The *Echtrae* as an Early Irish Literary Genre

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Abstract

As its title indicates, this thesis is concerned with the *echtrae* as a genre in early Irish literature

Chapter I looks at the basic use of the term in medieval Irish tale-lists and elsewhere, and then briefly considers modern scholarship and various issues raised by it regarding the nature and function of the pre-Norman Irish *echtrae* Chapter II endeavours to gather such information as is available about *echtrae* titles attested in the tale-lists and then to examine the medieval provenance (or lack of it) