or in the citation of him not via a specified text. Some of his appearances seem to be derived from awareness of his status as an authority-figure. He is presented, in the three poems in *UM*, as someone who is to be deferentially consulted (4:1.2.6.1–2, 4:2.3.3). Elsewhere, he is

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\(^{885}\) Darren Mac Eiteagáin, ‘The Renaissance and the Late Medieval Lordship of Tir Chonaill; 1461–1555’ in *Donegal*, ed. by Nolan et al., pp. 203–228.
accessible as literature, via inscribed codices (4:2.2–4, 4:2.3.3). It is perhaps significant that the section of ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’ (4:2.1.6.1) placed in Flann’s mouth consists of learned lore on the Collas rather than charged narrative or political argument; his role is to provide information out of which others can make meaning. In ‘Muinter Padraig na paiter’ (4:2.2.3), on the other hand, he is as responsible for making political meaning out of his information as he is for providing it.

Material associated with Flann might have been re-contextualised, appropriated, and perhaps misattributed, but we have also encountered attributions to him or material about him that correlate with what is known of his biography. Whether or not these are true, they imply that Flann’s existence as an author-figure and his biography were not separate. On the other hand, we have also encountered instances where a medieval compiler has failed to recognise Flann Mainistrech as an eleventh-century scholar (4:2.1.1.1) or conflated him with another Flann (4:2.1.2). His identity did not remain perfectly stable.

Alongside ongoing issues with specific texts’ interpretation, this chapter raises some wider questions about the extant material relating to Flann. As we have discussed, it is unclear to what extent the variation between his corpora in pre-1200 and late medieval manuscripts is due to diachronic changes in how he was understood and presented or to imperfect preservation, for our perusal, of material in each period. The widespread assumption that Flann is an authority on genealogies is particularly striking in this regard: it is nowhere attested in pre-1200 manuscripts but may be a historical fact. The matter remains uncertain, although the continuing appearance of new, credible attributions to Flann in material considered in Chapters 5 and 6 seems to support the latter hypothesis. It is also to be noted that a large proportion of the material discussed in the present chapter is either in UM or from the hand of Giolla Íosa Mór Mac Firbisigh; these two sources certainly account for the majority of the most interesting material. This raises questions concerning the nature of the material’s transmission and availability and thus whether our analysis can relate to medieval Gaelic manuscript culture as a whole or only to specific scholarly circles.

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Chapter 5

Who preserved *senchas*?
The Post-Medieval Flann Mainistrech (1):
The Gaelic Manuscript Tradition, c. 1600–1850

1 Introduction

1.1 Post-medieval Ireland: a historical overview

Ireland’s conquest and subjugation during the seventeenth century and the circumstances of the Protestant Ascendancy that followed bequeathed to Ireland, among much else, a complex relationship with the medieval Gaelic past and its literary and historiographical traditions. Gaelic learned culture during this period responded in a number of ways.

The seventeenth century saw major, influential endeavours from various Catholic Irish scholars that aimed to refine, adapt, and renew medieval Gaelic sources through new historiographical and investigatory methodologies established during the Renaissance. Such scholars included the collectively prolific team known as the Four Masters, whose work in the 1630s and 1640s embraced history, genealogy, hagiography, and more. Dubhaltach Mac Firbhisigh (*ob*. 1671) produced in *LMG* a grand synthesis of the Irish genealogical tradition. Roderick O’Flaherty (*c*. 1629–1718) provided in his Latin monograph, *Ogygia*, a closely synchronised account of Irish history in the medieval Gaelic learned tradition, unprecedented in its close referencing of medieval manuscripts. Geoffrey Keating (*c*. 1569–1644), in *Forus Feasa air Éirinn*, presented another account that also...

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888 Although I retain the term for the sake of brevity, the circle of scholars known as ‘the Four Masters’ comprised substantially more than four people and changed in composition over time: Cunningham, *Annals*, pp. 142–59; Pádraig A. Breathnach, *The Four Masters and their Manuscripts: Studies in Palaeography and Text* (Dublin: DIAS, 2013), pp. 1–10. In practice, the two members of the group of particular interest to this study, Michéal Ó Cléirigh and Cú Chóigcriche Ó Cléirigh, are also two of the most active members of the group overall.

Chapter 5

preserved a trove of medieval Gaelic literature. Much of this work was motivated by the perceived need to defend Ireland’s ‘honour’ in a European context by showing that Ireland had a long and credible history as a pious Christian nation. All of these scholars were immersed in medieval Gaelic source materials. However, they were also working to validate Irish history in the sceptical historiographical context of early modern Europe, particularly given the political and social pressures on Catholic Ireland. Contemporary historical practice required that accounts be given of how ancient sources had been accessed, of their claims to authenticity, and of the authors that had produced them. Open reliance on single authorities, however prestigious, was not acceptable; instead, points of consensus and superior testimony were to be identified via comparison.

After this boom in historiography, Gaelic manuscript culture continued into the nineteenth century, perpetuated by composers, scholars, and scribes working in modest, often adverse, socio-economic circumstances, manuscripts being transcribed for fellow enthusiasts and in response to occasional patronage or custom from clergy and gentry. Yet, while some new literary works were composed, very little new historical scholarship was conducted, although many relevant medieval texts continued to be copied and circulated.

The Gaelic manuscript tradition finally drew to a close during the nineteenth century. However, since O’Flaherty, the Gaelic past and its physical and textual remains had also been the subject of sporadic printed publications. In the course of the nineteenth century, with increasing organisation and sponsorship, individuals, learned societies, and academic institutions began to widen access to


Cunningham, Annals, pp. 22–44.


Gaelic manuscripts through the expansion of archives, the publication of catalogues, and early editions of texts.

1.2 The post-medieval Flann Mainistrech

Texts attributed to Flann appear in Gaelic manuscripts throughout this period and he is referenced quite frequently in printed historical works. Given the political and cultural potency of the medieval Irish past and contemporary historical practice’s demands for authentic, reputable sources, medieval authors like Flann and the provenance of the Gaelic historiographical tradition as a whole seem to have been objects of close interest among scholars sympathetic to Gaelic Ireland. Multiple scholars implicitly or explicitly contextualise Flann within narratives or models of Gaelic historiography’s development, responding both to medieval sources and contemporary needs. Echoes of medieval presentations of Flann examined in previous chapters can certainly be heard, often distinctly, but new ideas emerge too. Also, during this period, the corpus of texts attributed to Flann undergoes further expansion, even compared to later medieval manuscripts. The expansion is particularly bewildering in printed works, potentially reflecting manuscript sources not now extant, inferences drawn from extant evidence, or the post-medieval need for a particular kind of historian.

In the present chapter, I consider Flann as he appears in the post-medieval Gaelic manuscript tradition, surveying the works attributed to him in context (5:2) and then the critical approaches taken to him and his purported corpus (5:3), including the treatment of individual texts and his place in accounts of Gaelic historiography overall. Chapter 6, meanwhile, is concerned with references to Flann in printed works in Latin or English over the same period. This is mainly for convenience and should not be taken as implying that the two media represent utterly distinctive intellectual milieux. Although published works potentially faced a much more sceptical audience and were sometimes framed accordingly, scholars who published in languages other than Gaelic, like O’Flaherty, could still be immersed in the traditional Gaelic historiographical framework, while those whose work

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remained in Gaelic and in manuscript, like the Four Masters, were still influenced by contemporary scholarly methodologies or by the aspiration ultimately to have their work translated and printed.

2 Texts attributed to Flann in post-medieval manuscripts

Many of the texts attributed to Flann in post-medieval manuscripts are familiar from medieval manuscripts. The Four Masters’ LGÉ d includes many of the poems discussed in Chapter 3. The Tara Diptych (2:2.2.1), ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ (4:2.1.3), and ‘Cetri ro gabh Érinn uile’ (4:2.1.2) all also appear in manuscripts associated with their circle, while a version of ‘Muinter Pádraig na paiter’ (4:2.2.3) and another poem on St Patrick have been added under Flann’s name to one of the manuscripts of AFM. LMG provides a version of ANÍ (2:2.2.3), with colophon, as well as occasional other references to Flann and his work. Some of these poems, plus ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’ (Appendix 17), continue to appear in post-seventeenth-century compilations.

2.1 Seventeenth-century historical compositions

We begin by considering texts attributed to Flann in seventeenth-century Gaelic-language historical compilations. Relevant material appears in works associated with the Four Masters, particularly with their two leading members, Míchéal Ó Cléirigh (c. 1590–1643) and Cú Chóigcriche mac Diarmada Ó Cléirigh (also known as Peregrine; ob. post 1664). A smaller but useful collection of references is also to be found in LMG. Keating makes no mention of Flann, although his work is relevant to our study in one important respect (5:2.1.1).

896 Cunningham, Annals, pp. 40–44.
897 For background, see Anne Cronin ‘Sources of Keating’s Foras Feasa: 1. The Printed Sources’, Éigse, 4 (1943–44), 235–79; ‘Sources of Keating’s Foras Feasa 2. The Manuscript Sources’, Éigse, 5 (1948), 122–35.
2.1.1 Lebor Gabála Érenn: recension d

The Four Masters’ new recension of LGÉ, recension d, is extant in both autograph and later manuscripts. Nonetheless, the manuscripts’ interrelationships and how they relate to the Four Masters’ intellectual agenda are still the subject of discussion and study. Since the manuscripts’ differences have been interpreted as reflecting distinctive purposes and approaches, they are worth considering alongside the different versions’ treatments of Flann and his work.

Pádraig Breathnach has suggested the extant manuscripts represent two distinct treatments of the Four Masters’ original work. The fragmentary RIA 23.M.70 – better represented by its derivative RIA D.iii.3 – is, he argues, Míchéal Ó Cléirigh’s version of the Four Masters’ original compilation (it is in his hand), destined ultimately for publication in Louvain, a centre for exiled Irish scholars at the time. This he infers from RIA 23.M.70’s layout, wider-ranging glossing, and a possible instruction to the printer preserved in text. Meanwhile, RIA 23.K.32 (from which derives RIA C.iv.3) is Cú Chóigechríche Ó Cléirigh’s own, later redaction of the Four Masters’ text, which came to remain in his own private library. Where the RIA 23.M.70 version has been adapted for a more general audience, the RIA 23.K.32 version is more ambitious ‘in learned terms’. It is characterised by extra, more contentious material in prose and verse, glossing focused on obscure vocabulary, extra material in the réim rígráide, a more elaborate chronology, and fewer ascriptions of verse to named authors. Thus, the version Breathnach believes was intended for publication is generally more cautious, except when it comes to authorial attributions. We can perhaps speculate that the published version was felt to need more grounding in named authorities, which experienced Irish scholars would either not require or treat with scepticism. Flahive, however, cautions both against

899 The most recent detailed study is Pádraig A. Breathnach, ‘On the Ó Cléirigh Recension of Leabhar Gabhála’, Éigse, 37 (2010), 1–58. However, Dr Joseph Flahive informs me that, in a forthcoming article (‘Observations on the Ó Cléirigh Leabhar Gabhála’), he will present a very different interpretation of the evidence. I am very grateful to Dr Flahive for sharing his article with me in draft.
901 Dublin, RIA, MS 23.M.70 (uncatalogued; purchased 1986), saec. XVII; Dublin, RIA, MS D.iii.3 (777), saec. XVII.
902 Dublin, RIA, MS 23.K.32 (617), saec. XVII; Dublin, RIA, MS C.iv.3 (1192), saec. XVII; Breathnach, Four Masters, p. 14.
903 Breathnach, ‘Ó Cléirigh Recension’, p. 35.
taking RIA 23.M.70 as representative of the original compilation and against taking RIA 23.K.32 as Cú Chóigcriche’s personal adaptation; he sees both as originating from the Four Masters collaborative compilation of *AFM* and representing different phases of this project.\(^{904}\) RIA 23.M.70 is earlier, 23.K.32 later. He also suggests that certain subsequent, non-autograph manuscripts, which Breatnach dismisses,\(^ {905}\) might actually be more representative of the Four Masters’ final product.

Addressing this complex issue is far from the current study’s purpose. My discussion of Flann’s role within *LGÉ* \(d\) is largely based on Breatnach’s published study and I have not been able to consult the later manuscripts in detail, as Flahive advises. However, it is important to note that our understanding of \(d\)’s textual situation is provisional.

Overall, *LGÉ* \(d\) basically resembles the medieval compilation, in its various forms (3:1.2), while containing important innovations.\(^ {906}\) That Flann is cited is, of course, hardly innovative and \(d\) adds no new texts to his corpus as compared to *mabc* (3:2.1). However, the configuration of Flann-associated texts and their contexts in \(d\) do not derive from any one medieval recension and their attributional apparatus can differ quite markedly. This reflects the Four Masters’ wide-ranging consultation of manuscript witnesses to the medieval *LGÉ*,\(^ {907}\) as well as their active interest in the author-figures on which the medieval *LGÉ* itself was based.

Material attributed to Flann in *LGÉ* \(d\)’s various manuscripts is summarised in Appendix 23. ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’, in \(d\), is broadly the same as in *LGÉ* \(ac\).\(^ {908}\) \(m\)’s quatrains on the damnation of the Túatha Dé Danann are absent. Its context most closely resembles that in \(N\) or \(m\), as it concludes the section on the Túatha Dé Danann and is not implicated in any debates regarding their humanity. ‘Suibne go sloghadh dia soí’, an extract from the Tara Diptych, also accompanies \(d\)’s account of Suibne Mend’s reign, as in \(Lc\), but is actually attributed to Flann in \(d\).\(^ {909}\)

The Tara Diptych proper is embedded within \(d\)’s *réim rígaise*, as in \(b\), but it has been split into its two parts, to conclude, respectively, pre-Patrician regnal history

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\(^{904}\) Flahive, ‘Observations’.

\(^{905}\) Breatnach, ‘Ó Cléirigh Recension’, pp. 15–18.

\(^{906}\) Scowcroft, *Leabhar Gabhála I*, p. 84 (n. 10); Breatnach, ‘Ó Cléirigh Recension’, p. 3 (n. 7).

\(^{907}\) Cunningham, *Annals*, pp. 42–44.

\(^{908}\) MacNeill and Macalister (ed. and trans.), *Leabhar Gabhála*, pp. 170–89, give a broad impression of the poem’s context in most \(d\) manuscripts.

\(^{909}\) *LGÉ*, V, §628 (pp. 376–77), pp. 536–37.
and post-Patrician regnal history down to Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill. The latter folios of RIA 23.M.70 are lost and with them the post-Patrician regnal history and the second poem in the Diptych. However, the text of LGÉ d in RIA 23.M.70’s supposed derivative, RIA D.iii.3 is complete; its réim rígraide concludes with the second part of the Diptych, followed by a brief prose account of the rig co fressarba (c. 1072–1169) and then a short colophon relating to the compilation overall.910 Here, the Tara Diptych is the main metrical counter-part to the réim rígraide. Meanwhile, in RIA 23.K.32 and its derivative, RIA C.iv.3, the Tara Diptych occupies the same positions but the réim rígraide overall concludes with chronological poetry from the likes of Gilla Cóemáin and Gilla Mo Dutu.911 Thus, in what seems to be an earlier version of LGÉ d (according to both Breatnach and Flahive), assuming RIA D.iii3 accurately reflects RIA 23.M.70 in this respect, Flann is the main authority for the réim rígraide’s king-list but, in a subsequent, more elaborate version, his Diptych has been implicitly displaced (as in LGÉ R and c (3:2.1)) from providing the main synchronistic overview and instead seems to form a metrical counter-part to the narratival accounts of the kings’ reigns.

On the other hand, the prefaces to the Tara Diptych’s two components (Appendix 23) describe Flann’s work as áirem (‘enumeration’), which is particularly stressed in RIA D.iii.3, and ascribe him skill in croinic (Lat. chronica), translatable as ‘chronicling’ or ‘history’ but with clear etymological links to chronology.912 Thus, despite the Diptych’s position in RIA 23.K.32 and C.iv.3 and its lack of chronological detail relative to the other poetry included in these versions, the Four Masters still seem to relate his work to the réim rígraide’s overall structure.

Beyond LGÉ d, in the composite and highly varied UCD A.33, the second half of the Tara Diptych is apparently cited in a codicologically discrete, doubly acephelous prose historical tract in Míchéal Ó Cléirigh’s hand.913 This fragment is concerned with events of the eleventh century and the reigns of Brían Bóruma, Máel Sechnaill, and the major kings from the interregnum that followed. It is yet to be the subject of any study or edition that I know of and I have no immediate means of

910 RIA D.iii.3, pp. 102.23–103.24.
912 eDIL s.v. croinic.
determining whether the text is Ó Cléirigh’s own composition or what its provenance might otherwise be. Following Máel Sechnaill’s death, Ó Cléirigh intended to add ‘Rígh Themra toebaige ñar ttain’, attributed to Flann Mainistrech, but the remainder of the page is blank. The extended introduction to the poem closely resembles that from LGÉ d and is printed in Appendix 23.

Attributed to Flann only in RIA 23.K.32 and C.iv.3 in d,914 ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’ presents a complex situation. It occurs as part of d’s account of the Goidelic invasion, although the arrangement is different from that in b (3:2.1). d’s poem has virtually the same opening as in the medieval recensions but is, thereafter, a different and much shorter text, consisting of only five quatrains rather than the medieval recensions’ seventeen or eighteen. Forty-one toisich are still named but their aideda are omitted. Different chevilles are employed and the toisich appear in a different order. No reference is made to ‘mac meic Fhlainn’ (2:2.3).

The short version might be either a later abbreviation or the long version’s original kernel. I favour the latter hypothesis. First, a possible dúnad occurs in the long version at the point corresponding to the end of the short version.915 Secondly, Keating includes the short version in Forus Feasa air Éirinn as the work of Eochaid úa Flainn.916 Eochaid úa Flainn could have composed the shorter version, which was then re-worked and supplemented with aideda, quite possibly by Flann Mainistrech, to become the long version. The two versions and their authors then inevitably became confused in d’s sources. An adaptor working with a text attributed to Eochaid úa Flainn would also provide a background for the invocation of prayers for ‘mac meic Fhlainn’ in some texts of the long version (2:2.3, 3:2.1), as if it were a tribute to the original poet. If this hypothesis is accepted, then the two versions of ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’ usefully provide a worked-out example of the historical Flann’s re-working of an earlier text. Interestingly, ‘Cetí ro gabh Éirinn uile’ is also split by a dúnad (q. 6) into quatrains on names and quatrains on aideda (Appendix 12.1). Since its coverage ends in the late tenth-century, it might also be an example of an augmented work, perhaps even also by Eochaid úa Flainn.

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914 MacNeill and Macalister (ed. and trans.), Leabhar Gabhála, pp. 246–49.
915 LGÉ, V, pp. 106–07 (q. 5).
916 Dineen (ed. and trans.) History of Ireland by Geoffrey Keating, II, 80–81.
2.1.2 The Annals of the Four Masters: marginal additions

With the exception of his own obit, neither Flann nor any texts attributed to him appear in the Ó Gadhra or Louvain sets of autograph manuscripts of AFM. However, in one manuscript of the Ó Gadhra set, RIA C.iii.3, there are a number of additions signed by ‘Henry Burc’ and dated, in his hand, to various years in the 1640s and 1650s. They include a charm against headaches, an extract from a Hiberno-Latin hymn, and an obituary for Oliver Cromwell. While they have been noted and catalogued, Burc has not been identified.

Under AD 432, following AFM’s account of Patrick’s foundation of Áth Truim, Burc added the five-quatrains poem, ‘Pádraig abb Érenn uili’, on Patrick’s genealogy, with a simple attribution to Flann Mainistrech. He also added a shorter, eleven-quatrains version of ‘Muinter Pádraig na paíter’ (4:2.2.3) under the otherwise blank AD 448. A note in Burc’s hand following the former poem states that they are each two parts of the same poem, which Burc calls ‘Muinntir Padruig na paiter’. Nothing resembling ‘Pádraig abb Érenn uili’ occurs in the longer version of ‘Muinter Pádraig na paíter’ in Lec. O’Donovan, supplied with imprecise transcriptions, included both poems in his edition without distinguishing them from the Four Masters’ original material.

Burc’s rendition of these poems yields interesting insights into the potential diversity of their medieval textual traditions. His text of ‘Muinter Pádraig na paíter’ differs in form and context from the Lec. version. First, his note implies that his source had amalgamated it with ‘Pádraig abb Érenn uili’, unless the note is based on his own assumption. Secondly, Burc’s text of ‘Muinter Pádraig na paíter’ lists only thirty-one of the seventy-two individuals in the Lec. version and introduces eleven new individuals in three unique quatrains. It also omits all mention of Flann and Clothna.

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917 *AFM* 1056.3.
919 Dublin, RIA, MS C.iii.3 (1220), *saec.* XVII.
921 *AFM* 432.3; RIA C.iii.3, fol. 218’14–22.
922 *AFM* 448.2; RIA C.iii.3, fol. 220’11–23.
923 RIA C.iii.3, fol. 218’22–23; *AFM*, I, 131–32.
924 *CGSH*, §672 (pp. 119–22).
In ‘Pádraig ab Érenn uili’, meanwhile, Patrick’s lineage is traced back to ‘Britan’, ancestor of the Britons. O’Curry has stated that it forms part of ‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’, an extensive metrical catalogue of saints’ genealogies found $BB$ and $Lec.$ as a metrical counterpart to $Senchas Naomh Érenn$ and also extant in a seventeenth-century recension by Cú Chóigcriche Ó Cléirigh. On the basis of Búrc’s attribution in RIA C.i.3, O’Curry has described Flann Mainistrech as the author of ‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’. There is no other evidence supporting this proposition. Various authors are named in the textual tradition of ‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’, with Ó Riain favouring Mac Raith Mac a’ Gabann (fourteenth-century) and ruling out a date as early as the eleventh century.

It thus seems unlikely that Flann composed ‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’. Indeed, ‘Pádraig ab Érenn uili’ is not very similar to the corresponding quatrains in that poem anyway (Appendix 24). Thirteen generations separate Patrick from Britan in ‘Pádraig ab Érenn uili’, sixteen in ‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’. The two poems vary considerably in orthography. Each poem’s supporting chevilles and conclusions are completely different. ‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’ details Britan’s ancestry, whereas ‘Padraig ab Érenn uili’ names Patrick’s mother and hometown and notes Munster’s devotion to him, echoing the opening reference to ‘all Ireland’. ‘Pádraig ab Érenn uili’, having a $dúnad$, is technically complete.

In short, they are different poems about ultimately related pedigrees. The background of the attribution to Flann is, naturally, unknown. However, given that the $Lec.$ version of ‘Muinter Pádraig na paiter’ is set within the context of Armagh’s relations with Munster (4:2.2.3), it is noteworthy that Búrc’s ‘Padraig ab Érenn uili’ is both attributed to Flann and interested in the same relationship. The sources whence Búrc drew them might be discernible though future study of his other

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926 O’Curry, $Manners$, II, 166–67.
927 For Cú Chóigcriche Ó Cléirigh’s recension, see ‘Naemsenchus Náemh nÉrenn’, ed. by Paul Grosjean in $Irish Texts$, ed. by John Fraser, Paul Grosjean, and James G. O’Keeffe, 5 vols (London: Sheed and Ward, 1931–1934), IV, pp. 40–78. In his edition of ‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’, Ó Riain reprints Cú Chóigcriche’s recension with variants from $BB$ and $Lec.$: $CGSH$, §662 (pp. 79–108). The quatrains O’Curry has in mind are located at Grosjean (ed.), ‘Naemsenchus’, qq. 8–11 (p. 12); $CGSH$, §662.8–11 (p. 80).
929 Such issues in ‘Pádraig ab Érenn uili’ (but not ‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’) are discussed by Anscombe, ‘Pedigrees’. 
additions to RIA C.iii.3. Unfortunately, for now, like Burc’s own identity, they remain obscure.

2.1.3 The Ó Cléirigh Book of Genealogies
The Ó Cléirigh Book of Genealogies is an extensive compilation, written sometime before 1660 and preserved in RIA 23.D.17 in the hand of Cú Chóigcriche Ó Cléirigh. 930 Embedded in the section on Cenél nÉogain is Catha Cenél Éogain (2:4.2.1.2; 4:2.1.2). 931 In the RIA 23.D.17 version, each reign-by-reign battle-list is augmented by information on the lineages descended from each king. 932 As in BB, RIA 23.D.17’s Catha Cenél Éogain is followed by ‘Cétrí ro gabh Ériinn uile’. 933 Again, their king-lists and the extent of their coverage do not match (4:2.1.2). Here, however, the poem is attributed explicitly to Flann Mainistrech. BB’s text of the poem was evidently not RIA 23.D.17’s exclusive source, as its omissions and variants are not repeated (Appendix 12). After the ambiguities of BB’s attribution to ‘Flann Fina’, this provides reassuring evidence of an independent textual tradition in which the poem was attributed to Flann Mainistrech and perhaps a common source misinterpreted in BB’s version.

2.1.4 Leabhar Mór na nGenealach
Compiled during the 1640s and 1650s, LMG, Dubhaltach Mac Firbhisigh’s even more extensive compilation of genealogies makes a number of references to Flann. As we have seen (4:2.1.6.1), he cites a number of quatrains from ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’, although without mentioning Flann as their author, and includes in a comparable context a more concise version of the Uí Dhiarmata colophon from Lec., including the reference to the ‘books of Flann Mainistrech’ (4:2.1.4). 934 Mac Firbhisigh seems to have had access to much material taken from Lec. but not the manuscript itself. 935

Otherwise, Mac Firbhisigh emphasises that sizeable communities of the Fir Bolg have survived in Ireland down to his own time and cites evidence of their

930 Dublin, RIA, MS 23.D.17 (790), saec. XVII; Pender (ed.), ‘O Clery Book’; Ó Muraíle, Celebrated Antiquary, pp. 155–56; Cunningham, Annals, p. 72; Breatnach, Four Masters, p. 20.
932 A sample entry from these three manuscripts is printed in Appendix 25.
933 Pender (ed.), ‘O Clery Book’, §455 (pp. 35–38).
934 LMG, I, §239.13 (pp. 540–41).
935 Ó Muraíle, Celebrated Antiquary, pp. 172–73.
involved in various historical events.\footnote{Ó Muraíle, \textit{Celebrated Antiquary}, p. 161.} In one such event, one of their number, Forgha mac Feradaich, fell alongside Art mac Cuinn at the Battle of Mag Muccrama.\footnote{LMG, I, §61.5–7 (pp. 236–37).} By way of corroboration, Mac Firbhisigh cites a quatrain, ‘amhail ro raidh Flann’.

\begin{quote}
Teora Connacht na ccosdadh, 
o thairmigh a tochosdal, 
teagaid um Chian sa chath chain, 
’s um Flharga mac Fearadhoigh.\footnote{LMG, I, §61.6 (pp. 236–37): ‘The three Connachta of the feastings, | when their assembling is completed, | come along with Cian and his fair battalion | and along with Forgha son of Fearadhach’.
}
\end{quote}

Both this Flann’s identity and the quatrain’s provenance are obscure. Neither this incident nor Forgha appears in the best-known literary account of the battle, \textit{Cath Maige Muccrama}.\footnote{Cath Maige Muccrama: The Battle of Mag Muccrama, ed. and trans. by Máirín O’Daly (London: ITS, 1975).} However, it is credible chronologically for Cian to be Cían mac Ailill Aulom, the Ciannachta’s eponymous ancestor, fighting alongside Art just as Tadg, his son, would fight alongside Art’s son, Cormac (1:4, 4:2:2.1.3), although Cian’s filial relationship to Ailill meant he had his own stake.\footnote{Byrne, \textit{Irish Kings}, p. 202.} Yet our Flann (if it be he) may, once again, be testifying on his own people’s ancient history.

Finally, Mac Firbhisigh includes an account of Nath Í’s death, cognate with that in \textit{ANÍ} and including material from the colophon. He uses the story of Nath Í’s European wars and death to illustrate both the achievements of the Gaidil and the pride and covetousness that had been their downfall in his own time. Its sagely preservation by the learned is described via material from the \textit{ANÍ} colophon.\footnote{LMG, I, §§299.5‒6 (pp. 684‒85).} This entire passage was added to \textit{LMG} in 1664, Mac Firbhisigh states, and based on a manuscript written by Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh (fl. 1603–16).\footnote{Elizabeth Schoales, ‘Ó Cléirigh [O’Clery], Lughaidh (fl. 1603–1616)’, \textit{ODNB} <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20497> [accessed 16 December 2014].} The nature of Lughaidh’s compilation is not otherwise known. Ó Muraíle points out that \textit{LU} was in Donegal for the duration of Lughaidh’s likely career, meaning that his \textit{ANÍ} material could ultimately derive thence.\footnote{Ó Muraíle, \textit{Celebrated Antiquary}, pp. 234–42.}
Chapter 5

2.2 Manuscript collections

As well as being cited within more integrated seventeenth-century works, independent poems appear attributed to Flann in manuscript collections of texts throughout the post-medieval tradition. Almost all these texts are already familiar to us from earlier manuscripts, although it is interesting to note which texts remain circulation in the manuscript traditions later stages, as far as they are extant.

Two such collections are extant in the hands, respectively, of Míchéal Ó Cléirigh (RIA B.iv.2) and Cú Chóigcriche Ó Cléirigh (NLI G.131). These were apparently compiled as sourcebooks to be used in further work. Given their overlaps in content and their compilers’ close collaboration, it is thought that they have multiple sources in common. Míchéal included a version of the Donegal Series, opening with ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’, which is attributed to Flann Mainistrech and is followed by an extended Ó Domhnaill Dúanaire (4:2.1.3, 6:4.1). He also included the Tara Diptych, also attributed to Flann Mainistrech and explicitly stated to be from LL. Finally, RIA B.iv.2 is the sole witness for ‘Úasalepscop Érenn Áed’ (1:3), whose quatrain on Flann seems to have interested the Four Masters (5:3.1). NLI G.131 contains the same Donegal Series and Ó Domhnaill Dúanaire poems in the same order. ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ is preceded by a detailed attribution to Flann, examined further in 5:3.1. The presence of the Donegal Series and the Ó Domhnaill Dúanaire in both collections is quite possibly related to the Uí Chléirigh having been hereditary historians to the Uí Dhomhnaill.

Versions of the Donegal Series appear in other post-medieval manuscript collections. However, ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ is only otherwise attributed to Flann Mainistrech by a manuscript’s scribe in the seventeenth-century Book of the

945 Cunningham, Annals, pp. 69, 72.
946 Ní Shéaghdha, NLI Cat., fasc. IV, 52.
947 RIA B.iv.2, fols 53r–68r.
948 RIA B.iv.2, fols 112r–15v.
950 Cunningham, Annals, pp. 176–214.
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O’Conor Don (hereafter, BOCD). Nonetheless, in the nineteenth century, up to eight further Donegal Series poems come to be attributed to Flann in published works by Edward O’Reilly and Eugene O’Curry. These scholars occasionally intervene in earlier manuscripts to add such attributions to Donegal Series poems. This impulse and the collections affected are discussed in detail in 6:4.

As already mentioned (4:2.1.6.1), ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’ appears in the seventeenth-century TD, lacking any sort of preface and any external attribution but retaining the internal citation of Flann Mainistrech (Appendix 17). The manuscript largely contains religious poetry, but it concludes with a short collection of items on the Antrim Meic Dhomhnaill, among which are several poems on the Airgialla’s legendary history. The Meic Dhomhnaill claimed descent from Somerled Mac Gille Brigte (ob. 1164), king of the Hebrides, whose lineage some late medieval sources trace to a branch of the Airgialla. Again, Flann’s testimony has been adapted to corroborate the identity of a much later dynasty.

Seón Mac Solaidh and Áodh Ó Dálaigh, two of the scholars who gathered around Tadhg Ó Neachtain (ob. c. 1752) in Dublin, both include ‘Muinter Pádraig na paiter’ in three apparently closely related manuscripts and always attribute it to Flann Mainistrech. Their text of the poem is much more like the Lec. version than the text Burc interpolates into AFM in RIA C.iii.3 (5:2.1.2). Ó Riain believes that their version could derive ultimately from Lec. itself. In addition, Áodh Ó Dalaigh is one of several scribes during this period to reproduce versions of LGÈ, including poetry attributed to Flann. These were not restricted to d but also copies of some medieval recensions.
Seán Ó Cléirigh (1778–1846), possibly a descendant of Cú Chóigcriche,\textsuperscript{959} includes ‘Cetrí ro gabh Érinn uili’, with an attribution to Flann Mainistrech, in RIA 23.G.12,\textsuperscript{960} a collection of genealogies and bardic and historical poetry structured around the regions of Ireland. It was compiled sometime after 1831.\textsuperscript{961} Seán possessed various manuscripts from Cú Chóigcriche’s library when he moved to Dublin in 1817 from Co. Cavan. These apparently included RIA 23.D.17 (the Ó Cléirigh Book of Genealogies),\textsuperscript{962} probably Seán’s source for both poem and attribution, as some other poems from RIA 23.D.17 also appear in RIA 23.G.12.\textsuperscript{963} Seán parted with the older manuscript shortly after arriving in Dublin,\textsuperscript{964} implying that he used an intermediate copy. RIA 23.D.17 thereafter passed through the hands of Edward O’Reilly but he makes no mention of ‘Cetrí ro gabh Érinn uili’ as Flann’s work (Appendix 1; 6:2).

2.3 Flann’s texts in post-medieval manuscripts: conclusion

Surveying material attributed to Flann in manuscripts from the seventeenth century onwards, we find, as in Chapter 4, some items not previously associated with him and, in fact, not previously attested at all. We also find some previously attested items in different forms. This amplifies questions raised in Chapter 4 (4:4) concerning the medieval manuscript tradition’s diversity, or the inventiveness of compilers, with respect to Flann’s corpus. In terms of subject-matter, however, the interests ascribed to Flann overall remain recognisable, if wide-ranging, consisting of histories of Irish kingdoms, Armagh’s past and politics, literature on the Ciannachta, and contributions to LGÈ.

\textsuperscript{959} Pender, ‘O Clery Book’, pp. xi–xii.
\textsuperscript{960} Dublin, RIA, MS 23.G.12 (12), saec. XIX.
\textsuperscript{961} O’Rahilly, \textit{RIA Cat.}, fasc. I, 58–60.
\textsuperscript{962} Pender, ‘O Clery Book’, p. xii.
\textsuperscript{964} Pender, ‘O Clery Book’, pp. xiii–xiv.
3 Critical treatments of Flann and his work

3.1 The Four Masters: attributions, annotations, and analysis

Looking at the attributions to Flann across LGÉ d (Appendix 23), it is interesting that each recurs so uniformly, given Breatnach’s postulation of distinctive approaches and audiences for the various versions (5:2.1.1). The attributions to him, including his extended laureation in the superscription to ‘Ríg Themra toebaige iar ttain’, were both considered worth setting before the published version’s wider readership but also acceptable in Cú Chóigeriche’s more stringent, scholarly version. As for the differences, the omission of ‘Suibne go sloghadh dia soi’ in RIA D.iii.3 and presumably RIA 23.M.70 (lacunose at this point) is commensurate with this version’s terser réim rígraide.965 The lack of any ascription to Flann of ‘Toisich na llongse tar Iler’ in RIA 23.M.70 and RIA D.iii.3 is less explicable and goes against this version’s tendency to include more attributions.966 This might be an indication of confusion surrounding this attribution prompted by the longer and shorter versions’ differences (3:2.1, 5:2.1.1).

A particularly detailed superscription introduces ‘Ríg Themra toebaige iar ttain’ in LGÉ d as well as in other, presumably related manuscripts. Since it appears across LGÉ d (RIA 23.M.70 lacunose) it can be assumed to be an early feature in the Four Masters’ work. Meanwhile, another detailed superscription introduces ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ in NLI G.131 (Appendix 26). Each superscription both summarises the respective poem’s content, ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ being catalogued in particular detail, but also provides relatively detailed information on Flann himself. Through both their content and their context, these superscriptions provide particularly detailed evidence of how the Four Masters conceived of Flann and his work.

Resembling Flann’s chronicle obits in style but surpassing them in enthusiasm, the Four Masters’ superscription to ‘Ríg Themra toebaige iar ttain’ describes Flann as ‘an t-ughdar oirrderc’,967 as fer léiginn of Monasterboice, and as

966 Breatnach, ‘Ó Cléirigh Recension’, p. 36.
967 ‘the famous author’ (my translation).
‘saoi eagna 7 cronice 7 filidechttae Gaedel na aimsir’.\textsuperscript{968} Much of this terminology is familiar from his chronicle obits (\textsuperscript{1:2.2}) but it is worth revisiting it in the context of the Four Masters’ usage.

\textit{Ugdar}, as we have seen, can denote a text’s composer, an expert, or, more impersonally, an authoritative source (\textsuperscript{1:2.2.6}). We have also seen it used to denote scholars learned in inherited, shared historiography (\textsuperscript{2:5.3}). Its usage, specifically, by the Four Masters is quite varied, which somewhat obscures its meaning in this superscription. In \textit{Genealogiae Regum et Sanctorum Hiberniae} (GRSH), a collection of Irish saints’ genealogies framed by \textit{a réim rígraide} that was an early product of the Four Masters’ researches,\textsuperscript{969} a long list of \textit{ugdair} (including Flann) is drawn from throughout the history of the Gaídil (\textsuperscript{5:3.2}).\textsuperscript{970} On the other hand, \textit{LGÉ}’s prefatory material refers to Irish and foreign authors on universal history with a chronological focus, in a tradition traced back to the Septuagint, as \textit{ugdair}.\textsuperscript{971} As a term, it can denote a source of specific historical testimony or the source of an overall chronological framework and seems to be highly dependent on context.

It seems to be used both sparingly and ambiguously in reference to other authors in \textit{LGÉ} \textit{d}. In RIA 23.K.32, Cínaed úa hArtacáin is described as ‘an senughdar’ and Gilla Cóemáin as ‘an senauctor oirrderc’.\textsuperscript{972} These two authors, plus Flann, are broadly similiar in \textit{floruit}. Both Flann and Gilla Cóemáin are known as authors of regnal histories of Ireland but how their work is also similar to Cínaed’s is unclear.\textsuperscript{973} Also, others who contribute large-scale regnal histories, like Gilla Mo Dutu or Seán Ó Dubhagáin, are not called \textit{ugdair} in \textit{LGÉ} \textit{d}.\textsuperscript{974} It is also unclear what makes Cínaed and Gilla Cóemáin ‘ancient’ or why Cínaed is not as ‘famous’. These terms’ usage here seems rhetorical rather than closely historiographical.

\textsuperscript{968} ‘master of learning and history and of the poetry of the Gaídil in his time’ (my translation).
\textsuperscript{969} Cunningham, \textit{Annals}, pp. 65–71; Bretnach, \textit{Four Masters}, pp. 32–39.
\textsuperscript{970} \textit{Genealogiae Regum et Sanctorum Hiberniae}, ed. by Paul Walsh (Dublin: Record Society, St. Patrick’s College, Maynooth, 1918) [hereafter, \textit{GRSH}], p. 10; Bretnach, \textit{Four Masters}, pp. 32–39.
\textsuperscript{971} MacNeill and Macalister (ed. and trans.), \textit{Leabhar Gabhála}, §§2–4 (pp. 2–3); Bretnach, ‘Ó Cléirigh Recension’, pp. 8–9 (n. 24).
\textsuperscript{972} RIA 23.K.32, pp. 153.28–30 (‘the ancient authority’), 164.8–10 (‘the famous ancient authority’; my translations).
\textsuperscript{974} RIA 23.K.32, pp. 230.11, 238.13.
Another term applied to Flann’s work in this passage is croinic (5:2.1.1). This very rarely describes scholarly expertise in chronicle obits, but it is familiar to us from ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (4:2.3.1). True to its Latin etymology, it often denotes synchronistic historical writing in a universal context, not unlike one apparent sense of ugdar in LGÉ d. In Lebor Bretnach it refers to the works of Eusebius, Jerome, and Isidore. In AT, where it is glossed ‘lebur oirisen’ (‘book of events’), it apparently refers to a historical work by Bede; it may also refer to Bede’s Chronica Maioria in Flann’s own ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (4:4.2.1). Dubhaltach Mac Firbhisigh uses it to designate CS. Yet Máel Muire Othna (ob. 887) uses it to describe ‘Can a mbunadus na nGáedel’, even though this poem is about the Gaídil’s genealogical origins; relevance to universal history might be key.

Perhaps most significantly, Michéal Ó Cléirigh describes himself as skilled in croinic in his address to the reader in GRSH. Indeed, chronological structure, based on common-era dating, is an important aspect of GRSH, LGÉ d, and AFM. Furthermore, AFM ascribes expertise in croinic to Michéal’s recent forebear, Tadhg Cam Ó Cléirigh (ob. 1565). Thus, while it had history as a term, croinic was also associated by the Four Masters with their own activities. That Flann is not only praised as a scholar but described via such a term implies a sense of connection and continuity with his perceived work.

This is touching, but also problematic. The description occurs in the context of the Tara Diptych. While, as we have seen (5:2.1.1), the Four Masters seem to have regarded this as pertaining to the réim rígraide’s chronological structure, they also came to include multiple historical poems that render a more extensive réim rígraide in greater chronological detail. Their authors – Gilla Cóemáin, Gilla Mo Dutu, and Seán Úa Dubhagáin – are introduced in markedly more modest terms (Appendix

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975 Cunningham, Annals, pp. 177–78.
976 Breatnach’s translation, ‘traditional historiography’ (‘Ó Cléirigh Recension’, p. 34), is thus potentially misleading.
977 van Hamel (ed.), Lebor Bretnach, §1 (p. 2); Todd (ed. and trans.), Leabhar Bretnach, pp. 26–27.
978 CI, I, p. 202 (n. 4); this may be Bede’s Historia Ecclesiastica or his Chronica Maiora. For Lebor Airissen as a term for chronicling, see Evans, Present, p. 226.
979 CS, p. 2.
980 LL, III, l. 16153 (p. 523).
981 GRSH, p. 7; Cunningham, Annals, pp. 177–78; Breatnach, ‘Ó Cléirigh Recension’, p. 34.
982 Cunningham, Annals, pp. 65–66.
983 AFM 1565.6; Cunningham, Annals, p. 178.
Given that both \textit{ugdar} and \textit{croinic} could connote universal history, we may be once again be seeing the influence of Flann’s authorship of ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ here. It was also possibly noted that Flann pre-dated these authors of more elaborate works, so he might have been interpreted as the ultimate originator of Irish national regnal history.\footnote{Indeed, more recent scholars have credited him with such a role: Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p. 866; Smith, ‘Historical Verse’, p. 341.} Alternatively, as we will see in \textbf{Chapter 6 (6:3)}, Flann eventually came to be cited regularly in early printed works as an author of the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’. While all such citations post-date the Four Masters, whatever was their basis might have influenced Flann’s depiction here.

NLI G.131’s detailed superscription to ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ says less about Flann himself, merely describing him (incorrectly) as the abbot of Monasterboice and citing ‘Flann a primchill Buiti binn’ (1:3, \textit{Appendix 4}). A later hand has helpfully added the year of his death. In what it does say, this superscription seems more distant from Flann. Rather than emphasising his utility as an authority and the continuity between his and the Four Masters’ work, he is described via a quatrains from a historical source, as in his \textit{AFM} obit. The quatrains is described as a ‘teist’ (‘evidence, testimony’; Lat. \textit{testis}).\footnote{\textit{eDIL} s.v. \textit{teist}.} Here, Flann is partly a historian and partly another character within history, discerned via evidence. One of the stated objectives of \textit{AFM} is, after all, the recovery of ‘fios sendachta na senughdar’.\footnote{\textit{AFM}, I, lv: ‘knowledge of the antiquity of ancient authors’; Cunningham, \textit{Annals}, p. 26.} The quatrains perhaps reinforces this sense of separation with its description of Flann as \textit{tiugsuí} (‘final scholar’; 1:2.2.6). Indeed, any sense of continuity with Flann in the superscription to ‘Ríg Themra toebaige ár ttain’ is also qualified by him being all the things he is ‘na aimsir’ (‘in his time’). The Four Masters’ attitude to Flann was complex, involving both recognition and high estimation of his scholarly activities and a consciousness of his antiquity, obscurity, and their reliance on others’ testimony in order to understand him.

Whatever these superscriptions’ composers feel they know about Flann, it does not inform how the two poems themselves are presented. In each case, the superscriptions simply present the topics on which they seem to provide historical information (cf. 3:4), implying that they are being taken as factual sources. This is

\footnote{The superscriptions are from RIA 23.K.32, RIA 23.M.70 having lost the relevant folios.}
Chapter 5

qualified, in the superscriptions, neither by the Tara Diptych’s open celebration of Máel Sechnaill’s return (2:3.3.3) nor by the favour shown to Cenél Conaill in ‘Conall cungid clainne Néill’ (4:2.1.3). An illustrative comparison is provided by Míchéal Óg Ó Longain (1766–1837), in his superscription to ‘Conall cungid clainne Néill’ in RIA F.vi.2. He identifies no author but recognizes the poem’s political impetus: ‘File d’Aoibh Néill ceccinit, ag foilsiogha mórdhachta Chlainne Néill 7 créad rug go cóige Uladh iad’.988 The Four Masters are more interested in the information – and thus in bolstering Flann as its source – than in critiquing its perspective.

3.2 The history of Gaelic historiography

The traditional medieval Gaelic history of Ireland and its various peoples rivalled the Bible in span and arguably surpassed it in detail. Both the Four Masters and Dubhaltach Mac Firbhisigh provided prefaces to some of their works designed to make credible, for the benefit of sceptics, the authentic transmission of such ancient information down to their own time.989 Two such accounts name, categorise, and periodise the personnel responsible, including Flann Mainistrech, who is thus situated within the development of Gaelic historiography overall.

As we have seen (2:5.2), medieval scholars were capable of providing aetiologies for pseudo-historical compilations. Furthermore, there are Old and Middle Gaelic texts extant that chart the legendary development of the Gaelic language and catalogue its major authors,990 who are also often legendary or semi-legendary. The centre of gravity of Gaelic language and literature here seems to have been located in the distant past, although the chronicles note culturally significant individuals throughout the Middle Ages.991 Seventeenth-century scholars, needing to draw lines of continuity down to themselves, pay more attention to medieval authors like Flann.

988 Dublin, RIA, MS F.vi.2 (253), saec. XVIII, p. 302; Mulchrone (ed.), RIA Cat, fasc. VI, 659: ‘A poet of the Ui Néill sang [this], proclaiming the grandeur of the sons of Niall and why they went to the fifth of the Ulaid’ (my translation).
989 Ó Muraíle, Celebrated Antiquary, pp. 218–19; Cunningham, Annals, pp. 39–42.
991 Richter, ‘Personnel’.
Many of the Four Masters’ accounts of their sources focus on the physical codices to which they had access.\textsuperscript{992} GRSH, however, provides lists of individual human authorities, the ‘ughdair choimhéda seanchois na hErenn’, from the pre-Christian and Christian eras respectively, back to the arrival of the Gaídil in Ireland.\textsuperscript{993} It is not actually stated that these \textit{ughdair} were each used individually; the lists may simply be to provide an overview of tradition. Indeed, the definition of \textit{ugdar} is quite inclusive. The term is applied equally to pre-Christian and Christian figures. Flann, listed, naturally, in the Christian era, appears alongside numerous other historians with ecclesiastical connections, such as Dub Dá Leithe, Gilla Cóemán, and Eochaid úa Flainn, but the \textit{ugdair} of the Christian era also include figures like Dallán Forgaíll, Colum Cille’s eulogist, or Urard Mac Coise, an ill-defined \textit{ollam}-adventurer known for manipulating Uí Néill kings.\textsuperscript{994}

Yet the second list, of the Christian era’s \textit{ugdair}, does not extend beyond the twelfth century. The Four Masters were certainly aware of the later medieval learned tradition and their own ancestors’ leading roles in it.\textsuperscript{995} GRSH’s \textit{réim rigraide} also ends in the twelfth century, so it might be that the existence of scholarly \textit{ugdair}, by this definition, was thought to require a corresponding political structure. On the other hand, a point stressed in \textit{AFM}, originally titled \textit{Annála Ríoghachta Éireann} (‘annals of the kingdom of Ireland’), is Ireland’s basic permanence as a political unit,\textsuperscript{996} which would, in general, render problematic the presentation of later twelfth-century events as bringing about cataclysmic discontinuity. It is also possible that \textit{ugdair} were expected to provide quasi-eyewitness testimony on contemporary events, hence they were not sought after the end of the period of interest.

For whatever reason, GRSH’s lists place Flann within a historiographical era that stretches back to the arrival either of Christianity or of the Gaídil but which, for the Four Masters, has long ended. Within this era, few distinctions are made. The \textit{ugdair} listed are all in some way responsible for the structure and details of the

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{992} MacNeill and Macalister (ed. and trans.), \textit{Leabhar Gabhála}, §5 (pp. 4–5); GRSH, p. 9; Cunningham, \textit{Annals}, pp. 42–46.
\item \textsuperscript{993} Walsh (ed.), \textit{Genealogiae}, p. 10.
\item \textsuperscript{994} Charles-Edwards, ‘Dallán Forgaíll’; O’Leary, ‘Identities’.
\item \textsuperscript{995} Cunningham, \textit{Annals}, pp. 244–82.
\item \textsuperscript{996} Cunningham, \textit{Annals}, p. 80.
\end{itemize}
Dubhaltach Mac Firbhisigh’s preface to *LMG* analyses the history of the Gaelic historiographical tradition in much greater detail. Additionally, Mac Firbhisigh began, but did not complete, *Ughdair Éireann* (‘Ireland’s authorities’), a history of Irish authors in various disciplines, including history (*seanchas*) itself, although Flann himself is mentioned by name only in *LMG*. In each account, Mac Firbhisigh sets out how Irish history has been transmitted via two parallel, interacting routes: through an ecclesiastical literary tradition and through the continuous existence of a dedicated learned class.

The latter, he demonstrates, had existed among every people that had come to inhabit Ireland. In an interesting parallel to what might underlie *GRSH*’s lists of *ugdair*, he stresses that the function of this learned class is not only to perpetuate memory of the past but to record contemporary events. The system, established at Druim Cetta by Colum Cille, of embedding a *fili* within each *túath*, for example, facilitates such a function. This socially-embedded learned class employed writing, which is thus not presented as distinctively ecclesiastical. The earliest text cited in the *LMG* preface is the *Saltair Temrach* (‘Psalter of Tara’), which was begun by Ollam Fodla, a very early Goidelic king of Ireland, as a record of the conclusions reached at the triennial *Feis Temrach*. In *Ughdair Éireann*, he goes further and states that the Gaídil have always kept a written historical record.

Yet Mac Firbhisigh also notes an ecclesiastical tradition of historiography based on direct access to authentic, revenant knowledge rather than on inherited memory. His main source for this tradition is a passage from a not immediately recognisable version of *LGÉ*, cognate with Macalister’s §385 and the conclusion to ‘Éitset áes ecna aibind’ (*2:5.3*). Again, Colum Cille and other saints receive and transcribe testimony on Ireland’s past from long-lived eyewitnesses, here unnamed,
their writings being reproduced thereafter by ecclesiastical scholars. While Eochaid’s poem and medieval versions of *LGÉ* describe the latter’s role in terms of refinement and discussion, the emphasis in Mac Firbhisigh’s *LGÉ* and in his own account is solely on preservation. *Ughdair Éireann* presents a similar role for the church and names some of the codices that were the result.\(^{1003}\)

Mac Firbhisigh is ultimately not interested in promoting either form of transmission over the other but in demonstrating the Gaelic historiographical tradition’s continuity and collective coherence. In his account, both professional poets and ecclesiastical scholars can claim direct or indirect access to the events or social institutions that are the subjects of their records. However, he does seem to present national Irish history as a specifically literary endeavour.

While we might expect to find Flann as part of this endeavour, this is not so straightforward. He appears within a list of the ‘rígh agus naoimh agus eaglais Éireann’ by whom history was also transmitted.\(^{1004}\) They are to be distinguished from professional, socially embedded poets, yet they are not purely textual ecclesiastical scholars. The list includes several other Middle Gaelic historical poets but also semi-legendary poets of the early Christian era and sagely characters, like Cormac mac Airt, from what we know to be the legendary past.\(^{1005}\) The particular nature, if any, of this eclectic group’s contribution is left unspecified.

We then find what we might have expected to be Flann’s contribution being attributed specifically to later medieval learned families. Mac Firbhisigh relates that, with the emergence of surnames, kings and lords were able to take on specific lineages of historians to interpret the literature of the past, write their polity’s history, and preserve it in poetry.\(^{1006}\) This, he states, is still the practice in his own time. He does not state that these functions are very different from those of earlier scholars, but the emphasis up to this point has been on observation and preservation, not literary creation or compilation. Like, perhaps, the Four Masters in *GRSH*, Mac Firbhisigh perceives important changes in the later twelfth century.\(^{1007}\)

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\(^{1003}\) Carney (ed.), *De scriptoribus*, ll. 99–106 (p. 91).

\(^{1004}\) *LMG*, I, §5.2 (pp. 166–67): ‘the kings and saints and church of Ireland’.

\(^{1005}\) *LMG*, I, §5.2 (pp. 166–67).

\(^{1006}\) *LMG*, I, §§5.3–6.2 (pp. 166–69); cf. Carney (ed.), *De scriptoribus*, ll. 107–25 (p. 91).

is placed in a prior era, mentioned in the same breath as ancient sages from pseudo-
history, and, in this instance, disassociated from the tertiary authorship that seems to
be his function elsewhere (2:5.2, 4:3.1). He has joined the ancient authorities we
once found him elucidating.

This loss of distinction between Flann and more ancient authorities might be
a consequence of emphasising continuity in Gaelic historiography. On the other
hand, Mac Firbhisigh’s later addition to LMG, based on ANÍ (5:2.1.4), to an extent
revives the idea of tertiary authorship. Flann and Eochaid memorialise Nath Í’s story
(‘do chuirsiod eoluigh ele an ccedna i ccuimhne’) but the story’s ultimate source is
Torna Éces, the colophon material stating that they accessed Torna’s account in
multiple manuscripts.1008 Flann is still a receiver and interpreter, as distinct from an
original witness. However, even here, Mac Firbhisigh emphasises his and Eochaid’s
preservation and memorialisation of a consistently coherent account, rather than their
work’s creative, reconstructive, or quasi-originative aspects (2:5.2.1).

Flann’s position in these two accounts of Gaelic historiography is ambiguous,
as it is in the widely circulated detailed superscription to ‘Ríg Themra toebaige iar
ttain’ (5:2.1.1). On the one hand, he is assigned a social and historical context within
a specific era and, in the superscription, areas of expertise. On the other, both Mac
Firbhisigh and the Four Masters are more interested in the Gaelic historiographical
tradition’s integrity and in what it collectively bequeaths than in isolating and
analysing specific contributors. For both, a wide range of identifiable authors are
ugdaír (‘authorities’), in that they provide useful, apparently authentic information
and not necessarily on account of anything particular about them as individuals. For
this and perhaps other reasons, Flann merges in these sources with authors and eras
from which he was once distinguished.

3.3 Glossing and glossaries

Another aspect of the Four Masters’ relationship with Flann’s work is expressed by
the glossing of his various poems in LGÉ d, in both RIA 23.M.70 and 23.K.32. Both
manuscripts contain a common corpus of mainly lexicographical or linguistic

1008 LMG, I, §§299.5–6 (pp. 684–85): ‘other learned men have preserved the memory of the same
thing’.
glosses, although their exact formulation often varies. For Breatnach, RIA 23.M.70’s glosses, by Míchéal Ó Cléirigh, were to be included in the printed edition to aid the less advanced reader, while those in RIA 23.K.32 by Cú Cóigcriche were for experienced scholars in Ireland (5:2.1.1). Many of RIA 23.M.70’s glosses in particular correspond to entries in Foclóir no Sanasan Nua (hereafter, Foclóir), a glossary published by Míchéal in Louvain in 1643. Breatnach suggests that this manuscript was one of the ‘leabhair chruaidhe’ on which he based the glossary.

Of the poems attributed to Flann in LGÊ d, ‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tnú’ receives the most glossing in both RIA 23.M.70 and RIA 23.K.32. Sporadic glossing also occurs in ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’ and ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’. The examples in Appendix 28, taken from all three poems, all fit Breatnach’s interpretation. They are about explicating vocabulary and their definitions correspond with entries in Foclóir. I have provided only a sample of the glosses on these three poems. It should be noted that there are also many that bear no relation to entries in Foclóir.

The Four Masters thus believed that Flann’s poems merited explication and that they were suitable as a source of vocabulary. That is not to say that they were considered particularly obscure. Michéal states that Foclóir avoids the esoteric and concentrates on standard, learned Gaelic vocabulary ‘don aos óg agas don aos ainbfís’, although the glossary has been compiled ‘ar fhoclabhbh cruaidhe ar dteangtha mathardha’, collected ‘do sheinleabhraibh’.

Flann (alongside other glossed contributions to LGÊ d) is not simply considered an authority on history but a reliable source for the learned yet approachable Gaelic of old books; he is, after all, also ‘saoi [...] filidhechta’.

1013 Texts (with glosses) of these poems from RIA 23.K.32 can be found at MacNeill and Macalister (ed. and trans.), Leabhar Gabhála, pp. 176–89, 246–49.
1016 AFM 1056.3.
When considering why he is so highly regarded by the Four Masters when more accurate chronological poetry was also available, his literary eloquence may also have been important. Indeed, in RIA 23.K.32, the more advanced chronological poems by Gilla Cóemáin, Gilla Mo Dutu, and Seán Ó Dubhagáin that conclude *LGÉ d* are not glossed.\(^\text{1017}\)

### 3.4 Ethical readings

Medieval authorship had an ethical, as well as a scholarly, dimension.\(^\text{1018}\) While there is no direct medieval evidence for Flann’s work having been read for ethical insights, such evidence is occasionally presented in post-medieval manuscripts. As we have seen, Mac Fhirbhisigh uses Flann and Eochaid’s *ANÍ* as a warning against pride and greed among the Gaelic aristocracy.\(^\text{1019}\) The popularity of the name Nath Í/Dathí among the seventeenth-century Úi Dhubhda may have added force to such a usage.\(^\text{1020}\)

In the sixteenth-century Donegal manuscript, *Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne* (Section C),\(^\text{1021}\) there appear several later additions by the late seventeenth-century scholar and poet, Tadhg Ó Rodaighe (*ob.* 1706).\(^\text{1022}\) In the midst of a Mac Suibhne *díanaire*,\(^\text{1023}\) he inscribes, in prominent display script, two quatrains from the conclusion of ‘Ríg Themra toebai ge íar ttain’ contrasting human kings’ mortality with the eternity of God’s kingdom.\(^\text{1024}\) These are introduced ‘Flann Mainistreach cecinit as an duain darab tosach Ríg Temhra dia tteasbann tnú ad feassam a n-aidhedha’ (sic).\(^\text{1025}\) Implying that this is a personal statement, he then inscribes his own genealogy.\(^\text{1026}\) His other major intervention in the manuscript also concerns

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\(^{1019}\) *LMG*, I, §§299.5‒6 (pp. 684‒85).

\(^{1020}\) Ó Muraíle, *Celebrated Antiquary*, p. 216.


\(^{1023}\) RIA 24.P.25, p. 143b8‒19.

\(^{1024}\) *LL*, III, II. 15978–85 (p. 515).


Chapter 5

mutability.\textsuperscript{1027} The same quatrains appear with an identical introduction in BL Egerton 127, produced in 1775 by Muiris Ó Gormáin (also ‘Mae Gormáin’; \textit{ob.} 1794),\textsuperscript{1028} who was in contact with Ó Rodaighe.\textsuperscript{1029} Ó Gormáin presents Flann’s quatrains alongside a series of proverbs in Irish and English and an English-only set attributed to Marcus Aurelius.\textsuperscript{1030}

In these three cases, Flann’s work provides more than the facts of worldly affairs but insights into underlying philosophical truths. It is debateable whether ethical insight is being sought from Flann in particular or from history in general, Flann being regarded simply as providing history. Potential ethical readings could certainly be identified elsewhere in the corpus attributed to him. However, it is only in these late manuscripts that we find such readings made explicit.

4 Conclusion: Flann in post-medieval manuscripts

In terms of the texts attributed to him, the post-medieval Flann enjoys quite a high degree of continuity with his former manifestations. Some previously unattested attributions are made, which yield interesting insights into the varied forms in which texts circulated under his name. However, they are broadly similar in subject-matter to attributions made in older manuscripts while, in genre and topic, the texts attributed to Flann remain quite varied. We also find explicit evidence of Flann’s texts being put to previously unattested lexicographical and moralising uses, although there is no evidence against them having been used these ways in the Middle Ages.

In the post-Renaissance historical compilations that we have examined, more interest is taken in describing historiography’s provenance, although often in legendary terms, and in providing basic identification and historical context for cited authors. This material, where it relates directly to Flann, is quite ambiguous. He is placed in a prior age that was defined socio-politically and intellectually and projected into the distant past but differentiated from recent history, in the perspective of seventeenth-century compilers. \textit{GRSH} and \textit{LMG}, in particular, are

\textsuperscript{1028} Ní Shéaghdah, ‘Scholars’, pp. 50–52.
\textsuperscript{1029} Flower, \textit{BL Cat.}, II, 52.
\textsuperscript{1030} London, BL, MS Egerton 127, \textit{saec.} XVIII, fol.48b1–19; Flower, \textit{BL Cat.}, II, 69.
both presented as deriving from Gaelic historiography as a whole, its individual author-figures subordinated to a tradition characterised by transmission rather than re-invention or origination. At the same time, the Four Masters’ ascription to him of expertise in *croinic* implies that he was understood to contribute more than information but to offer structure and coherency to history, as he, indeed, he would offer abundantly within early printed historiography (6:3). The lexicographical and moralistic uses of his work, meanwhile, suggest that his occupation of a prior era did not render his work pedagogically irrelevant.
Chapter 6

‘One accurate numerical system’ and the Uí Néill’s Glory.\textsuperscript{1031}

The Post-Medieval Flann Mainistrech (2):
Early Printed Works, c. 1600–1870

1 Introduction

1.1 Two new attributions

The texts attributed to Flann in early printed English and Latin works on Irish history include several poems found under his name in the manuscript tradition. However, this corpus is dominated by two new groups of texts: the mostly prose ‘Synchronisms of Flann’, which correlate Ireland’s ancient past with universal history, and the majority of the Donegal Series (4:2.1.3, 5:2.2), which asserts the rights and prestige of the Uí Dhomhnaill. The ‘Synchronisms’, specifically, not only dominate printed references to Flann but constitute a source of major importance for the writers involved overall, propelling Flann to the forefront of medieval Ireland’s perceived intellectual culture, as we have seen (LR:2.3).

There is little evidence of the association of any of these texts with Flann in the medieval manuscript tradition, let alone of his actual authorship of them. Their association with him in early printed scholarship thus raises questions concerning the sources and methodologies employed by the scholars who cite them. Again, these attributions may have been generated by post-Renaissance historiographical needs and approaches or by otherwise unattested medieval evidence accessible to the relevant scholars. In addition, whatever their provenance, each group of texts’ association with Flann, from our perspective, presents him in a distinctive way. As author-figure of the ‘Synchronisms’, Flann engages with historical frameworks at a national or universal level, whereas the Donegal Series has him adopt a very particular political perspective. Yet it is also unclear if the scholars who associate these works with him actually read the texts in this way.

\textsuperscript{1031} 6:3.2.3; 5:3.1.
1.2 Early printed works on Irish history

As already discussed (LR:2.1; 5:1), post-medieval historical works by those immersed in Gaelic historiography or sympathetic to Irish nationhood or Catholic Emancipation were very often orientated towards asserting Ireland’s validity as a nation via its medieval and pre-medieval history. Such enterprises were not only highly-charged politically but also controversial historiographically. Gaelic sources and the traditional pseudo-historical narrative around which they were based regularly fell short of post-Renaissance standards of credibility and accountability. Fr Thomas Innes (1662–1744) expressed the opinions of multiple foreign historians when he complained that traditional Gaelic history was derived from ‘anonymous, obscure or credulous authors’. In addition, the seventeenth century saw European scholars’ elaboration of a scheme of absolute chronology, meaning that synchronicity became a key test of historical material’s validity. Apologists for Gaelic historiography aiming to publish in print thus not only faced practical and financial challenges, especially before the nineteenth century, but were also under pressure, in the face of a sceptical audience, to render their histories rational and accountable.

2 Overview of Flann’s corpus in early print

In the seventeenth century, Flann Mainistrech was not universally known. As we have seen, he is not mentioned by Keating (5:2.1), nor is he to be found in James Ware’s De Scriptoribus Hibernicis (1639). The earliest explicit reference to him in print is in Fr John Lynch’s (ob. c. 1677) Cambrensis Eversus (1657). Thereafter, he is cited or referenced in some form by most major writers on Irish history with access to medieval Gaelic materials, including Roderick O’Flaherty, Charles

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O’Conor of Belanagare (1710–91; O’Conor I), his grandson, Rev. Charles O’Conor (O’Conor II), Edward O’Reilly, John O’Donovan (1806–61), and Eugene O’Curry (LR:2.1–2). Interest was expressed in his work by writers outside Ireland, such as the aforementioned Thomas Innes and Edward Stillingfleet (1635–99), who both probably encountered Flann indirectly via O’Flaherty. Although some of these citations include very terse biographical information emphasising Flann’s scholarly eminence, the first published efforts to establish Flann’s corpus and comment on his overall significance did not appear until O’Reilly and O’Curry’s two bio-bibliographies.

The issues with the attributions to Flann of the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ and the Donegal Series are complex and are discussed in detail below (6:3). Otherwise, the poems associated with Flann in early printed works largely overlap with those that appear in manuscripts of the same period (5:2). The most frequently occurring poems in the works of Lynch, O’Flaherty, and O’Conor II, are the Tara Diptych and ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’.

Specifically in *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*, O’Conor II’s heavily annotated editions and Latin translations of major Irish chronicles, we find citations, under Flann’s name, of ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’, ‘Pádraig abb Érenn uile’ (5:2.1.2), and ‘Erimón is Éber ard’ (3:2.1), the latter included within the Tara Diptych.

These citations appear in various contexts. O’Flaherty references the Tara Diptych in relation to regnal succession on one occasion, to topography on another. Meanwhile, Lynch cites the Diptych to show – pace Giraldus Cambrensis (*ob. c. 1223*) – that a certain ‘Turgesius’ was never a king of Ireland, expressing confidence in Flann’s king-list. O’Flaherty cites ‘Éstid a eolchu cen

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1038 O’Conor [II], *Rerum Hibernicarum*, I, p. 35.
1039 O’Conor [II], *Rerum Hibernicarum*, III, p. 99.
1040 O’Conor [II], *Rerum Hibernicarum*, II, p. 36 (n. 1).
ón’ while profiling Manannán.1044 Most of O’Conor II’s citations are to do with the corroboration or fine tuning of details from the various chronicles under scrutiny. Excluding ‘Pádraig abb Érenn uile’ but including ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’, all these had also appeared attributed to Flann in O’Conor II’s catalogue entry on the manuscript containing LGÉ D (now RIA D.iv.3).1045 He is named there simply because these poems are attributed to him in this manuscript.

Two citations cannot be linked with any texts attributed to Flann in extant manuscripts, but involve poems treated as accurate sources of chronological data. First, O’Flaherty cites ‘Flann de Monasterio in Synchronismi Poemate’ when ascribing Conaire Mór a reign of sixty years,1046 apparently a metrical regnal list of the kings of Tara or Ireland. Sharpe treats this as a citation of the prose ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ (Adam primus pater; 6:3.1.1) but O’Flaherty specifies a metrical text.1047 It cannot be the Tara Diptych, as this omits reign-lengths. One poem that does contain the datum in question is Giolla Íosa Mór Mac Firbisigh’s Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (4:3.3, 6:3.2.2). Secondly, O’Conor II ascribes reign-lengths to two kings of Alba on the basis of an otherwise unspecified poem attributed to ‘Flann’.1048 One corresponds precisely to the same king’s reign-length in ‘A éolcha Alban uile’ (the Dúan Albanach), the other varies by only one year.1049 O’Conor II, who transcribed and translated this poem,1050 may thus have believed it to be Flann’s work.1051

On the whole, therefore, Flann’s poems were cited as useful historical sources. Yet Flann is not always regarded as authoritative in early printed scholarship. Very often, he is but one of several sources cited, the period’s historical practice ostensibly eschewing reliance on single authorities. Furthermore, O’Flaherty and O’Conor I both openly expressed reservations about some of Flann’s purported

1045 Dublin, RIA, MS D.iv.3 (1224), saec. XVI; O’Conor [II], Bibliotheca, I, 22, 29, 35–36; Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála I’, p. 86.
1046 O’Flaherty, Ogygia, p. 131; Hely (trans.), Ogygia, I, 185: ‘Flann Mainistrech, in his metrical synchronisms’.
1047 Sharpe, Letters, p. 412.
1048 O’Conor [II], Rerum Hibernicarum, IV, p. 241 (n. 2).
1051 Its anonymous author is unlikely to be Flann: Jackson, ‘Poem’, p. 150; Zumbuhl, ‘Contextualising’. 
work, particularly on ancient history. For O’Flaherty, writing began in Ireland in the reign of Cyrus, the first Persian world-king, whom he synchronised with Ireland’s early Goidelic kings, rendering coverage by the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ of pre-Goidelic Irish history in need of corroboration. O’Conor I was even more cautious, urging that all Flann’s material on pre-Christian Ireland be treated with scepticism. He suggested in print that Flann had dangerously mixed ‘the uncertain and authentic, in our antient history’. In private correspondence, he admitted to disillusionment with Flann’s entire chronological scheme.

3 The ‘Synchronisms’: Flann’s apotheosis?

3.1 Overview

The ‘Synchronisms of Flann’, as a title, generally refers to four identifiable medieval tracts, in various combinations. To facilitate discussion of their attributions to Flann, it is necessary to discuss the tracts themselves and their patterns of inclusion within the ‘Synchronisms’. In what follows, ‘the Synchronisms of Flann’ refers both to the four tracts collectively and to the hypothetical single work that scholars tacitly invoke via various English and Latin titles that employ the basic elements of ‘Flann’ and ‘Synchronisms’, without making further distinctions.

Appendix 29 presents the four main tracts cited as the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’, their medieval titles, and references to their citations as such in early printed scholarship. Also listed are instances in which one of the component tracts is cited but without Flann as the author or where the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ is cited as a title but the referenced tract is not identifiable.

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1054 O’Conor, *Ogygia Vindicated*, p. xi
1056 Much of this data has been gathered through database and index searches for the terms ‘Flann’ and ‘Synchronisms’. Citations that do not use one of these terms thus may not be exhaustively listed.
3.1.1 Adam primus pater (Schmidt’s S-BB and S-UM)

Adam primus pater (my title, from the tract’s incipit) is a Middle Gaelic prose tract in BB, UM, and, abridged and acephelous, in NLI G.6.\textsuperscript{1057} It has no attested medieval title, although O’Conor I added the titles ‘Leabhar Comhaimisireachda Flainn Mainistreach’ and ‘Synchronism of Flan’ in BB.\textsuperscript{1058} Any basis he had for this, beyond O’Flaherty’s citations of the UM version as such, was already unknown by O’Curry’s time.\textsuperscript{1059}

The tract begins with an unsynchronised history of Adam’s immediate descendants, their foundation of human society, the Flood, and the descent of post-Diluvian humanity from Noah. Upon reaching Ninus, Eusebian tradition’s first world-king,\textsuperscript{1060} the tract employs the five world-kingships (Assyrian, Median, Persian, ‘Greek’, and Roman) as eras and the world-kings’ regnal years as a chronological framework. Within this framework is set the standard pseudo-historical invasions of Ireland and the réim rígraide, alongside other notable events, such as the Táin,\textsuperscript{1061} and assorted information on Mediterranean and Christian history. This is all dated relative to the relevant world-king’s reign. The BB text ends with the Battle of Mag Muccrama and Art mac Cuinn’s death, while the UM text ends slightly earlier with the Battle of Cenn Abrad, both in the reign of the Emperor Caracalla (ob. AD 217).\textsuperscript{1062}

As discussed (4:3.3), Adam primus pater has been shown to push Irish history substantially further back in time relative to the world-kingships when compared to LGÉ mabh, meaning most pre-Goidelic Irish history occurs during the Assyrian world-kingship, as in LGÉ c. Scowcroft believes that Adam primus pater was used in this recension.\textsuperscript{1063} In addition, the tract is in some way related to SAM, as the initial section covering Adam to Ninus (BB version) appears therein.\textsuperscript{1064}

\textsuperscript{1057} BB, fols 6\textsuperscript{r}1–7\textsuperscript{v}5; UM, fols 48\textsuperscript{a}1–49\textsuperscript{b}64; Dublin, NLI, MS G.6, saec. XVI, fols 32\textsuperscript{v}4–45\textsuperscript{v}26. For the latter, see Jaski, ‘Irish Origin Legend’, pp. 72–74. The BB text has been edited and translated by MacCarthy (Codex, pp. 286–317). See also Schmidt, ‘Zu Réidig’, pp. 249–50, who is alone in noticing the existence of the UM version.

\textsuperscript{1058} Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála I’, p. 128 (n. 135).

\textsuperscript{1059} O’Curry, Manuscript Materials, p. 522.

\textsuperscript{1060} McKitterick, Perceptions, pp. 9–11.

\textsuperscript{1061} MacCarthy, Codex, §§p–r (pp. 302–07).

\textsuperscript{1062} Schmidt, ‘Zu Réidig dam’, pp. 249–50. For these battles, see Cath Maige Muccrama ed. and trans. by O’Daly.


\textsuperscript{1064} MacCarthy (ed. and trans.), Codex, §a (pp. 286–87); SAM, §13 (pp. 69, 112).
3.1.2 Assyrian Synchronisms (Schmidt’s S-Lc)
The Assyrian Synchronisms (currently unedited) are preserved solely and without attribution in Lec., where they bear the scribal title ‘Comaimser rig Asar re rigaib Erind’.\footnote{Lec, fols 186v–190r: ‘synchronism of the kings of the Assyrians with the kings of Ireland’; Schmidt, ‘Zu Réidig’, p. 250. Despite the title, the Assyrians do not predominate more than in Adam primus pater.} As discussed (4:3.3), the tract is accompanied in Lec. by a partial metrical counterpart, Mac Firbísigh’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’. On this basis and because he oversaw Lec.’s production and transcribed most of the tract and poem, Ó Concheanainn has suggested that Giolla Íosa also compiled the Assyrian Synchronisms.\footnote{Ó Concheanainn, ‘Lebor Gabála’, p. 73.} The tract resembles Adam primus pater structurally and in synchronistic doctrine, although its range is slightly greater, running from the Flood to the Emperor Theodosius (ob. AD 395) and Lóegaire mac Néill. The Assyrian Synchronisms have been identified as another text of Adam primus pater,\footnote{Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála Part I’, p. 128; Ó Concheanainn, ‘Lebor Gabála’, p. 72; Jaski, ‘Irish Origin Legend’, pp. 70–72.} but this is an over-simplification. Their overall chronological schemes correspond but they vary considerably in detail.\footnote{Jaski, ‘Irish Origin Legend’, p. 71.}

It is not certain whether O’Flaherty intended to cite the Assyrian Synchronisms as the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’. Other than the reference to Mac Firbisigh’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’, only one of his side-notes implies as much.\footnote{O’Flaherty, Ogygia, p. 139; Hely (trans.), Ogygia, I, 196; Sharpe, Letters, p. 397.} There are others in which the Assyrian Synchronisms and Adam primus pater are presented as separate works, the former lacking an author.\footnote{O’Flaherty, Ogygia, pp. 12, 151; Hely (trans.), Ogygia, I, 160, 213–14.}

3.1.3 Invasion Synchronisms (Scowcroft’s s/Tract IV; Schmidt’s S-LG-A)
The Invasion Synchronisms are interspersed throughout LGÉ b and its Appendix and recur again in LGÉ B (3:2.1).\footnote{The tract has been partially edited by Macalister. For details, see Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála I’, pp. 125–29. See also Schmidt, ‘Zu Réidig’, pp. 245–48.} Within LGÉ b, the tract is given the title ‘Comaimserad rig in domain ocus Gabál nÉrenn’.\footnote{LGÉ, V, §666 (pp. 566–67): ‘synchronism of the kings of the world with the settlements of Ireland’.} It was originally independent, but reconstructions of this original tract differ.\footnote{MacNeill, ‘Irish Historical Tract’, Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála I’, pp. 125–27; Schmidt, ‘Zu Réidig’, pp. 245–48.} It seems to have begun with the
first settlement of Ireland by Partholón, synchronised with Ninus. Placing the settlements and kings of Ireland within world-reigns, it runs up to the Byzantine Emperor, Leo III (ob. AD 741), and the Irish king, Fergal Mac Máele Dúin (ob. AD 722), the end-point of Flann’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’. It includes Irish history more sporadically than the previous two tracts and places it further forward in time relative to world history. Scowcroft suggests that this represents an earlier synchronistic scheme, later revised due to internal contradictions to produce Adam primus pater, the Assyrian Synchronisms, and LGÉ c. 1075

As discussed (3:2.1), the LGÉ b Appendix also includes Flann’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’, the Tara Diptych and ‘Érimón is Éber ard’, 1076 Ind Áirem Cetach (another synchronistic tract), and the Provisional Synchronisms (6:3.1.4). A particularly close relationship exists between the Invasion Synchronisms and Flann’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’. 1077

3.1.4 Provincial Synchronisms
Another component of the LGÉ b Appendix is the Provincial Synchronisms. 1078 The tract sometimes bears the title ‘Comaimserad rig n-Erenn 7 rig na coiced iar cretim’. 1079 Unlike the previous three tracts, the Provincial Synchronisms derive their basic framework solely from Irish history. Extremely terse, they give the years elapsed between major events, usually deaths of kings of Ireland, but beginning with St Patrick’s arrival. 1080 For each period, they give the kings of Ireland and the kings of Alba, Ulster, Leinster, Munster, and Connacht. During the final period, from Brian Bóruma’s death in 1014 to Muirchertach úa Briain’s death in 1119, the high-kingship ceases and ‘comflaithius’ (‘joint-rule’) prevails (Máel Sechnaill’s second reign, celebrated in the Tara Diptych, is apparently ignored). 1081

1079 ‘a synchronism of the kings of Ireland and the kings of the provinces after the [coming of the] Faith’ (my translation).
1081 Thurneysen (ed.), ‘Synchronismen’, p. 94.
Broun has argued that the tract, in its current form, was composed as a single work shortly after 1119 (LR:3.2.1). Thurneysen had argued that the original ended in the mid-eleventh-century, as only the lines of the kings of Ireland and Alba properly run to 1119; no provincial king appears who was alive less than fifty years prior to that date. Thurneysen, and Scowcroft, thus take the longer version as a secondary extension. Broun, however, points out that this does not necessarily date the Alban king-list, which may have been added in the post-1119 version. An independent text of the Provincial Synchronisms in NLS Adv. 72.1.28, which Thurneysen did not use, ends in 1014, but it too has its textual problems.

### 3.2 The ‘Synchronisms’: historiography and evidence

In all these tracts, Irish reigns and events are ordered and dated relative to a single, continuous kingship, whether of the world or of Ireland. However, they are far from compatible with each other. Adam primus pater and the Assyrian Synchronisms differ in basic chronological scheme from the Invasion Synchronisms and all three differ from the Provincial Synchronisms in their global scope. Adam primus pater never even appears in the same manuscript as the Invasion or the Provincial Synchronisms. Furthermore, some of the tracts come to be known as the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ much earlier than others (Appendix 29). Nonetheless, these four tracts are often not distinguished in terms of titulature, implying that they are components of the same work by Flann or operate under a common chronological scheme.

O’Curry is particularly explicit in conceiving of the ‘Synchronisms’ as a single text, describing Adam primus pater as ‘the first part’ of the Provincial Synchronisms, an interpretation to which William Skene and Rev. Thomas McLauchlan also subscribed. MacNeill, meanwhile, is happy to consider the

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1085 Skene (ed. and trans.), *Chronicles*, pp. 18–22, 119; Boyle (ed.), ‘Edinburgh Synchronisms’.
1086 Broun, *Irish Identity*, p. 171 (n. 23).
Invasion Synchronisms and Adam primus pater to be separate conceptually but maintains Flann’s authorship of both (LR:3.2.1). By their era, the textual or, at least, conceptual unity of the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ under a single author appears to have become virtually axiomatic.

3.2.1 Historiographical origins
As discussed (LR:2.3), in the post-medieval period, not only were the ‘Synchronisms’ understood to represent a fundamental contribution to medieval Gaelic historiography, but Flann, as their author-figure, became an icon of medieval Irish learning. The attention they attracted is understandable, given contemporary historiography’s values and the particular pressures facing Catholic and Gaelic Ireland. The ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ constitute a source, supposedly traceable to an identifiable author of good standing, in which the Gaelic past and Ireland’s long history as a kingdom were synchronised with other sources within a rational and coherent framework. In three cases, this was Eusebian universal history, a point of contact with external, European historiographical tradition. O’Conor II even saw their compilation as making possible universal, common-era dates for Irish history. All this perhaps explains the positive reception of the ‘Synchronisms’, even among those normally critical of Gaelic sources.

In a separate strand of reception, the Provincial Synchronisms, among other medieval Gaelic texts, provided controversial evidence for the relatively recent, fifth-century origins of the kingdom of Alba. When this tract was first published by O’Flaherty (it was not associated with Flann until the early nineteenth century), it naturally had a considerable impact in Scotland and across Britain (due to the Stuart dynasty’s Scottish origins), where historical orthodoxy had held that the kingdom of Scotland was much more ancient.
In post-Renaissance historical practice, these tracts’ importance may well have been incompatible with uncertain authorship and provenance, creating centripetal forces that unified them as a single work under a single author-figure by the nineteenth century. As a result, Flann, the single author-figure, became a historian who was not simply learned in questionable facts and narratives but in logically verifiable interconnections and underlying structures and who was conversant with mainstream universal history. Of Flann and Gilla Cóemáin, whose chronological poetry was also acclaimed, O’Curry surmised that ‘they were familiar with a large and extensive range of general history; and their chronological computations, parallels and synchronisms, prove that they must have industriously examined every possible available source of the chief great nations of antiquity’.  

3.2.2 Evidential origins
While such a context might have provided a general impetus, the precise reasoning and evidence that led to the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ taking on their eventual, extensive form are more complex. The four main tracts came to be considered components of the ‘Synchronisms’ at different points in time and for different reasons, while some scholars broadened the definition still further (Appendix 29).

The earliest attested components are Adam primus pater and its close relative, the Assyrian Synchronisms, first associated with Flann by O’Flaherty in Ogygia (1685). Adam primus pater generally dominates the corpus of citations of the ‘Synchronisms’ thereafter. The Invasion and Provincial Synchronisms, meanwhile, first appear under Flann’s name in O’Conor II’s Bibliotheca MS. Stowensis, published in 1816, apparently due to their manuscript context in the LGÉ b Appendix. This entire Appendix, for O’Conor II, apparently constituted the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’, despite the absence of Adam primus pater. In his catalogue entry on LGÉ D (recension b), O’Conor II, apparently constituted the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’, despite the absence of Adam primus pater. In his catalogue entry on LGÉ D (recension b), 1095 concluding the entry on the Appendix’s last text (‘Ríg Themra toebaige íar ttain’), he notes that ‘Ussher mentions these Synchronisms with great respect, styling Flan a valuable and not a modern author’. 1096 In the cited approbation, James Ussher (1581–1656), Archbishop of Armagh, refers to the

1094 O’Curry, Manuscript Materials, p. 56.
1095 RIA D.iv.3; For O’Conor II, the manuscript was Stowe MS No.1, saec.XII: O’Conor [II], Bibliothec, I, 22.
1096 O’Conor [II], Bibliothec, I, 36 (O’Conor’s italics).
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Provincial Synchronisms and does not mention Flann. O’Conor II also attributes ‘Érimón is Éber ard’ to Flann in the absence of any medieval ascription, presumably also by virtue of its manuscript context. This poem and the Tara Diptych proper extend much further back in time than the Provincial Synchronisms. Both chronologically and textually, therefore, O’Conor II defined the ‘Synchronisms’ quite broadly.

Despite their proximity within LGÉ D’s Appendix, O’Conor II’s view on the authorship of the Invasion Synchronisms is ambiguous. He also refers to ‘Flann’s synchronisms, beginning Rhi Temhra dia tesband tnu’, cutting off everything except the Tara Diptych, and describes the Invasion Synchronisms only as the work of ‘the ancient collector of these compositions’, possibly meaning the Appendix’s compiler, or LGÉ b’s compiler, or Flann. Thus, even with a manuscript in front of him, O’Conor II does not express a clear policy on what the ‘Synchronisms’ contain. Nonetheless, from this point onwards, the Invasion and Provincial Synchronisms emerge fitfully as components of the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’; O’Curry is the first to describe them unambiguously as such.

Pre-O’Conor II, neither the Invasion nor the Provincial Synchronisms were regarded as the work of Flann. The Provincial Synchronisms, as we have seen, were a much cited and debated document. Yet no one who encounters them during the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries considers them to be Flann’s work and O’Flaherty explicitly states that their authorship is unknown. More radically, Gaelic sources imply that the compilation of comparable synchronisms long predates even the eleventh century. In AFM, for example, a text particularly reminiscent of the Invasion and Provincial Synchronisms in the LGÉ b Appendix is part of the legendary Saltair Temrach, here associated with Cormac mac Airt: ‘ba h-isin liubarsin batar coimgneadha 7 comhaimsera rioghraidhe Ereann fri rioghaibh 7 impireadha

1098 O’Conor, Rerum Hibernicarum, III, p. 36 (n. 1).
1099 O’Conor [II], Bibliotheca, I, 94.
1100 O’Conor [II], Bibliotheca, I, 25.
1101 O’Curry, Manuscript Materials, pp. 53–56.
an domhain, 7 riogh na e-coicceadh frí rioghaibh Ereann’. \(\text{1103}\) Cúan úa Lothcháin (\(\text{ob. 1024}\)) alludes to the *Saltair Temrach* containing something particularly resembling the *Provincial Synchronisms* in ‘Temair toga na tulach’: ‘coimgned, comamserad cáich, 7 cech ríg diaraile do ráith’. \(\text{1104}\) In fact, if the *Saltair Temrach* was but Cúan’s poetic fiction, \(\text{1105}\) Cúan’s description may well be *AFM*’s ultimate source. Thus, material resembling the *Invasion* and *Provincial Synchronisms*, in medieval tradition, seems to have acquired an archaising frame-tale, obscuring its real medieval authorship and transmission, which were conjectured and reconstructed by post-medieval scholars.

Flann’s authorship of the *Invasion* and *Provincial Synchronisms* seems to have been deduced by O’Conor II on the basis of the tracts’ context in RIA D.iv.2. Using similar reasoning but a different manuscript, Skene describes the *Provincial Synchronisms* as Flann’s work on the basis of their context in NLS Adv. 72.1.28. \(\text{1106}\) Here, the tract appears alongside poems from the Donegal Series, ‘which are the undoubted works of Flann himself’. \(\text{1107}\) As we shall see (6:4), his authorship of these works itself ought to be anything but undoubted.

Scholars sometimes seem to make deductions relating to the ‘Synchronisms’ on the basis of contexts other than those presented in extant codices. Perplexingly, McLauchlan describes the *Provincial Synchronisms* in NLS Adv. 72.1.28 as ‘a transcript of a very curious and interesting MS known in Ireland as “The Synchronisms of Flann of Bute”, forming part of what is called “the Book of Ballymote”’, \(\text{1108}\) presumably referring to *BB*’s *Adam primus pater*. Both he and Skene, like O’Curry, whom Skene cites, \(\text{1109}\) believed the *Provincial Synchronisms* to

\(\text{1103}\) *AFM* 266.1: ‘In that book were entered the coeval exploits and synchronisms of the kings of Ireland with the kings and emperors of the world, and of the kings of the provinces with the monarchs of Ireland’.

\(\text{1104}\) *MD*, I, q. 6 (pp. 14–15): ‘the correlation, the synchronising of every man, 7 of each king one with another together’. By way of context, q. 5 states that the *Saltair* stipulates the legal relationship between the king of Tara and the provincial kings. For potential issues with Gwynn’s translation of *coimgne*, see Mac Airt, ‘*Filidecht*’. ‘Comamserad’ (‘synchronising’), however, verifies this particular work’s nature.

\(\text{1105}\) Ó Ráin, ‘*Psalter*’, pp. 108–12; Smith, ‘Historical Verse’, p. 328 (n. 20).

\(\text{1106}\) MacKinnon, *Descriptive Catalogue*, pp. 113–14; Black, ‘*Catalogue*’.

\(\text{1107}\) Skene, *Chronicles*, p. xxxi. This argument is repeated, with hints of scepticism, by Boyle, ‘*Edinburgh Synchronisms*’, p. 170.

\(\text{1108}\) McLauchlan, *Celtic Gleanings*, p. 93.

\(\text{1109}\) O’Curry, *Manuscript Materials*, pp. 53–5; Skene, *Chronicles*, p. xxxi.
have been originally ‘part’ of something greater, something self-evidently the work of Flann.

While the entry of the *Invasion and Provincial Synchronisms* into the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ has at least left a paper trail, the basis for O’Flaherty’s original citation in these terms of *Adam primus pater* and its relative, the *Assyrian Synchronisms* is even more obscure. In a letter to Lynch dated September 1665, published as a preface to *Ogygia*, O’Flaherty mentions his first discovery of *Adam primus pater* in *UM* and emphasises its value to his investigations into Irish historical chronology.

Postquam haec ita concinnavi in manus incidit Synchronismus, qui dictis multum roboris addit, Regum nostratium cum 4 orbis Monarchis. Habetur in O Duvegani O Kelliorum Hymaniae dominorum Antiquarii codice mebraneo [...] 1110

This text was clearly important to O’Flaherty, who carefully details the codex in which it was found. 1111 The absence of any reference to an author suggests that this information was unavailable. Indeed, none is named in a medieval hand in *UM* or in any other manuscript. However, in *Ogygia* (1685), the text is cited as the work of Flann, although still specifically referenced via *UM*.

It is possible that, between 1665 and 1685, O’Flaherty deduced Flann’s authorship of *Adam primus pater* on the basis of medieval manuscript evidence. ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ is actually attributed to Flann in *UM* (4:2.3.1) and, since Flann is thereby designated as expert on Eusebian world-kingship, O’Flaherty could have inferred that he is the most likely to have authored the ‘Synchronisms’. In addition, as Ó Concheanainn suggests, 1112 the connection could be based on Giolla Íosa’s re-use of Flann’s poem’s incipit for his partial metrical counterpart to the closely-related *Assyrian Synchronisms* (4:3.3, 6:3.1.2). Indeed, O’Flaherty believed that this poem was by Flann (6:2). Finally, *Adam primus pater*, in both *BB* and *UM*, begins with material on foundational history of the sort articulated by Flann in

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1110 O’Flaherty, *Ogygia*, p. 18; Hely (trans.), *Ogygia*, I, xlviii: ‘After proceeding thus far, I meet with a synchronism of [our] kings with the four monarchies of the world, which added very great weight to preceding accounts. It is to be found in a parchment book of O’Duvegan, antiquarian to the O’Kellys, lords of Hymania’.


1112 Ó Concheanainn, ‘Lebor Gabála’, p. 73.
‘Aenach Temra na n-ocht n-ech’ (4:2.3.3),\textsuperscript{1113} although only overlapping slightly in terms of specific information. This poem, also in UM, could have further informed O’Flaherty’s deduction.

It is also possible that a synchronistic tract closely akin to \textit{Adam primus pater} and the \textit{Assyrian Synchronisms} genuinely existed under Flann’s name in the manuscript tradition and was known to O’Flaherty. Indeed, the historical Flann could have actually compiled such a tract. Pre-O’Flaherty, we encounter sporadic instances in which a connection is made between Flann and material akin to that in these two tracts. His presentation in ‘Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’ and Giolla Íosa’s re-use of ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ in his counterpart to the \textit{Assyrian Synchronisms} are such instances.

Another is the tract on the chronology of Cú Chulainn’s life in TCD 1336, for which Flann Mainistrech and Neide Úa Maelchonaire are cited as authorities (4:2.1.1.2). While their respective contributions to this tract’s off-beam account are not made clear, Cú Chulainn’s death in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of Conaire Mór in the TCD 1336 tract is paralleled approximately by his death in Conaire’s twenty-sixth year in \textit{Adam primus pater}.\textsuperscript{1114} Extant sources’ widely varying chronologies of Conaire’s reign mean that any assertion on this matter cannot be described as commonplace.\textsuperscript{1115} In any case, the TCD 1336 tract is essentially a collection of chronological factoids relating to Cú Chulainn, so whatever source it employed that appeared under Flann’s name must have contained some sort of chronological data.

Finally, various scholars have cited evidence linking the historical Flann to a northern redaction of the now-lost, but apparently real, late tenth-century \textit{Saltair Caisil} (1:4).\textsuperscript{1116} Citations and descriptions of this \textit{Saltair} continued to be made into the seventeenth century,\textsuperscript{1117} several of which attest to its containing synchronistic

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{1113} MacCarthy (ed. and trans.), \textit{Codex}, §§a–b (pp. 286–87).
\item\textsuperscript{1114} O’Curry (ed. and trans.), \textit{Manuscript Materials}, pp. 507–08; MacCarthy (ed. and trans.), \textit{Codex}, §q (pp. 304–05).
\item\textsuperscript{1115} Kelleher, ‘Táin’, pp. 108–11.
\item\textsuperscript{1116} Ó Muraíle, \textit{Celebrated Antiquary}, p. 150; Jaski, ‘Genealogical Section’, pp. 329 (n. 117), 331–32; McCarthy, \textit{Irish Annals}, pp. 271–73.
\item\textsuperscript{1117} Ó Riain, ‘Psalter’.
\end{footnotes}
In one description, David Rothe (ob. 1650), Bishop of Ossory, includes an item that Ó Riain identifies as genealogies and synchronisms: ‘the pedigree of our kings as well the provincial kings as the monarchs, together with the foreign’. ‘Pedigree’ may potentially mean king-list here. In terms of the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’, this best resembles the Invasion and Provincial Synchronisms. Indeed, Ó Riain suggested that Cúan úa Lothcháin invented the idea of the Saltair Temrach to counter the all too real Saltair Caisil and that his description of its contents (see above) directly reflects those of the southern codex. As we have seen, similar synchronistic material appears in Cúan’s depiction of Saltair Temrach, even more so in A.F.M’s description.

Therefore, if the historical Flann did help redact Saltair Caisil, then synchronisms therefrom could then have circulated under his name and influenced scholars like O’Flaherty. However, the synchronisms in the Saltair Caisil are consistently described as resembling more closely the Invasion and Provincial Synchronisms, as conjoined in L.G.E b, than Adam primus pater and the former only come to be associated with Flann by O’Conor II, apparently on the basis of his work with R.I.A D.iv.2. It is thus difficult to argue that Flann’s redaction of the synchronisms in the Saltair Caisil was the text that led O’Flaherty to make this initial attribution, unless it was made from superficial resemblance only.

Fragmentary and equivocal evidence thus shows that Flann could have been associated, in the Middle Ages, with prose synchronisms broadly resembling the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’, as cited in early printed scholarship. It is also possible to reconstruct lines of reasoning that led scholars to attribute the various tracts involved to Flann on the basis of extant manuscript evidence. Aside from the potential influence of a now-lost medieval synchronistic tract attributed to Flann, the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ seem to have evolved out of deductions based on manuscript materials and post-Renaissance historiography’s need for that sort of source with a named, identifiable author.
3.2.3 Are the ‘Synchronisms’ texts?
The ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ are often referenced as if this title represents a single
text with an authorial original.1121 This is difficult to reconcile with the medieval
manuscript evidence. To add further complexity, some scholars hint that they do not
in fact regard the ‘Synchronisms’ as a single text or even as a set of texts but as an
abstract intellectual work that could take on a variety of textual manifestations. This
may explain their relatively liberal application of this title.

The ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ are sometimes said to constitute a system. This
is stated by O’Conor I, for whom Flann and unnamed others produced ‘one accurate
numerical system’ out of regnal lists.1122 He implies that Irish historical chronology’s
full systematisation was a collective work and does not attribute it to any one author,
although Flann is his only named example. The non-textuality of the ‘Synchronisms’
is also implied by O’Conor II, although he does seem to see Flann as their creator.
‘Atá sunn senchas rig Érenn’ is a metrical list of the kings of Ireland widely
attributed to Seán Ó Dubhagáin (ob. 1372).1123 O’Conor II ascribes it to Ó
Dubhagáin but states that ‘this [the poem] is a system of metrical chronology written
before the year 1050 [sic], when its author, Flann, died’, adding a citation of Adam
primus pater.1124 As we have seen, elsewhere, he extends the term ‘Synchronisms’ to
include the Tara Diptych, despite it having no synchronistic function itself.1125 Both
he and O’Curry imply that the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ were used in
AT’s compilation, O’Curry stating that ‘it is, in fact, the synchronism [sic] of Flann, now
imperfect, which we find at the commencement of Tigernach’.1126

The ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ here seem to be understood not so much as a
fragmented text but as a set of data and principles that can be made manifest, more or
less, in a variety of textual forms by authors other than their original deviser.
Disinterest in their textual form might have been encouraged by the unavailability of

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1121 For example: O’Flaherty, Ogygia, p. 92; Hely (trans.), I, 133; O’Conor [II], Bibliotheca, I, 10;
O’Curry, Manuscript Materials, pp. 53–55.
1122 Charles O’Conor [I], Dissertations on the Antient History of Ireland (Dublin: Faulkner, 1753; 2nd
d. 1764), p. 156. I was not aware of the second edition until a late stage of my research and have not
been able to compare its coverage of Flann with that of the first edition.
1124 O’Conor [II], Bibliotheca, I, 87.
1125 O’Conor [II], Bibliotheca, I, 36.
1126 O’Conor [II], Rerum Hiberniarum, II, 67; O’Curry, Manuscript Materials, p. 55.
printed editions of any of the ‘Synchronisms’ before 1892, with the exception of O’Flaherty’s heavily amended and unattributed version of the *Provincial Synchronisms*. If this is how the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ were conceived, then citations using this title have more to do with texts’ form and content than with their direct authorship or provenance. The proposition that the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ were literally authored by the historical Flann Mainistrech becomes unfalsifiable, as it might not even be being claimed that texts cited as such derive directly from him.

**3.3 The ‘Synchronisms of Flann’: conclusion**

To scholars engaged in the critical reconstruction of Irish and Scottish history, the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ were of considerable practical utility. Their author-figure was lauded as a supreme historian and chronologist and was used to illustrate the calibre of medieval Irish intellectual culture. The textual process behind all this was complex and opaque. It seems to have involved the nature of the synchronistic tracts themselves; post-Renaissance historiography’s needs and values; deductions from medieval evidence; and possibly a *deus ex machina* in the form of now-lost manuscripts. Flann the master-synchronist may not have been entirely a modern manufacture and the ‘Synchronisms’, as individual tracts, certainly were not. However, this interpretation of Flann’s role, hardly emphasised in the manuscript tradition, came dramatically to the forefront of scholarly attention in print.

**4. The Donegal Series: Flann made explicit?**

**4.1 Introduction: Donegal Series and Ó Domhnaill *Dúanairí***

In the Donegal Series, we have another example of the purview of Flann’s author-figure expanding in early printed scholarship, possibly based on medieval evidence. To recapitulate (4:2.1.3, 5:2.2), the Donegal Series is a metrical collection on the northern Uí Néill’s history, rights, claims, and interrelationships. It shows virtually unwavering support for Cenél Conaill from the perspective of their self-

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1127 MacCarthy, *Codex*.
1129 Simms, ‘Donegal poems’. 
proclaimed late medieval heirs, the Uí Dhomhnaill.\textsuperscript{1130} In some manuscripts, an Ó Domhnail\textsuperscript{u}l \textit{Dùanaire} follows this dynasty and their interests down to the sixteenth century and beyond.\textsuperscript{1131} Both the Donegal Series and the Ó Domhnail\textsuperscript{u}l \textit{Dùanaire} vary in structure and composition in different manuscripts.\textsuperscript{1132}

‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ is attributed via superscription to Flann Mainistrech in various sixteenth- and seventeenth-century manuscripts and contains an internal reference to him collaborating with ‘Óengus’. This internal reference may not have originally been meant as an attribution but as a citation. Nonetheless, multiple manuscripts present Flann as the poem’s author. In most manuscripts, ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ is part of, and often initiates, the Donegal Series. Another Donegal Series poem, ‘A liubair atá ar do lár’, contains an ambiguous reference to ‘Flann’, which is reproduced as a simple attribution in some manuscripts.

\section*{4.2 Flann’s authorship of the Donegal Series}

O’Reilly, via interventions in certain manuscripts and in his published \textit{Chronological Account of Irish Writers}, attributed nine poems from the Donegal Series to Flann Mainistrech, including ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ and ‘A liubair atá ar do lár’. O’Curry, in five cases, favoured manuscript attributions to other poets but retained three of O’Reilly’s attributions to Flann (including the two just specified) and withheld judgement on a fourth.

\textbf{Appendix 30} summarises the manuscript versions of these nine Donegal Series poems and their attributions both in manuscript and in printed scholarship. None are attributed to Flann Mainistrech in the manuscript tradition in any primary hands except ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ and this only in some manuscripts. A

\begin{itemize}
  \item For some of these manuscripts, see Tomás Ó Cléirigh, ‘A Poem Book of the O’Donells’, \textit{Éigse}, 1 (1939–40), 51–61, 130–42.
\end{itemize}
variety of other poets are cited as alternative authors for the Series’ poems, ranging from the legendary Caille mac Ronáin to the very late Lochlainn mac Taidhg Óg Ó Dálaigh (fl. 1624–38). Most popular, however, is Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe (ob. 1272). O’Reilly notes these attributions without detailed discussion. Nicholas Williams, editor of Giolla Brighde’s works, has rejected his involvement.

These nine Donegal Series poems make for a striking addition to Flann’s corpus. They consist, in Simms’ words, of ‘propaganda pieces from a period of intense political competition’. That period is, for Simms, in most cases the twelfth- or thirteenth-century. Although they justify their assertions with reference to pseudo-historical events, these poems are primarily and prescriptively concerned with political interrelationships among the northern Úi Néill and Úi Dhomhnaill’s rise to power in that context. They are, in many cases, much more direct and open in their purposes than ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’. As their author-figure, therefore, Flann takes a distinctively explicit political position, as compared to his position in other texts attributed to him. The ‘Synchronisms’, the major feature of the corpus attributed to Flann in print, are particularly far removed from factional politics, with their universal perspective on ancient, largely canonical pseudo-history. While other texts attributed to him may well have implicit political meaning or contain some sort of endorsement of particular factions or individuals, little even comes close to matching the Donegal Series’ detailed, explicit advocacy and historicisation of Ó Domhnaill supremacy.

Given the apparent lack of any evidence from the manuscript tradition and the contrast between the Donegal Series and Flann’s other texts’ approach and tone, O’Reilly’s attribution of these nine Donegal Series poems to Flann is quite surprising. It is not clear what source, if any, prompted him to do so. He refers obliquely to different manuscript versions of each text that he has accessed but does not indicate the version that contains the authoritative attribution. As with the ‘Synchronisms’, some codex, now lost or obscure, may be the source but I have been unable to identify any positive clues in this direction.

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1134 Williams, Poems, pp. 10–11.
1135 Simms, ‘Donegal poems’, p. 50.
Chapter 6

How he has reached this conclusion remains unclear even when more indirect approaches are considered. Considering extant evidence, ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ provides the best argument for attributing all nine poems to Flann. Its external attributions to Flann are corroborated by the, admittedly ambiguous, internal reference. As demonstrated in Appendix 31, such external attributions’ arrangement in Rawl.B.514, RIA B.iv.2, and NLI G.131 could be read as attributing to Flann not only this poem but also the Series’ subsequent poems, which lack superscriptions, although BOCD presents a striking counter-example.

As a modern parallel, Simms appears to have accepted this approach and conclusion as valid in relation to Rawl.B.514. She states that ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’, ‘Atá sunn rol as na rig’, ‘A éolcha Chonaill cheólaigh’, and ‘Enna dalta Cairpri crúaid’ are all attributed to Flann Mainistrech there. As the latter three are not attributed individually in any way in this manuscript, Simms is presumably referring to the superscription over ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’. All three poems she understands as attributed to Flann appear, in this manuscript, between ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ and the first poem bearing a superscription specifying that it is from the Senlebor Caillín (Appendix 29). Simms seems to have assumed, perhaps justifiably, that no poem would have been regarded as both by Flann and from the supposedly sixth-century (but actually thirteenth-century) Senlebor.

‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ thus provides the crucial link between the Donegal Series and Flann. However, in his interventions in the seventeenth-century RIA 24.P.27, O’Reilly leaves unaltered the attribution of this poem to Flann mac Lonáín, while inserting Flann Mainistrech’s name into several subsequent Donegal Series superscriptions (Appendix 30). The initial attribution is still unaltered in O’Reilly’s transcription, RIA 23.N.26. Indeed, according to O’Reilly’s Chronological Account, ‘some writers’ attributed ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ to Flann mac Lonáín and the text is listed under his entry for Flann mac Lonáin in only slightly more cautious terms than in the entry for Flann Mainistrech. Were this poem O’Reilly’s crucial piece of evidence for determining the Donegal Series’

1139 Dublin, RIA, MS 23.N.26 (564), saec. XIX.
authorship, we might expect him to handle the matter somewhat more decisively. Indeed, textual evidence does not seem to be of much relevance to O’Reilly. While he attributes ‘A liubair atá ar do lár’ to Flann Mainistrech in RIA 24.P.27, RIA 23.N.26, and in print, he makes no mention, unlike O’Curry, of the final quatrain’s ‘Flann file’.

A few decades later, O’Curry was able to cite substantive reasons why Flann could not have authored five of the Donegal Series poems uniquely attributed to him by O’Reilly, citing anachronistic historical and literary references alongside ‘style and diction’. Given his lack of comment on this sort of evidence, we are brought back to the proposition that O’Reilly’s attributions are from some other, yet-to-be-identified manuscript source(s).

4.3 Flann and the Donegal Series pre-O’Reilly

Pre-O’Reilly, there are indirect indications that Flann was already associated with other poems in the Donegal Series beyond ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’, rendering it possible that O’Reilly’s attributions derived from manuscript evidence. In a secondary attribution to ‘Atá sund rolla na rígh’ in RIA B.iv.2, despite there being no pre-existing superscription, O’Conor I designates the poem ‘Dán bregach nár chum Flann ná Pátraic’. The same poem is attributed in pencil to Flann Mainistrech in O’Curry’s 1848 transcription of BOCD, this could be from O’Reilly’s Chronological Account, although no other attributions have been imported from the latter, raising the possibility of an independent source. O’Curry, unfortunately, seems to have subsequently forgotten making this transcription and attribution, as well as his source for it, as he later claimed that he could not comment on the poem’s authorship, having never encountered it before.

1142 O’Curry, Manners, II, 160–61.
1143 O’Curry, Manners, II, 162–66; Simms, ‘Donegal poems’, p. 46.
1144 RIA B.iv.2, fol. 55r5: ‘a deceptive poem that neither Flann nor Patrick composed’ (my translation). The poem claims that its stipulations were confirmed and inscribed by St Patrick: A Bardic Miscellany, ed. by Damian McManus and Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh, Léann na Tríonóide 2 (Dublin: TCD, 2010), §55 (pp. 57–59) (q. 30 (p. 59)).
1145 Dublin, RIA, MS 3.C.12 (625), saec. XIX; Mulchrone, RIA Cat., fasc. XVI, 1965. The transcription continues in Dublin, RIA, MS 23.C.13 (626), saec. XIX.
1146 O’Curry, Manners, II, 165.
While O’Reilly appears to be the first to make Flann the explicit author of a plurality of items from the Donegal Series, someone must have attributed ‘Atá sund rolla na righ’ to Flann by the eighteenth century in order for O’Conor I to disagree so strongly with the idea. Nonetheless, no examples survive of this attribution being positively recognised by a scribe, while two manuscript versions provide alternative authors for this poem (Appendix 30). Even if manuscript evidence attributing Donegal Series poems to Flann was available to O’Conor I and O’Reilly, it was either unknown or not accepted in wider scribal culture.

4.4 Flann’s authorship: consequences and implications

Alongside much material attributed to Flann, the Donegal Series is significantly more politicised and prescriptive. It may be that the Series’ overt political agenda prompted O’Conor I’s opposition to Flann’s involvement. He also twice contests the attribution to him of ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ via manuscript interventions.\(^\text{1147}\) In RIA B.iv.2, he challenges Michéal Ó Cléirigh’s simple attribution with the assertion, ‘nior can Flann focal don dán bregach’.\(^\text{1148}\) In BOCD, he qualifies the same simple attribution with ‘madh fior’.\(^\text{1149}\)

He thus twice designates a Donegal Series poem attributed to Flann as brégach (‘counterfeit, deceptive, lying’).\(^\text{1150}\) This could simply mean pseudonymous, but could also relate to the content’s veracity, particularly as RIA B.iv.2’s ‘Atá sund rolla na righ’ lacks a ‘counterfeit’ written attribution for O’Conor I to attack. Interestingly, O’Conor I was also moved to designate BB’s Adam primus pater as the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ (6:3.1.1). It is as if Flann, who had ‘endeavoured to digest the regal successions into one accurate numerical system’,\(^\text{1151}\) could not be suspected of having turned his powers to propaganda. This is despite O’Conor I also standing out, within his era, as more critical of Flann’s work (6:4.3). He perhaps distinguished purposeful manipulation from mixing ‘the uncertain and authentic’.*\(^\text{1152}\)

\(^{1147}\) For O’Conor’s interventions in manuscripts generally, see Smith, Three Historical Poems, p. 42; Nollaig Ó Muraíle, ‘The role of Charles O’Conor of Belanagare in the Irish manuscript tradition’, in Book, ed. by Ó Macháin, pp. 235–42.

\(^{1148}\) RIA B.iv.2, fol. 53r; ‘Flann did not chant a word of this deceptive poem’ (my translation).

\(^{1149}\) BOCD, fol. 157v18: ‘if it is true’ (my translation).

\(^{1150}\) eDIL s.v. bréac.

\(^{1151}\) O’Conor, Dissertations, p. 156.

\(^{1152}\) O’Conor, Ogygia Vindicated, p. xi.
Whether O’Reilly saw his own attribution of the Donegal Series to Flann as rendering Flann a propagandist and compromising his status as a historian is unclear. He is, for his period, distinctly uninterested in the ‘Synchronisms’: in relation to *Adam primus pater*, he merely notes O’Conor I’s *BB* superscription and looks elsewhere for the author of the *Invasion Synchronisms*.[1153] He is thus not committed to interpreting Flann as a macro-level master-synchronist. Yet he may not have read the Donegal Series as distinct from history. He refers to Flann’s ‘Conall cuingid claimne Néill’ as being ‘in praise of Conall Gulban’ but otherwise uses no such formulations.[1154] He makes little comment on Flann’s social role and his descriptions of the poems are mostly summaries of their contents. Without more contextualisation, this implies that he regarded them as straightforward historical sources.

O’Curry is slightly more open about how he categorised texts. In his coverage of the Donegal Series poems, the adjectives ‘curious’, ‘valuable’, and ‘historical’ tend to recur in various combinations, whoever O’Curry ultimately maintains the author to be. One poem (‘Éstid re Conaill calma’) is ‘of no great value’.[1155] Again, the overall impression is that he considers the Donegal Series to be factual history. Indeed, this is how texts attributed to Flann were generally treated during this period (6:2). Therefore, however we might read the Donegal Series, neither of the scholars primarily responsible for associating it with Flann seem to have seen it as risking despoiling him of his status as a historian. This may have been O’Conor I’s view, but he never elaborates sufficiently for us to be sure.

O’Reilly’s attribution of these poems to Flann, in print and in manuscript, and O’Curry’s only partial revision wreak havoc with subsequent scholars’ understanding of these texts’ attributional situation. Tomás Ó Cléirigh lists both ‘A éolcha Chonaill cheólaigh’ and ‘A liubair atá ar do lár’ as attributed to Flann in NLI G.167.[1156] The former is not attributed in this manuscript, the latter is attributed only to ‘Flann’ via O’Curry’s intervention. John McKechnie apparently believed that ‘A liubair atá ar do

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lár’ is ‘found in many mss. ascribed to Flann Mainistrech’. He treats ‘Atá sunn senchas nach súail’ more cautiously, mentioning an attribution to Flann but citing only O’Curry’s authority. Gearoid Mac Eoin refers to a plurality of attributions to Flann in *Fen*. There are no external attributions, only two ambiguous internal references. Boyle was under the impression that ‘Enna dalta Cairpri crúaid’ is genuinely attributed to Flann in the manuscript tradition. It should be noted, incidentally, that none of these studies is materially undone through overestimating the manuscript evidence for Flann’s authorship of these texts.

### 4.5 The Donegal Series: conclusion

The bases and implications of O’Reilly’s attribution of nine Donegal Series poems to Flann Mainistrech are all unclear. As with the ‘Synchronisms’, a now-lost manuscript’s influence cannot be ruled out. Likewise, again, printed editions of the poems that took into account a representative range of manuscripts were (and still are) unavailable, the poems only being published in 1875 from *Fen*, although manuscripts of the Donegal Series are much more plentiful than those of the ‘Synchronisms’. The Donegal Series poems might arguably present Flann as a particularly hard-nosed, politically engaged *fili*, but the scholars who attributed them to him may well not have drawn such conclusions.

### 5 Conclusion: Flann in early print

The attributions, in early printed scholarship, of the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ and of much of the Donegal Series to Flann Mainistrech are dramatic. Yet both bodies of material correlate loosely with actual texts attributed to Flann in medieval manuscript tradition. Furthermore, both are arguably but extreme manifestations of themes we have encountered previously when considering his corpus. In the *LGÈ b* Appendix

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1160 Boyle, ‘Poem’, p. 11.
(3:2.1) or in UM’s gendered world history (4:3.2), Flann’s work forms part of compilations structuring accounts of Ireland’s past in a universal context. The difference with the ‘Synchronisms’ is that he is no longer a contributing authority but the scheme’s supreme genius. His aetiologies and regnal histories of medieval Irish kingdoms, meanwhile, inherently relate to those kingdoms’ diplomatic interrelationships (2:2.2.1, 4:2.1), although not in the explicit manner of the Donegal Series. Even the controversy hinted at by O’Conor I’s manuscript interventions is perhaps mirrored in Flann’s chronicle obits and their repeated disagreements over whether to associate him with the powers of persuasion (filidecht; 1:2.2.4). I do not suggest that these attributions were prompted directly by these particular medieval materials but that they might reflect tensions arising from the corpus associated with Flann generally.

It is also worth noting that the attributions to Flann in early printed works once again call into question how well extant manuscripts reflect the range and quantity of material associated with him. In each case discussed in this chapter, it is possible that evidence still extant formed the basis for the attribution made, but it is also possible, particularly in relation to the Donegal Series, that manuscript sources, now lost or obscure, influenced published scholars.
Conclusion

In this thesis, I have considered what Flann Mainistrech might have invoked for subsequent readers, composers, and compilers in terms of his understood historical context and his backstory. I have also examined responses to and uses of textual material attributed to him. This line of inquiry was taken in order to understand the relevance of Flann’s individual identity to his power when referenced as an author-figure, which it is hoped will contribute to future considerations of historiographical authority’s nature and dynamics in medieval Gaelic learned culture.

On the basis of the material examined herein, Flann and his textual output were interpreted, by at least some medieval readers, within a definable theoretical and a biographical context. While avoiding comment on whether Flann was perceived or presented as unique, as this would require much additional comparative work, there is sufficiently widespread evidence that Flann’s author-figure meant something specific for us to be able to postulate that he had a commonly understood identity that may have framed readings of his texts. The model of the medieval auctor as a mere function of their texts’ literal meanings may thus not be the most useful for understanding him, particularly given that author-figures appear to have brought extrinsic meaning to texts elsewhere in medieval Gaelic literature (LR:4.2). It is more difficult to reach firm conclusions on the extent to which this mattered for how his texts were read and used. While authors like Flann have been interpreted, particularly in prosimetric contexts, as providing authoritative corroboration, we have encountered multiple examples of Flann’s texts being supplemented or re-contextualised and of his testimony being brought to bear on anachronistic historico-political issues. While Flann’s integrity as an author-figure might have been discussed theoretically or used rhetorically, on the basis of this evidence, it did not materially restrict subsequent compilers and composers from using his texts and identity.
1 Flann’s author-figure: contexts and back-stories

Both within texts attributed to Flann and in medieval material about him, we have seen certain themes recur whenever his compositional activity is discussed in any sort of detail. His role was widely perceived to be the interpretation and elucidation of historiography, generally in specifically textual form; I have termed this tertiary authorship. There are references to him in multiple contexts as a *fer léiginn*. In *LU*’s *ANÍ* and in *LGÉ*’s implied context for ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’ (2:5.2), the content of the texts with which Flann worked is traced back to direct experience; his work of *compilatio* is distinguished from each. ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ is mysterious, perhaps intentionally, regarding Flann’s sources but presents the work as having rendered accessible the previously intractable tradition of universal chronicling (3:3, 4:2.3.1). Appearing in ‘Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’, Flann seems to make reference not only to his knowledge’s textual basis but to his active augmentation of historical knowledge through textual study (4:2.3.3). His personal epithet, *tiugsuí*, could imply an overall command of scholarship’s strands and traditions (1:2.2.6). These descriptions correlate with the types of texts that consistently tend to be associated with him: regnal histories drawing on narrative *aideda* and catalogues of names and events. Such texts appear to select and order characters and incidents chronologically or thematically from pre-existing written sources, although we have seen that this may not always have been their origin (LR:3.2.1, 5:2.1.1). The recurrence of *rim*-based terms in authorial self-representation in texts attributed to Flann and the Cenél nÉogain Suite’s particularly intense meditations on this concept (2:3.3.2) openly emphasise this as the nature of his work. Indeed, in several cases, texts attributed to Flann contain more extensive data than all other known sources (2:6.2, 3:4, 4:2.1.2).

Flann’s tertiary authorship is, on several occasions, presented as occurring in the context of collaboration with other named scholars. He compiles *ANÍ* with Eochaid Êolach úa Céirin (2:2.2.3), Druim Cetta’s *dindsenchas* with Echthigern (2:2.2.1), and Conall Gulbán’s *caithréim* (or perhaps all of ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’) with Óengus (4:2.1.3). ‘Eochaid’, in ‘Cía triallaid nech aisnis senchais’ (2:3.2), could be taken as a collaborator, although he is more probably a source. While general references to a learned community are common in Middle Gaelic
historical poetry, the open presentation of Flann engaging in specific collaborative relationships is a very distinctive aspect of the material about him; in fact, I know of no other comparable examples from any other medieval Gaelic source. Unfortunately, no further details are provided as to what these relationships were thought to have involved, the circumstances in which they were thought to have occurred, or whether collaborative authorship particularly enhanced or qualified the textual product’s status among medieval readers. These are matters for future study, perhaps drawing on analogies from other medieval literatures, particularly if no further examples from medieval Gaelic sources emerge.

The ecclesiastical nature of Flann’s role as *fer léiginn* is not very heavily emphasised in descriptions of his work. However, his compositions, including his collaborative compilations (*ANÍ*, ‘Druim Cetta, cette na noem’, and ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’), are quite often presented as occurring within ecclesiastical centres (Monasterboice or Armagh). Furthermore, most of his chronicle obits mention his position at Monasterboice (1:2.2) and two poems attributed to him are specifically of Armagh interest (5:2.1.2). Alongside collegial relationships with individuals, he is thus also regularly associated with ecclesiastical communities and institutions.

Collaboration does not end, for Flann, with a text’s production. His work is also presented as empowering subsequent composers who encounter it. This is set out explicitly within ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (4:2.3.1). It is also implied in the three *UM* poems in which Flann is both an approachable character and an authoritative source of information (4:2.1.6.1–2, 4:2.3.3). These poems present Flann as revered but also used, as not inertly authoritative but enabling others’ historical investigations and historicised arguments. ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’ (4.2.1.6.1) is particularly interesting in this regard, as Flann’s imparted testimony itself constitutes well-ordered, finely-detailed background information, while the unnamed poet takes command of the narrative and political argument within which Flann’s material is made to function. As Irvine has discussed in another context, medieval composition is often actually commentary on pre-existing texts.1162 While the insight it might yield into the medieval tradition is debatable, O’Conor II’s identification of the

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‘Synchronisms of Flann’ as having enabled common-era dating in medieval Gaelic historiography envisages a similar dynamic (LR:2.3).

From this evidence, we can say that Flann did not present himself and was not subsequently understood simply as a learned and capable individual, but that he was presented as operating within networks that embraced the authorities and texts which he interpreted, his contemporary colleagues, and future scholars to whom he made historical tradition accessible and useable. If we seek the context invoked by Flann’s author-figure for material attributed to him, then we might conclude that that context comprised scholarly relationships and a communal ethos. It might have been imagined that material under Flann’s name was a collective product of multiple source-texts and multiple contributors’ dialogic relationships and, indeed, that it should continue to exist in such a context. Such a collective, discursive origin for the material might have played a corroborative or verificatory role. It may also have had some basis in reality, whether in the historical Flann’s working practices or in more widespread norms, although there would still need to have been reasons why such details were sufficiently compelling to be preserved in Flann’s case in particular.

If his role as a tertiary author was a key characteristic of Flann’s textual persona, then this may have conflicted with other conceptions of him and other aspects of medieval Gaelic textual culture. Simple attributions (‘Flann Mainistrech cecinit’ and similar), which constitute the bulk of all descriptions of Flann’s authorial activity, leave no room for collaborative relationships or sources but trace the work back to a named individual. Indeed, a simple attribution can introduce a poem that goes on to present itself as the product of collaboration or source interpretation (e.g. 4:2.1.3, 5:2.1.1). Flann’s singular status as an authoritative scholar is also promoted by terms like ugdar, and perhaps tiugsuí, and the panegyric tone of Flann’s chronicle obits and some detailed attributions to him (1:2, 5:3.1). Alongside conceptions of Flann in which he was contextualised in relation to his sources and wider networks and invoked a whole scholarly culture, conceptions also seem to have existed in which he was a kind of solitary, originative genius (e.g. 3:3). In a further dimension, as we have seen (5:3.2), in the seventeenth-century, the emphasis was on Flann not as originator or compiler but as preserver, in order to demonstrate the Gaelic tradition’s capacity to provide authentically ancient information. Indeed, medieval
compilers by no means always express interest in Flann as author-figure but often present poems attributed to him primarily on the basis of their content (3:4).

Different ideas concerning scholarly authority may well have existed in medieval Gaelic learned discourse, as they did in learned discourse throughout medieval Europe. Yet we need not frame the material we have examined in terms of conflict. Flann’s presentations as tertiary author may enlarge upon and explain his presentations as a singular authority figure rather than counter them. Reading and collaborating may be what made Flann authoritative. Indeed, for Eochaid úa Flainn and LGÉ’s compilers, ugdair (‘authorities’) are precisely those that study, discuss, and refine literary tradition (2:3.4). Furthermore, the compositional narratives in response to which I have elaborated the concept of tertiary authorship can be read as, ultimately, making unified, authored works out of the products of compilatio, as we have discussed. Their sources lost, it is implied that there is no comparable ANÍ beyond Flann and Eochaid’s version (2:5.2.1). ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ is presented as the gift of God through Flann’s piety, not a human work of interpretation and construction (3:3). Simple attributions’ critical meaning is yet to be analysed in modern scholarship and they need not denote some kind of absolute authorial responsibility that excludes collaboration and compilatio, but could embrace a range of compositional backstories. Medieval Gaelic concepts of scholarly authority and pre-eminence may have gone beyond great individuals to embrace the author’s social and cultural context and historiographical era.

Flann’s theoretical place within the history of historiography was not the only aspect of his existence that seems to have been preserved, although it is perhaps the most clearly and widely attested. We also find hints and fragments of an understood political persona and even of a perceived biography. In terms of the texts attributed to him, he retained associations into the post-medieval era with the Ciannachta and with Armagh, which correlate with what is known of the historical Flann’s background and career. In both cases, we find Flann directly asserting the relevant entities’ rights and prestige, often in relation to quite particular issues (2:2.2.1, 4:2.2.3, 5.2.1.2). The same might also be said of the Tara Diptych’s proclamation of the Uí Néill’s unbreakable hold on the kingship as a celebration of Máel Sechnaill’s

1163 Ziolkowski, ‘Cultures’.
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return (2:3.3.3). In these often much-recopied texts, Flann is identifiable not just by his theoretical function as tertiary author, although some contain evidence to support that, but by agendas within historical situations sometimes so specific and technical as to be now obscure, from our perspective. This has the potential to disrupt characterisation of him as a generic authority on the past and to locate his texts within actual circumstances.

Yet there is no evidence that these details interested later compilers. The Tara Diptych is only ever preserved in contexts focusing on ‘national’ and universal history (2:5.1, 3:2.1, 5:2.1.1). The other texts happen to be preserved through being cited in relation to hagiography, for some reason. For example, ‘Druim Cetta, cestc na noem’ is treated as primarily of Columban interest (2:2.2.3, 4:2), while ‘Muinte Pádraig na paiter’, in its earliest manuscripts, supports either CGSH or AFM’s account of St Patrick (4:2.2.3, 5:2.1.2). Neither Flann nor the ultimate point being made in each poem is directly relevant to these contexts. O’Reilly’s apparent lack of interest in the implications of his wholesale ascription of the highly partisan Donegal Series to Flann (6:4.2) finds precedent in such approaches. At some point, whether during the historical Flann’s career or thereafter, a textual or attributional record was created that was tied closely to something resembling his career but this political Flann generally did not gain traction in medieval textual culture beyond these chance survivals.

One possible exception is ‘Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’ (4:2.3.3). This, we have assumed, is a later composition about Flann, although its date is uncertain. I have argued that Flann and Máel Sechnaill do not simply fill the conventional roles of sage and king but that their dialogue seems to be framed by some specific incident in Flann’s imagined career involving his relationship with Máel Sechnaill and his status in the king’s assembly (4:2.3.3), which it is tempting to relate to the issue of the rights of the Ciannachta in ‘Druim Cetta, cestc na noem’ (2:2.2.1). Also implicated, by this poem, are his connection to Monasterboice and tertiary authorship. That the poem’s audience is expected to appreciate whatever this incident is about, despite the lack of detail, implies, tantalisingly, that information about Flann’s career was in circulation, whatever its provenance. If this information could be supplied in response to such a poem, it could be supplied in response to an
attribution or a citation. Unfortunately, what it actually constituted in detail remains conjectural.

Thus, our search for what Flann meant or invoked as an author-figure has yielded rich, varied, complex, possibly stratified, fragmentary material that need not ultimately be reconcilable into a single implied context, particularly when we recall the disparate manuscript and printed sources that have been consulted. This material’s interpretation will hopefully be refined or even revolutionised through closer studies of the texts involved or through wider-ranging comparative work. For now, we can conclude that, in terms of his biography and, to a greater extent, his theoretical function, there is evidence that Flann’s identity as an author-figure was actively interpreted, presented, and formulated in particular ways in medieval Gaelic manuscript culture. In short, he mattered.

2 Flann’s author-figure: reception

In considering poems attributed to Flann in their manuscript or prosimetric contexts, we have seen that subsequent compilers used material attributed to Flann relatively freely. It appears to have been the subject of secondary expansion (2:4.1, 4:2.1.2), unitisation (2:4.2.1.2), re-contextualisation (4:2.1.5), and appropriation (4:2.1.4). Misattribution is invariably an alternative explanation in each case, although this shows a similar impulse towards manipulating Flann’s corpus.

We might conclude from this evidence that Flann did not really matter as an author-figure after all. His authority was discussed and promoted but fidelity to his intentions, perspective, and corpus, if these were even known, was not a high priority compared to compilers’ other concerns. In fact, his authority may have been promoted in the manner we have discussed partly because material attributed to him could prove so useful.

This is valid to an extent, based on the evidence considered in this thesis. Yet, as we have partly discussed, if what Flann invoked in subsequent textual culture was the elucidation of historiography and scholarly collaboration, then this might partly explain how his work came to be used. Flann is presented reading, ordering and
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categorizing information, and finding lines of continuity in the records of the past. This active approach to texts perhaps provides a model for how his texts were then treated.\textsuperscript{1164} If the club can be taken from Hercules’ hand (2:3.2), then it can theoretically also be taken from the one who overcame him, following his example. Indeed, we have encountered a couple of medieval instances of Flann being explicitly accessed via a physical text (4:2.1.3–4). That Flann’s texts were re-interpreted and appropriated may actually be evidence of close engagement with his presented author-figure. The moments of political subjectivity within Flann’s corpus may have further enhanced him as a model author, these expressing the kinds of agendas and relationships that generally became only more pressing in the later Middle Ages. In contrast, in the seventeenth century, Flann sometimes seems to have been regarded as an ancient author distinct from his ostensive later medieval counterparts (5:3.2).

We may also encounter echoes of Flann’s author-figure in how material attributed to him interacts with its context. Just as Flann’s compositional work was described in terms of networks of sources and people, texts attributed to him are rarely presented as complete unto themselves but as components within prosimetric compilations or manuscript clusters linked thematically or through more direct suppletive and corroborative relationships (e.g. 4:3.2). Sometimes, his texts are treated as authoritative. In the \textit{LGÉ b} Appendix, for instance, poems attributed to Flann articulate the chronological basis for the entire recension (3:2.1, 3:2.3). Yet, in most cases, the relationship is complex. His poems can supply variant versions of narratives (2:6.2), corroborate information (2:5.2.2, 3:2.1), or supply one strand of data among several provided by other texts (2:5.1). They are not always easy for compilers to reconcile with their other material or with the main text at hand. In \textit{LGÉ}, Flann more than once supplies more data than the cognate prose (2:6.2, 3:2.1), while \textit{AI}’s compiler only employs ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ as a corroborative supplement, apparently unable or unwilling to integrate its material wholesale (2:6.3.2). There is also evidence that the Tara Diptych did not enjoy its authoritative status universally or indefinitely but was regarded in some quarters as superseded (2:6.1, 3:2.1, 5:2.1.1). In all these instances, Flann’s texts, as presented in

manuscript, are in assistive or contrastive relationships with other texts out of which history is collectively and dialogically imparted. In the work of later compilers, therefore, we perhaps find numerous further examples of Flann engaging in a kind of virtual collaboration. Yet, again, there are counter-examples. For instance, LL’s Úi Néill Series appears to be the product of an attempt to unify a diverse range of material with Flann as its single authority, undisputed by any neighbouring texts (2:4.2.1.2).

Indeed, the similarity between Flann’s presented author-figure and those that adapt and re-contextualise material attributed to him is not perfect. Many texts attributed to Flann can be suspected or even shown to be adaptations of or compilations out of earlier texts (2:3.2, 5:2.1.1). Those earlier texts’ purported authors are rarely now apparent or identifiable. On the other hand, when texts attributed to Flann are extended or adapted in some way (e.g. 2:4.2.1.2), he, sometimes anachronistically, retains their authorship, while his adaptors again remain largely obscure. Thus, while methodological continuity may exist in practice between him and his adaptors, Flann retains some kind of foundational, authorial integrity and identity that the latter do not. What might lie at this integrity’s heart, like what might be behind the sense running through our sources that Flann is very important, if it is anything more than a medieval structural need for an auctor, remains ultimately conjectural.

3 Implications for future author-centred studies

As well as exploring the dynamics of Flann Mainistrech’s own textual afterlife, it is also hoped that this thesis provides some insights into general issues related to the study of medieval Gaelic authors and perhaps medieval authors more widely.

Troublingly, my diachronic analysis of texts attributed to Flann by manuscript date reveals cause for scepticism over whether the manuscript tradition ever gives a complete or even representative impression of what was associated with him. The material associated with him in later medieval manuscripts (4:2) is quite different from what appears in manuscripts pre-1200 (2:2). For example, he at some point acquired a reputation as a genealogist but his material in pre-1200 manuscripts
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implies nothing of the sort. At the same time, many pre-1200 attributions cease to be attested in later manuscripts. Until the mid-nineteenth century, new material continues to be attributed to Flann (5:1.2, 6:2). Some could be the product of secondary extrapolation from medieval evidence known to us but some could be taken directly from now-lost medieval testimony and much cannot be ruled out as the work of the historical Flann. All this suggests either frequent re-analysis of author-figures and their corpora in the course of the manuscript tradition or fragmentation of the tradition and widespread lacunae in what is extant or a mixture of the two. Each scenario has problematic implications for what we can know about medieval Gaelic authors, in terms both of their historical careers and of their textual afterlives. We have encountered a similar situation regarding the existence of a commonly understood biography for Flann in later learned culture. There is just enough evidence to suggest such an understood biography existed but very little is certain thereafter. Other material evidently circulated in some form but it is not accessible to us. It can be reasonably assumed that such issues would be encountered if one was to conduct similar studies of other authors.

Collating and analysing all available references to Flann throughout Gaelic learned culture has led us to a wide range of texts, genres, and topics. For example, all four of the traditional (in modern terms), but now questionable, ‘cycles’ have been touched upon, even, surprisingly, the Finn-cycle (2:3.3.1). We have encountered Flann being treated as relevant not only to the regnal histories, kingdom-based catalogue poetry, and national pseudo-history most commonly associated with him but also to hagiography, genealogies, saga tradition, glossaries, classical literature, and biblical apocrypha. It is not clear, without further comparative study, whether Middle Gaelic authors generally end up being related to this many areas of learning or whether this is something peculiar to Flann. Regardless, if an author or authors could be held responsible for such a wide range of activity, this might suggest that medieval Gaelic learned culture was or aspired to be more interconnected than is implied by some of the material it produced. Indeed, recent

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1166 In terms of the latter, it is interesting that some of Flann’s chronicle obits present him as particularly inter-disciplinary in their unique combination, in his case, of *filidecht* and *létgenn* (1:2.2.7).
work on the historicization of literature and on the concept of medieval Irish
classicism seems to support this interpretation.\textsuperscript{1167} If interconnected learned culture
reflected back onto perceptions of its author-figures, then author-figures other than
Flann may be far from predictable in terms of their textual afterlives.

In another form of unpredictability, if tertiary authorship was a key aspect of
Flann’s author-figure’s medieval significance, then this suggests that multiple
models of authorship existed in medieval Gaelic learned culture. It has, of course,
long been acknowledged in modern scholarship that much medieval Gaelic literature
was produced through the collation and re-working of pre-existing sources.\textsuperscript{1168} Less
prominent is the fact that such activity, alongside collaboration and multiple
authorship, could be celebrated, via actual historical characters, within the Middle
Ages.\textsuperscript{1169} As explored above (Conclusion: 1–2), that such complex conceptions of
authorship could inform medieval reading should be taken into account when
interpreting medieval writing and compilation.

The major conclusion arising from this case study on Flann Mainistrech is
that authors mattered in medieval Gaelic learned culture and were enduring objects
of interest. As a result, from our perspective, they have multiple dimensions: their
historical activity and intentions, their self-construction according to commonly-held
categories and conventions, and the various interpretations and uses of them
thereafter as author-figures. Multiple distinctive and divergent author-figures may
exist or they may be characterised by a commonly understood persona, itself of
mixed provenance. These later interpretations and uses are in many cases not the
product of confusion but of the priorities of the times that produced them and can
thus be meaningful. Therefore, while there are perfectly good reasons to go in search
of the historical author and their corpus, it is not sufficient overall simply to
differentiate between an author’s confirmed works and troublesome pseudopigraphy
and then focus only on the former. Any given study on medieval Gaelic authors must
needs identify the dimension with which it is concerned, the author as he was or the
author as he is perceived and received, and consider the latter’s varied, sometimes
impersonal, origins and manifestations.

\textsuperscript{1167} Toner, ‘Ulster Cycle’; Miles, Heroic Saga; Burnyeat ‘”Wrenching”’, pp. 206–07.
\textsuperscript{1168} Boyle and Hayden (eds), Authorities; LR:3.2.1.
\textsuperscript{1169} Although see Burnyeat, ‘Early Irish’, p. 216.
The Reception and Use of Flann Mainistrech and his Work in Medieval Gaelic Manuscript Culture

Eystein P. Thanisch

Volume II

Appendices and Bibliography

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Edinburgh

2015
Declaration

This is to certify that the work contained within this thesis has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. I have published a specific case study of a text covered primarily by Chapters 2 and 3 as ‘Flann Mainistrech’s Götterdämmerung as a Junction within Lebor Gabála Érenn’, Quaestio Insularis, 13 (2012), 69–93. Where it becomes relevant, it is cited in the main body of the thesis as a secondary source. It is also included (with the permission of the current editor of Quaestio Insularis) as Appendix 32.

Signed: Eystein Þamisch 27/01/2016
Preface

Many of the following appendices consist of primary texts from manuscripts. Within such appendices, some texts are printed from published diplomatic editions, others are my own transcriptions. These are not intended as editions of the texts in question, but are included here to support particular points made in the thesis proper. The relevant thesis-sections are referenced in each appendix. Within material printed from manuscripts, I have supplied line and word-division and capitals for proper names but avoided supplying punctuation, with the exception of question marks. Any points that appear in-text are thus from the relevant manuscript. When a published translation is yet to appear, I have provided a translation. When a poem is being printed from manuscript, I have identified the metre in order to explain my choices regarding line-division. Braces indicate semi-legible text in the manuscript and square brackets indicate my own editorial interpolations. When two or more texts are being compared in terms of their relationships, a colour-coding system is employed to highlight variants. Red signifies a unique reading; amber signifies a reading on which two or more manuscripts agree but on which at least one dissents; bold signifies variance in the inclusion, position, or order of entire quatrains.
Appendix 1: Poems attributed to Flann by O'Reilly and O'Curry

See: LR:2.2, 6:2.2.

Headings are my own and the names in round brackets are alternative attributions proposed by O'Reilly and O'Curry themselves, with varying degrees of certainty.

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<tr>
<td>- ‘Éistí d a eolchu cen ón’ (2:2.2.2)</td>
<td>- ‘Éistí d a eolchu cen ón’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The deaths of the kings of Tara</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tu’</td>
<td>- ‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tu’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Ríg Themra toebaide iar ttain’ (2:2.2.1)</td>
<td>- ‘Ríg Themra toebaide iar ttain’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>St Patrick’s companions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Muinter Pádraig na paiter’ (4:2.2.3; 5:2.1.2; 5.2.2)</td>
<td>- ‘Muinter Pádraig na paiter’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The world-kings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (2:6.3; 3:2.1; 4:2.3.1)</td>
<td>- ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The northern Uí Néill (the Donegal Series)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Atá sund senchas nach suaill’</td>
<td>- ‘Atá sund senchas nach suaill’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘A liubair atá air do lar’</td>
<td>- ‘A liubair atá ar do lar’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’</td>
<td>- ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘A eolchu Conail cheolaigh’</td>
<td>- ‘A eolchu Conail cheolaigh’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Cairpre, Éogan, Enda éim’</td>
<td>- ‘Cairbre, Éogan, Enna éim’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Enna, dalta Cairpri cruaid’</td>
<td>- ‘Enna dalta Cairpri cruaid’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Éistíd re Conall calma’</td>
<td>- ‘Éistíd re Conall calma’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Atá sund rolla na ríg’</td>
<td>- ‘Atá sund rolla na ríg’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Idir gach obair sgríobhais’</td>
<td>- ‘Idir gach obair sgríobhais’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cenél nÉogain</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Cia tríallaid nech aisneis’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Cind ceithri ndini iar Frigrind’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Ascnam ní scol sadal’</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- ‘Aní do ronsat do chalmu’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘A ngluind, a n-echta, a n-orgni’ (2:4.2.1.2)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sil nAedo Sláine</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Mugain ingen Choncraid cháin’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Sil nAedo Sláine na sleg’ (2:2.2.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The kings of Mide (i.e. Clann Cholmáin)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- ‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’ (2:2.2.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The kings of Cashel</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘In éol duib in senchas sen’ (2:2.2.1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A band of risible craftspeople</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘A gillu gairm n-ilgráda’ (2:2.2.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The saints of Ireland</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’ (5:2.1.2)</td>
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</tr>
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### Appendix 2: Texts attributed to Flann by selected mid-twentieth-century scholars

See: LR:3.2.2

Only scholars dealing with a substantial corpus of texts are included. Struck-through incipits indicate the specific rejection of the attribution of the text to Flann by the scholar in question.

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<td>‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tnú’</td>
<td>‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tnú’</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Ríg Themra toibaige iar ttain’</td>
<td>‘Ríg Themra toibaige iar ttain’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘In éol dib in senchus sen’</td>
<td>‘Mide maigen Clainne Cuinn’</td>
<td>‘Cia triallaid nech aisnis’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Mide maigen Clainne Cuinn’</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Cind cethri n-dini iar Frigrind’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Ascnam ni seól sadail’ (?)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Aní do ronsat do chalma’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‘A ngluid, a n-échta, a n-orgní’</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Mugain ingen Chonchraid chán’</td>
<td>‘Mugain ingen Chonchraid chán’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Síl nÁeda Sláine na sleg’</td>
<td>‘Síl nÁeda Sláine na sleg’</td>
<td>‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pódör, ‘Twelve Poems’</th>
<th>Byrne, ‘Ireland’, p. 865</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Éstid a colchu cen ón’</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Ríg Temra dia tesbann tnú’</td>
<td>‘Ríg Temra toibaige iar ttain’</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘In éol dib in senchus sen’</td>
<td>‘In éol dib in senchus sen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’</td>
<td>‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Cia triallaid nech aisnis’</td>
<td>‘Cia triallaid nech aisnis’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Cind cethri n-dini iar Frigrind’</td>
<td>‘Cind cethri n-dini iar Frigrind’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ascnam ni seól sadail’</td>
<td>‘Ascnam ni seól sadail’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Aní do ronsat do chalma’</td>
<td>‘Aní do ronsat do chalma’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘A ngluid, a n-échta, a n-orgní’</td>
<td>‘A ngluid, a n-échta, a n-orgní’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Mugain ingen Chonchraid chán’</td>
<td>‘Mugain ingen Chonchraid chán’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Síl nÁeda Sláine na sleg’</td>
<td>‘Síl nÁeda Sláine na sleg’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Muinter Pádraig na paiter’</td>
<td>‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Cruithnig cid dos farclam’</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Toisig na llongse tar ller’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 3: Flann’s chronicle obits

See: 1:2.1.

Unless indicated otherwise, translations are my own but generally with reference to those by the respective editors. For details of editions, see the List of Abbreviations.

### The Armagh Group

**AU 1056.8:** Flann Mainistrech, aird-fer leighinn 7 sui senchusa Erenn, in uita eterna requiescit.

‘Flann Mainistrech, arch-fer léiginn and master of Ireland’s history, rested in eternal life’.

**ALC 1056.3:** Flann Mainisdreach, aird fhile 7 airdfher léighinn, 7 soi shenchusa Erenn, in uita eterna requieuit.

‘Flann Mainistrech, arch-poet, and arch-fer léiginn, and master of Ireland’s history, rested in eternal life’.

### The Clonmacnoise Group

**AT 1056.3:** Fland Mainistreach ughdar Gaidhel, etir léighind 7 t-senchus 7 filidecht 7 airchedal in .uui. kl. Decimbris, xui. lunae, uitam feliquiter in Christó finiuit.

‘Flann Mainistrech, the Gaels’ authority in literature and history and poetry and poetic composition, on the 7th kalends of December [25th November], the 16th of the moon, happily finished his life in Christ’.

**CS 1056:** Flann fer leiginn Mainistrech et tiugsháoi na n-Gaoidheal etir leigenn 7 sencus quieuit. +

‘Flann, fer léiginn of Monasterboice and last scholar of the Gaels in both literature and history, rested’.

### Late Chronicles

**AFM 1056.3:** Fland Mainistreach, fer léighind Mainistreach Búithe, saoi egna n-Gaoidheal, h-i léighionn, 7 h-i senchus, 7 h-i filidheacht, 7 i n-airchetal do écc an cethramhadh calainn do December, amhail as-bearor,

- Fland a prim-chill Búithi bind,
- rind ruisc a min-chind as mall,
- midh-shui sidhe súiges lind,
- tiugh-suí Tíre Trí Find Fland.

‘Flann Mainistrech, fer léiginn of Monasterboice, master-sage of the Gaels in wisdom, literature, history, poetry and poetic art, died on the fourth kalends of December [28th November], as it is said:

- “Flann of the chief church of melodious Buite,
  slow the bright eye of his fine head;
  contemplative sage is he who sits with us,
  last sage of the three lands is fair Flann”.

**AClon 1056:** Fflann lector, the best learned, & chronicler in these partes of the World, died.

---

1 Flann’s obit is the same in both manuscripts of AU: McCarthy, Irish Annals, pp. 34–37, 312–24; Evans, Present, pp. 8–10.

2 For the various translations of this quatrain, see 1:3 and Appendix 4.
### Appendix 4: ‘Flann a prímchill Buiti binn’: texts and translations

See: 1:3, 5:3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>O’Donovan (ed. and trans.), <em>AFM</em>, II, 870–71</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fland a primchill Búithi bind, rind ruisc a minchind as mall, midhshuí sidhe stúiges lind, tiughshuí Tire Ti Find Fland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Flann of the chief church of melodious Buite,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is he who sits with us,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Murphy (ed. and trans.), ‘Poem’ [‘Úasalepscop Érenn Aed’], q. 31 (p. 155)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flann a primchill Buite binn rinn roisc a minchinn is mall; midshúi sidhe suíges linn; tigshuí tire Tri Finn Flann.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flann, from the famous church of sweet-voiced Buite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ní Shéaghdha (ed.), <em>NLI Cat.</em>, fasc. 4, 54 [from the superscription to ‘Conall cuingid clainm Néill in NLI G.131, p. 108.23–25]</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flann a primchill Buiti binn rinn roisc a minchinn is mall miudhsai sidhe suighes lind tiughshai tire tri fFind Flann.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[untranslated]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mac an Bhaird (ed. [from <em>AFM</em>] and trans.), ‘Dán Direach’, p. 165.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flann a primchill Bhuithe bhinn rinn roisc a minchinn is mall miodhsshaoi sidhe suidehas lionn tioghshaoi tire tri bhFionn Flann.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Stately is the gaze in the gentle head of Flann from sweet Buite’s main church (Monasterboice, Co. Louth). Flann is the mead sage of the stiodh who sets forth liquor, the last sage of the land of the Three Fionns (i.e. Ireland)’. 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

3 Mac An Bhaird’s parenthetical material.
## Appendix 5: Texts attributed to Flann in pre-1200 manuscripts

See: 2:2.2.1, 2:41, 2:4.2.1.2, 2:5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>Scribe</th>
<th>Poem/Attribution</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>End date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LU</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| ll. 2783–924 (pp. 90–94). | M/H1 | *Aided Nath Iocus a adnacol*  

### Rawl.B.502 (Section B)

| fol. 55va6–55va17. | Section B only has one scribe.  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>88vb30–88vb18.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>88vb19–88vb20.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LL

| III, II. 15640– | U | ‘Rig Themra dia tesbann tu’. Simple: ‘Fland | Regnal history of Tara: names and | Prehistoric. | 5th cent (death of Nath I mac |

---

5 Duncan, ‘Reassessment’, pp. 51–53.
6 Duncan, ‘Reassessment’, p. 54.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page Range</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Attribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III, ll. 18209–67 (pp. 635–36)</td>
<td>'Mugain ingen Choncraid cháin'. Simple: 'Fland'</td>
<td>Account of the birth of Áed Sláine.</td>
<td>6th cent.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III, ll. 19369–427 (pp. 635–36)</td>
<td>'Inn éol duib in senchas sen'. Simple: 'Fland'.</td>
<td>Regnal history of Cashel: forenames only.</td>
<td>5th cent.</td>
<td>c. 1050x1063 (Donnchad mac Briain’s reign).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV, ll. 23343–414 (pp. 782–84)</td>
<td>'Cia triallaid nech aisnis senchais'. Simple: 'Fland Manistrech'.</td>
<td><em>Dindsenchas</em> of Ailech, Cenél nÉogain’s fortress.</td>
<td>Prehistoric</td>
<td>5th cent. (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV, ll. 23483–572 (pp. 788–89)</td>
<td>'Ascnam ni seol sadal’. No attribution.</td>
<td>Battles of Cenél nÉogain.</td>
<td>6th cent. (?)</td>
<td>722x734 (reign of Áed Allán).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV, ll. 23573–712 (pp. 791–96)</td>
<td>'Aní doronsat do chalmu’. No attribution.</td>
<td>Battles of Cenél nÉogain.</td>
<td>5th cent.</td>
<td>1091x1099.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV, ll. 23713–851 (pp. 797–802)</td>
<td>'A ngluind, a n-échta, a n-orgni’. Internal: ‘Flann [Mainistrech]’.</td>
<td>Martial deeds of Cenél nÉogain.</td>
<td>5th cent.</td>
<td>1047 (Mathgamhán úa híffernán’s death).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6: *LL*’s potential secondary attributions to Flann

See: 2:4.2.1.1

### 6.1: ‘Toisich na llóngse tar llér’

Joseph O’Longan’s lithographic facsimile (1880):

![Joseph O’Longan’s lithographic facsimile (1880):](image)

Atkinson (ed.), *Book of Leinster*, p.16a6–8 (*LL*, I, ll. 1918–20 (p. 60)).

By permission of Edinburgh University Library.

**The original manuscript:**

![The original manuscript:](image)

*LL*, p. 16a6–8 (Source: *ISOS*).

By permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

The second image has been enhanced via *GNU Digital Manipulation Programme (GIMP) Version 2.8.14*, using the equalizer, colour enhancement, and soft-glow functions. I am very grateful to Dr Christopher Yocum for his friendly assistance with this software.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.2: ‘Mide maigen clainne Cuinn’</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>LL</em>, p. 184&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;17–22. (Source: <em>ISOS</em>).</td>
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<tr>
<td>By permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>6.3: ‘Síl nÁeda Sláine na sleg’</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>LL</em>, p. 185&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;1–4. (Source: <em>ISOS</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 7: Cenél nÉogain Suite poems in later medieval manuscripts

See: 2:4.2.1.2

#### 7.1 ‘Cind cethri ndíni iar Frigrind’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cínd ceithri ndíne la Frigrinn foraid gleorglan Ailech adhmur ro gab anrath airech Eogan.</td>
<td>Cínd ceithri ndíne la Frigrenn foraid gleorglan Ailech adhmur ro gab anrath airech Eogan.</td>
<td>Cínd ceithri ndíne la Frigrenn foraid ngléoghlan Ailech adhmur ro gabh anrach airech Eogan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eogan mac Neill ro rigad i nAiliuch iaram uaidh malad. ri ré dá fichet buan bliadhan.</td>
<td>Eogan mac Neill ro rigad a nOilech iarum uada ro railad relegal fichi buan bliadhan.</td>
<td>Eoghan mac Néill ro rigadh a n-Ailech iarom. uadh ro railadh re ré dá fhiched mbuan mbliadhain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Baí Muridach and dia éis o duine ni dichet fialghain féithet ri ré cethri mbliadhan ficet.</td>
<td>Bai Muiredach and da eisi o duin fhichead. fialglan feched fri re ceithri mbliadhan ficheat</td>
<td>Bai Muiredhach ann da éisi o duin riched fialglan feithed, fri ré cheithri mbliadhan fichead</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Fichi fá dí do Murchertach mór Mac Erca clethail chaicha</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td><strong>D</strong> Fíche bliadán do Mháel Fhithrígh iarná farraidh. Ernán deighmec Fiachna an fennidh a sé is bliadhan.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td><strong>T</strong> A sé fo cheathair do Chruindmáel mac saer Subni cen locht do Fergus co foibdi a.uiii. uml.</td>
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<td><strong>R</strong> A sé fo cheathair do Chruindmáel mac saer Subhi gan locht do Fhearghus co foibh. a h-ocht uilme.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td><strong>D</strong> A sé fó ceathair do Chruindmáel mac sáer Subhí gan locht do Fhearghus co foibdh. a h-ocht uilme.</td>
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<td><strong>T</strong> A deich do Mael Duin mac Mael Fithrig mar ro faemad Flund let ós lind. a.xuiri. do mac Cind Faelad.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>R</strong> A deich do Mael Duín mac Maili Fithrid faemad. Flnd lat os lind a .uuii. deg do mac find Fhelaí.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>D</strong> A deich do Mael Duin mac Maile Fithrígh do fáemhadh Flund lat os lind a h-ocht deg do mac Cind Faelad.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>T</strong> Sé mis do Erthaile o Chruindmáel cétáib cuire gaine gaile sé mis do maíc Maile Tuile.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>R</strong> Se mis d’Arthaili ua Crunmail cétáib cuire. gais congloine se mis oile do maíc Maili Tuile.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>D</strong> Sé mis d’Airrtaile ua Chrunmail cédáibh cuire gais conglaíné sé miss do maíc Maele Tuile.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td><strong>T</strong> Tri secht mbliadán do maíc Maile Duín do Fergal clandad chomram tri .uui. do Aed Allán na n-ergal.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>R</strong> Tri seacht mbliadán do maíc Maili Duín con deagblaid. crandain comruim tri seacht d’Aed Allan mac Fergail.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>D</strong> Tri súchd mbliadhán do maíc Maile Duín do Fhærghal.</td>
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clandan comráth
tri shecht d’Aedh Allán mac Fhbergail

13 T Erbúait.uii. cóic do Niall Frossach
cia fuair forráın
 a .x. daena
do Mael Duín mac Aeda Allain.

R Abraid .uii. cóic do Niall Fhosach
cen uair forráín
 a deich do noe {il}
do Mael Duín mac Aeda Allain

D Earbadh shecht cóic do Niall Fhosach
ge fuair forráin
 a .x. don duil
do Mháel Dúin mac Aedh Ollán

14 T Oen ar trichait do Aed Ordndie
naro fubthad
dá dó cen rún
do mac Máele Dúin do Murchad.

R Aen ar flchít dAed ur Oirnidi
na n urchor.
a do can run
do mac Maili Duín do Murchad

D Aen ar .xxx. dAedh ur Oirndide
na n urchor
a dho gan rún
do mhc Máile Dúin do Murchadh.

15 T Mad Niall Caille
mac Aeda Ordndine airig.
xx. a trí os laech Maig Li
ba ri Ailig.

R Mad Niall Caili
mac Aeda Oirnidi airid.
fichí sa trí os cach laech Mag
ba ri aes mar Ailig

D Madh Niall Caille
mac Aedha Oirnídhe airigh.
fiche sa trí ós láech Magh Li
bá ri Ailigh.

16 T A cóic fá thrí
do Mael Duín do mac Aeda ind Orddain
a trí da secht
do Aed Findliath fecht ni terc torcaib.

R A cuic fo trí
do Mael Duín mac Aeda in ordain
a trí fo .uii.
dAedh Flünd fecht ni tarc torcaib

D A cuic fo thri
do Máel Dúin mac Aedha in ordain
a trí dá shecht
dAedh Flhndliath fecht ni terc torgaibh

17 T Triallaí Murchad mac Mel Dúín
ré .uii. mbiadan.
réil ro rélad
conna gedad acht a giallad.

R Triallais mac Maili Duin
re ocht mbliadan.
rel do relad
conach gedad acht mar do riarad

D Triallais Murchad a mac minglan eadh
shecht mbliadhan
reidh ro gialladh
conach gabhadh acht a riaradh.

18 T Gabais a mac
Flathbertach fri ré .ix. mbliadan
comrand caemfer
malle 7 Domnall dianglan.

R Gabais a mac
Flathbertach fri re naí mbliadan
conclann caemda
imale 7 Domnall dian diambla

D Gabhais a mac
Flathbertach fri re náei mbliadhán
conglann cáemhðha
immalle 7 Domhnall dianghla.

19 T Domnall iar sin
fria .ix. déc fri dúrdul
fial in fælur malle
7 Niall Glundub.

R Domnall d aeis
fri re .ix. mblíadan dec durchor
fial in faebar imale
7 Niall glan Glundub

D Domhnall da eis
fri re naí mbliadhán dèg duchor
fial an fæbhar immalle
7 Niall gel Glándubh

20 T Gabais Niall for Temraig tirig
rige riarglains
Flathbertach in Ailiuch Eogain
teora bliadnaib.

R Gabais Niall for Theamraid thirig
rigi riarglan
Flathbertach a nOileach Eogain
teora bliadand

D Gabhais Niall for Theamraigh thirigh
righe riarglain.
Flathbertach da aeis a nOileach
teora bliadhán

21 T Noí mbliadhna déc
do Fergal mac Domnall dela.
a .u. iar céin
do Murchertach mac Néil neda.
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<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>Teóra bliadán déc do Domnall do fa deagblaíd. a rigi nAilich co hearngaíó iarsín Temraid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Téora bliadhán deg do Domhnall. dó fa deghblaigh i rríghí nAiligh co h-ergnaíd iar sin Teamhraigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td>Teóra bliadán déc do Domnall <strong>cona</strong> deagblaíd. i rríghí Ailigh co h-ergnaíd <strong>riasín</strong> Temraid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>Nái mbliadhaín déc do Fhéargal mac Deala a coíc iar ceín do Murchheartach mac Neill neada</td>
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<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Náeí mbliadhna deg do Fhearghal mac <strong>Domhnaill</strong> deala. a cúic iar ceín do Muircertach mhc Neill neadha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td>Tarraid Flaithbertach is Chond is Tadg co taigib re ré .u. mbliadán co mblaíدب ar mag Ailigh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>Tarraid Flaithbertach is Cond is Tadg co taigib. re choic mbliadán co mblaíدب iar mag Ailigh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Tárraidh Flaithbertach is Conn is Tadg co taidbhíbibh re ré chúice mbliadhadh co mbladhaibh ar muigh Ailigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td>Oenbliadain déc do Murchad Glún i lLár lainech iar ngreis galach cen <strong>anad</strong> ropo leis Ailech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>Aenbliadadán déc do Murchad Glún <strong>for</strong> iar laindech iar ngreas ngalach cen <strong>thalach</strong> robo leis Ailech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Áenbliadhain dég do Mhurchadh Glún <strong>ar</strong> lár laindech iar ngreis ngalach gan <strong>thalach</strong> robo leis Ailech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td>A .uiii. do Domnall U Néill i nAilich ergnaíd firu fo dlaibh iar mbeith i rrigh for Temraig.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>A hocht do Domnall .h. Neill a nAileach eargunaíd. fir ré fódlaídbh iar mbeith a rigi for Temraig</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>A h-ocht do Domhnall ua Neill a nAilech eargnaithe fri ré foghlaidh iar mbeith a righi dho for Theamhraigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>26 T</strong></td>
<td>A trí fó trih do Fergal i ríge Ailíg. tri cóic la hóen eret ro gab Aed ind ainig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>A trí fo thri do Domnall a rígh nAilígh a cuic is a háen la h-airedh dAed an éiche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>A trí fo thri do Domhnall a rígh nAilígh a cuic is a háen la h-airedh dAedh in inigh.</td>
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<td><strong>27 T</strong></td>
<td>Trícha bliadán do Flathbertuch Hu Néill nemthruim Aed and ro triall máille 7 Níall mac Mael Sechnuill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>Trícha bliadán do Flaithbeartach Ua Neill nemthruim. Aed an ros triall imale 7 Mael saer Seachlaing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Trícha bliadhán do Fhlaithbertach Ua Néill nemthruim Aedh an ros triall maraen is Níall mac Mailsechlainn</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>28 T</strong></td>
<td>Sé rig déc dib ro gabhsat for Herind ule na rig aile fuaratar bríg o cech dune.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>Se riga dec dib ro gobsad Erind uile. na rig aile fuaridur bríg o cach dune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Se righe dég dibh ro gabhsat Erind uile na righ eile fuaradar brigh ó gach duine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>29 T</strong></td>
<td>Díb Murchertach 7 Domnall Fergus fírdhil. Baetán na ndám Eochaid is Cholman Rimid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>Dib Murcheartach Domnall 7 Fergus fírdhil. Baedán na bad Eochaid 7 Colman Rimid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Dibh Muirchertach 7 Domhnall bás dibh Fergus fírdhil Baedán na mbagh</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Rim Aed Uairidh na Subhne Mend is Fergal fossad Aed Ollan riath 7 a brathar Niall Frossach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Fég Aed Ordnide is Niall Caille cetaib comland Aed Findliath fial in Glundub Niall 7 Domnall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Derb ro sechnus drem na ilethrig ciabtar lanfir ardgus n-eolaig connachas tarddus i n-áirim.</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>A cóicc ceithreachad do rigaib ro gab Ailech ó Eogan fial co toracht Niall na ngíall ngroidheach.</td>
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### Translations of qqs. 32–33a/34

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<th>R (my trans.)</th>
<th>D (my trans.)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Truly I have omitted the list of half-kings,</td>
<td>though they were whole men,</td>
<td>a learned man’s high task,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truly, I have dealt with the list of half-kings,</td>
<td>though they were whole men,</td>
<td>a learned man’s high task,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truly, I have dealt with the list of half-kings,</td>
<td>though they were whole men,</td>
<td>so that I attained, of the host, in response,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>T (trans. MacNeill)</td>
<td>Forty-five kings</td>
<td>have ruled Ailech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R (my trans.)</td>
<td>Forty-five kings</td>
<td>have ruled Ailech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D (my trans.)</td>
<td>Forty-five kings</td>
<td>have ruled Ailech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33a</td>
<td>T (my trans.)</td>
<td>Each king of them that took Ireland,</td>
<td>a contention most noble and bright,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R (my trans.)</td>
<td>Each king of them that did not take Ireland,</td>
<td>a contention most noble and bright,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>T (trans. MacNeill)</td>
<td>They that shall rule Ailech</td>
<td>besides in the time to come, except</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R (my trans.)</td>
<td>They that shall rule Ailech</td>
<td>afterwards [...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td>ANí doronsat do chalmu clanna Éogain. cia ’meradid ní etat a arim eolaig.</td>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td>Inn eol dúib cath Slebe Cua clu co certa mebaid cen brón ria Murcachtach mór mac Erca</td>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td>Ocus cath Ocha for Ailill Molt is mó gessib triathach tosaich i torchair h-ua Fiachrach fessin</td>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td>Ocus cath Gránne for Findchath fegait eolaig ria Murcachtach co clú cáemfir ria n-u nÉogain</td>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td>re n-úib nEogain.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Ocus cath Ocha for Ailill Molt mo gheisibh triathglan tosaigh a torchair t/a Flachrach fesin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>Cath Cell Osnaid for sluag o Muman is mó sechme i torchair Oengus co n-achri 7 Eithne.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>Cath ceill Usnadh for sluagh Muman moo a seichne a torchair Aengus co n-aichne 7 Eichne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Cath Cell Osnaid for sluagh Mumhàn moo a secme a torchair Aengus cona aicme 7 Eithne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>Ocus cath Inde for Illaind i mbith glanfer fraech for feraibh isin deabaid fri laech Lagen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>Ocus cath Midhe for Aillil imad nglainfer fraech for feraibh isin deabaid fri laech Lagen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Ocus cath Midhe for Illann imad nglainfer fraech for feraibh isin debaigh is latch Laighean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>Is cath Delgga cath Mucrama ba mór glondalt cath i Tuaim Drubi dia ndrengat for sluág Connacht.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>Is cath Delga cath muc numa ba mór glonn allt. is cath ac Tuaim Drubaid dregaid for sluag Conachtaí</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Is cath Delga cath muc numa bá mór nglon alt is cath ac Tuaim Dhruibhaidh dregaid for sluagh Connacht</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>Is cath cegsa i torchair Duach Tenga Uma. mebaid ria Murchertach Mena ba mór guba.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>Is cath cegsa a dorchair duach tenga umae. mebaid re Murchertaigh nena ba mor guba</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Is cath seghsa in an dorchair Duach Tenga Umha mebaidh re Muircheartaigh nena</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Column</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>T</td>
<td><em>Is cath Culi cath Dromma troetha flathis.</em>&lt;br&gt;7 in cath in Mair Airb i nArd Machi.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Cath cuili os cath Droma traethad flathis.&lt;br&gt;cath a Muig Garb&lt;br&gt;7 in cath in airm aichne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Cath Cuile 7 cath Droma traethad flaithis.&lt;br&gt;cath Chind Aichle&lt;br&gt;7 cath amuigh airm aiche</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Cath Almaini&lt;br&gt;7 cath Chind Eich 7 cath Ailbe.&lt;br&gt;ro bris in triath&lt;br&gt;7 in cath in n-iath Adni.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Cath Almaine&lt;br&gt;cath Chind Eich 7 cath Ailbe.&lt;br&gt;ro bris in triath&lt;br&gt;7 in cath in n-iath Aidne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Cath Almaine&lt;br&gt;cath Chind Eich 7 is cath Ailbe&lt;br&gt;ro bris in triath&lt;br&gt;7 an cath a n-iath Aidne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>T</td>
<td><em>Is cath Detna i torchair</em>&lt;br&gt;Ardgal mac Conail&lt;br&gt;rigfe ferand&lt;br&gt;la cath Átha Sige sonaim.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Serbchath Slebe&lt;br&gt;Eblinne for mathe Muman&lt;br&gt;is for Echaid Sremm i farbad&lt;br&gt;i lar cend curad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Serb cath Slebi&lt;br&gt;Eblindí for maithib Muman.&lt;br&gt;for Eochaidh Srem a ndrochair&lt;br&gt;imad cend curad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Serb chath Sleibhe&lt;br&gt;hEblínne for mathaibh Muman&lt;br&gt;for Eochaidh Srem a torchair&lt;br&gt;lar cend curadh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix 8: Aideda in ‘Estid a eochu cen ón’ and LGÉ N (prose)**

See: 2:62

Same circumstances of death in ‘Estid a eochu cen ón’ and LGÉ N (prose)'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quatrain (LGÉ, IV)</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Corresponding material in LGÉ N (prose).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>q. 2 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Edleo.</td>
<td>IV, §310 (pp. 112–13); LL, I, l. 1070 (p. 34).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 3 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Ernmas.</td>
<td>IV, §310 (pp. 112–13); LL, I, l. 1071 (p. 34).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 3 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Fiach[r/n]a.</td>
<td>IV, §310 (pp. 112–13); LL, I, l. 1071 (p. 34).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 3 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Echtach.</td>
<td>IV, §310 (pp. 112–13); LL, I, l. 1071 (p. 34).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 7 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Núadu Argatlám.</td>
<td>IV, §312 (pp. 118–19); LL, I, l. 1093 (p. 34).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 7 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Macha.</td>
<td>IV, §312 (pp. 118–19); LL, I, l. 1093 (p. 34).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 8 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Ogma.</td>
<td>IV, §312 (pp. 118–19); LL, I, l. 1094 (p. 34).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 8 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Casmael.</td>
<td>IV, §312 (pp. 118–19); LL, I, l. 1095 (p. 34).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 33 (pp. 236–37).</td>
<td>Delbáeth.</td>
<td>IV, §315 (pp. 124–25); LL, I, l. 1125 (p. 35).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 34 (pp. 238–39).</td>
<td>Fiachna.</td>
<td>IV, §315 (pp. 124–25); LL, I, l. 1126 (p. 35).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 34 (pp. 238–39).</td>
<td>Aí (?)(^8).</td>
<td>IV, §315 (pp. 124–25); LL, I, l. 1126 (p. 35).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qq. 36, 38 (pp. 238–39).</td>
<td>Fotla.</td>
<td>V, §469 (pp. 154–55); LL, I, l. 1813 (p. 57).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qq. 36–37 (pp. 238–39).</td>
<td>Mac Gréine.</td>
<td>V, §469 (pp. 154–55); LL, I, l. 1813 (p. 57).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qq. 36, 38 (pp. 238–39).</td>
<td>Banba.</td>
<td>V, §469 (pp. 154–55); LL, I, l. 1813 (p. 57).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qq. 36–37 (pp. 238–39).</td>
<td>Mac Cuill.</td>
<td>V, §469 (pp. 154–55); LL, I, l. 1813 (p. 57).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qq. 36–37 (pp. 238–39).</td>
<td>Mac Cecht.</td>
<td>V, §469 (pp. 154–55); LL, I, l. 1813 (p. 57).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Different circumstances of death in ‘Estid a eochu’ and LGÉ N (prose)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quatrain (LGÉ, IV)</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Corresponding material in LGÉ N (prose).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>q. 11 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Bress.</td>
<td>IV, §312 (pp. 118–10); LL, I, l.1099 (p. 35).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 28 (pp. 236–37).</td>
<td>Néit.</td>
<td>V, §381 (pp.14–15); LL, I, l.1466 (p.46).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^7\) Here and in Appendix 11, use was made of Michael Murphy, *Lebor Gabála Érenn: The Book of the Takings of Ireland Part VI: Index* (ITS, 2008) <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/indexLG.html> [accessed 26 July 2015].

\(^8\) Macalister (LGÉ, IV, 100) suggests that Aí mac Ollamon may have emerged at some point out of a misreading of ‘ui. meic [sic] Ollaman’ (‘six sons of ollamon’), which is LL’s reading at this point.
<p>| q. 4 (pp. 226–27) | Donand. | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29); LL, I, l. 1169 (p. 37). |
| q. 5 (pp. 226–27) | Cethen. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23); LL, I, l. 1109 (p. 35). |
| q. 5 (pp. 226–27) | Cú. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23); LL, I, l. 1109 (p. 35). |
| q. 5 (pp. 226–27) | Cian. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23); LL, I, l. 1109 (p. 35). |
| q. 6 (pp. 226–27) | Coirpre. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23); LL, I, l. 1110 (p. 35). |
| q. 6 (pp. 226–27) | Étain. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23); LL, I, l. 1110 (p. 35). |
| q. 9 (pp. 228–29) | Dian Cecht. | IV, §314 (pp. 124–25); LL, I, l. 1121 (p. 35). |
| q. 9 (pp. 228–29) | Goibniu. | IV, §314 (pp. 124–25); LL, I, l. 1121 (p. 35). |
| q. 9 (pp. 228–29) | Luigne. | IV, §314 (pp. 124–25); LL, I, l. 1121 (p. 35). |
| q. 9 (pp. 228–29) | Creidne. | IV, §314 (pp. 124–25); LL, I, l. 1121 (p. 35). |
| q. 10 (pp. 228–29) | Bé Chuille. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23); LL, I, l. 1116 (p. 35). |
| q. 12 (pp. 230–31) | Dianann. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23); LL, I, l. 1116 (p. 35). |
| q. 13 (pp. 230–31) | Indui. | IV, §316 (pp. 126–27); LL, I, l. 1130 (p. 36). |
| q. 14 (pp. 230–31) | Fea. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23); LL, I, l. 1116 (p. 35). |
| q. 15 (pp. 230–31) | Boind. | IV, §316 (pp. 130–31); LL, I, l. 1181 (p. 37). |
| q. 16 (pp. 230–31) | Nechtan. | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29); LL, I, l. 1154 (p. 36). |
| q. 17 (pp. 232–33) | Abcan. | IV, §316 (pp. 130–31); LL, I, l. 1185 (p. 37). |
| q. 18 (pp. 232–33) | Elcmar. | IV, §316 (pp. 130–31); LL, I, l. 1184 (p. 37). |
| q. 19 (pp. 232–33) | Brian. | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29); LL, I, l. 1170 (p. 37). |
| q. 19 (pp. 232–33) | Iucharba. | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29); LL, I, l. 1170 (p. 37). |
| q. 19 (pp. 232–33) | Iuchair. | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29); LL, I, l. 1170 (p. 37). |
| qq. 20–21 (pp. 232–33) | Cormait. | IV, §313 (pp. 120–21); LL, I, l. 1109 (p. 35). |
| q. 22 (pp. 232–33) | Lug. | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29); LL, I, l. 1146 (p. 36). |
| q. 23 (pp. 234–35) | Aed. | IV, §313 (pp. 120–21); LL, I, l. 1109 (p. 35). |
| q. 25 (pp. 234–35) | Crìdinbel. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23); LL, I, l. 1110 (p. 35). |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>q.</th>
<th>(pp.)</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>(234–35)</td>
<td>Óengus.</td>
<td>IV, §313 (pp. 120–21); LL, I, l. 1109 (p. 35).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>(234–35)</td>
<td>‘Óenmac Manannáin’&quot; ('Manannán’s only son').</td>
<td>IV, §316 (pp. 128–29); LL, I, l. 1161 (p. 36).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>(236–37)</td>
<td>Badb.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 122–23); LL, I, l. 1180 (p. 37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>(236–37)</td>
<td>Neman.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 122–23); LL, I, l. 1180 (p. 37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>(236–37)</td>
<td>Sigmal.</td>
<td>IV, §316 (pp. 128–29); LL, I, l. 1156 (p. 36).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>(236–37)</td>
<td>Manannán.</td>
<td>IV, §316 (pp. 128–29); LL, I, l. 1161–65 (p. 36).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>(236–37)</td>
<td>Uillend.</td>
<td>IV, §316 (pp. 130–31); LL, I, l. 1182 (p. 37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>(236–37)</td>
<td>In Dagda.</td>
<td>IV, §313 (pp. 120–21); LL, I, l. 1106 (p. 35).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>(236–37)</td>
<td>C'aicher.</td>
<td>IV, §316 (pp. 128–29); LL, I, l. 1154 (p. 36).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>(238–39)</td>
<td>Éogan.</td>
<td>IV, §315 (pp. 124–25); LL, I, l. 1126 (p. 35).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>(238–39)</td>
<td>Óengus.</td>
<td>IV, §313 (pp. 120–21); LL, I, l. 1109 (p. 35).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>(238–39)</td>
<td>Aed.</td>
<td>IV, §313 (pp. 120–21); LL, I, l. 1109 (p. 35).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Characters in ‘Éstid a eolchu’ not mentioned in LGÉ N (prose)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>q.</th>
<th>(pp.)</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>(226–27)</td>
<td>Tuirill Picreo.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>(230–31)</td>
<td>Aine.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>(230–31)</td>
<td>Cairpe.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>(232–33)</td>
<td>Midir.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>(232–33)</td>
<td>‘in cruittre’ (‘the harper’).</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>(234–35)</td>
<td>Corrachend.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>(236–37)</td>
<td>Fuamnach.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>(236–37)</td>
<td>Bri.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>(236–37)</td>
<td>‘Ben in Dagda’ (‘the Dagda’s wife’).</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>(238–39)</td>
<td>Eochaid Iúil.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>(238–39)</td>
<td>Labraid.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

9 Cf. LGÉ IV §368 (pp. 192–93).
10 = Delbaeth mac Ogma? (Murphy, Index, s.n. Delbaeth³).
Appendix 9: ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ in AI

See: 2:6.3.2, 4:2.3.1

For ease of reference, Mac Airt’s sigla are used for specific manuscripts of ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’:11

D (Schmidt’s D): RIA D.iv.3, fols 36\textsuperscript{a}1–40\textsuperscript{b}20.
H (Schmidt’s UM): UM, fols 44\textsuperscript{b}1–47\textsuperscript{b}5.
L (Schmidt’s Lc1/Lc2): Lec., fols 11\textsuperscript{b}5–13\textsuperscript{b}51.

For some reason, Mac Airt did not claim to have used the second Lec. text of the poem (fols 27\textsuperscript{a}25–30\textsuperscript{b}6), although Schmidt has pointed out that he does use it under the same siglum (L) as the first.12 Schmidt has included the second Lec. text in his analysis. I have confined the present study to the text and variants in Mac Airt’s edition.13

References to ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ are by canto number (Roman numerals) and quatrain number within that canto (Arabic numerals), as numbered in Mac Airt’s edition. Under the ‘Summary of shared text/information’, the format of the text or information in AI is given in brackets at the end of each item; a reference to Mac Airt’s edition indicates full citation of verse. Quatrains from ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ cited in AI are identified as such and located in AI but otherwise given under their canto and quatrain number in Mac Airt’s edition (e.g. ‘AI §171’s III:4’).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definite Citations and uses</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AI ref.</strong></td>
<td><strong>RdaDdN ref.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
<td><strong>Summary of shared text or information</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1 §171.</td>
<td>III:1–11.</td>
<td>III:1, 4 quoted <em>in extenso</em>; III:2–3, 5–11 summarised in Gaelic prose.</td>
<td>The Persians’ origins (<em>AI</em>: III:1); why they are so named (<em>AI</em>: Gaelic prose); Cyrus permits the Jews’ return to Jerusalem from exile (<em>AI</em>: III:4); the treasures from Solomon’s temple returned to Jerusalem (<em>AI</em>: Gaelic prose); the Jewish leaders’ names and roles (<em>ibid.</em>); Cyrus’ reign-length (30 years) (<em>ibid.</em>); his invasion of Scythia and his slaying by Tomyre (<em>ibid.</em>).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

The poem (III:4), in D, states that 30 Persian kings ruled the world; this is in neither LH nor *AI* §171’s III:4; *AI* and the poem’s different versions go on to enumerate around a dozen Persian world-kings (see D4), broadly tallying with the number of kings each names. *AI* §171 (Gaelic prose) states that 4,000 silver vessels were returned to Jerusalem; the poem (III:5), 50,000 (D. H: unspecified; L: 1000). *AI* §171 (Gaelic prose) adds that it was in the seventh month of his reign that Cyrus permitted the Jews’ return. The poem (III:11) and *AI* §171 (Gaelic prose) disagree on the number of Persian soldiers that fell with Cyrus in Scythia (300,000 v. 200,000) and *AI* §171 (Gaelic prose) adds that Cyrus [re?]built Babylon. *AI* §172 (Latin prose) notes different scholarly views of the time elapsed from the burning of the temple to its re-foundation and mentions that Samaritan interference delayed its completion until the second year of Darius. None of this appears in the poem.

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13 For various other fragments of this poem, see Schmidt, ‘Zu *Réidig dam*’, p. 212.
Different texts of the poem (III:12) disagree on Cambyses’ reign-length (DH: 7 years; L: 8 years); AI §174 (Latin prose) gives 8 years. The poem (III:13–14) adds that Cambyses was known as ‘the second Nebuchadnezzar’ specifically among the Jews and that he was slain by insurgent magi, one of which was his son-in-law, Smerdes.

AI §186, in its prose introduction (Latin prose), notes that Artaxerxes’ cognomen was ‘Mnemon’, whereas this is simply assumed in the poem.

AI does not mention the four year reign of Perses son of Ochus (III:31); indeed, he is apparently unique to ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’.14 The poem (III:31) ascribes Darius a reign of seven years, AI §191 (Latin prose) six years. Alexander’s defeat of Darius is mentioned in the poem at this point (III:32) but not in AI until §192 (Latin prose). In the chronological recapitulation, AI §191’s citation of III:33 gives 12 kings and 230 years. In the poem’s III:33, disagreement is found (D: 12 kings, 230 years; HL:10 kings, 250 years). The reigns of the Persian world-kings total 227 years in AI but 240 years (rounding up) in the poem, 230 in H.

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### Possible uses

| P1 | §§181–83. | III:17–23. | Latin prose; one sentence of Gaelic prose (AI §183). | Xerxes’ reign (Latin prose); his invasion of Greece (ibid.); the expedition’s soldiers and ships (ibid.); Artabanus’ reign-length (seven months) (ibid.); Artaxerxes’ reign (ibid.); his cognomen (Longimanus) (ibid.); Ezra’s return to Jerusalem and the re-establishment of the law (ibid.); Nehemiah’s re-building of Jerusalem’s walls (ibid.). |

**AI** §181 (Latin prose) and the poem (III:17–22) give the same categories of information on Xerxes’ expedition, disagree on the exact number of soldiers and warships, but agree on the numbers of supply ships.\(^{16}\) The poem’s (III:17) manuscripts disagree on Xerxes’ reign-length (DL: 20; H: 10); AI §181 gives 20. The poem (III:19) specifies that Artabanus assassinated Xerxes; §182 (Latin prose) simply notes his reign’s commencement. Artaxerxes is ascribed a forty-three year reign-length in Al §183 (Latin prose) but only forty years in the poem (III:20). Al does not mention the subsequent short reigns of Xerxes (two months) and Sogdianus (seven months) given by the poem (III:23). AI §183 (Gaelic prose) adds that two tribes of Israel returned from Assyria and ten from Babylon, information not found in the poem.

| P2 | §185 | III:24. | Latin Prose | Darius Nothus’ reign-length (19 years) (all Latin prose). |

The poem (III:24), but not Al, mentions the loss of Egypt during Darius Nothus’ reign.

| P3 | §§188–89. | III:30. | Latin prose. | Artaxerxes Ochus’ reign; Arses’ reign-length (4 years); conquest of Egypt (all Latin prose). |

**AI** §188 (Latin prose) gives Artaxerxes Ochus a reign-length of 26 years, the poem (III:30) 30 years. AI §188 (Latin prose) has Artaxerxes Ochus conquer Egypt, not Arses, as in the poem. In H, III:30 does not include Arses but gives 4 years as an alternative reign-length for Artaxerxes (!).


**AI** §197 (Latin prose) gives Ptolomeus Philodelphus a reign of 27 years; the poem (IV:13) gives him 38 (DL) or 37 (H) years. AI and the poem describe his library differently: in AI §197 (Latin prose), it contains both Gentile literature and the Scriptures, while, in the poem (IV:15), it contains works in every language. The poem (IV:15) numbers the books therein at 80,000, AI §197 (Latin prose) at 30,000. AI §197 (Latin prose) contains the additional detail that Ptolomeus liberated the Jews that were living in Egypt. AI §198 (Latin prose) contains a passage detailing Ptolomeus’ military power that has no parallel in the poem.


**AI** §200 (Latin prose) ascribes 26 years to Ptolomeus Euergetes, the poem (IV:16) 27 years (D) or 17 years (HL).

Rawl.B.503 is missing the next two folios (between fols 6’ and 7’) after §200. The text resumes during the reign of Augustus and the world-kingship of the Romans.

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\(^{16}\) The poem’s manuscripts disagree on some of these figures: Mac Airt (ed. and trans.), ‘Poem [2]’, p. 36.
## Appendix 10: Attributions to Flann in LGÉ

### 10.1: Definite attributions to Flann Mainistrech in LGÉ

#### Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recension m</th>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Attribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rm §316a</td>
<td>‘Estid a eolchu cen ón’</td>
<td>Flann cecinit (‘Flann sang’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§468</td>
<td>‘Anmand na tóisech delm tenn’ (1 q.)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§492</td>
<td>‘Cruithnig cid dos farclam’</td>
<td>Flann cecinit i.e. Mainistrech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ym §316a</td>
<td>‘Estid a eolchu cen ón’</td>
<td>Flann cecinit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§468</td>
<td>‘Anmand na tóisech delm tenn’</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lbm §316a</td>
<td>‘Estid a eolchu cen ón’</td>
<td>Flann cecinit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§468</td>
<td>‘Anmand na tóisech delm tenn’</td>
<td>—</td>
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</table>

#### Recension a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Attribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’</td>
<td>Flann Mainistrech cecinit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Conad dia n-aideaib ro chan Flann Mainistrech in duan-sa sis ga foirgeall’ (‘So it is on their deaths that Flann Mainistrech sang this poem, providing authoritative testimony on them’).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Et is da n-aideaib na taisseach-sa anuas ro chan Flann so sis’ (‘And it is on the deaths of these leaders above that Flann sang this’).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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17 Sigla are as in Scowcroft, ‘Medieval Recensions’, p. 4.
18 Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
19 This attribution’s existence cannot be gleaned from Macalister’s edition: Dublin, RIA, MS D.iii.1 (671), saec. XV, fol. 2vb38–40.
Recension b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>§385</th>
<th>‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’</th>
<th>‘De quibus dicitur’ (‘On which it is said’)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>§594bis</td>
<td>‘Ochtuin August in ri’</td>
<td>‘Amail adbert Flann’ (‘As Flann says’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>§385</td>
<td>‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’ (1 q.)</td>
<td>‘De quibus dicitur’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>§385</td>
<td>‘Ochtuin August in ri’</td>
<td>‘Amail adbert Flann’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>§594bis</td>
<td>‘Ochtuin August in ri’</td>
<td>‘De quibus dicitur’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lb</td>
<td>§385</td>
<td>‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’</td>
<td>‘De quibus dicitur’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>§594bis</td>
<td>‘Ochtuin August in ri’</td>
<td>‘Amail adbert Flann’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>§386</td>
<td>‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’</td>
<td>‘Is do aideduib ’oocus dia n-anmannaib/ na toisech-sa anuas ro chachain Flann imso sis’ (‘It is on the deaths / and on their names / of those leaders that Flann sang this’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>§594bis</td>
<td>‘Ochtuin August in ri’</td>
<td>‘Amail adbert Flann’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Recension b: Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lb</th>
<th>Lec., fols 11th/4; 13th 46–49</th>
<th>‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superscription:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Do flaithiusaib in domain moir annso’ (‘on the kings of the great world, here’).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Cach flaith failte os gairbri glain fris raite airdri in domain o ’Nin co Leomain na clann ros rim in t-eolas aen Fhlanann Flann feidbind romben brig mbreath fer leigind min Mainistreich, ro gle triana gning a guth re cach righ do reidhiugudh’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(‘Each ruler of gladness over clear [?]</td>
<td>who was called high-king of the world,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flann, sweet of word, the strength of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 Again, this is only to be found in the original manuscript: RIA D.iv.3, fol. 18v14. The interlinear insertion seems to be in the main scribe’s hand.
21 Material from or relating to ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ is printed from manuscript. The conclusion of ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ is edited and translated from Lb by MacNeill (‘Irish Historical Tract’, p. 138), and from UM, with variants from elsewhere, by Thurneysen (‘Flann Manistrech’s Gedicht’, pp. 270–72).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *Lec.*, fol. 15^b^8–9 | ‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann trú’ | ‘De regibus Hibernie ab Erimon usque Eochu Feidlech et incipit ab Eocho usque ad Laegaire mac Neill. Et Flann cecinit’ (‘On the kings of Ireland from Érimón to Eochaid Feidlech and from Eochaid to Loegaire mac Neill begins. And Flann sang’).

| *Lec.*, fols 16^a^36; 16^a^38–39 | ‘Ríg Themra toebaige ír ttain’ | Superscription: ‘Do rigaib Erind iar cretim inso sis’ (‘On the kings of Ireland after the faith here’).

**Internal:**
‘Coro Flann sech digla drenn mac in fir ligda leigind for nem ni dal dithich De ruachain rightig hi righe’

(‘May Flann, disregarding vengeance for feuds,| the son of the brilliant lector, | attain God’s heaven, a judgement that cannot be gainsaid, | attaining the royal house in the kingdom’).

| D RIA D.iv.3, fols 36^a^1; 40^a^13–17 | ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ | Superscription: ‘Do flaithiusuib in domuin moir indso sis’ (‘On the lords of the great world here’).

**Internal:**
‘Cach flaith failti os gargbrigh glain fris raiti airdrigh in doman o Nîn co Léomhain na cland ro sîm an t-eolach oen Flann Fland feigbindh rom ben brig breth fer leighing min Mainistrech ro gle triana gnim a guth ré each réidigut’

(‘Each ruler of gladness over clear, blunt power | who was called high-king of the world, | from Ninus to Leo of the weapons, | Flann alone, the wise man, hath numbered them’.

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| Flann, sweet of word, the strength of judgments hath sounded him, | the gentle lector of Monasterboice, | his voice through his work hath made clear | the explanation of each king's time’ (trans. MacNeill).

RIA D.iv.3, fol. 43vb12–13 | ‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tnú’ | ‘Finit de Regibus Hiberniae ab Heremon usque Eocha Feidleach 7 incipit nunc ab Eocha usque ad Laegaire mac Néill. Flann cecinit’ (‘On the kings of Ireland from Érimón to Eochaid Feidlech and from Eochaid to Lóegaire mac Neill begins. And Flann sang’).

RIA D.iv.3, fol. 44va13 | ‘Ríg Themra toebaige iar ttain’ | [ms. illegible] ‘...iar cretim innso sios’.

Internal: [ms. illegible]

| Recension c |
| Lc | §371 | ‘Estid a Eolchu cen on’ | ‘Conad dia n-oideadaib do chan in t-eolach in duan-sa. i. Flann Mainistrech’ (‘So it is on their deaths that the knowledgeable one, that is, Flann Mainistrech, sang this poem’).

§503 | ‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’ | ‘Is ar oigeadaib na täiseach-sa täncadar le Macaib Míled in Érind, do neoch ro airmemar romaind, 7 ara n-anmandaib, ach ger o hairmead, roime iad 7 do na hindadaib 7 do na cathaib a ndrochradar 7 do na rigaib ler toitsead 7 in mèd do thoit le Túatha Dé Danann i cathaib 7 comracab díb 7 in mèd do thoit le Macaib Milead fèn, amail adfet Flann Mainistrech’ (‘It is on the deaths of those leaders that came with the sons of Mil to Ireland, which we have already recounted, and on their names, even though they have already been listed, and on the locations and on the battles in which they fell and on the kings by which they fell and on those that fell by the Túatha Dé Danann in battles and those that fell by sons of Mil themselves, as Flann Mainistrech relates’ (trans. Macalister)).
| §503 | ‘Anmand na toisech delm tenn’ | ‘Ocus is for anmandaib na taiseach sin 7 na hoicthigern, do neoch thanic le maeacaib Míled in Érinn 7 ar na dindaib ro cumdaiged leo in Érinn, do chum Flann Mainistreach in duan-sa; 7 ro bad fearr comad ac teacht tar na taisechaib ica cét-imrad docuimneocha hi, 7 o nach ead ni hanoircheas a cuimneochad, mara tarla don toiscesea a cur sa leabar-sa annsó’ (‘And it is upon the names of those chieftains, and of the lordlings who came with the Sons of Mil into Ireland, and of the forts that were founded by them in Ireland, that Flann Mainistrech framed this song. And it were better that we should have remembered it when we were going over the chieftains at their first mention; and since it was not so, it is not improper that we should remember it now, as there has come this opportunity of inserting it into this book here’ (trans. Macalister)). |
| §628 | ‘Suibne go sloghadh dia soí’ | [No introduction. This is a quatrain from ‘Ríg Themra toebeige iar ttain’: LL, III, ll. 15846–49 (p. 511).] |

B §§273, 275 (2 qq.) | ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ | ‘Ut dixit poeta’; ‘ut dicitur’ (‘As the poet said’; ‘as it is said’). |

§371 | ‘Éstid a Eolchu cen ón’ | ‘Conadh dia n-aigheadhaibh ro chan Fland Maneisdreach in duan-sa sis’ (‘So it is on their deaths that Flann Mainistrech sang this poem’). |

### 10.2: Problematic Attributions to ‘Flann’ in LGÉ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recension – Manuscript – LGÉ ref.</th>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Attribution (my translations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recension a</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N §245</td>
<td>[‘Ériu oll oirdnit Gáedil’] ‘Togail tuir Chonaind co ngail’</td>
<td>‘Unde in sui senchasa cecinit’ (‘Whence the master of history sang’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F §245</td>
<td>‘Togail tuir Chonaind co ngail’</td>
<td>‘As don gabail sin Nemid do can in senchaid in duan’ (‘It is on that conquest [sic] by Nemed that the historian sang the poem’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recension b</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E §257</td>
<td>‘Togail tuir Chonaind co ngail’</td>
<td>‘Ut dicitur’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R §257</td>
<td>‘Togail tuir Chonaind co ngail’ (1 q.)</td>
<td>‘Ut dicitur’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y §257</td>
<td>‘Togail tuir Chonaind co ngail’</td>
<td>‘Ut dicitur’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>§257</td>
<td>‘Togail tuir Chonaind co ngail’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recension c</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lc</td>
<td>§266</td>
<td>‘Togail tuir Chonaind co ngail’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>§614</td>
<td>‘Augaine mór mac rig Érenn’ ‘Boroma Laigen na learg’ ‘Rig rogb Temair na treab’</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>§266</td>
<td>‘Togail tuir Chonaind co ngail’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>§271</td>
<td>‘Togail tuir Chonaind co ngail’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 11: *Aideda* in ‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’ and *LGÉ F* (prose)

See: 3:4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quatrain (<em>LGÉ</em>, IV)</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Corresponding material in <em>LGÉ N</em> (prose).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>q. 2 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Edleo.</td>
<td>IV, §310 (pp. 112–13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 3 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Ernmas.</td>
<td>IV, §310 (pp. 112–13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 3 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Fiach[r/n]a.</td>
<td>IV, §310 (pp. 112–13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 3 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Echtach.</td>
<td>IV, §310 (pp. 112–13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 3 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Etargal.</td>
<td>IV, §310 (pp. 112–13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 7 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Núadu Argatlám.</td>
<td>IV, §§312, 314 (pp. 118–19, 124–25).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 7 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Macha.</td>
<td>IV, §312 (pp. 118–19).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 8 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Ogma.</td>
<td>IV, §312 (pp. 118–19).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 8 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Casmael.</td>
<td>IV, §312 (pp. 118–19).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 32 (pp. 236–37).</td>
<td>In Dagda.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 124–25).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 33 (pp. 236–37).</td>
<td>Delbáeth.</td>
<td>IV, §315 (pp. 124–25).</td>
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<tr>
<td>q. 34 (pp. 238–39).</td>
<td>Fiachna.</td>
<td>IV, §315 (pp. 124–25).</td>
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### Different circumstances of death in ‘Éstid a eolchu’ and *LGÉ F* (prose)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Character</th>
<th>Corresponding material in <em>LGÉ N</em> (prose).</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>q. 11 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Bress.</td>
<td>IV, §312 (pp. 118–10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 22 (pp. 232–33).</td>
<td>Lug.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 124–25).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 28 (pp. 236–37).</td>
<td>Néit.</td>
<td>V, §381 (pp. 14–15).</td>
</tr>
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### Characters mentioned in ‘Éstid a eolchu’ and *LGÉ F* (prose)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quatrain (pp. 226–27).</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Corresponding material in <em>LGÉ N</em> (prose).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>q. 4 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Donand.</td>
<td>IV, §316 (pp. 128–29).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 5 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Cethen.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 122–23).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 5 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Cú.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 122–23).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 5 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Cian.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 122–23).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 6 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Coirpre.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 122–23).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 6 (pp. 226–27).</td>
<td>Etain.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 122–23).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 9 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Dian Cecht.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 124–25).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 9 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Goibniu.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 124–25).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 9 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Luigne.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 124–25).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. 10 (pp. 228–29).</td>
<td>Creidne.</td>
<td>IV, §314 (pp. 124–25).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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23 With reference to Macalister’s (*LGÉ*, IV, 100) suggestion that Aí mac Ollamon may have emerged at some point out of a misreading of ‘ui. meic [sic] Ollaman’ (‘six sons of Ollam’), F reads ‘secht mac Ollamon’ (‘seven sons of Ollam’).
| q. 12 (pp. 230–31) | Bé Chuille. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23). |
| q. 12 (pp. 230–31) | Dianann. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23). |
| q. 13 (pp. 230–31) | Induí. | IV, §316 (pp. 126–27). |
| q. 14 (pp. 230–31) | Fea. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23). |
| q. 15 (pp. 230–31) | Boind. | IV, §316 (pp. 130–31). |
| q. 16 (pp. 230–31) | Nechtan. | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29). |
| q. 17 (pp. 232–33) | Abcan. | IV, §316 (pp. 130–31). |
| q. 18 (pp. 232–33) | Midir. | IV, §316 (pp. 126–27). |
| q. 18 (pp. 232–33) | Elcmar. | IV, §316 (pp. 130–31). |
| q. 19 (pp. 232–33) | Brian. | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29). |
| q. 19 (pp. 232–33) | Iucharba. | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29). |
| q. 19 (pp. 232–33) | Iuchair. | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29). |
| qq. 20–21 (pp. 232–33) | Cermait. | IV, §313 (pp. 120–21). |
| q. 23 (pp. 234–35) | Aed. | IV, §313 (pp. 120–21). |
| q. 25 (pp. 234–35) | Crídinbel. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23). |
| q. 26 (pp. 234–35) | Óengus. | IV, §313 (pp. 120–21). |
| q. 27 (pp. 234–35) | ‘Oenmac Manannán’ (‘Manannán’s only son’).\(^{24}\) | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29). |
| q. 28 (pp. 236–37) | Badb. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23). |
| q. 28 (pp. 236–37) | Neman. | IV, §314 (pp. 122–23). |
| q. 29 (pp. 236–37) | Sigmall. | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29). |
| q. 31 (pp. 236–37) | Uillend. | IV, §316 (pp. 130–31). |
| q. 33 (pp. 236–37) | Caicher. | IV, §316 (pp. 128–29). |
| q. 34 (pp. 238–39) | Éogan. | IV, §315 (pp. 124–25). |
| q. 35 (pp. 238–39) | Óengus. | IV, §313 (pp. 120–21). |
| q. 35 (pp. 238–39) | Aed. | IV, §313 (pp. 120–21). |

**Characters in ‘Éstid a eolchu’ not mentioned in LGÉ F (prose)**

| q. 3 (pp. 226–27) | Tuirill Picreo.\(^{25}\) | – |
| q. 15 (pp. 230–31) | Aine. | – |
| q. 16 (pp. 230–31) | Cairpe. | – |
| q. 22 (pp. 232–33) | ‘in cruiitir’ (‘the harper’). | – |
| q. 24 (pp. 234–35) | Corrachend. | – |
| q. 29 (pp. 236–37) | Fuamnach. | – |
| q. 29 (pp. 236–37) | Bri. | – |
| q. 30 (pp. 236–37) | Manannán. | – |
| q. 31 (pp. 236–37) | ‘Ben in Dagda’ (‘the Dagda’s wife’). | – |
| q. 35 (pp. 238–39) | Eochaid Fáil. | – |
| q. 35 (pp. 238–39) | Labraid. | – |

\(^{24}\) cf. LGÉ IV §368 (pp. 192–93).
\(^{25}\) = Delbaeth mac Ogma (?); Murphy, Index, s.n. Delbaeth\(^{3}\).
### Appendix 12: ‘Cétrí ro gabh Érinn uile’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>See: 2:2.2.1, 4:2.1.2, 5:2.1.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### 12.1: The poem in selected manuscripts

|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|

**UM, saec. XIV/XV, fol. 2ra–28:** Concluding genealogies of Cenél nÉogain.

**BB, saec. XIV/XV, fol. 49ra–49rb:** Concluding Catha Cenél Éogain, within genealogies of Cenél nÉogain.


The metre resembles *deibide scaitle* (7x, 7x+1; 7x, 7x+1), although with the lines invariably ending on a single syllable.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pref.</th>
<th>Rawl.B.502</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remend rigraide is ois 7 rig hEren a hAiliuch prius ('The king-lists here and the kings of Ireland from Ailech first') (my trans.). <strong>27</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| UM | Fursamadh ar ni da righaibh Claimh Eoghan mac Neill andso amal adeir an duan aga ndaiream cona ndoighheadaibh ('An elucidation of some of the kings of Cenél nÉogain mac Néill here, as this poem states through enumerating them with their deaths' (my trans.)). **28** |

| BB | Finit do clandaibh Eogain meic Neill agdso. Flann Fìna cècinid ('Here ends the matter of Cenél nÉogain mac Néill. Flann Fìna sang' (my trans.)). |

| Ó Cléirigh Book | It iat iamsin craeibha coibhnesa, catha, et coingleaca, ocus coimlenga cloindi Muirethaigh mc Eogain mc Neill co Muircertach mac Domhnaill, conidh dona rioghaibh sin cenel Eoghan mc Nell as-bert Flann mainestrech an nath-so ('These are the genealogies, battles, strife, and contentions of the sons of Muiredach mac Eogain mic Néill down to Muirchertach mac Domnall, so it is of those kings of Cenél nÉogain that Flann Mainistrech pronounced this composition' (my trans.)). |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rawl.B.502</th>
<th>Cetri ro gabh-Erinn uile. do sil Eogain a h-Echdruim in athruí cheppach thoir. Muircertach mac Muiredaig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘The first king who took Ireland</td>
<td>of the seed of Éogan from Aughrim;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| UM | Cetraidh dha gab Erenn uill da sil Eogain a theachdhruir an athruí cheicheadheach thoir Muircertach mac Muiredhaigh |

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**26** Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Metrics* (Dublin: RIA, 1961), §65 (p. 65).

**27** Ó Cuív (ed. [preface only]), *Catalogue*, I, 199.

**28** Mulchrone (ed. [preface only]), *RIA Cat.*, fasc. 26, 3316.

**29** The translation is of the Rawl. B.502 text only.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>BB</th>
<th><em>Ó Cléirigh</em> Book</th>
<th>Rawl.B.502</th>
<th>UM</th>
<th>O Cléirigh Book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Domhnall ina diaidh ni doim Fergus an dhéadaid Domnall Buedan iar Fergus a fal 7 Eochoaid iar mBuedan</td>
<td>‘Domnall after him, not ungenerous,</td>
<td>Fergus after Domnall,</td>
<td>Baedan after Fergus of the enclosures</td>
<td>and Eochoaid after Baedan’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domhnall ina diaidh ni doim Fergus an cghaidh Domnall Buadan iar Fearugas na fal 7 Eocaigh iar mBuadan</td>
<td>FFergus after Domnall,</td>
<td>Baedan after Fergus</td>
<td>and Eochoaid after Baedan’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Colman iar nEochoaid na n-ag. Aedh Uairidhnaich iar Colman Suibni iar nAedh ro dedlad de. 7 Fergal iar Suibne</td>
<td>‘Colmán after Eochoaid of the cattle,</td>
<td>Aed Uairidnach after Colmán,</td>
<td>Suibne after Áed was severed from it</td>
<td>and Fergal after Suibne’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colman iar nEochoaid co n-adh Aedh Uairidhnaich iar Colman Suibni iar nAedh deabhladh de 7 Fergal iar Suibne</td>
<td>‘Colmán after Eochoaid of the cattle,</td>
<td>Aed Uairidnach after Colmán,</td>
<td>Suibne after Áed was severed from it</td>
<td>and Fergal after Suibne’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aedh Allan h-aithli Fegail ise ro ghabh for Temhraigh Niall Flassach iar n-Aedh alle Aedh Findliath iar Nialle</td>
<td>‘Aed Allán, after Fergal,</td>
<td>he took Tara,</td>
<td>Niall Frossach after</td>
<td>Áed Oirdnide after high Niall’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rawl.B.502</td>
<td>At iat so slúignim do neoch. <em>flaithi hErenn a h-Aileoch</em> da <em>fer dec is .iiii. cain</em>. ro po <em>clethchur ca cetaib</em>.</td>
<td>‘These are the names, for anyone, of the Ireland’s lords from Ailech: sixteen good men, they were a palisade for hundreds.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

30 ‘or, sixteen good men’; see Appendix 12.2.
| Rawl.B.502 | Suibni mac Fiachna fuaír gail. | ‘Suibne mac Fiachna found a wound, | he whom Congal mac Scandail slew; | Fergal, lord of Derry, fell | in the swift Battle of Almaine’. |
| Rawl.B.502 | Dorochair Colman Rimidh la Logan diolmain dibhe ecc at-bath na toigh trelmach mo chara Aedh uairidhnaich. | ‘Colmán Rimid fell | by Locán, poor protection; | the death that died, in the weaponed house, | my friend, Aed Uairidnach’. |
| Rawl.B.502 | Adrochar Colman Rimidh la Logan didhna dha dainigh ec abath na thich trelmach mo chara Aedh Uairidhnaich. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| Rawl.B.502 | Dorochair Colman Rimid la Locan didna dinnim ec at-bath na thich trelmach mo chara Aed Uairidhnaich. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| BB | Baedan mac Muircertaigh moill et Eocho mac Domnoill at-rochradar a Temhraigh la Cronan mac Tigernaigh. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| UM | Domnall mac Muireadaigh maill 7 Eochaid mac Domnaill da thoitedar a Teamhraigh la Cronan mac Tigernaigh. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| BB | Baedan mac Muircertaigh moill et Eocho mac Domnoill do rocratar i Temraich la Cronan mac Tigernaigh. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| UM | Domhghaidh Mhuireartaigh na modh gòin is bathudh. Is loscadh eg abathadar a fhus a meic Domnall is Fergus. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| BB | Oididh Murcertaig na mod guin is badadh is loscend ecc at-batator abbus a meic Domnall is Fergus. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| O Cléirigh Book | Oided Muircertaigh na modh guin is bádadh | is loscend ecc at-batator abbu | a meic Domnall is Fergus. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| UM | Oidheadh Mhuireartaigh na modh gòin is bathudh. Is loscadh eg abathadar a fhus a meic Domnall is Fergus. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| 8 | Rawl.B.502 | Baetan mac Muiredaich maill. et Eochuid mac Domnaill do rocratar i Temraich. la Cronan mac Tigernaigh. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| 9 | Rawl.B.502 | Dorochair Colman Rimid la Locan didna dinnim ec at-bath na thich trelmach mo chara Aed Uairidhnaich. | ‘Colmán Rimid fell | by Locán, poor protection; | the death that died, in the weaponed house, | my friend, Aed Uairidnach’. |
| 10 | Rawl.B.502 | Suibni mac Fiachna fuaír gail. | ‘Suibne mac Fiachna found a wound, | he whom Congal mac Scandail slew; | Fergal, lord of Derry, fell | in the swift Battle of Almaine’. |
| Rawl.B.502 | Dorochair Colman Rimid la Locan didna dinnim ec at-bath na thich trelmach mo chara Aed Uairidhnaich. | ‘Colmán Rimid fell | by Locán, poor protection; | the death that died, in the weaponed house, | my friend, Aed Uairidnach’. |
| UM | Adrochar Colman Rimidh la Logan diamh dha dainigh ec abath na thich trelmach mo chara Aedh Uairidhnaich. | ‘Colmán Rimid fell | by Locán, poor protection; | the death that died, in the weaponed house, | my friend, Aed Uairidnach’. |
| BB | Baedan mac Muircertaigh moill et Eocho mac Domnoill do rocratar i Temraich la Cronan mac Tigernaigh. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| O Cléirigh Book | Oided Muircertaigh na modh guin is bádadh | is loscend ecc at-batator abbu | a meic Domnall is Fergus. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| 8 | | Baetan mac Muiredaich maill. et Eochuid mac Domnaill do rocratar i Temraich. la Cronan mac Tigernaigh. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| 9 | | Dorochair Colman Rimid la Locan didna dinnim ec at-bath na thich trelmach mo chara Aed Uairidhnaich. | ‘Colmán Rimid fell | by Locán, poor protection; | the death that died, in the weaponed house, | my friend, Aed Uairidnach’. |

| Rawl.B.502 | Suibni mac Fiachna fuaír gail. | ‘Suibne mac Fiachna found a wound, | he whom Congal mac Scandail slew; | Fergal, lord of Derry, fell | in the swift Battle of Almaine’. |
| Rawl.B.502 | Dorochair Colman Rimid la Locan didna dinnim ec at-bath na thich trelmach mo chara Aed Uairidhnaich. | ‘Colmán Rimid fell | by Locán, poor protection; | the death that died, in the weaponed house, | my friend, Aed Uairidnach’. |
| UM | Adrochar Colman Rimidh la Logan diamh dha dainigh ec abath na thich trelmach mo chara Aedh Uairidhnaich. | ‘Colmán Rimid fell | by Locán, poor protection; | the death that died, in the weaponed house, | my friend, Aed Uairidnach’. |
| BB | Baedan mac Muircertaigh moill et Eocho mac Domnoill do rocratar i Temraich la Cronan mac Tigernaigh. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| O Cléirigh Book | Oided Muircertaigh na modh guin is bádadh | is loscend ecc at-batator abbu | a meic Domnall is Fergus. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| 8 | | Baetan mac Muiredaich maill. et Eochuid mac Domnaill do rocratar i Temraich. la Cronan mac Tigernaigh. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| 9 | | Dorochair Colman Rimid la Locan didna dinnim ec at-bath na thich trelmach mo chara Aed Uairidhnaich. | ‘Colmán Rimid fell | by Locán, poor protection; | the death that died, in the weaponed house, | my friend, Aed Uairidnach’. |
| UM | Adrochar Colman Rimidh la Logan diamh dha dainigh ec abath na thich trelmach mo chara Aedh Uairidhnaich. | ‘Colmán Rimid fell | by Locán, poor protection; | the death that died, in the weaponed house, | my friend, Aed Uairidnach’. |
| BB | Baedan mac Muircertaigh moill et Eocho mac Domnoill do rocratar i Temraich la Cronan mac Tigernaigh. | ‘Baetan son of gentle Muiredach | and Eochaid mac Domnaill | fell at Tara | at the hands of Cronan mac Tigernaich’. |
| UM       | Suibni míc Fiachra fuair gail | da mharb Conghal míc Scandail | adbath Fergal fi flaith Dairi | a c ath earlaimh Almhaini |
| BB       | Suibne míc Colmaín fuair ghill | ro marb Suibne" míc Scandail | marbtar Aedh Allan na fleadh | i cat mal Maighi Sereadh |
| Ó Cléirigh Book | Suibne míc Fiachna fuair goil | ro marb Conghal míc Scannail | at-bath Ferghal flaith Doire | a c ath adbal Almhoine. |
| 11 Rawl.B.502 | Marbhthair Aed Allain nan haed. | i cat mall Maigí Seireadh | marbh Niall Frossach na fleidi. | ar lar la na ailithre |
| BB       | Marbh Niall Frossach na fleidh | for lar hi iar n-oilître | adbat in rig i Sliabh Fuaid | Aed Ornìde nar bhan shuaire |
| 11 Rawl.B.502 | Ag Druim Inasclain na n-eoch. | adbath in rí i Sliabh Fuait | Aed Oirdnìde nar ban shuaire | ro bo baini cheil chaim, |
| BB       | Fuair a oide | a sliabh Fuaid | Aed Oirdnìde nar an-shuaire | robadh baini co ceall cairn |
| 11 Rawl.B.502 | Ag Druim Eineasclain na n-eoch. | adbath Aedh Findliath | Ag Druim Eineasclain na n-eoch. | adbath Aedh Findliath |

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31 gl., in same hand (?): vel Congal
12.2: The gap in *BB*’s text

*BB*, fol. 49r34–38 (Cétrí ro gabh Érinn uili’, qq. 5–6).

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### Appendix 13: ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.</th>
<th>See: 4.2.1.3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Rawl.B.514, saec. XVI, fol. 61r1–66v16.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1 | Conall cuingid cloinní Neill, tainig a Temraig taibreid, d’ath a fhalad is tir thuaid, ar chuicid Uladh armruaidh. | Fland Mainistrech cécinnt |
| 2 | Ro brís Conall coicait cath ar tocht a Temraig amach. Nir brísed air, ba rath noll, cath na cliathach, na cómlonn. | Do brís Conall coiga cath. ar tocht a Temraig amach, nir bríssedh air farath oll: cath no cliathach no comlann. |
| 4 | Nir dam Conall coir na cert do bidbait, ba rigda in recht, acht sloig do dith a domán ‘sa crích uill d’holmugad. | Nil dernadh olc re cáradh. do Conall riga an rath a mhairc. nach ceid gairce ngal. |
| 5 | Nir dam cert man tir atuaíd, no gur cosuin hi co cruaidh; ar na cosnum ní cein fann, roímnis co feigh a féarr. | Nir gab cert iman tir thuaid. no cor co isain i go cruaidh. ar na cosnumh ní feidhm fann. rannais co feigh an ferann. |
| 6 | Leth do fein ruc as ga chert, daig is leis tanguis in fecht; leth do braithrib gairdí gal, do Chaithpre, d’Enna, d’Eogan. | Leath do fen ruc as ceech cert. doigh as lais tancus ar fecht. leth do braithrib gairce ngal do Cairpri dhEnna is dEogan. |
| 7 | Forba Eogain ardomtha, o Srubh Broin go glais n’Enncha. Ferann Enna siar arsin, co Bernas mor, co Sruithail. | Cairibri fris aniar miadh ngal. Enna etarra as Eogan. Ferghas as Boghaine bale. ris atuaíd a dha degh mac. |
| 8 | Cairpri fris aniar, miadh ngal; Enna eturra is Eogan; Fergus is Boguine bale, ris atuaíd, a dha deg mac. | Forba eogan iar motha. o Shruib Bruin go glais n’Enncha. ferand Ena siar arsin. go Bernus móir go Sráithair. |
| 9 | Cuid ig Conall féin don roind, teora fuind crichi Conaill; o Fertuis co Dobár ndil; odtá Dobár co hEidnigh. | Cuid ag Conall tar don róin. teora fonn tire Conaill. o Fairsaid co Doghar ndil. a do Dhogar go hEidnigh. |
| 10 | Ota Eidnigh ni sliocht cam, co roich fodes co Cromchall; o Bernas gan taisí treib, co Ros iti dha inber. | A do Eidnigh ni sliocht cam. co roich budh deis co Caenchall. o Bernus can taisse treib. go Ross iti dha inber. |
| 12 | Roind Caipre siar arsin sloind, no Fanglais a tir Choruind. Amlaid sin, nir bo cranna, fodbaiset a bferanna. | Lé Cairpri siar arsin sloinn. co Findglais cen tair Coraimn. amlaid sin nj cuird cranda. foghaiset a feranda |
| 13 | Ocht meic Neill ba tren a tres; Cethrar thuaid dib, cethrar thes; Maine thes, Laoguiri arsin; Conall Cremthuinein is Fiachaid. | Ocht mic Neill ba tren a thres. Cethrar thuaid dib cethrar tess. Maine tes Loeghaire arsin. Conall Cremthaining as Fiachra |
| 14 | Enna thuaid, Eogan gan ail; Caipre 7 Conall Gulbuin; ge re fhagsatt Temraig trell, nir fagsat rigi nErend. | Eogan thuaid Cairpri co maill. Enna 7 Conall Gulbain. ge do fhacsat Temra trell. nir facsad righe nErend |
| 15 | Dés Nell ocus Dathi thoir; toghar Conall i Temraig; no gur breg Laeguire lonn isasacht na rigi o Chonoll. |  |
| 16 | Is samlad siric fri snath samlad chloinne Neill ri cach; is samlad feinned re fann, samlad mac Neill re Conall. | Is samail siricc re snath. samail cloinne Neill re cach. is samail fennedh re fand. samail meic Neill re Conail. |
| 17 | Engnum Cuinn cedchathraigh chaid i Niall ix. gaillaig nertnair; gan ennum Neill caide glonn, i mac aigi acht i Conall. | Engnamh Cuind Cetcaithach caidh. a Niall Naigiallaigh nert nair. ga nengnamh Neill caide an glonn. a mac aice acht a Conall |
| 18 | Lais tangatar a Temraig. Clanna Neill co nert menmain, ocus Fiachraig gan laigi; do digail a frithoide. | Leis tancatar a Temraig. Clanna Neill commert menman. 7 Fiachra gan loicce. do dighail a degh oide |
| 19 | Muiredach mend luaidhed gail, frithoide Conuill gulbain, ocus Fiachraig gan laige, robhe sin a ard oide. | Muiredach mend fa garb gail frí thoide Conaill Gulbain 7 Fiachra gan loice. do bé sen a ar doide |
| 20 | Cana ocus a chlann chnedach, cagad dob re Muiredach; gabsatar a dun gheall; marbsrad frithoide Conuill. | Cana thuaidh s a clann cnedhach. cocadh daib re Muiredach gubsatadar a dun gan aill. marbaid frithoide Conuill |
| 21 | Rangatar na techta soir, dinoiseg Conuill gulbain, is co Fiachraig mac Echach, is co Niall nertechrechach. |  |
| 22 | Taimig Conall reme arsin, ochtar doib do deg braithrib ocus Fiachra cna chloind, co riacachtar clar Coruin. | Thaimig Conall roimh arsin, ochtar do bui do braithraib agus Fiachra cna cloind. co riaacht arathar clar Coraind |
| 23 | Targher o Ulltaib gan fhell breath airdbreitheanan Erenn, do Conall fein gan laige, a naidhirdh a frithoide. | Taircther ó Ulltaib gan feall. breath ard breithimhan Erenn. do Conall cém gan loicce. an dighail a frí thoide |
| 24 | Adubaír Fiachaid amnis ard oide Conuill gulbain, ‘Bennacht ar mo dalta ndil, narap scoitt sith a enig’. | Adubert Fiachra na feld. ard oide Conaal na cnedh bendacht ar mo dalta díl narúb scoit sith aenich |
25 ‘Ata sith rogebainn ind, a Fhiachruig in fhuilt oirfhind; m’oide beo gan cron gan chrad, a dun ’sa argain imlán.’
Ata sith dogebaind ind. a Fiachra an fuilt for fhind. m oide beo gan cron gan chrad. a dun gan ar cain imlán
26 ‘Nocon fhuiuge tusa sin, brethrechtaí a Chonaill gulbain; o shlog Ulad admus baig, nochon aigend a thaghbaill.’
Nochan fuighe tussa sin, breth rechta a Conaill Gulbain o sluag Ulad adhmhus baidh. ni fhuiu ainhedh na thaghbaill
27 ‘Mana fhaghar mo cert fein,’ ar Conall Gulban mac Neill, ‘ni uil bídbad ongebad cert, ar ndenam uile rim ain fhín.’
Mana fhaghar mo breth. fein. ar Conall Gulpain mac neill. nach an fhuilt bhubha. on gebhad cert. ar ndenam uile ruin ain fhin
28 ‘Nochá d’Ulttaib is nar sin,’ ar in techtairea d’Ualtaib, ‘acht do Niall na tuici sin tend, d’airdirg uil na hErend.’
Nacha d’Ulltaib as nar sin. ar an techtair d’Ulltaib. acht do Niall an tobair tend. d airdrigh oireach ais ernd.
29 O na rogab Conáill coir, o Ulltaib collin a sleg. Áraigh Niall air a chlann, gan dol re dicheill Conaill.
On lor nar gab Conall coir o Ulltaib colin a sleg. saruighis Niall ar a cloind. gan dul re dicheill Conaill
30 Scaruaid fri Conall amnsoin Conall Cremthainn a brathair, is Maine collin a sleg, is Fiacha mac Neill nert-moír.
Scarathar re Conall amn sin. Conall Cremthaínn a brathair 7 Fiachra lion a shloigh. as Maine mac Neill nertmoir
31 Fubhrí scarad fris uilí, Clanna Neill co med bloidhi; acht in leoman, garga a gal, Eogan mor mac a mathar.
Fobhrí scaradh ris uile. Clanna Neill co méd mbloidhce. acht an loman garcc a ghal. Eogan mor mac a mathar
32 Andsin abert Eogan oll, ‘Tam fein lin digla ar nglonn; nibhath cesta ar ar cloind, misi 7 tusa, a Chouin.’
Andsin aspert Eoghan oll. a tám fen lion digla ag nglonn. ni fhasfa c[…] ar ar cloinn. mesi 7 tussa a Conuill
33 ‘Ragaid sinne libh annsin’, ar Dathi ocus ar Fiachaidh; sleg somalta nach frith faill, oide is comalta Chonaill.
Racha sinde lib and sin. ard Dathi 7 Fiachra. sluag somholta nach frith faill. oide as comhalta Conaill
34 Atbert Enna re Cairpri, ri oide ceim gan cairde, ‘Ni fuigeb Conall romchar, ar smachd oide na athar’.
Atbert Enna re Caebrí. re oide gan im cairde. ni tréiciub Conall rumcar. ar smacht oide ina athar
35 ‘M’ane a Enna,’ ar Cairbre, ‘sunn ag Conall gan chairdre, anfoisda ag Eogan sinn seal; meth gach seolad co sindser’.
Maine Cairpri Enna and. ac Conall gan cairde clann. an fam as Eogan sinn sal ni math seolad can sindser
36 ‘Raga misi ar isacht le’, ar Laeguiri go laech nert; ‘danuga isacht gan fell, uait aris ort mar iarfam’. Dora chaindse ar isacht le. ar Laegaire go laech nert. da tuatha isacht can faill dam uaid an tan d iarrsam
37 ‘Ni tibra’ ar Fiacha na fled, oide Conaill na corr sleg, ‘Celga Laeguiri gan acht, ni bi in rigi acht ar isacht’.
Ni racha ar fiachra na fledh ar oide conaill na cnedh. cealgach Laegháire cin acht. ni bi an righe acht ar isacht
| 38 | ‘Cuma lem,’ ar Conall caid,  
   ‘Cia buss ri i Temraig Fail;  
   gidbe tir imbusa and,  
   bid lem a rigi,’ ar Conall. | Cuma lium ar Conall caid.  
   gebe bus ri ar Temraig Fail  
   gebe tir an bhuas ann  
   bid liom an righe ar Conaill |
| 39 | ‘In demin toidhecht beo a cath’,  
   ar Laegaire collan rath;  
   ‘Ni ro dam, a Chonuill chain,  
   iasach bhús tithe dom amain’. | In demhin toigecht beo a cath.  
   ar laegaire co laech rath.  
   ni bia damh ó Conall caid.  
   iasach bus Fiachra dommain |
| 40 | Do rad Conall gan chaire  
   a brethir re Loigaire;  
   co tbred do sech gach fear,  
   in cet aisged do shirfed. | Do rad Conall gan cair e.  
   a breth fen do Laogaire.  
   co tiubred do sech cech fer.  
   iasacht an tan do iarraid |
| 41 | Lotsat Clanna Neill fothuaid,  
   co hor Esau rogloin Rúaid;  
   gur gabsadar longport ann,  
   go comnart ima Chonuill. | Luidhset Clanna Neill budhthaide.  
   co h-oirer Eisa ro gloin Ruaidh  
   gor gabatar longport ann  
   go comnart ima Conall |
| 42 | Tinolait Ulaid a fecht,  
   o nar gabad uatha cert;  
   co rangatar co hEss Ruaid,  
   do chabair Chana clann ruaid. | Tinolid Ulaid ar feacht.  
   on ar gabadh uatha cert.  
   go rancatar co hEis Ruaid.  
   do cabair Cana crann ruad |
| 43 | Cana is Cissi na nglonn  
   ocus Senach na saerchlann;  
   tri rig Ulad gan laigi,  
   tiagad ra na socraide. | Cisi agus Cana na cland.  
   7 Senach na saercland.  
   tri rig Ulad gan loicce.  
   ergid fana sochraide |
| 44 | Tri catha d’Ulltoib annsoin,  
   d’indoigead atha Senaigh;  
   ocus oen chath don taeb thall,  
   ro eirgetar ba Conall. | Tri catha dUlltaib and sin,  
   dindsoigead atha Senaigh.  
   7 en cath don taib tall.  
   do ergheatair am Conall |
| 45 | Comraitht van ath annsoin,  
   Clanna Neill ocus Ulltai;  
   dar ath Senaigh, dar Es Ruaid,  
   buí fuil co fairrgi forruaid. | Comruicid iman ath andsin.  
   Clanna Neill agus Ulaidh  
   tar áth Senaigh tar Ess Rúadh,  
   bui fuil go fairece for ruaidh |
| 46 | Ced la Fiachaid laechda a li,  
   ocus da chéd re Dathi;  
   Maine 7 Enna inmain,  
   7 da cet le Dáthi.  
   Cairbri 7 Enna inmain.  
   da cet leo sa laech irghail |
| 47 | Ced laech fri Loegaire lond,  
   ocus ced re hEogan oll;  
   do trehsein comlann gach fir,  
   do tren feruib int shluaidgid. | Ced le laech le Laegairi lona.  
   7 ced le hEogan oll.  
   dobe sin comlann gach  
   do tren feruib an tsluaiadh sin |
| 48 | Gnimrada Conuill co ngail,  
   nir beg a esba d’Uultaib;  
   Cana snimach, cona cloind,  
   do rochar do laim Conuill. | Gnimhraud Conaill Gulpain.  
   nir becc an ebsg dUlltaib.  
   Cana san ath con a cloinn.  
   do toitset do laim Conaill |
| 49 | Torchair fos ri Conall soin  
   Senach o bfiul Ath Senaig,  
   ocus tri ced, sloindti sin,  
   d’Ultoib ria ndol don lathair. | Do tuith fós le Conaill sin.  
   Senach ó fuil Ath Senaigh.  
   agus tri cet sloindti sin  
   d’Ultaib re ndol do lathair |
| 50 | Cisi ri Carroighi cruaid,  
   o dochoid on ath fothuaid,  
   torchair le Conall gnim ngle,  
   Cissi ri Carbaide cruaidh.  
   ar teithed on áth bhotuaidh.  
   do tuith le Conaill gnimh ngle. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>A cathreim osin amach, a aisneis is crann folach, on chath sin Atha Senaigh co scainnir ndeirc ndegeanaigh.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Cath Boirni, Cath Inbir uill, ocus Cath Comai chrualoinn. Cath Line co form fuil, Cath Boirni ocus Cath Belaig.</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Cath Carad is Cath Grení, Cath Cruachan, Cath Corrsléibhi; Cath Cera, Cath Gallmi gloin, Cath Aidni 7 Cath Uamh.</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Maista, Liamain, LiFi lonn, Siuir, Beoir, Berba, Alma oll; Edar, aith in Derca daill, laithri sin chatha Conaill.</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Da cath .x. leis ar Ulltaib, mar indisit na hughdair; ro ba fecht flatha ar fianaib. A secht catha ar Oirgiallaib.</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Deich catha ocus da chet sin, ar na rim a Manistir, d’Oengus maraen is do Flann, ro chorn in gres do Chonall.</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 14: ‘A liubair atá ar do lár’

See: 4:2.1.3

### q.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NLS Adv. 72.1.28</th>
<th>Fen., saec. XVI, fols 43r19–43r13; (Hennessy and Kelly (ed. and trans.), Book of Fenagh, pp. 358–65).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NLS Adv. 72.1.28</td>
<td>A liubair ta ar do lar senchus <em>comuaige</em> comlan do rig echtach Oilig uill, is do righ <em>chinid</em> Chonaill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fen.</td>
<td>A liubair ta ar do lar senchus <em>comuaige</em> comlan do rig echtach Oilig uill, is do righ <em>chinid</em> Chonaill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rawl.B.514</td>
<td>A liubair ata ar do lar senchus <em>comchubsnaid</em> comhlan do righ echtach Oilig uill is do righ <em>cinil</em> Conuill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NLS Adv. 72.1.28</td>
<td>Do dleisdis <em>onoir</em> eolaigh duid a liubair lantreoraigh agaed ata fis go cert do righaib tenda tuaisgeart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rawl.B.514</td>
<td>Dleisdis <em>ugdair</em> eolaid duit a liubair lantreorigh agat ata fis eech cert do righaib tenda an tuaiscert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NLS Adv. 72.1.28</td>
<td>[...] tan bus <em>rigi</em> <em>rigi</em> Oilig <em>fri</em> slogh Conaill <em>cet</em> gonaigh dligait tuarusul gach ain ado brughaidh go h-airdrigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fen.</td>
<td>In tan bus <em>ri</em> <em>rir</em> Oilig ar sluag Conaill <em>cet</em> guinid dlegait tuarusul gach ain ota brugaid co h-airdrigh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rawl.B.514</td>
<td>An tan bus <em>ri</em> Eogain ar sluag conuill <em>cet</em> ndeorigh tuarusul uaidh gach fir dib ó ata brugaid co h-airdrigh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>NLS Adv. 72.1.28</td>
<td>In tan bus <em>ri</em> Conuill ar <em>sil</em> Eoghain gan dodaing [dlig]id in cêna doib sin o buis airdrigh e uaisrib</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   | Fen.              | In tan bus *ri* Conuill, ar *sil* nEogain ni doduing; dliged in cedna dhib sin,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rawl.B.514</th>
<th>An tan bus ri Conaill ar sluag nÉogain gan dothairing dlídgh an cetna dib sin o bus airdrigh é uastaib.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 NLS Adv. 72.1.28</td>
<td>.l. ech is .l. bó .l. cloidhíim .l. go is .l. sgiath comall ngle o gach righ dib dar[...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fen.</td>
<td>Coicait ech is coicait bo, coicait cloidhim, coicait go, coicait sciath, coicait con ngle, o gach righ dib daroile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawl.B.514</td>
<td>Caeca ech as .l. 'ar bo. caeca cloidhem caeca gó caeca sciath caeca con ngle ó cech righ dib da roili.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 NLS Adv. 72.1.28</td>
<td>Se sceith vi cloidhím vi coin vi eích vi moghaidh vi doim tuarastal gach urrigh sin on righ bus airdrig uastaib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fen.</td>
<td>Se sceith, se cloidemh, se coin se heich, se mogaid, se doim; tuarustal gach urrig sin, on righ bus airdri uastaib.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawl.B.514</td>
<td>Se sceith se cloidhím sé coin .ui. eích .ui. moghaidh doimh tuarustal gach urrig sin ond righ bus airdrig uastaibh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 NLS Adv. 72.1.28</td>
<td>[...]udhruma a leithe sin tall gacha taisgíd in bréth cam a leath sin go coir cubaidh tuarastal gach ard brughaidh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fen.</td>
<td>Cutrama a leithi sin thall, gacha taisig, ni bréith cham; a leath sin ean buss cumán, tuarustal gach ard brugaíd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawl.B.514</td>
<td>Cudramha a leithe sin tall gacha toísech ni bréith cam a leath sin co coir cubaidh tuarastal gach ard brugaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 NLS Adv. 72.1.28</td>
<td>Ni dlídgh oirecht dib amne tar a chéin sin daraile acht sluaiheadh go ream ratha is coméigh crucadh catha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fen.</td>
<td>Ni dlídgh airecht dib amne, tar a cheann sin da cheli, acht sloiged co ream ratha, is coméigh crucadh caththa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawl.B.514</td>
<td>Ni dlig oirechod dib malle tar a cend sin da ceili acht sluaiheadh is ream ratha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
is comerge cruad catha.

9 NLS Adv. 72.1.28 Slogh dib ri beodacht gomblaidh
ri h-adh is re hinnsaigaidh
slogh eile re costudh cat
agus re cosgar cliadhach

Fen. Sluaig dib re beodacht comblaidh,
re hagh is he hindsaiged;
slua eil re costad cath,
ocus re coscur cliathach.

Rawl.B.514 Sluaig dib re beodacht comblaid
re h-agh is re hindsaiged
slua eil re costad crech
re coscar is re cliathach

10 NLS Adv. 72.1.28 In tan bus righ ar Eirinn uill
ri Eoghain no righ Conaill
cet do gach crudh feidhm ngle
o gach righ dib daraile

Fen. In tan bus rí ar Erinn uill
ri Eogain, no ri Conaill,
ced da gach crud, ba gnim ngle,
o gach ríg dib daroile.

Rawl.B.514 An tan bus rí ar Eirind uill
ri Eogain no ri Conaill
ced da gach crud feidhm ngle
o cech ríg dib daroili.

11 NLS Adv. 72.1.28 Aen cogar leo andis ar tus
no go cumadh a caemrus
righ Temra righ Cruachna tiar
cucar sin is righ oirgiall

Fen. En chogur leo andis ar tus,
no co cumad a caemrus,
ri Cruachna, ri Cearna adchiam
cucar asin, is ri Airgiall.

Rawl.B.514 En chogur leo andis ar tus
no co cumadh a caemhrus.
ri Temra ri Cruachain thiar
cucar as sin as ri oirgiall

12 NLS Adv. 72.1.28 [as ar?] cumaid am breith do breith
righradh Leithe Cuind a leith
airdri Uladh cuca arsin
is airdri Moghmaidh migh

Fen. Mar chumaid a mbreith do breith
rigrad chloinde Chuidh ar leth;
rigrad Uladh cuca arsin,
is rigrad mor gacha cuigid.

Rawl.B.514 Mar cumaid am breith do breith
righruid Lethe Cuinn ar leith.
airdri Ulad cuca arsin
as airdri Munan maid mhoir

13 NLS Adv. 72.1.28 fir Eirinn o tuind do tuind
ar breith Eoghain is Conaill
re righe agus gan righe
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>is e sin a sen dire [...].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fen.</strong></td>
<td>Fir Erenn o thuinn co tuinn, ar breth Eogain is Conaill; re rigi no gan righe is he sin a sen dine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rawl.B.514</strong></td>
<td>Fir Eirenn o tuinn go tuind ar breth Eogain as Conaill le righe agus gan righe as e sin a sen diri.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>NLS Adv. 72.1.28</strong> ein dlidged doib [...] ces dEas ruaidh d Oilech no neiges aen ainnmugadh orro arsin ar slogh Conaill is Eoghan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fen.</strong></td>
<td>En dlidged doib sunn ro fes, d’Oilech is d’Eas ruaid na nes en ainnmnugadh orra arsin, ar shlogh Conaill is Eogain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rawl.B.514</strong></td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>NLS Adv. 72.1.28</strong> inand briathar do [...]gh o re Padraic is Cairnigh in da brathair gruad fri gruaidh inand buaidh inand dimbuaidh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fen.</strong></td>
<td>Inann briathra doib ga tig, or re Patraice is Chairnig, in da brathair, gruaid fri gruaidh, inann buaid inann dimbuaid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rawl.B.514</strong></td>
<td>Ni mo as inraid sluag oilech re sluag Eogain armdoilig na re sluag Conaill gan crud do reir Cairnich meic Sharain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><strong>NLS Adv. 72.1.28</strong> Ni mo is raite sluag Oiligh re sluag Eoghan armgroigh na ri sluag Conaill gan cradh o re Cairnech mic Saran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fen.</strong></td>
<td>Ni mo is raidhte sluag Oilig re slogh Eogain armdoilig, na fri slogh Conall gan chradh, o re Chairnig mic Sharain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rawl.B.514</strong></td>
<td>Inand briathra doib ga toigh o aimser Patraigh pendgloin an da brathair gruaidh fri gruaidh inann buaid inann dimbuaid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>NLS Adv. 72.1.28</strong> aire ainn re aer uile iat o oilech med mblaidehe iar sin Oilech gan ell Temair righ tuaisgirt nE[renn]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fen.</strong></td>
<td>Air ainnnithe iar huile o Oilech co mét gaili, oir is be Oilech gan fhell inat rig tuaiscert hErenn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rawl.B.514</strong></td>
<td>U[...] ainnnithe uili iad o oilech med mb[...]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>NLS Adv. 72.1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Fen.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rawl.B.514</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

oir ise Oilech gan fell
Temhain rig tuaiscirt Erenn
Appendix 15: The ‘Uí Dhiarmata Colophon’

Material unique to each version of the colophon in Lec. and BB is marked in bold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lec. fol. 68v9–37</th>
<th>BB, fol. 61ra7–18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do thínoilsiam tra in genealach-sa b‘Uí nDiarmada a criochnib na n-Gaoidhil.</td>
<td>Ro thínoilsiaim in genealach b‘Uí nDiarmada a croínoib na nGaoidhil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do thínoilsiam tra in genealach-sa b‘Uí nDiarmada a criochnib na n-Gaoidhil.</td>
<td>Do thínoilsiam in genealach b‘Uí nDiarmada a croínoib na nGaoidhil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ro thínoilsiaim in genealach b‘Uí nDiarmada a croínoib na nGaoidhil.</td>
<td>Ro thínoilsiaim in genealach b‘Uí nDiarmada a croínoib na nGaoidhil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ro thínoilsiaim in genealach b‘Uí nDiarmada a croínoib na nGaoidhil.</td>
<td>We have compiled this genealogy of Uí Dhiarmata from the chronicles of the Gaoidhil and from the books of Cormac of Cashel and from the Books of Dún Dá Leathglas and from the books of Flann Mainistrech and from Cin Droma Snechta and from annals and books of history that we have collected into one place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We, indeed, have gathered this genealogy of Uí Dhiarmata from the chronicles of the Gaoidhil and from the Psalter of Cormac in Cashel and from the book of Downpatrick and from the books of Flann Mainistrech and from Cin Droma Snechta and from annals and from books of events so that I have gathered it into one place and so here is related the roots and origins and ancient common ancestors from the beginning and their high kings. So it is carried back to Diarmaid Finn mac Tomaltaig and to Muireadach Muileathan mac Feargusa and to Brian mac Echach Muigmedon and to Cairbre Lifechair and to Conn Cetcathach and to Eochu Feidlech and to Ugaine Mór and to Erimón mac Milid and to Gáedel Glas, from which the Gaoidhil originate, and, in turn, back to Noah son of Lamech. It is now henceforth related.

LMG, II, §239.13 (pp. 540–41)

Do thínoilsioim edir tra an genealach-sa b‘Uí nDiarmada a criochnib na n-Gaoidhil agus as leabraibh Cormaic is Caisiil agus a Leabhar Dún Da Leathglas agus a leabraibh Fhiloinn Mhainisdrech agus a Cin Droma Snechta agus a hannalaibh agus a leabraibh airisean go ro theagloisme in go h-aoiniodh. We have compiled this genealogy of Uí Dhiarmata from the chronicles of the Gaoidhil and from the books of Cormac of Cashel and from the Book of Dún Dá Leathglas and from the books of Flann Mainistrech and from Cin Droma Sneachta [...] and from the annals and books of history that we have collected into one place.
Appendix 16: B² (ANI)

See: 4:2.1.5

BB, fol. 63ªr–33.

Genelach Fiachrach andso do reir Flaind [Later hand:] The Hy-Fiachrach Race of Tir-Aawley

Cúig meic la Fiachrach mac Eathaíc mac Eara Caelbuidhe is uadh Cenel Meic Earca .i. Fir Ceara ro bo leathan a fheargand .i. críche meic Eara gonas tallsat Clann Briain uato in eiric Briain bo chear la Fiachra i gCath Damh Cluana. Nath Í in righ roghabh go Sliabh Ealpa. Amhalghaidh is e ro righsat fir Erenn i Sliabh aird Ioibh dianadh ainm Sliabh Cennglan Ealpa, dia fuair a braghaí Dath Í gabhalaigh bas ann don tshaighit ghealaí .i. saiged teind tighe ta trách ainghel in coimhdéidh do tre eascaine Formenius, righ Traigia, diario coilleáidh a thor lasin righ agus ro ghuaidh Formenius in coimhdéidh na beith flaithius Nath Í ni bha sia na sin go ro be sin fochoind a bhaí agus tuargaibhset a maíntiocr in righ leon gonaighi i Cruachan ro hadnacht agus ro ba in this do shochaidh de cinad ar le go hadnacht no go faillsigh Torna Egeas dia neabhaír

Ceilis cach a Cruachu chroderg caemrigh Erenn Dathi meic Fiachra fialrigh ar muir ar tir teichtais tuair cach cara righ iathro ort ar gach cielis cae. Ceilis

Dunghal agus Flannus Tomaltach agus Tuathal is iat sin in ceathrur da aes grada tugsadar leor corpin righ go ro h-adhnaicedh i Cruachain he gonaigh uime sin. Ro laisct in cuigedh ailgí sin. Imhais ar Torna go ro faillsidh doibh ca baile i raibhe corpin in righ conadh aon ro raidó Torna Egeas

Ata fudsu righ fher Flail
Dathi meic Fiachrach fir aidh
a Cruachu ro cheilísin sin.
ag Gallaibh ar Gaeidhelaibh et reliqua.


The Genealogy of [Ui] Fhiachrach here, according to Flann.

Fiachrach Eathaíc son of Erc Caelbuidhe had 5 sons and from him stems Cenél meic Erca .i. the Fir Ceara, whose lands are broad .i. the territory of Mac Erca until the sons of Brian took it in vengeance for Brian who was fallen by the hand of Fiachra in the Battle of Damh Cluana. Nath Í is the king who conquered as far as the Alps. Amalgaid is the man the men of Ireland installed as king on high Sliabh Ioibh,33 which is called Sliabh Cennglan Ealpa,34

33 ‘Mountain of Jove’; Mons Iovis (Mont Joux, Canton du Valais, Switzerland), whose name dates from at least Late Antiquity, is located on the Swiss-Italian border, at the Great St Bernard Pass (Ó Conchobhair, ‘Genealogies’, p. 4 (n. 16)).
when his brother Dath Í the conqueror found death by an arrow of lightning, i.e. an arrow of thick fire cast upon him by an angel of God on account of the complaint of Formenus, king of Thrace, when his tower was damaged by the king and Formenus asked the Lord that Nath Í’s reign be no longer than that so that that was the cause of his death and his companions took the body of the king with them so that it was in Crúachu that he was buried and the knowledge that he was buried there was with the company, or until Torna Éces revealed it, when he said,

You have concealed from all, o Crúachu of the red blades, the sweet king of Ireland, Dath Í mac Fiachra, the decorous king over sea and land, who went eastwards. Each friendly king, the land that he ravaged before all, you have not concealed.

Dungal, Flanngus, Tomaltach, and Tuathal, they are the four from among the people of rank who took the body of the king along with them so that he was buried in Crúachu and was enclosed in it. The fifth laid stones there. There was vision with Torna, so that he revealed to them where the body of the king was, so that then Torna Éces said,

There is beneath you a king of the men of Ireland
Dath Í mac Fiachrach, with success,
o Crúachu, you have concealed him,
from foreigners and Gaels. etc.

10 battles were broken before the body, the body being dead, before they reached Ireland. These are the battles. i.e. Cath Corpair, Cath Cinni, Cath Coluim, Cath Faili, Cath Miscail, Cath Lunnand, Cath Cordhe, Cath Moile, Cath Gremnis, Cath Feromhair. Here is the genealogy that ought to be related; these thus far are clearly for narration from his stories.
Appendix 17: ‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’

See: 4:2.2.5.1, 5:2.2

U: Egerton 90 [part of U], fol. 18v46–18v42

T: TD, fol. 36r1–22

L: qqs. 7, 8, 10, and 12: LMG, II, §§303.6 (pp. 6–7), 332.2–5 (pp. 70–73)

‘Airgialla ardmóra uaisli’ also appears in Dublin, RIA, MS 24.M.18 (607), saec. XIX (fol. 6v–8r), by Joseph O’Longan. However, this is a direct copy of U. Eugene O’Curry also made a copy from U, as our poem appears in a list of poems O’Curry transcribed in the British Museum for William H. Hudson (1796–1853), although apparently based on a catalogue found with Egerton 90. There, it is described as ‘a poem by Flann of the Monastery on the history of the Three Collas’.35 This copy, if it survives, is not easily locatable.

The T text has been printed by Damian McManus and Éoghan Ó Raghallaigh.36 While I have used their diplomatic edition, I have not followed every reading, particularly where U (of which they make no mention) assists in deciphering T or expanding its abbreviations.

Overall, U and T contain frequent, significant variants, including in the order of quatrains. T’s order seems slightly more logical so this has been followed below. L’s quatrains tend to agree with T. In the text and translation below, I have included Ó Muiríle’s texts of qqs. 7, 8, 10, and 12 from L and made use of his translations in interpreting U and T, except where the latter contain different readings. Since U and T are clearly very different texts and their relationship is not an issue for this thesis, variants are unmarked. The poem’s metre most closely resembles Dían Midsheng (8/9 2 7 3; 8/9 2 7 3).37

Preface in U

As fiadbhraidh chneasadh craed in bais dar thuit Eochaid Daimlen? Aderaid na seanachaídh gurub e Semoth mac Ceirb do fhorthaibh do marb Eochaid Daimlen atáraí na tri Colla. Agus is si cuis far marb se e a cínigh Elatha mna Crindine cearda do forthaib la Eochaid Daimlein 7 gur ai sin máthair na tri Colla 7 aderad ar eli gurub i Eoleach ingen rig Alban máthair na Colla i. mar adeir Flann Mainistrech andra duain seo sis.

It is properly asked, what is the death by which Eochaid Daimlen fell? The traditional historians say that it was Semoth mac Ceirb, of the fortha,38 who slew Eochaid Daimlen, father of the three Collas. And this is the reason for his death, the sin of Elatha, wife of Crindine, craftsman of the fortha, with Eochaid Daimlen, and so she was the mother of the three Collas. And others say that it was Eolach, daughter of the king of Alba, mother of the Collas i.e. as Flann Mainistrech says in this poem.

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36 McManus and Ó Raghallaigh (ed.), Bardic Miscellany, §32 (pp. 28–29).
37 Murphy, Early Irish Metrics, §1 (pp. 23, 48). I do not understand why Simms lists this poem’s metre as deibide (Bardic Poetry Database, Poem 182 <bardic.celt.dias.ie> [accessed 15 June 2015]) and McManus and Ó Raghallaigh (Bardic Miscellany, p. 28) list it as sédna mór.
38 A *foriud (gen. sing. fortha) was a person against whom legal cases were brought in place of a king (eDIL, s.v. fortha). However, the Fothairt are involved in a loosely similar version of these events, recounted, in varying forms, throughout the metrical dindsenchas on Ailech (MD, IV, pp. 96–99 (qq. 19–20), 104–07 (qq. 26–31), 114–17 (qq. 46–55)), including, significantly, ‘Cía triallaid nech aisin senchais’ (2:2.2.1). This perhaps calls for the emendation of Fothairt to Fothairt here in U.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The Poem</th>
<th>May the high, mighty, noble Airgialla arise around the trunk of the Red Branch, you who are interwoven on account of the lordship of Emain, flames from green-sloped Tara.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>U1</strong> Oirgiallaigh ardmore uaisli eirgid umh crand craeblíruaidae fuithe fithche ar flathe Aemhna críthre Teamra taobháuaine.</td>
<td><strong>T1</strong> May the high, mighty, noble Airgialla arise around the trunk of the Red Branch, you who are interwoven on account of the lordship of Emain, flames from green-sloped Tara.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>U2</strong> Teiged neac da fiabhraiche d eolcaei in sheancas beag sencha sa anmanna trí mac n-Eachaid Daimhneill na n-arm corr gergruadh gasda.</td>
<td>‘One went to seek from the expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>T2</strong> Teid neac da fiabrachaidh dh eolchaithe. in sencas beag buadhchá sa. anmanna trí mac Echach Doimlen. na n-arm ccoilegeach crúad gasda.</td>
<td>One goes to seek from the learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>U6</strong> Na trí Colla caite a rúcha? Raied ribh [sun]na seancaidhe. Ca hainm dabhí ar a mathair gusna fathaíbín far craidhe?</td>
<td>The three Collas, where were they born? The historian responds to you here. What was the name of their mother, with the reasons for her offence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>T3</strong> Na trí Colla caite a rugtha? Radhaíd sunna senchaide. Ca hanmann bhíos for a mathair gusna fathaíbín er craithé?</td>
<td>The three Collas, where were they born? The historian speaks here. What was the name of their mother, with the reasons for her offence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>U4</strong> Ca ferand do gabh gach aenfhcear dona fialaibh forasda ce da thog in triar n-ard {n-}amhair gusna rannaitheasda</td>
<td>What land did each one take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>T4</strong> Ca feronnt do gabh gach aoinfer. dona fialaibh forasda. Cia thuargaibh in triar n-ard amhair. gusna rannaitheasda</td>
<td>What land did each one take</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>U3</strong> Cath anmannsa da bidir orro ar na macaibh mhilieta sul du gortha dib ni Colla os druim droma diregra?</td>
<td>What are the names that were upon them upon the martial sons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>T5</strong> Cia na hanmanna badar forra na meic mhéara mileta. ria siú do gairthe dhiobh Colla. for thuig droma di n-fregra?</td>
<td>What names were upon them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>U5</td>
<td>As dim dleagar a fhasneis dona briathraibh bindnisi a n-imh{h}us tar mhBoing mear glais as coir an eolas dinnisi[n].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Is uaimsi dleghar a n-aisneis. tre{sa} briathraibh bing eisi. a n-ion{h}th{h}us ag Boing na mb{e}ol as. coir {an} eolas dinnis{in}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oileach ingen airdrig Alban mathair na ngeg nglan ordha Eochaid Daimh{ne}ill ainm a n-athair do teand catha comora.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aileach ing{h}en airdriogh Alban. mathair na ngeg nglan ordtha. Eochu Doiml{e}n ainm in athair. do the end catha comora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oileach, inghean airdrigh Albon mathair na ng{e}ug nglan{ordha}; Eochaidh Doiml{e}un ainm in athair. do t{h}end catha com-m{ora}.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Caemdas mac Seag'd/a fa Ulltaib dabi a dh{h}alta a tarn{g}ere do thog Colla Uais os feaghaibh ar Loch Feabail n-ainglige.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uais saormac Seghuime dhUilt {aib}. do bh{h}i a dh{h}alta i tairngire. togbhuis Colla Uais os fheidhain ar Loch Feabail {aenglet}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uais, saormhac Seghuime do Ulltuiibh, do bh{h}i a dh{h}alta i tairngire; togbhuis Colla Uais os feadhuingh ar Loch Fheabhuiil ainglidhe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gu rig Oileach f{h}ri rind ruca na fir sin gu find Eamhain ag folaimh shn{ama} doibh tair{i}ls tar loch radhais rind amail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ag ruadh Aileach raileann na fir sin a finn Emain for chairth{h}ibh shn{ama} doibh tairis. ar Loch rades rinn Febail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>U10</td>
<td>Mend moderne mac rig Maland fa dimsach a dhoreagra do thogadh Colla Mend Macha do teand catha croibdearga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>T10</td>
<td>Meann modhaimre mac righ Malann, ba diomsach a dohfregra, s e tuargaibh Colla Meann Macha. do thent catha croibdearga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>L3</td>
<td>Meann Moghuirne, mac righ Malann, ba diomsach a dohfreagra, as se tuargaibh Colla Meann Macha, do theann catha croibdearga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>U11</td>
<td>Colla Uais eir uaisli togail fuair in rig[e?] gan rolaige Colla Meand fa h-ainm da braithair do gnathi a glanidi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>T11</td>
<td>Colla Uais ar uais da thogbail, ar in ri gan rolaige. Colla Meann dob ainm da brathair do gnathaig a ghlannoidhe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>U12</td>
<td>Colla Da Crich crich ro chosain re sluag n-Uladh n-ollbladach do marbsadar Fergus a Fadhga ar madh cadbhha comramach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>T12</td>
<td>Colla Da Crioch crich a righsat. re sluag nUlaid n-olbbisdach da ro marbhsadar Fergus Fugha. ar modh coba comramach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>U13</td>
<td>B iad ced anmaidh na Colla dar teast Tailltin tuiribeach sinin ag san)'igae na saer snaiagaemh Aed, Cairill is Muredach.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{39}\) I am not aware of this polity, but, since both Ó Muraíle and McManus and Ó Raghallaigh read the T and L texts this way, I have adopted their interpretation in U. It could perhaps relate to Malin (Málainn), in Inishowen (Co. Donegal).

\(^{40}\) I cannot find any record of a polity of this name so have retained my own translation.
These are the first names of the Collas who possessed pillared Tailltiu, I myself am seeking their distinct, particular lineage, Aed, Cairell and Muiredach.

Muiredach is Colla Da Crich, the chariot-fighter, Aed is Colla Menn of the greater house, Cairell [the name] for Colla Uais of Emain who transports many herds.

Here, for you, is the history of the noble offspring that cuts short the complete journey as I heard from the poet-frequented son, from the noble Flann Mainistrech.

The nobles of the men, great their tribe, equal from the root with the royal offspring, the men who carry their lineage (?) from the tangled seed of Conn Cétcathach.

The Ulaid sought Ireland from the battler’s Red Branch, theirs was Leth Cuinn without crime along with Tonn Birraigh forever (?).

Eochaid’s sons sought the Ulaid, they cut down the thick woods, they took Macha’s fertile plain, the three battle-heroes.

Eochaid’s sons, who incited the
Rob sad rem ra rugatt. Do ghabh sbad Madh minseng Macha. Na t{\text{h}}i catha curata Ulaid, | they were the thick woods | who took Macha’s fertile, noted plain | the three battle-heroes.

19 U19 Da iarsat na fir ar Fergus dobo cheim tar gnathgu deabaigh doibh fa mur Meadba no Dun Eamhna dfasagudh. The men sought for Fergus, | the approach was by protocol, | battle among them below the wall of Medb | or to desolate the fort of Emain.

T19 Do shirsed na fir air Fergus. feidh gan gnath re gnath sholad. deabaigh doib sin fa mur Meadba. no Dun Emhna d fasogudh The men sought for Fergus | an undertaking without beauty with customary success | battle among them below the wall of Medb | or to desolate the fort of Emain.

20 U20 Do radad catha na Colla dar greach badba a breathdhoire fa feart a nUllaigh a meirilli gu ceand Seimh{\text{n}}i seactmaine. The Collas give battles | over which the crow screamed from the variegated oakwood; | their plundering was a wonder among the Ulaid | for a week, as far as Seimh{\text{n}}e.

T20 Do radadh cath do Colla{\text{ibh}}. gur sgrech badbh a breathdhoire. laiter Ulaid da fod seibhe. go cend Seimh{\text{n}}e seachtmuine Battles were given by the Collas | so that the crow screamed from the variegated oakwood |the Ulaid are roused throughout their domain | as far as Seimh{\text{n}}e, for a week.

21 U21 Adubairt riu smaergand smaergadh oglach Fergus{\text{s}} Fodhaigh curthea{\text{r}} mhise gu Tuind Tuaighe bhu me in Cuailli cothaithce He said to them “The scanty marrow has been smeared” (?, | the warrior of Fergus Fadhga, | “I am dispatched to Tonn Tuaighe, | I was supported in Cuaille”.

T21 Go n{\text{e}}rbhairt riu smirdhonn smirdha. draoi Fergusu fholtaighthi. beiridh n{\text{h}}isisi go Toing Tuaighi. bud me in Cuaille cothaiti So he said to them “The smeared brown-marrow” (?), | the druid of Fergus of the rich hair, | “it carries me as far as Tonn Tuaighe, | I was supported in Cuaille”.

22 U22 Trian leis do clannab f{\text{n}}eill nertmair f{\text{a}} o Colla gloim d{\text{h}}eraibh tr{\text{i}}an do Connachtai dh{\text{a}} fhaille tr{\text{i}}an gach uaire d’Oirgiallbh A third, in his opinion, to the sons of mighty Niall | that was from Colla, a shout that obstructs (?) | a third to the pride Connacht | a third, each time, to the Airgialla.

T22 Trian leis do clannab f{\text{n}}eill nertmair, dona Collaibh clann mhianagha. tr{\text{i}}an do Connachtaih dh{\text{a}} fhaille. tr{\text{i}}an gach uaire d’Airgiall{\text{n}}aibh A third, in his opinion, to the sons of mighty Niall, | from the Collas, offspring of a vein of ore | a third to the pride Connacht | a third, each time, to the Airgialla.
### Appendix 18: ‘Scela cluana na clog mbind’

According to the coloured initials in *UM*, q. 8 should begin ‘Is se scribba [...]’ (line c, as divided below). I have imposed a division that allows four-line quatrains, plus *duinte*, to be maintained. The metre appears to be *deibide*-type, with irregular cadences.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>[... a gach teadlach Padraig tug do Tigernach.</td>
<td>[... from each household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tri fuind dob andsia leis riam dar theasail thair agas thiar as mebar lium a`g a n-eis a frital iss a faiseins</td>
<td>The three lands that were ever dear to him,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In cnoc an ngabtha in gloir ag molad in naem naem og. ard na n-aingeal naema in smacht. is rileg coir co comnarr</td>
<td>The hill in which he assumed glory,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Se minna Ailligh amra do ca mac Cairbre calma. ceolan muille naema in ball. in clog ban is in bacall</td>
<td>Six treasures of splendid <em>Ailech</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>In dubh~nach Ronan reidh sin aithe roim er fein catbharr Martan fa maith sging scrin Padraig moir mac Alpraind</td>
<td>The <em>dubánach</em> of peaceful Ronán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tigernach mac Cairbre caith meic Enna meic Fergus ain meic Luain meic Briuin go mbloid meic Eochaga aird eaithbh</td>
<td>Tigernach son of Caire of battle,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mac Daire Baire na mbeand meic Cathair airdrig Eirind gilfhach foll a Fearrmaigh, genelach trom Tigernaid.</td>
<td>Son of Daire Barrach of the mountains,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>berar in duan sa maseach gu Fland miadach Mainistrech Is se scribha do dena mar do sil in soiscela</td>
<td>May this beautiful song be carried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dallan Forgaill is se m’aínm Tigernach fa dearb a gairm me dearbas ga n[d]enam do leanbas ga prímscelaibh.</td>
<td>Dallan Forgaill is my name.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix 19: ‘Mug Éme a h-ainm, éirim nglé’

See: 4:2.2.1.2

**BL Harley 5280, fol. 75r (marg.).**

**TCD 1317, p. 31 (marg.).**

The text printed here is from TCD 1317; I am grateful to Dr Sharon Arbuthnot (QUB) for providing me with an image of the relevant page and her own transcription of the poem, of which I have made use. The translation is my own. Harley 5280’s text is difficult to read in places and partially obscured by the manuscript’s binding but what is legible seems to provide no major variants. The metre appears to be *deibide scailte* ($7^x, 7^{x+1}; 7^x, 7^{x+1}$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fland ecginit</th>
<th>Mug Eme its name, a clear coursing,</th>
<th>of the first lap-dog that was in Ireland.</th>
<th>of the first lap-dog that was in Ireland.</th>
<th>of the first lap-dog that was in Ireland.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mog Eme a h-ainm, eraim nglé na cethire ci boi ind Ere</td>
<td>Coirpre Musc dorat anair isse uis Cuind Cetcaithaig</td>
<td>Coirpre Musc who first brought [it] from the east:</td>
<td>he is a descendant of Conn Cetcathach.</td>
<td>he is a descendant of Conn Cetcathach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consisset impegand garth</td>
<td>Oiliil Fland Peg is Corbmac, go tar maire cath ceid cend da airdri uille Eirend</td>
<td>They fought [.....]</td>
<td>Ailill Fland Bec and Cormac,</td>
<td>the war of the first head disgracefully dragged on,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is ea cend fouair fo neibh</td>
<td>Conid de dobert in cend for Moen mac Edna a dessecc</td>
<td>This is the one that found the head, with fame,</td>
<td>Condla mac Taidg, Tadg mac Cein</td>
<td>so that then he gave the head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teitnais Moen, nirbo delm do,</td>
<td>tria tenn lair laordo laodo conepert sell iar cene isse so cend Mug Eme.</td>
<td>Moen went, it was no conflict to him,</td>
<td>through the full [.....]</td>
<td>“this is the head of Mug Eme”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 20: Tadg mac Céin’s encounters on Inis Derglocha

See: 4:2.2.1.3 (*Eachtra Thaidhg mhic Chéin*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref. (SG)</th>
<th>Occupants of Hall/Role.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I, pp. 347.27–348.24; II, pp. 390.2–391.4.</td>
<td><strong>Ingen Gothniad</strong> Fir Bolg: wife of Sláinge mac Déla, the first king of Ireland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I, pp. 349.26–352.2; II, pp. 392.8–394.18.</td>
<td><strong>Veniusa</strong> Antediluvian: daughter of Adam and Eve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62
Appendix 21: ‘Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’

See: 4.2.4.3

*UM*, fol. 56"a"27–56"b"20.

The division by speaker is my own, based on textual evidence, and is in no way indicated in the manuscript, other than Part 2’s emphasised initial ‘M’ (q. 8).

### Part 1: Flann Mainistrech

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-each da rinni Tuathal Teachtmar o cind is docho a ri do ainm uachtar aenaigh</th>
<th>The assembly of Tara of the eight horses, that Tuathal Techtmar wrought; from the start it is to be expected, o king, that your renown be foremost at the fair.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ni bertach ocht n-eich faidho issa n-aenach ni dibh ba mo dabi rig Eireann an fiadaigh an grafaing uachtar aenaigh</td>
<td>Only eight horses were brought, for a long time, into the assembly, not by them was it greater. The king of Ireland was hunting in the foremost horse-troop of the assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Robudh ocht n-each gc tiri isse sin seancas firi le rig gach cuigi miad greall a grafaing airdrig Eireann</td>
<td>There were eight horses of each land, that is the true tradition, with the king of each fifth, the dignity of grasshoppers (?), in the horse-troop of the High-King of Ireland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cormac craeb suileach cas dond cét mac rugud o Conadh da bi gin gur htagaibh cland xxx. bliadan a nAcaill</td>
<td>A brown, twisting, knotted branch, Cormac, although he did not obtain offspring, he was thirty years in Achall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sleact as Art mac a athar agus deag mac amath gu n-ebairt an draigh re hArt be eir do macsa Cormac</td>
<td>Offspring of Art, son of his father and good son of his mother; so the druid said to Art: “A woman for your son, Cormac”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ingen do Conadh in broga bean Conaire meic Mogha dag Conaire garb garg darsat comainn Meadb Leatdarg</td>
<td>Wife (?) to Conn of the territory, wife of Conaire mac Mogha — good Conaire, blunt and hard — her cognomen is Medb Lethderg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Miscis le Meidb Leitdgir luind ar los Airt Cormaic Ui Cuind nir lamad le dul amach da fecun aenaigh Teamrach</td>
<td>Hatred from fierce Medb Lethderg for Cormac, Conn’s grandson, on account of Art; he did not dare, by sallying abroad, to view the assembly of Tara.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part 2: Máel Sechnaill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>Masa thu seanca Teamrach abair riom guro meamrach o thoirigh na mbeach ar tus re n-airem is re n-imithus?</th>
<th>If you are a historian of Tara, tell me, so that it might be learned, whence came the bees, in the beginning, according to enumeration and process?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ce cét fili dabi tair ar tus an ainsir Adhaim? Do síl Adhaim is raithi abair cét cainti?</td>
<td>Who is the first poet who was in the east, in the beginning, in the age of Adam? Of the seed of Adam, it ought to be told, say who was the first satirist?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ce rinni goid gan cron tair ar tus ar in doman? Ce i goid do meada {i}dead? Finnat ard-ollamhain Eireann</td>
<td>Who made a theft, without crime, in the east, first in the world? What was deemed to be the theft there? May the high poets of Ireland learn!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cuidh cét easbog caem glan tairr ar tus dreich talmain? Ce shil Adhaimh ana ara tugud cét gradha?</td>
<td>Who was the first bishop, fair and bright in the east, first on the face of the earth? Who, of the race of Adam, thus, was first ordained?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ce shil Adhaim fear ag [ga] n-earnam in treabadh do gabh ag dhaim ar tus tall agas da sheol a cét crand?</td>
<td>Who [was] the man of cows, of the seed of Adam, by whom was made the ploughing, who first possessed an ox, yonder, and steered the first plough (?)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ce ga ndhearnamh cloic[th]each cain tair ar fordreith in talmain? Ce shil Adhaim na leand ga n-earnamh in cét molind?</td>
<td>By who was built the fine roundtower yonder, on the face of the earth? By who of the seed of Adam of the cloaks was built the first mill?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ce do shil Adhaim na leand ga n-earnamh in cét teampull? Findat da tsheanchaid gan go ce ga n-dea rnam in cét bro?</td>
<td>By who of the seed of Adam of the cloaks was built the first temple? Let them find out from the unlying historian, by who was made the first millstone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Da beir-sa duit ceist maseach masa thu Fland Mainistreach ce ga n-dhernam gan in cét fleadh?</td>
<td>I give you a question, in turn, if you are Flann Mainistrech! By whom, without flaw, was wrought the world’s first ever feast?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Cread dar n-earnamh na deasci abair rium guro eisgi a Flaind a Flaind Mainistreach. No ce do gabh tair gan in cét fleadh ar tus ar doman?</td>
<td>Of what was he making the dishes? Tell me what was conceded, o Flann, o Flann Mainistrech of the expounding, by who was made the first millstone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ce ga dhearnamh ar tus teach? Abradh fos Flaind Mainistreach. No ce do gabh tair gan on righe ar tus ar in domhan?</td>
<td>By whom was a house first built? Speak further, Flann Mainistrech! Or who began, yonder, without flaw, first, to rule a kingdom, in the world?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ce trí ina agus flear mbeand dífhuair ar tus Mis Eireann re na h-eisgaire anair re Bith agus re Ceasar?</td>
<td>Which three women and men of the mountains first found Mis of Ireland before the fisherman, in the east, before Bith and before Cessair?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Cai in duine cai in dus cai a ainm cai a h-imus da riogh na feoil re gach neach? Abradh fos Flaind Mainistreach</td>
<td>Who is the man, what is the origin, what is his name, what is his story, he who did a deed of slaughter before all people? May Flann Mainistrech speak further!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Dim-sa dleagar maith mo chéist dom do radhá in cét ceist anírn d a gníom ramra da dian dibh a dian amra.</td>
<td>Benefit is owed by me for my question, to speak the first question to me […]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Na cruma da cuaidh fan deach a cuirp Jacob a caemteach {a?} noco ceilm ar gach neach is dib do ríneamh gach firbeach.</td>
<td>The maggots who went, according to the verse, from the body of Jacob, his comely abode. It is not hidden from every man. It is from them that each true bee is made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Mac Adhaim dabi ar miri Cain do be in cét fíli Seth do tiolá na tainti Cainen in cét cainti</td>
<td>The son of Adam who was enraged, Cain, he was the first poet; Seth who led the cattle; Cainen [who was] the first satirist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Cainen òg Seth naí creid as e doríghni in cét goid ar caeiri fhínd fáagar</td>
<td>Cainen, grandson of Seth, who did not believe, it is he who made the first theft of fine sheep, fearfully, that were in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>Translation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Da ba in cét easbog caem glan airdrig nime agus talman, ise tug gradhə ar tus tair [Abel mac Adhaimh]</td>
<td>The first bishop, precious and bright, was the High King of Heaven and Earth; it is he that ordained, first, yonder,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ag Mathasaleim na n-glond dorinead in cét teampull ag Enog, gun fir taid [bech dar] oin Adeadh in cét cloic [th]each</td>
<td>By Mathusaleh of the deeds was made the first temple. By Enoch, by the true explanation, was built the first stone house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Cain mac Adhaimh in fear ag ga ndearnam [an tr] eabath da gab daim ar tus tall agus da t-sheol in cét crand</td>
<td>[It was] Cain son of Adam, the man of cows, by whom was made the first ploughing, who first harnessed an ox, in the east, and who steered the first plough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Is ag in Cain sin na leand da ríneam in cét molind arsin muil ar brud na mal da rinni degnim don gran</td>
<td>It was by that same Cain of the cloaks that the first mill was built by means of the axle-wheel, by the breaking of tributes (?) he made a good deed of the grain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Ag in Cain sin ni go da ríneamh ar tus in cét bro tricha bliadan ni fath fúnd re siu do ríneadh molind</td>
<td>By that Cain, it is no falsehood, the first millstone, ever, was made; thirty years, it is no weak reason, before the mill was built.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Dim-sa dlear anois ni ceast [a] nd [d] nisin mar fuilgeas in scribt gan ceas i. fuilleis in seanac</td>
<td>I am now obliged to relate some problems here, just as the writing ceaselessly endures, that is, as the senchas increases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Tri ingena Cain mir agas in t-Sheith meic Adhaim as iad fuair Eireann ar tus re n-em is re n-imthus</td>
<td>Three daughters of crazy Cain and Seth, the son of Adam: it is they that first found Ireland, according to enumeration and according to process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Mathasaleam fear na fleadh chlaigi theainig fo coir robi sin riam in cét cuilni</td>
<td>Mathusaleh, man of the repasts, by him the first feast was made; it came to him, as is right; his was the first ever kitchen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Mbuindhe snamamh darach duind agus caera clac ranic a gur a leasdar gan gais a dairci re ceaide l cais is iad sin is nirco ra cleith do bo deasgi don cét fleagh</td>
<td>The flowing branch of the brown oak and the mounds of stones that reaches the vessel without sprigs; the acorns against (?) hated. It is they, it is not concealed, that constituted the vessel for the first feast (?).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Ag Adhaim da ríneamh teach ase adeir Fland Mainistreach aña inar buadh a parthus issa luain ar [nir] bus</td>
<td>By Adam a house was built – this is what Flann Mainistrech says – upon his expulsion from paradise, it is on Monday (?) [...].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Toradh mac Esru meic Cloic in airdrig do gab Aissia Is[s]e/s sin is ni bladh m-beand cét rig garaib cét ceithirnd agus da thlaich re cach tuarasar ar tus do /glach/</td>
<td>Torad son of Esru son of Cloc, the High King who took Asia: he is, it is something of the notables’ glories, he is the first king who had [the] first warband: and he gave to all, the first tribute that he took.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 35    | Pennan mac Adhaimh gu droir isse dorfini in cét feoil da brathair do mill fini | Pennan son of Adam, with vigour, it is he who committed the first slaughter; against his brother, he violated his kin, | against
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>do Cain don in cét /filid\</th>
<th>Cain, against the first [poet?].</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>I am from Monasterboice [of the] heights,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am Flann, archpoet of Ireland,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I entered the assembly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 22: An intracodical network in UM

The following table is based on work done on *UM* by Mulchrone and O’Sullivan. In the table, C is Adam Cusin, and F is Faelán Mac a Gabann.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fol. ref. (text/section beg.)</th>
<th>Scribe</th>
<th>Text and Attribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gathering 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39²⁰¹</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>The Prose <em>Banshenchas</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41⁰²⁰</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>‘Adham aeathir na ndhaine’. The metrical <em>Banshenchas</em>, mainly on women from Irish history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44⁰¹⁴</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’. Attr. Flann Mainistrech; on the world-kings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47⁰⁶</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>‘Adham ar n-athair uile’. Attr. Faelán Mac a’ Gabann; on famous women from biblical and classical history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47⁰⁶</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>‘Ceithri coimperta caemha’. On procreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47⁰⁶⁴</td>
<td>C (catchword (to fol. 48²⁰¹) by C).</td>
<td>‘Neac genes in Domnach bidh suthain bidh soenmeach [...]’. On the fortunes of those born on the several days of the week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48²⁰¹</td>
<td>F</td>
<td><em>Adam primus pater</em>. Synchronisms of the world-kings with Irish history, including the kings of Ireland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49⁰¹</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>‘Abrathamh et Nachor tugsad da mnaï [...]’. Tract on the mothers of characters from biblical and classical history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49⁰⁷</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>‘Scota ingean Fhoraind bean Niuil máthair Gaeidil Glais [...]’’. Tract on the mothers of characters from Irish history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50²²⁶</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Pedigrees of Christ, Mary, Samuel, and other biblical personages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50⁰⁷⁰</td>
<td>F (catchword (to fol. 76²⁰¹) by C).</td>
<td><em>Senchas Naem Érenn</em>. Saints’ genealogies, litanies etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering 11 (to fol. 56⁰²⁰)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>C (?)</td>
<td>Missing folio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56⁰¹</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>‘Scela cluana na clog mbind’. Incomplete; on St Tigernach (?).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56⁰²⁷</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>‘Aenach Teamra na n-ocht n-ech’. Flann and Máel Sechnaill’s dialogue on biblical apocrypha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering 11–15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56⁰²⁰</td>
<td>C (and later hands)</td>
<td>Religious poetry and prose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76²⁰¹</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td><em>Lebor na Cert</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Appendix 23: Poems attributed to Flann in *LGÉ d*

See: 5:2.1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RIA 23.M.70</th>
<th>Scribe: Mícheál Ó Cléirigh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Éistid a eolchu cen ón’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fol. 29r10</td>
<td>D aitbibh Tuaitbi De Danang da ringe Flan in Mainistrech (‘on the deaths of the Túatha Dé Danann, that Flann wrought’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fol. 44v7</td>
<td>As do cuimhniuccdhd anmanng na toisech so do raidedh (‘It is to memorialise the names of those leaders that it was pronounced’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tú’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fol. 97r13–14</td>
<td>As d aitibh na riogh so 7 da n-anmannaib a Eochaid Feidle lech go Dathi cona n-athgabhail dibh airmh [ ... ?] (‘It is on those kings’ deaths and on their names from Eochaid Feidlech to Nath Í, with their enumeration [ ... ?]’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Suibne go sloghadh dia soí’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Physical lacuna]</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ríg Themra toebaige iar ttain’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Physical lacuna]</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RIA D.iii.3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scribe: Eochaidh Ua hEodhusuidhe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Éistid a eolchu cen ón’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. 27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Toisich na llongse tar ller’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. 40.21–22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tú’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. 87.12–14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLANN MAINISTREACH CECINIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(‘It is on the deaths of those kings and on their names from Eochaid Feidlech to Nath Í, with the number of their full computation, that Flann Mainistrech wrote this poem. Flann Mainistrech sang’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Suibne go sloghadh dia soí’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Omitted]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ríg Themra toebaige iar ttain’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. 99.11–14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN DUAN SO [ ... ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(‘It is on the deaths and on these names of those kings that this was pronounced, from Nath Í mac Fiachrach to Máel Sechnaill Mór mac ...’).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Domnaill, and the famous authority, Flann, *fer léiginn* of Monasterboice, the Gaidil’s master-scholar of chronicling and of poetics in his time, wrought this poem [...]’.

**RIA 23.K.32**

*Scribe: Cú Cóigriche Ó Cléirigh*

‘*Éistid a eolchu cen ón*’

p. 51.7–8

As d aitheb Thuaithe Dé Donann, amail ro chan Flann Mainistrech (‘It is on the deaths of the Túatha Dé Danann that Flann sang thus’).

‘*Toisich na llóngse tar ller*’

pp. 70’27–71.1

As do cuimhniughadh anmann na ttoisech ’7 na n-airéch sin ró raided innso. Flann ro chachain (‘It is to memorialise the names of the leaders and those chiefs this here was pronounced. Flann sang’).

‘*Ríg Themra dia tesbann tnu*’

p. 176.27–28

As d aitibh na righ et da n-anmandaibh o Eochaid Feidhlech co Dáthi co na n-athghabail ina n-airim do righne Flann Mainistrech an duan so (‘It is on the deaths of the kings and on their names from Eochaid Feidilech to Nath Í, with their enumeration, that Flann Mainistrech wrought this poem’).

‘*Suibne go sloghadh dia soí*’

p. 189.21

[...] diandebagh Flann Mainištreach (‘on which Flann Mainistrech said’).

‘*Ríg Themra toebaige íar tain*’

p. 225.11–15

As dóna rioghaibh sin ro ghab Erinn ó Dathí mac Fiachrach go Maolseachlann Mór mac Do,mnnaill, dia n-anmandaibh et dia n-oibh do righne an t-ughdar oirrderc Flann fear leiginn Mainistrech Buite saoi eagna ’7 cronice fílídechtae Gaeil na aímsir an duan so sios (‘It is on those kings who held Ireland from Nath Í mac Fiachrach to Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill, on their names and on their deaths, that the famous authority, Flann, *fer léiginn* of Monasterboice, the Gaidil’s master of study and of chronicling and of poetics in his time, wrought this poem below’).

**RIA C.iv.3**

*Scribe: Dábhidhe Ó Dubhghaonnáin*

‘*Éistid a eolchu cen ón*’

fol. 19’8–9

D AİTHBH TÚATH DÉ DANANN AMAIL RO CHAN FLAND MAINISTREACH (‘On the deaths of the Túatha Dé Danann, Flann sang thus’).

‘*Toisich na llóngse tar ller*’

fol. 28’7–19

As d choinníugadh anmann na ttoisech ’7 na n-airéch sin ro raidedh an so.

Flann ro chachain.

(‘It is to memorialise the names of the leaders and those chiefs, that this was pronounced. Flann sang’)

‘*Ríg Themra dia tesbann tnu*’

fol. 81’12–14

As d aitibh na rgh, et da n-anmandaibh o Eochaidh Feidhlech co Dathí co n-aithghabail in n-airéimh do righne Flann Mainistrech an duain so (‘It is on the deaths of the kings, and on their names, from Eochaid Feidlech to Nath Í together with their enumeration that Flann Mainistrech wrought this poem’).

‘*Suibne go sloghadh dia soí*’

fol. 87’11

[...] dia ndebairt Flann Mainištreach (‘on which Flann Mainistrech said’).
### ‘Ríg Themra toebaige íar ttain’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fol. 108’1–5</th>
<th>As dona rioghaibh sin ro ghabh Eirinn o Dháthi mac Fiachraich co Maelachlaind Mór mac Domnaill, dia n-anamnuibh, 7 da n-oidedaibh, do righne an t-ughdur oirrderc i. Flann fer leiginn Mainistreach Buite, sáio egna, croinice, filidhecha Gaoidheal ina aimsir an duain shenchusa so sios (‘It is on those kings who took Ireland, from Nath Í mac Fiachrach to Máel Sechnaill Mór mac Domnaill, on their names and on their deaths, that the famous authority, Flann, <em>fer léiginn</em> of Monasterboice, the Gaidil’s master of studies, of chronicling, and of poetics in his time wrought this historical poem below’).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### The preface to ‘Ríg Themra toebaige íar ttain’ beyond *LGÉ d*

#### UCD A.33

**Scribe:** Míchéal Ó Cléirigh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>See also Edinburgh, NLS Adv., MS 72.3.1, <em>saec. XVIII</em>, p. 294.42</th>
<th>As d ainm et do bas gach righ da ndubhramar o Dhathí mac Fiachraich go Mael Seachlainn Mór mac Donnaill do rinne an t-ughdar oirdeire Flann fear leiginn Mainistreach Buite, saoi eagna, croinice et filidheachta nGaoidheal ria aimsir an duais siosa. (‘It is of the name and the death of each king we have mentioned, from Nath Í mac Fiachrach to Máel Sechnaill Mór mac Donnaill, that the famous authority, Flann, <em>fer léiginn</em> of Monasterboice, the Gaidil’s master of studies and chronicling and poetry in his time, wrought this poem below’).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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42 McKechnie, *Catalogue*, I, 250.
### Appendix 24: ‘Pádraig abb Érenn uili’ and ‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’

See: 5:2.1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>`Pádraig abb Érenn uili’</th>
<th>‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’: qq. 8–11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RIA C.iii.3, fol. 218’14–22 (Henry Burc’s addition).</strong></td>
<td>The extract below, like all published editions of ‘Naemsenchas naem Insi Fáil’, is from Cú Cóigeriche Ó Cléirigh’s Recension. The minor variants in the BB and Lec. texts of the poem do not affect the present comparison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pádruig, ab Eireann uile mac Calprainn, mic Fotaide mic Deisse, nar dóigh do liudh mic Cormuic Mhóir, mic Leibriuth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patraicc mac Calpruinn, ar tus, mic Fodáidhe, as caomhrús, mic Odis mic Cornil aird mic Liber mic Meirc morgairce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>mic Ota, mic Orric Mhaith mic Moiric, mic Leo in lan raith mic Maximi, maírgh na sloyinn mic Enretta aird alaind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mic Oda mic Oric moill mic Muiricc mic Oirc luathloind mic Leo mic Maxim aird mic Otraig uallaigh iomgairce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mic Pilist is ferr ar aig cach, mic Fereni gan ansath mic Brittain, dothbra in mara, o tait Bretain bruthmharra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mic Eris mic Pelist luinn mic Ferine na bferglond mic Briotain Mail, maith fir, mic Ferrchusa mic Neimhidh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cochnias a mhathair malla Nemthor a bhaille bagha don Mumhain ni cael a chuid ro saor ar puthair Pádraig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do siol an Neimhidh sin tra Cruithnigh is Brethaigh Cluada, senathair Gailian nar gann, Fer mBolcc is Tuat De Danann.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As da shiol Patraicc ro fes dleccchar dhin a shaoirshencus gen gob do shiol mac Milidh ngle, leis do naomadh ar naomne.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Translations of qq. 4–5**

4 Cochnias was his modest mother; | Nemthor his native town; | of Munster not small his share, | which Patrick redeemed from sorrow. |
| Of the seed of that Nemed, indeed, | are the Cruithni and the Britons of the Clyde, | grandfather of the Leinstermen who do not begrudge, | of the Fir Bolg and of the Túatha Dé Danann. |

5 – |
| It is of the seed of Patrick, it was known, | it is owed by the noble history, | the birth that was for the bright sons of Míl, | by it was sanctified our saints. |

---

43 CGS§, §§662.1–642.242 (pp. 79–108) (§662.8–12 (p. 80)).
Appendix 25: Catha Cenél Éogain: sample entry

See: 2:4.2.1.2; 4:2.1.2; 5:2.1.3

**BB, fol. 48v**

Niall Caille mac Aeda Ordnite .uii. catha leis i cosnam Erenn .i. Cath Dairi Calgaidh for Gollu Cath Muighe Itha for Gollu Cath Lethi in Chaim for Ulltu agus ar na Colla dar ro tuit Cumascach agus Cellach Sluaiged la Niall co ILaigniu co tug rige do Bran mac Faelain. INdradh Midhi la Niall cetna cor loisc co Tech Mceldhag Righdhai mr i Cluain Conaire Tomain re Feidlimid mac Crimthainn ri Caisil agus Niall Caille ri Erenn Argain Fher Ceall agus Delbna Beithra la Niall cetna bathadh Neill i Callaing unde Niall Caille dicitur

Borb a talland isin tir
olec a dhiil i Callaing cruaidh
tainic barrfind asin tsleibh
do marbadh Neill ra duing ruaidh

**Translation**

Níall Caille, son of Áed Oirdnide, eight battles by him contending for Ireland i.e. the Battle of Daire Calgaid against the foreigners, the Battle of Mag Itha against the foreigners, the Battle of Leth Cam against the Ulaid and against the Collas [= the Airgialla] in which fell Cumuscach and Cellach. A hosting by Níall against the Laigin so that he gave the kingship to Bran mac Faelán. Mide’s devastation by that same Níall, so that he burned as far as Tech Mael Maedoc. A great royal conference in Clúain Conaire Tomain between Feidlimid mac Crimthainn, king of Cashel, and that Níall Caille. Níall’s destruction of the Fir Cell and the Delbna Bethra. Níall’s drowning in the River Caille, whence Níall Caille, as it is said:

Fierce the disgrace in the land,
evil his end in the harsh Caille;
the bright-cap fell from the mountain
when dashing, swarthy, ruddy Níall was slain.

**Lec., fol. 59r**

Niall Cailli mac Aeda Oirnide .uii. catha leis i cosnam Erenn .i. Cath Dairi Calgaig for Gallu agus Cath Muigi Itha for Gollu agus Cath Lethi in Chaim for Ulltu agus arna Colla dar thuit Cumuscach agus Cellach Sluaiged la Niall co ILaigniu co tug rige do Bran mac Faelain. INdrud Mide la Niall cetna cor loisc co Tech Mael Maedoc agus Chonog Rigidal mor i Cluain Conaire Tomain ir Feidlimid mac Crimthainn ri Caisil agus Niall Cailli cetna Orgain Fer Cell agus Delbna Bethra la Niall cetna Bathadh Neill i Callaing unde Niall Cailli dicitur

Borb a tharand isin tir
olec a chem a Callaing cruaidh
tanic barrfind asin tsleibh
do marbadh Neill ra duing ruaidh

**RIA 23.D.17: Ó Cléirgh Book of Genalogies, §§430–31 (Pender (ed.))**


Borb a tallann isin tir
Olc a dil a Callainn cruaidh
tainic barainn isin tsleibh
do marbad Nell raduinn ruaidh

Ui. mic Neill caille .i. Aedh finnliath ri Erenn, Duibindrechtach (o ta clann Duibindrechtaigh), et Aenghus (o ta clann Aenghusa), Baedan, Muircertach (o ta clann Muircertaigh .i. Eogan mac Muiredaigh o ta clann Conghalaigh .h. Ualgartaigh), et Braenan (o ta clann Braenain muighe h-ithe), amail as-bert

Se mic ag Niall caille cain
Aedh finnliat, Aenghus arnaidh
Muircertach, Duibindrecht deach
Baedan, Braenan, Flaithbertach.

**Translation of Additional Material**

Six sons of Níall Caille i.e. Áed Findliath, king of Ireland, Dubindrechtach (whence Clann Duibindrechtaig), and Áengus (whence Clann Áengusa), Báetán, Muirchertach (whence Clann Muirchertaig i.e. Éogan mac Muiredaig, from which is Clann Conghalaigh uí Mhuireertaig) and Braenan (whence Clann Braenain of Mag Itha), as it is said.

Six sons of good Niall Caille:
Áed Findliath, cruel Áengus,
Muirchertach, good Dubindrecht,
Báetán, Braenan, Flaithbertach.
### Appendix 26: NLI G.131’s superscription to ‘Conall cuimgid clainne Néill’

**See:** 5:3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NLI G.131, p. 108.20–25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scribe:</strong> Cú Cóigerche Ó Cléirigh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flann abb Mainistreach Buíte mic Brónaigh do chum an dúansa in ro chúimhnhigh gabhaltus Conaill Gulban mic Neill i ecoigeadh Uladh, et na catha ro chuir ag dioghaire a oide, et amail do rann a fearonn for a braithribh Eoghan, Cairpre et Ênna. As for an fFlann sin tuccadh an teistsi:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flann a primchill Buiti binn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rinn ruiscc a mhinchinn as mall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miudhsai sidhe suighes lind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiughsai tire tri fFind Flann.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Later hand (?):] Aois Christ an tan at bath 1056.\(^{44}\)

Flann, abbot [sic] of the monastery of Buíte son of Brónach [= Monasterboice], wrought this poem to preserve the memory of the conquests of Conall Gulbán mac Néill in the fifth of the Ulaid and of the battles that he fought to avenge his tutor and how he divided the land among his brothers, Eoghan, Cairpre and Ênna. It is concerning this Flann that this evidence is given:

Flann, from the famous church of sweet-voiced Buíte, slow the glance of the eye in his gentle head. He is a wondrous mead-scholar who imbibes ale. Final scholar of the three Finns’ land is Flann.

[Later hand (?):] The age of Christ when he died: 1056.

---

\(^{44}\) Ní Shéaghdha (ed.), *NLI Cat.*, fasc. IV, 54 (my translation). For issues surrounding the interpretation and translation of ‘Flann a primchill Buiti binn’, see 1:3 and Appendix 4.
## Appendix 27: Other poets in RIA 23.K.32’s réim rigraide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>See: 5:3.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Érú òg, inis na naem’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attr. Gilla Mo Dutu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cf. LGÉ, V, §664 (pp. 412–13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As do förathmett na riogh ro ghbsat Ére iar ccreidemh ro chan an tsaoi-senchaidh na hebraidh gaoi an duan so sios .i. Giolla Mo Duda agus ba habb eisidhe in Ard Breccain.

‘Ére ogh inis na nomh’

It is in remembrance of the kings that took Ireland after the coming of the Faith that the master-historian, who would not speak falsehood, chanted this poem .i. Gilla Mo Dutu and he himself was abbot of Ardbracean.

‘Young Ireland, isle of saints’

‘Ata sunn forbha feasa’

Attr. Gilla Cóemáin

| RIA 23.K.32, p. 236.1–2 |

Giolla Caemain rochan indso dona rioghaibh cètna si sin. Ro gabsat righe Ereann ier ccreidiumh

‘Ata sunn forbha feasa’

Gilla Cóemáin sang here concerning the same kings. They took the kingship of Ireland after the coming of the Faith.

‘Here is the apex of knowledge’

‘Atá sunn seachas riogh Ereann’

Attr. Seán Úa Dubhagáin


Úa Dubhagáin Sean, ollam Ua Maine do chum senchus rioghréime Ereann isin duain si. Aois Crist an tan tathaim an tUa Dubagain sin 1372.

‘Atá sunn seachas riogh Ereann’

Úa Dubhagáin, Seán, ollam of Uí Maine, who compiled the history of the kings of Ireland in this poem. The age of Christ when that Úa Dubhagáin died was 1372.

‘Here is the history of the kings of Ireland’
Appendix 28: LGÉ at: glossing on poetry attributed to Flann

See: 5:3.3

‘Ríg Themra dia tesbann tú’

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scribe: Michéal Ó Cléirigh</td>
<td>Scribe: Cú Cócigcriche Ó Cléirigh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eochaid Airem, a swift journey, 1 | The true lord died in Freman, | it was the last exploit 2 of his glorious reign, | by Sigmall of Sid Nennta. |

1. i. his journey was swift, or impetuous.  
2. i. it was the final exploit that defined his kingship.

Eochaid Airem, eraim ndaith 1  
ort a bFreamain an fiorflaith  
ba tiugbann 2 dia righe rá  
lá Sioghmall Sidhí Nenntá

1. i. bá daith no ésecaidh a éirim.  
2. i. bá déidhionbánn do remniugadh a righe.

Relevant lemmata from Michéal Ó Cléirigh’s Focloir no Sanasan Núa (1643)

[‘Dictionary or modern small glossary’].

Daith .i. ésgaidh, no tapaidh no luath (‘impetuous, or quick, or fast’).

Ra .i. réimnuighadh, no ceimnuighadh (‘proceeding, or gradating’).  

Tiugh .i. deireadh, no deigeanach, amhail atá tiug laithe .i. laithe .i. laithe deigeanach 7 tiughcholadlaidh .i. codlaidh deigeanach (‘the end, or final, as in tiuglaithe, that is, day, that is, the final day and tiughchodladh, that is, the final sleep’).

‘Éstid a eolchu cen ón’

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scribe: Michéal Ó Cléirigh</td>
<td>Scribe: Cú Cócigcriche Ó Cléirigh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fodla la hEttan go n-uaill  
la Caicher Banbha go mbuaithd  
cia1 baile a ffaid as iad sin  
aidhedha na n-óc esttidh. EST.

1. i. as iad sin a mbás, gibé hionad i bhfaoiódh  
no ina ccomnnaighd anos, no gi bé gá  
mbeith fuireachrus riu d’e cisibh

Fodla, by Etan with pride; | by Caicher, Banba with victory; | whatever place they

1. i. i ffaoit, no i ccomnnaighd, nó ci be ga 
mbeith fuireachrus riu.

45 Miller (ed. and trans.), ‘Focloir [1]’; ‘Focloir [2]’.

46 Rá has at least two meanings (eDIL, s.v. rá). From rán, after poetic syncope of the final letter, it can mean ‘glorious’. It can also mean ‘voyage’, possibly based on an inference from ráid (‘rows, sails’).
may sleep, those are | the deaths of the heroes, hear ye.

1.i. those are their deaths, whatever the place in which they are, or where they remain now, or wherever they are to be expected by scholars.

may sleep, those are | the deaths of the heroes, hear ye.47

1.i. in the place, or in which they remain, or wherever it is at which they are to be expected.

Relevant lemmata from *Foclóir*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Föt .i. faiteach (‘cautious’).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Föt .i. fúireachais (‘keeping look-out’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Óc .i. fili (‘poet’).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Toisicnach longse tar ller’

| RIA 23.M.70, fol. 4447–14 |
| Scribe: Míchéal Ó Cléirigh |

TOISIcGH na loingsi tar ler
dia tangattar meic Mhíleadh
ad memra liomsa rem la
a n-anmanna gan iomarba.1

Donn, Ereamhon, Ébir án
Ír Aimhirgin gan clethrann6
Colptha Airech Feabra feigh
Eranann Muiimne maiothreth

1.i. gan brécc
2.i. gan claoine no gan letrom

| RIA 23.K.32, p. 71.1–4 |
| Scribe: Cú Cóigcriche Ó Cléirigh |

Tóisicch na loingsi tar lear
dia tangatar meic Mileadh
at memra liomsa rem la
a n-anmanna gan iomarba.1

Donn Eremón Eber an
Ir Aimhirgin gan clethrann6
Colptha Airech Feabra a fheig
Eranann Muiimne minreidh

1.i. cen bréicc
2.i. gan claoini no lethtrom ina breithemnus

The chiefs of the voyage over sea | by which the sons of Míl came | I have in recollection, during my life, | their names without lie.1

Donn, Érimón, noble Éber, | Ír, Amairgen without partiality7 | Colptha, Airech Feabra the keen, | Eranann, Muimne of the smooth course.

1.i. without deceit.
2.i. without perversion or without one-sidedness.

The chiefs of the voyage over sea | by which the sons of Míl came | I have in recollection, during my life, | their names without lie.1

Donn, Érimón, noble Éber, | Ír, Amairgen without partiality7 | Colptha, Airech Feabra the keen, | Eranann, Muimne fine and smooth.48

1.i. without deceit.
2.i. without perversion or without one-sidedness in their judgement.

Relevant lemmata from *Foclóir*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iomarbha .i. brég (‘deceit’).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleathramh .i. cláoine (‘perversion’).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

47 MacNeill and Macalister (ed. and trans.), *Leabhar Gabhála*, pp. 188–89.
## Appendix 29: References to the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’ in early print and selected post-medieval manuscripts

See: LR:2.2, 6:3.1

### Identifiable Citations of the ‘Synchronisms’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td>O’Flaherty, <em>Ogygia</em></td>
<td>Sharpe (Letters, p. 412) provides a full annotated list of citations by O’Flaherty. One of O’Flaherty’s citations (<em>Ogygia</em>, p. 129), interpreted by Sharpe as relating to <em>Adam primus pater</em>, seems rather to relate to Giolla Íosa Mac Firbisigh’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’ (6:2). Similarly, the citation (<em>Ogygia</em>, p. 139) of ‘Codex Lecan. fol.179a’ relates not to <em>Adam primus pater</em> but to a text I am terming the Assyrian <em>Synchronisms</em> (6:3.1.2). Sharpe omits to mention the version of <em>Adam primus pater</em> in <em>BB</em>, fols 6v1–7v5, and the abridged version in NLI G.6 (6:3.1.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1753</td>
<td>O’Conor [I], <em>Dissertations</em>, p. 52</td>
<td>O’Conor I also adds the heading ‘Leabhar Comhairmsireachda Flainn Mainistreach Synchronism of Flan’ to <em>Adam Primus Pater</em> in <em>BB</em> (fol. 6v1) (6:3.1.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814–1826</td>
<td>O’Conor [II], <em>Rerum Hibernicarum</em>, <em>Adam primus pater</em> is cited too frequently in this work for a full list to be practical; some of the more detailed citations are at II, 9–11, 31 (n. 19); III, 67 (n. 1); IV, 11.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1827</td>
<td>D’Alton, ‘Essay’, p. 43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Moore, <em>History of Ireland</em>, I, 134–35 (?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>O’Donovan, <em>AFM</em>, I, <em>Again, the more detailed citations (of many) are at I, 74 (n. z), 80 (n. o), 84 (n. a), 105–06 (n. s).</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>McLauchlan, <em>Celtic Gleanings</em>, p. 93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>O’Curry, <em>Manuscript Materials</em>, pp. 53–56, 509</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Hyde, <em>Literary History</em>, p. 445</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Dineen, <em>History of Ireland by Geoffrey Keating</em>, IV, p. 346</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Assyrian Synchronisms (= ‘Comaimser rig Asar re rigaib Erind’; Schmidt’s S-Lc)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td>O’Flaherty, <em>Ogygia</em>, pp. 129</td>
<td>[via Giolla Íosa Mac Firbisigh’s ‘Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim’], 139.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Invasion Synchronisms (= ‘Comaimserad rig in domain ocus Gabál nÉrenn’; Scowcroft’s s/Tract IV; Schmidt’s S-LG-A)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
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<td>1814–1826</td>
<td>O’Conor [II], <em>Rerum Hibernicarum</em>, IV, 86; <em>Bibliotheca</em>, I, 36.</td>
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<td>1835</td>
<td>Moore, <em>History of Ireland</em>, I, 134–35 (?)</td>
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<td>1899</td>
<td>Hyde, <em>Literary History</em>, p. 445</td>
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#### Provincial Synchronisms (= ‘Comaimserad rig n-Erenn 7 rig na coiced’)

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<td>1814–1826</td>
<td>O’Conor [II], <em>Rerum Hibernicarum</em>, II, 103 (n. 31), 117; III, 127, 136–37; IV, 85–86; <em>Bibliotheca</em>, I, p. 36.</td>
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<td>Non-specific or unidentifiable citations of the ‘Synchronisms of Flann’</td>
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<td>1814–1826: O’Conor [II], <em>Rerum Hiberniarum</em>, II, 90 (n. 87), III, 119 (n. 3); <em>Bibliotheca</em>, I, 35–36.</td>
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<th>Provincial Synchronisms (without a named author)</th>
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<td>1685: O’Flaherty, <em>Ogygia</em> [Sharpe (<em>Letters</em>, p. 412) tacitly implies that O’Flaherty cites the <em>Provincial Synchronisms</em> as Flann’s work; I have found no such citation].</td>
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Appendix 30: The Donegal Series: post-medieval manuscripts and early print

See: 6:4.2

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<th>O’Curry’s Attribution (Manners, II)</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’</td>
<td>Flann Mainistrech/Flann mac Lonáin</td>
<td>Flann Mainistrech</td>
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<td>‘A liubair atá ar do lár’</td>
<td>Flann Mainistrech</td>
<td>Flann Mainistrech</td>
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<td>Flann Mainistrech</td>
<td>Flann Mainistrech</td>
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<td>‘Cairbre, Éogán, Énna éim’</td>
<td>Flann Mainistrech</td>
<td>Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe</td>
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<td>Flann Mainistrech</td>
<td>Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe</td>
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<td>‘Eistigh re Conaill calma’</td>
<td>Flann Mainistrech</td>
<td>Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe</td>
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<td>‘A eólcha Chonaill cheólaigh’</td>
<td>Flann Mainistrech</td>
<td>Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Idir gach obair sgriobas’</td>
<td>Flann Mainistrech</td>
<td>Eogan Ruad Mac An Bhaird</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Atá sund rolla na righ’</td>
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‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’

Printed attributions: Attr. to Flann Mainistrech or Flann mac Lonáin by O’Reilly, ‘Chronological account’, pp. lx, lxxvii; attr. to Flann Mainistrech by O’Curry, Manners and Customs, II, 161.

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<td>Aodh Ó Dochartaigh</td>
<td>fol. 57'18</td>
<td>‘Flann Mainistrech’ [contradicted by O’Conor I]</td>
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<td>NLI G.131, saec. XVII</td>
<td>Cú Chóigeriche O Cléirigh</td>
<td>p. 108.20–25</td>
<td>‘[...] Flann abb Mainistrech Buíte mic Brónaigh [...]’[49]</td>
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<td>Michéal O Cléirigh</td>
<td>fol. 53[50]</td>
<td>‘Flann Mainistrech’ [contradicted by O’Conor I]</td>
</tr>
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<td>NLI G.167, saec. XVIII</td>
<td>Semus Mhaguidhir</td>
<td>p. 41</td>
<td>‘Flann mac Lonáin’ [altered by O’Curry to Mainistrech]</td>
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<td>Dublin, TCD MS 1411 (olim H.6.7), saec. XVIII</td>
<td>Donnchadh Ó Conaill</td>
<td>p. 536</td>
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<td>Dublin, RIA F.vi.2 (253), saec. XVIII</td>
<td>Micheál Og O Longáin</td>
<td>p. 302</td>
<td>‘File d Aoibh Néill cct. ag foillsiogha mórdhacht Chlainne Néill 7 créad rug go’</td>
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<td>'A liubair atá ar do lár’</td>
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<td>NLI G.167, saec. XVIII</td>
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<td>Dublin, RIA, MS 23.Q.1 (570), saec. XVIII/XIX</td>
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<td>Dublin, RIA 23.N.26 (564), saec. XIX</td>
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52 O’Rahilly, RIA Cat., fasc. I, 28 (O’Reilly’s hand is identified on p. 27).
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<th>RIA 3.C.12, saec. XIX [Transcript of BOCD]</th>
<th>Eugene O’Curry</th>
<th>p. 142</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘Cairbre, Éogan, Énna éim’</td>
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<td><strong>Attributions:</strong> attr. to Flann Mainistrech by O’Reilly, ‘Chronological account’, p. lxxvi; attributed to Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe by O’Curry, Manners, II, 162–64.</td>
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<td>[None]</td>
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<td><strong>BOCD, saec. XVII</strong></td>
<td>Aodh Ó Dóchartaigh</td>
<td>fol. 161</td>
<td>‘In fear ceadna .cc.’ [i.e. Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe]</td>
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<td><strong>RIA 24.P.27, saec. XVII</strong></td>
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<td>‘Giolla Brighde’</td>
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<td>fol. 52[l]</td>
<td>[O’Grady (BL Cat.): ‘Poem by Flann of Monasterboice […]’]54</td>
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<td><strong>RIA 3.C.12, saec. XIX [Transcript of the BOCD]</strong></td>
<td>Eugene O’Curry</td>
<td>p. 171</td>
<td>‘Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe’</td>
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<td><strong>Attributions:</strong> Attr. to Flann Mainistrech by O’Reilly, ‘Chronological account’, p. lxxviii; attr. to Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe by O’Curry, Manners, II, 164.</td>
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<td>‘An Giolla Brighde ceadna’ [i.e. Mac Con Midhe]</td>
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<td>‘Giolla Brighde’ [Mac Conmidhe]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RIA 3.C.12, saec.XIX [Transcript of BOCD]</strong></td>
<td>Eugene O’Curry</td>
<td>p. 180</td>
<td>[None]</td>
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</table>

54 O’Grady, BL Cat., I, 68.
55 fl. 1596x1630 (‘A poem on the downfall of the Gaidhil’, ed. and trans. by William Gillies, Éigse, 13 (1969–70), 204–10 (p. 204 (n. 1))).
### ‘Eistígh re Conaill calma’


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<td>BOCD, saec. XVII</td>
<td>Cú Chóigcríche O Cléirigh</td>
<td>p. 35</td>
<td>‘Giollabrighde’ [Mac Conmidhe]</td>
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<td>Eugene O’Curry</td>
<td>p. 167</td>
<td>[None]</td>
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### ‘A éolcha Chonaill cheóлаigh’

**Attributions:** Attr. to Flann Mainistrech by O’Reilly, ‘Chronological account’, p. lxxvii; attr. to Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe by O’Curry, *Manners*, II, 162–63.

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<td>‘Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe’</td>
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<td>Eugene O’Curry</td>
<td>p. 174</td>
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### ‘Idir gach obair sgríobas’

**Attributions:** Attr. to Flann Mainistrech by O’Reilly, ‘Chronological account’, p. lxxviii; attr. to Éoghan Ruadh Mac An Bhaird by O’Curry, *Manners*, II, 165.

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<td>p. 48</td>
<td>‘An tí idem’ [i.e. either the author of ‘A cólca Chonaill chéolaigh’ (unnamed by original scribe) or Flann mac Lonáin, the last author named by the original idea; this superscription has been altered by Eugene O’Curry to ‘Eoghan Ruadh mac an Bháird cc.’]</td>
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<td>‘Eoghan Ruadh’</td>
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<td>‘An tí idem’ [i.e. Flann Mainistrech]</td>
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<td>p. 177</td>
<td>‘Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe’</td>
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### ‘Atá sund rolla na rígh’

**Editions:** McManus and Ó Raghallaigh (ed.), *Bardic Miscellany*, §55 (pp. 57–59).

**Attributions:** Attr. to Flann Mainistrech by O’Reilly, ‘Chronological account’, p. lxxviii; O’Curry (*Manners*, II, 165) claims never to have seen it (however, see RIA 3.C.12, below).

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<td>p. 392</td>
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<td>p. 295</td>
<td>‘Caílte mac Ronáin’</td>
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<td>Peadar Ó Longáin</td>
<td>p. 250</td>
<td>[None]/Donnchad Mór Ó Dalaigh[^58^]</td>
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</table>

[^57^]: This is what appears in Mulchrone’s catalogue entry (*RIA Cat.*, VI, 659). The poem follows ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’ (see above). It is not clear whether Mulchrone means that a similar inscription is made here or that the scribe wrote ‘idem.’ or equivalent.

[^58^]: According to Simms (*Bardic Poetry Database* (Poem 268)) and McManus and Ó Ragallagh (*Bardic Miscellany*, p. vii), this poem is ascribed to Donnchadh Mór Ó Dalaigh (ob. 1244) in Maynooth M.3. However, no author is listed in the manuscript catalogue (Paul Walsh, *Láithscribhinni Gaeilge Choláiste Phádraig Mh naud: Clár: Fáiscil 1* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1980), p. 20) and I have been unable to ascertain the situation by consulting the manuscript myself.
Appendix 31: The Donegal Series: structure in selected manuscripts

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<tr>
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<td>‘Enna, dalta Cairpri cruaid’</td>
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<td>‘Enna, dalta Cairpri cruaid’</td>
<td>‘Eistigh re Conaill calma’</td>
<td>‘Eistigh re Conaill calma’</td>
<td>Flann Mainistrech cecinit: ‘Conall cuingid clainne Néill’</td>
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<td>‘A liubair atá ar do lár’</td>
<td>‘A liubair atá ar do lár’</td>
<td>‘A liubair atá ar do lár’</td>
<td>Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe cecinit: ‘Cairbre, Eógan, Énna éim’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Atá sund senchas nach suaill’</td>
<td>‘Atá sund senchas nach suaill’</td>
<td>‘A eólcha Chonaill cheólaigh’</td>
<td>‘Enna, dalta Cairpri cruaid’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 32:


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(Original pagination is located top-right, this thesis’ pagination at the page’s foot.)
Flann Mainistrech's *Götterdämmerung* as a Junction within *Lebor Gabála Érenn*

Eystein Thanisch
University of Edinburgh

*Lebor Gabála Érenn* (‘The Book of the Invasion of Ireland’) is the conventional title for a lengthy Irish pseudo-historical text extant in multiple recensions probably compiled during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The text comprises a history of the Gaídil (‘Gaels’) within the context of a universal history derived from the Bible and from classical historiography. *Lebor Gabála* traces the ancestry of the Gaídil back to Noah and follows their tortuous migrations, spanning many generations, from the Tower of Babel to Ireland via Spain. Here, the narrative breaks off to cover the origins, history and demise of the peoples who had inhabited Ireland prior to the arrival of the Gaídil. Then, resuming its account of the Gaídil themselves, *Lebor Gabála* gives an account of their conquest of Ireland and their history thereafter, mainly in the form of a king-list, down to roughly the time of the text’s compilation.

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1 I am very grateful to David Alexander and my supervisor, Abigail Burnyeat, for discussing this paper with me, as well as to various delegates at the Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic 2012 for their questions and suggestions.


The compilation has a somewhat formidable reputation for complexity. It includes both prose and verse. Its narratives are supported by a wide range of scholarly techniques and genres, including etymology, genealogy and synchronistic scholarship, as well as detailed knowledge and exegesis of the Bible and various historical authorities, its purpose being partially to relate the Gáidil typologically to the children of Israel.4

**Lebor Gabála Érenn: Textual History and Criticism**

One of the most troublesome—but also one of the most interesting—aspects of *Lebor Gabála* is the significant variance in content, structure and doctrine between its thirteen manuscript texts, which are generally grouped into four recensions.5 Since Robert Macalister’s edition of *Lebor Gabála*, R. M. Scowcroft has offered another response to the text, as well as to various attempts to describe its textual history.6 He has argued that, rather than being derived from an authorial archetype, much of the material in the extant compilation is derived from subsequent commentary and supplementary material, as well as fundamental re-working in subsequent redactions and conflation of material from different versions.7 Any original with which the tradition began is no longer extant and Scowcroft does not believe it is possible to reconstruct it definitively.8 Therefore, ‘the very quest for an “original” [Lebor Gabála] … is misguided’.9

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8 Ibid. pp. 94–5.
9 Ibid. p. 88.
While the resulting idiosyncratic nature of each extant version may frustrate textual critics and editors, it also provides a useful opportunity for insight into concepts of authority in medieval Irish textual culture and the self-perception of the personnel involved in it. Whether innovative or based on another strand of the tradition, the distinctiveness of each manuscript version suggests a complex and nuanced attitude to the authority of texts and to an extent, a sense of authorial empowerment on the part of those involved in redacting and compiling each version.10

Poetry in Lebor Gabála Érenn
In this paper, I illustrate and explore this aspect of the Lebor Gabála tradition through the treatment of one poem found in different versions of the compilation. The poem itself changes in only a few meaningful respects but its context, which is—at least partially—the domain of the compiler, varies markedly.

Éstid a eolchu cen ón (‘Listen, scholars without flaw’) appears in several versions of Lebor Gabála and is part of a considerable corpus of lengthy metrical histories found in the compilation.11 It is attributed to the poet and historian, Flann Mainistrech (ob. 1056).12 Studies of the frequently occurring genre of prosimetrum in medieval Irish literature have generally concluded that the function of the verse

component is to support the prose either through marking moments of heightened pathos and drama or as evidence for statements made in prose. The evidential quality of a poem is derived from identifying it as the words either of an eyewitness or of a known scholar.\textsuperscript{13} Usually, poetry in \textit{Lebor Gabála} is neither concerned with heightened emotion nor found in the mouths of characters involved in the action. It tends, in general, to be very similar to the accompanying prose in terms of content and doctrine. While much is anonymous, the longer poems tend to be attributed to scholars of the Middle Irish period, such as Flann Mainistrech, who worked shortly before or during the period in which \textit{Lebor Gabála} was compiled.\textsuperscript{14}

Macalister, Scowcroft and John Carey view much of the poetry as having been originally composed independently, before subsequently becoming extremely influential in the development of the prosimetric compilation. Thus, many are cited \textit{in extenso} as direct sources, rather than supporting evidence.\textsuperscript{15} Scowcroft regards the original document behind the extant \textit{Lebor Gabála} as having been written entirely in prose, with subsequent redactors adding and integrating poems into the prose.\textsuperscript{16} Macalister has described the verse in \textit{Lebor Gabála} as an ‘unmitigated nuisance’ and, conceiving it to be independent from the prose, edits and prints it separately.\textsuperscript{17} However, both Carey and Scowcroft, while understanding the prose as being derived from the

\textsuperscript{17} Macalister, \textit{Lebor Gabála} I, x.
verse, also stress how both forms function integrally within the extant compilation, viewing the result in terms of the well-known medieval literary form, the opus geminatum. Scowcroft’s analysis is particularly interesting for this study. He suggests that, in Lebor Gabála, authoritative verse is not simply invoked in support of prose but, instead, the latent authority of the cited verse is in a dialogic relationship with other poems and within a wider, composite and more complex exposition by the compiler of the recension:

The poetry remains more or less immutable—the voice of named authorities—while the prose, anonymous and adaptable, expounds and integrates their testimony, consolidating its allusive treatment of action and wealth of non-narrative detail into a full narrative line. This prose ‘explanation’ of poetic authority comes therefore to function as a theatre for the historian’s own work as compiler and critic.

In the case study presented in this article, the relationship of the ‘historian’s own work’ with the poetic authority is examined through the treatment by different compilers of Êstid a eolchú... in the context of their own versions of Lebor Gabála. I thus hope to expand upon and stimulate further interest in the dynamic identified by Scowcroft in the development of the compilation.

Editions and Citations
When citing Lebor Gabála, one is faced with a dilemma. Macalister’s edition has been heavily criticized in terms of text, translation and editorial strategy, to the extent that Daniel Binchy recommended that studies of the compilation continue to be based on the original manuscripts. Conveniently, most of the relevant manuscripts are

19 Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála Part I’, p. 91. For examples of poems in Lebor Gabála that Scowcroft believes to be based on existing prose, see ‘Leabhar Gabhála Part I’, p. 90 and ‘Leabhar Gabhála Part II’, p. 5.
now much more accessible thanks to digitisation but they are still only available to those with the relevant expertise. For various reasons, Scowcroft has, albeit reluctantly, recommended that Macalister’s edition continue to be used.\(^{21}\) Other options include the text of *Lebor Gabála* in the *Book of Leinster*, which can be found in the diplomatic edition of that manuscript.\(^{22}\) Carey’s unpublished edition of what he analyses as ‘Recension 1’ of *Lebor Gabála* also includes the *Book of Leinster* text.\(^{23}\) However, both of these editions, while more reliable than Macalister’s, are restricted to one branch of the tradition, which Scowcroft has warned is not particularly representative.\(^{24}\) Macalister’s edition is, at least, representative. It includes the majority of variants from almost all the extant manuscripts and generally indicates the structural differences between their texts.

It is for this reason that citations of *Lebor Gabála* in this study will be from Macalister’s edition, checked against the diplomatic edition of the *Book of Leinster* where appropriate. Quoted text from other versions has been checked against the original manuscripts and I have revised some of Macalister’s translations. Mostly, however, this study is concerned with ordering of material, rather than with close reading, so the shortcomings of Macalister’s edition, while worth noting, are not relevant to it.

**ÉSTID A EOLCHU... IN CONTEXT**

Éstid a eolchu... is a rather bleak collection of terse accounts of how seventy individuals of the Túatha Dé Danann (‘People of the goddess Érenn’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 86: 1 (1956), 62–72, at pp. 71–2; Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála Part I’, pp. 82–3.


\(^{22}\) *L.L. I*, ll. 1–1800, pp. 1–56.


Danu’) died; the deaths, when not the result of violence or malevolent magic, tend to be the result of sorrow over earlier deaths.\(^{25}\) The Túatha Dé Danann are broadly presented by *Lebor Gabála* as human descendants of Noah and the last people to occupy Ireland before the arrival of the Gaídil.\(^{26}\) Their identity does not appear to have been so straightforward, however; many versions of the compilation also include some discussion as to whether they were, in fact, demons. Some modern scholars have interpreted material concerning the Túatha Dé Danann as pre-Christian mythology and the Túatha Dé Danann themselves as a kind of pantheon, preserved in euhemerized or demonized form in the Middle Ages.\(^{27}\) Medieval sources do indeed, on occasion, describe the Túatha Dé Danann as gods.\(^{28}\) However, a complex range of conceptions, both of them and of the religion of the pre-Christian past, has been identified within medieval Irish literature, possibly based on Patristic models, and further study of this topic is certainly desirable.\(^{29}\)

*Éstid a eolchu...*, with one late exception, is always found as part of *Lebor Gabála*.\(^{30}\) It appears in the following manuscripts.\(^{31}\)

\(^{25}\) This is the customary translation of their name but see J. Carey ‘The Name “Tuatha Dé Danann”’, Éigse 18 (1980–1981), 291–4.


\(^{27}\) Van Hamel, ‘*Lebor Gabála*’, pp. 190–1; *Lebor Gabála* IV, pp. 97–105; Dillon, ‘*Lebor Gabála*’, p. 67. For further references, see Scowcroft ‘*Leabhar Gabhála Part I*’, p. 82, n. 1.

\(^{28}\) For example, both *Éstid a eolchu...* and the poem *Éstid in senchas sluagach* (‘Hear the history of hosts’), also found in *Lebor Gabála*, refer to the Túatha Dé Danann as *dei* (‘gods’): *Lebor Gabála* IV, l. 1982, pp. 232–3; *LL* I, l. 1377, p. 43; *Lebor Gabála* IV, ll. 2497–505, pp. 282–91.


\(^{30}\) Cambridge, University Library, MS. Add. 4207 (s. xix), fols. 44v–45r.

\(^{31}\) The sigla used hereafter are those used in Scowcroft, ‘Medieval Recensions’, pp. 3–5. For more details concerning the manuscripts and for a guide to how
Recension m

- Lbm (Book of Lecan): Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 P 2 cat. 535 (Connacht s. xv), 19ra3–19rb36.
- Ym: Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, D i 3 cat. 539 (s. xiv), 1vb28–2rb7.
- Rm: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 512 (Connacht? s.xv/xvi), 93va24–93va26 (first quatrain only).

Recension a

- N (Book of Leinster): Dublin, Trinity College, H 2 18 cat. 1339 (s. xii), 11ra18–11rb40.32
- F (Book of Fermoy): Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, Stowe D iii 1 cat. 671 (Munster? s. xv), 11vb21–12ra39.33

Recension e

- B (Book of Ballymote): Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 P 12 cat. 536 (Connacht s. xiv), 19ra37–19va11.
- Lē (Book of Lecan): Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 P 2 cat. 535 (Connacht s. xv), 281va14–281vb50.

Éstid a eolchu... is not found in recension b. In terms of Scowcroft’s account of Lebor Gabhála’s textual history, this associates it with μ.34

they relate to Macalister’s edition, see Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála Part I’, pp. 84–6, 139–42.
33 This manuscript consists of folios which have become detached from the Book of Fermoy proper, which is bound as Dublin, Royal Irish Academy 23 E 29 cat. 1134 (Munster? s. xv).
Scowcroft envisages a terse, original document (ω) being adapted and expanded twice, producing two main traditions (α and μ), each influenced by distinct interests and methodologies. Broadly, m is derived from μ while b is derived from α, a being an attempt to reconcile α and μ.35

_A genealogical context within m and N_

In Scowcroft’s account of the textual tradition, m and N are the earliest in terms of the development of the compilation. Éstid a eolchu... is one of only two poems on the Túatha Dé Danann in m, following a body of genealogies which traces them back to Noah.36 It is then followed by a poem and two short anecdotes which focus on a particular character, Tuirill Biccreo.37 The coverage of the Túatha Dé Danann in m is then complete. If we read poems in _Lebor Gabála_ and elsewhere as working in conjunction with accompanying prose, Éstid a eolchu... appears to support the genealogies in some way, although m does not make its role explicit.

The prose coverage of the Túatha Dé Danann in N concludes with cognate genealogies, the material on Tuirill Biccreo being absent.38 Éstid a eolchu... is the third of three poems which follow N’s prose, each, like Éstid a eolchu..., apparently the work of an eleventh-century scholar. _Eirin co n-úaill co n-ídnaib_ (‘Ireland, with pride, with weapons’), is attributed elsewhere to Eochaid Ua Flainn and focuses on the arrival of the Túatha Dé Danann and the reigns of their kings.39 _Túatha Dé Danann fo diamair_ (‘The Túatha Dé Danann under

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34 Scowcroft describes Éstid a eolchu... as a ‘later addition’ to μ but does not elaborate: ‘Leabhar Gabhála Part II’, p. 5.
36 _Lebor Gabála_ IV, §§ 316 (N) and 316a (m), pp. 126–33; LL I, ll. 1130–89, pp. 35–7. The other poem is Éstid in senchas sluagach, see above, p. 75, n. 28.
obscurity’), attributed to ‘Tanaide’, lists their major figures and their particular skills.\textsuperscript{40} N is peculiar, in that it does tend to group poems together where other versions intersperse them more regularly with the prose.\textsuperscript{41} However, the implication is that the scribe of N does not interpret \textit{Éstid a eolkhu}... as directly supporting the genealogies, as the poem is separated from them by seventy lines of manuscript text in N (10vb3–11ra17). These complementary poems can thus almost be read as a verse account of the Túatha Dé Danann in Ireland entirely discrete from the prose.

The general character of \textit{m} and N, however, may provide insights into the role \textit{Éstid a eolkhu}... plays in these versions. Both are derived from \textit{µ}, the focus of which is, Scowcroft argues, on tracing the various settlers in Ireland genealogically back to Noah, establishing a continuous line of its kings and associating them with Tara.\textsuperscript{42} With a few exceptions, \textit{m} does not tend to deviate extensively from these topics. N keeps the structure of \textit{µ} and interpolates content from \textit{α}, resulting in a version similar in character to \textit{m}.\textsuperscript{43}

The genealogies of the Túatha Dé Danann appear to have something of a pedigree within the textual tradition of \textit{Lebor Gabála}. First, versions of the genealogies cognate with those in \textit{m} and N appear across the extant versions of the compilation.\textsuperscript{44} Each places twenty-three generations between Noah and Nuadu Argetlám, first king of the Túatha Dé Danann in Ireland. In terms of biblical chronology, twenty-three generations from Noah reaches Obed,
father of Jesse, father of King David.\textsuperscript{45} This suggests that these genealogies of the Túatha Dé Danann were derived from a chronological scheme which synchronised the arrival of the Gaídil in Ireland with the kingdom of David. Scowcroft has demonstrated that such a scheme underlies the earliest versions of \textit{Lebor Gabála} that it is possible to reconstruct.\textsuperscript{46} The scheme which predominates in later versions generally ascribes the events a much later date, synchronising the overthrow of the Túatha Dé Danann by the Gaídil with Alexander the Great’s defeat of the Persians.\textsuperscript{47} The core interest in \textit{N} and \textit{m} is thus genealogical and regnal history. The poem need not relate directly to these topics but, as I shall argue presently, compilations of death-tales are a well-attested feature in medieval Irish historical writing and the poem can thus be read as an integral part of these two versions of the compilation.

One distinctive feature of \textit{Éstid a eolchú... in \textit{m}} is the inclusion of four additional quatrains at the end of the poem, which are also found in \textit{Le}.\textsuperscript{48} These quatrains reject the idea that the Túatha Dé Danann are still alive and living in the \textit{sid} or in Tír Tairngire; instead, they are in Hell.\textsuperscript{49} Carey doubts that these quatrains were part of the poem as originally composed.\textsuperscript{50} However, if they are later additions, it is not clear whether they were added by the compiler of \textit{m} or in an earlier version of the poem. They do not fit comfortably with the rest of \textit{m} or \textit{N}. The Túatha Dé Danann retreat to the \textit{sid}—a kind of underground world—at the arrival of the Gaídil in Mesca Ulad (‘The Intoxication of the Ulstermen’) and De Gabáil in tSídá (‘Concerning the Seizure of the Fairy Mound’), but this does not

\textsuperscript{46} Scowcroft, ‘Leabhar Gabhála Part II’, p. 31; Scowcroft, ‘Medieval Recensions’, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Lebor Gabála} IV, ll. 2061–76, pp. 240–1.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Lebor Gabála} IV, ll. 2064, 2068 and 2074, pp. 240–1.
\textsuperscript{50} Carey, \textit{A Single Ray}, p. 18, n. 25.
happen in any version of *Lebor Gabála*. The term *Tir Tairngire* has been shown by James Carney to be a translation of *terra repromissionis* (‘promised land’) and generally refers to a Christian paradise. Only in a few late Middle Irish texts is a place with that name inhabited by the Túatha Dé Danann.

Within this article, these interesting quatrains must receive less attention than they merit. Suffice to say, while they are clearly of relevance to *Éstid a eolchu...*, they appear to attack a viewpoint not expressed anywhere else in the *Lebor Gabála* tradition, perhaps suggesting that the poem as it appears in *m* was intended for another context. If they are a later addition to the poem, they constitute an interpretation of it akin to those to which we shall now turn.

*Gods, demons or humans? F and c*

F is generally regarded as a version of recension *a* along with N, although it is the result of a more extensive process of interpolation. Recension *c* is an attempt to reconcile recensions *a* and *b*. In F and *c*, *Éstid a eolchu...* is found in a similar location towards the end of both recensions’ coverage of the Túatha Dé Danann and following a corresponding, although independently expanded, body of genealogies. It is also preceded by a somewhat opaque passage that is not found in *m*, which discusses the ‘gods’ (*dei*) and ‘un-gods’ (*andei*) among the Túatha Dé Danann. Carey sees some of this material as


being derived from an independent tract, which he has reconstructed.\footnote{A Túath Dé Miscellany’, ed. J. Carey, \textit{BBCS} 39 (1992), 24–45. I am grateful to Răzvan Stanciu for this reference.}

There follows a list of trios who fulfilled certain roles among the Túatha Dé Danann. F then contains a passage, not found in Carey’s tract, which introduces \textit{Éstid a eolchu}:

\textbf{Atbert tra araile} beittid demna so, arro fetattair curpu daenna impu o lo, din as firu; ar mairechtar a ngenelacha for culu, 7 do raebattar la tiachtain creitmi. Conad dia n-aidedaib ro chan Flann Mainistreach in duan-sa sis ga foirgeall.\footnote{Lebor Gabála IV, § 318, pp. 134–5: ‘Others say, indeed, that they are demons, since they knew that [they took] human bodies around them by day, which is more true; for their genealogies endure backward and they existed at the time of the coming of [the] faith. So it is in testimony to their deaths that Flann Mainistreach chanted this poem’, author’s own translation.}

The argument seems to be that the Túatha Dé Danann were demons and their apparent humanity is an illusion of their own making. An intriguing but obscure passage unique to recension \( b \) is also concerned with the ability of the Túatha Dé Danann to manufacture human bodies, although their relationship with demons there is more complex.\footnote{Ibid. §§ 320–1, pp. 138–41.} The formula \textit{atbert araile} implies that the passage in \( F \) is countering something else, such as the unqualified description of them as ‘gods’ in § 317. Indeed, while Macalister prints § 318 as a separate paragraph, it is not separated visually from § 317 in the manuscript.

If their human bodies are illusory, the illusion has depth, as the bodies seem to have genealogies. Alternatively, this passage could suggest that the Túatha Dé Danann have genealogies despite not being human. The reference to them existing at the coming of Christianity is also obscure; in \textit{Lebor Gabála}, the Túatha Dé Danann are placed well before the Christian era and are apparently destroyed by the as yet non-Christian Gaídil, although one manuscript of
recension ε does attribute the victory of the Gaídil to their precocious faith. It otherwise, the late Middle Irish Acallam na Senórach (‘Colloquy of the Elders’) depicts familiar members of the Túatha Dé Danann interacting with St Patrick. It is perhaps an illustration of the dynamic nature of Lebor Gabála that, like the additional quatrains in Êstid a eolchu... in m and Lc, this passage appears to relate to material outwith its own version of Lebor Gabála.

Êstid a eolchu... alone does not support the idea that the Túatha Dé Danann existed until the arrival of Christianity, unless that may be implied from the arrival of the Gaidil, who are mentioned in the poem. However, by exhaustively citing how the Túatha Dé Danann died and by often including illness or physical violence as a cause, the poem can be understood as showing them to have had human bodies. The poem is clearly thought of as relevant to the discussion of the origin of the Túatha Dé Danann, as F is particularly explicit in citing it as evidence, the word faigheall (‘authoritative testimony’; OIr forgell) implying that it carries distinct insight or authority.

In Lc and B, Êstid a eolchu... is cited in the context of the same issue but apparently supporting the other side of the argument:

Ocus ciatberaid arailg go Íomha Tuaitha De Danann, ar thiachtain in nErinn gan airigudh, 7 adubradar fein is a nellaibh dorchaídh thangadar, 7 ar imad a fheasa 7 a n-eolais 7 ar doighe a ngeinealaigh do breadh iar cul; acht cheana ro fhoglaimead eolas 7 filidheacht. Ar gach ndiamair n-dana 7 ar gach lere leighis 7 gach amainis eladhna fuil an Erinn, is o Tuatha De Danann ata a bhunadh; 7 ge thaining creideamh an Erinn, ni ro dichuirtea na dana sin, daigh at mhaithte iad. Ocus is follus nach do deamnaib na dho sidhaibh doibh, ar ro fhíodar each gur gabhsad cuip daenna umpu o lo dinas firu 7 airimhthear in geinlach for culu 7 do raebadar la tiachtain

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62 Lebor Gabála IV, ll. 2053–6, pp. 238–9; LL I, ll. 1448–51, p. 46.
The emphasised text closely resembles part of the passage we have cited from F, while the rest of the passage similarly resembles a passage in b, which also argues that the Túatha Dé Danann were not demons. The passage in c thus appears to be constructed out of pre-existing material although its arrangement in c gives the material from F new meaning. The overall sense of the passage in c seems to be that the Túatha Dé Danann are not demons but the passage includes the idea that they only had human bodies by day. Macalister regards this phrase as out of place, describing it as a 'gloss' when it occurs in c. However, the phrase is presented as part of the main text in both c and F. The rest of the passage from F effectively argues that they are human and cites Éstid a eolchub... in support of this view.

Recension c is not quite as firm as F in citing the support of Éstid a eolchub... but the wording makes a connection clear. Also, across the three manuscripts, the attribution to Flann Mainistrech is worded with sufficient differences to suggest that the attribution is not simply fossilised within the tradition but was re-expressed by the scribes.

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64 Lébor Gabála IV, § 371, pp. 200–3: ‘And though some say that the Túatha Dé Danann were demons—for they came into Ireland without being perceived, and they themselves said they came in dark clouds, it is on account of their excessive knowledge and their learning and on account of the difficulty of following their genealogies back—but, in truth, they pursued knowledge and powers of vision, for in Ireland, all obscurity in art, all clarity in reading and every exactitude in craft, their origin is thus with the Túatha Dé Danann and, although the Faith came to Ireland, these arts were not discarded, for they are good. For all know that they took human bodies around them by day, which is more true. And (their) genealogy can be traced back and they existed at the time of the coming of the Faith, so that of their deaths, Flann Mainistrech chanted this poem’, author’s own translation and emphasis.

65 Ibid. § 353, pp. 164–5.

66 Ibid. p. 203, n. A.
handling it.\textsuperscript{\ref{footnote:le}} This might be said to be evidence of a continued, active interest in linking the poem to the prose.

\textit{Le} is the only manuscript outwith \textit{m} to include the four additional quatrains.\textsuperscript{\ref{footnote:prose}} The prose in \textit{c} also specifies that the Túatha Dé Danann are not of the \textit{síd}, which could be inspired by these quatrains or, conversely, could have led to their inclusion. The additional quatrains never explicitly state that the Túatha Dé Danann are human, however.

\section*{Analysis}

\textit{Éstid a eolchu}... thus appears in two contexts: as part of a genealogical and regnal account of the Túatha Dé Danann and as part of the discussion concerning their identity. Within the latter context, it appears to be cited in \textit{F} as evidence for identifying them as demons and in \textit{c} for identifying them as human. As I will now show, these contexts are cogent uses for the poem paralleled elsewhere both in the \textit{Lebor Gabála} tradition and in medieval Gaelic literature more widely.

\textit{Genealogies, death-tales and historical writing}

Within medieval Gaelic historical poetry, lists of the death-tales of prominent figures of a dynasty or particular group are a recognized genre. Peter Smith has categorized them as ‘Versified Battle-lists and Death-tales of the Kings’ in his taxonomy of historical poetry. He draws examples from the seventh to the twelfth century, including \textit{Éstid a eolchu}... but observes that verse compilations of the death-tales of an entire dynasty only begin to appear in the ninth century.\textsuperscript{\ref{footnote:genealogies}}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{\ref{footnote:le}} \textit{Lebor Gabála} IV, p. 202, n. 19.
\item \textsuperscript{\ref{footnote:prose}} See above, pp. 76–7.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Indeed, death-tale poetry appears with particular frequency among the works of eleventh-century scholars associated with or cited in *Lebor Gabála*. For example, two poems in *Lebor Gabála* record the deaths of the leaders of the Fir Bolg and Gaídil respectively. In addition, several examples of death-tale poetry occur among the other purported works of Flann Mainistrech. For instance, *Ríg Themra dia tesbann tuí* ("The kings of Tara who lack envy") and *Ríg Themra toebáige iar tain* ("The kings of Tara of the slopes, after that") together list the deaths of the kings of Tara from Eochu Feidlech to Mael Sechnaill mac Domnaill (ob. 1022). Sporadically, cause of death is also supplied in Flann’s poem on world kingship, *Réidig dam, a Dé, do nim* ("Unravel for me, O God, your heaven"). An early example from outside *Lebor Gabála* is *Fianna bátar i nEmain* ("Warriors that were in Emain"), which is attributed to the tenth-century poet Cinaed Ua hArtacáin (ob. 975) and recounts the deaths of characters familiar from a wide range of texts and cycles.

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70 These poems are *Fír Bolg bátar sunna sel* ("The Fir Bolg were here for a season") and *Gáedel Glas ótat Gáedil* ("Gáedel Glas, of whom are the Gáedil"): *Lebor Gabála* IV, ll. 1493–544, pp. 46–53; *LL* I, ll. 893–940, pp. 28–30; *Lebor Gabála* II, ll. 339–510, 347–350, 371–98, 415–8, pp. 90–107, 90–1, 92–7, 98–9; *LL* I, ll. 244–387, pp. 8–13, at ll. 260, 280–91, 304–7. The former is attributed to Tanaide, for whom see above, p. 78, n. 40; the latter is attributed to Gilla Cóemáin (fl. 1072), see *LL* I, §§ 117, 165, pp. 30–3, 78–9; P. J. Smith, *Three Historical Poems Ascribed to Gilla Cóemáin*, Studien und Texte zur Keltologie 8 (Münster, 2007), 25–32.


Examples of death-tale poetry are thus found relating to individuals from the Christian and pre-Christian era, to Gaédil and non-Gaédil and to characters from a variety of literary sources. No example other than Éstid a eolchu… relates to individuals whose humanity is noticeably in doubt. Therefore, there seems no *prima facie* reason for interpreting the poem in itself as addressing the question of the Túatha Dé Danann’s identity. On the contrary, complementing a regnal and genealogical history is a perfectly appropriate role for this sort of poem. However, this raises the question of the role death-tale poetry played in historical writing and thus exactly how Éstid a eolchu… might complement m and N.

The account of an historical character’s death could be useful in constructing chronology: the death of a person cannot happen more than once, it removes the character from subsequent proceedings and, if a killer is involved, it provides a terminus post quem for his own disappearance from the record. Éstid a eolchu… does not deal with a line of kings or a dynasty with a clear order by generation or succession but with a more complex group, some of whom are contemporary with one another. However, the individual narratives in the poem appear to be in chronological order when compared with the genealogies and with the accounts of their deaths which occur in prose in the *Lebor Gabála* tradition. Carey—without giving reasons—has given 1056, Flann Mainistrech’s death-date, as the latest possible date for the production of *Lebor Gabála*’s coverage of the Túatha Dé Danann in its extant form, presumably because he sees the structure of Éstid a eolchu… as closely following the structure of its account as a whole.74 While both prose and poetry could have influenced each other, the point is that a collection of death-tales can play an important role in structuring time and is thus worth citing in an historical compilation.


I am aware of three specific examples where ‘Éstid a eolchu… is potentially being used in this context elsewhere. Accounts of the deaths of the kings of the Túatha Dé Danann who ruled Ireland appear in a king-list in the Book of Leinster, which cites Lebor Gabála. Some deaths of individuals of the Túatha Dé Danann appear in a body of synchronisms interpolated into Le and in a text known as Leabhar Comhaimisreaclda Flann Mainistreach (‘Flann Mainistrech’s Book of Synchronisms’), found independently in the Book of Ballymote. Scowcroft believes that these latter texts share a common source. The date and history of the LL king-list is uncertain.

In the LL king-list and ‘Éstid a eolchu… the deaths mentioned occur in the same order. The accounts in the LL king-list are a lot terser but what details it gives are the same. Specifically, its account of the death of Bres mac Eladan closely follows the wording in the poem: ‘Bress mac Eladan meic Néit .uii. mbliadna d’ól rota i richt lomma ros marb’, ‘… ropo domna trota tra / ól rota i rricht ind lomma.’ Also, the LL king-list’s description of the death of the Dagda (Eochu Ollathair) uses the same distinctive phrase as the poem: ‘Eocho Ollathir .lxxx. marb de gae chró’, ‘Marb in Dagda do gáí chró / isin Bruig, ní himmargó’.

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78 LL I, l. 5384, p. 180: ‘Bres son of Elada son of Nét, seven years. He was killed after drinking bog-water disguised as milk’, author’s own translation.
79 Lebor Gabála IV ll. 1951–2, pp. 228–9: ‘for him it was a cause of quarrel indeed, / drinking bog-stuff in the guise of milk’; LL I, ll. 1350–1.
The synchronistic tracts cite the deaths of individuals—although rarely the causes of the deaths—and the accession of new kings among the Túatha Dé Danann using the reigns of the Assyrian kings as a framework. The *Leabhar Comhaimseirchdá* goes further and specifies the Assyrian regnal year in which each event occurs. The order of events in *Éstid a eolchu*... and in these tracts is similar, although with some divergences. There are several examples of individuals appearing in the same or adjacent quatrains in the poem and dying during the reign of the same Assyrian king in the tracts. For instance, in Lamprides’ reign Cermad mac in Dagda, Corpre File, Etan, Cian, Elloth and Donand died. These appear in three adjacent quatrains in the poem. Once more, *Leabhar Comhaimseirchdá* possibly references *Éstid a eolchu*...: two deaths are described as follows: ‘ocus isin coiced bliadain deg iar sin, bas Cairbri filed do gae grene ocus bas Eadaine...’. Meanwhile, in the poem we find ‘Marb de gai grene glaine / Corpre mór mac Étain...’.

The three texts discussed briefly here employ more advanced chronological devices than *Éstid a eolchu*... does. The first gives lengths of reign and the two synchronistic tracts use the world-kingship to establish a single chronology for the material. *Éstid a eolchu*..., however, does appear to have been used in their production. Its usefulness may be derived from the potential of this type of poem to provide a relative chronology, as mentioned above. If *Éstid a eolchu*... was also used in the production of synchronistic texts, this would provide a parallel for its role in *m* and N, where it complements

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84 *Palatino-Vaticanus*, p. 292: ‘and in the fifteenth year after that, Cairpre died by a beam of the sun and Étain died’, author’s own translation.
86 Smith suggests that this sort of apparatus developed after the work of Flann Mainistrech and was perhaps based on it: ‘Historical Poetry’, p. 341.
versions in *Lebor Gabála* that are focused on regnal and genealogical history.

*The identity of the Túatha Dé Danann*

Both F and c are reasonably explicit about why they are citing *Éstid a eolchus*... and attestations elsewhere in the extant literature of the issues and concepts involved have previously been mentioned. If we consider the additional quatrains in m and Lc to be a later addition to the poem, this would provide a further instance in which *Éstid a eolchus*... might be seen in light of uncertainty as to the identity of the Túatha Dé Danann.

It is not clear if the use of *Éstid a eolchus*... in this context is actually a later development subsequent to the reading evidenced in m and N. Indeed, the additional quatrains in m demonstrate that such an interpretation had been made by someone at the time of m's compilation. On the other hand, both F and c are derived from a lost version or group of versions, termed *U* by Scowcroft, which did not influence m or N.87 The interpretation of *Éstid a eolchus*... in F and c could thus be derived from an innovation at that stage.

It is also possible that a general uncertainty concerning the Túatha Dé Danann fluctuated over time or was particular to certain circles of scholars, although both these factors are unfortunately difficult to measure. The compilatory character of *Lebor Gabála* means that inconsistencies in the treatment of certain subjects are to be expected. Indeed, Scowcroft has suggested that the compilation purposefully brings different types of material and different viewpoints together.88 For example, as we have seen, F appears to conclude that the Túatha Dé Danann were demons but also includes genealogies tracing them back to Noah; F's remark ‘ni fes bunadhús doibh’ may represent the compiler’s own view, although even that sentence closely echoes the ninth-century text, *Scél Túain maic Chairrill*

In contrast, N does not mention the possibility that the Túatha Dé Danann are demons and similarly includes their genealogies; nonetheless, N remarks cryptically that they initially came to Ireland in dark clouds. Integrating a range of authoritative sources seems to have been at least as much of a priority in Lebor Gabála as propagating particular interpretations was; this seems starkly evidenced by the way c constructs a discussion of the Túatha Dé Danann entirely out of material from a and b.

The interpretation of Éstid a eolchu... in F and Lc could thus be derived from an attempt to reconcile it with other material in the tradition. Rather than taking a cavalier approach to the intentio auctoris of the poem and use it to propagate their own views, the redactors of Lebor Gabála can be understood as questioning and engaging with the poem in the context of other early material in the tradition. For example, b does not include Éstid a eolchu... but it does cite the deaths of the Túatha Dé Danann as a reason for regarding them as human. Both this passage and the corresponding section of c cite their knowledge and skills as an argument that they are not only human but also good. The difficulty of tracing their genealogies is cited as key to the debate about whether they are human, as it is in the passages introducing Éstid a eolchu... in F and c.

In m and N, Éstid a eolchu... follows on from genealogies. In F, it follows both genealogies and material on the knowledge and skills of the Túatha Dé Danann. There is, therefore, considerable overlap between the topics of the debate on their identity in b, F and c and the poem’s wider context in N and m. If N or m were read in light of the debates found in b, their human ancestors, their deaths and the

90 Lebor Gabála IV, § 306, pp. 106–9; LL I, ll. 1054, p. 33.
91 See above, p. 76.
93 Ibid. § 371, pp. 200–3.
94 Ibid. § 353, pp. 164–5.
broadly realistic reign-lengths of their kings in these versions could easily be re-analysed as arguments that they are human, whatever the original purpose of such material. Indeed, it has been suggested by both Carey and Myles Dillon that the original purpose of locating the Túatha Dé Danann in the historical scheme set out in Lebor Gabála was to render them human beings and thus euhemerize them. This may also explain the presence of the additional quatrains in the texts of Éstid a eolchu... in m. The later versions may thus be interpreting the intention behind the material more accurately than the earliest extant versions.

Specifically, suspicion concerning the ancestry of the Túatha Dé Danann could be due to the archaic nature of these genealogies within the Lebor Gabála tradition. As discussed above, these genealogies are based on synchronising the arrival of the Gaídil with King David, while subsequent versions of the compilation date the same event much later. Such a discrepancy may be behind the suggestion in b that the genealogies of the Túatha Dé Danann cannot be reckoned back.

The interpretation of Éstid a eolchu... in F and Le could be regarded as rhetorical invention reflecting a new agenda of the compilers, comparable with the treatment of intentio auctoris in medieval commentary tradition, as analysed by Rita Copeland. There were undoubtedly wider cultural and intellectual anxieties that influenced the treatment of the Túatha Dé Danann in texts like Lebor Gabála. However, the debate concerning them, into which Éstid a eolchu... is explicitly drawn in F and e, very often concerns material already contained within the Lebor Gabála tradition. The debate may thus be an expression of perceived tensions and disagreements arising from

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97 See above, p. 75.
attempts to reconcile the different versions of the compilation and not the conscious imposition of an entirely new interest on the material. There are problems with this interpretation, however. For example, it assumes a detailed, general knowledge of the entire tradition on the part of the scribes and compilers. This is not at all impossible but it is not evidenced in the texts they actually produced, which have been shown to have definite affiliations.  

**CONCLUSION**

Éstid a eolchun... is a junction for some of the key concepts and methodologies within the *Lebor Gabála* tradition. Its various interpretations and uses give the impression that the meaning of an ‘authoritative’ poem could, in fact, be manipulated by later compilers or continuators, with interesting implications for the nature of its authority. However, this manipulation should not necessarily be understood as conscious deception. The treatment of the Tuatha Dé Danann as an historical people and the discussion of whether they are human, while differing in presentation, have been shown to be potentially interlinked conceptually and based on the same material. The different uses of Éstid a eolchun... may thus be the product of the developing understanding and discussion of that material in the course of the *Lebor Gabála* project, rather than the imposition of new readings upon it. The poem was considered authoritative but its meaning was derived from a wide-ranging consideration of the *Lebor Gabála* tradition and perhaps other texts as well. Indeed, the frequency of references in the treatment of this poem to ideas not expressed in *Lebor Gabála* itself in or around Éstid a eolchun... adds a new dimension to the poem’s treatment; these include the existence of the Tuatha Dé Danann at the coming of Christianity or their repose in *Tir Tailgire*. These remind us that even a text with the scope of *Lebor Gabála* was composed, compiled and intended to be read in a wider literary and cultural context which may also have been

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100 Scowcroft, ‘Medieval Recensions’, p. 18.
authoritative and influenced the treatment of material within the compilation.
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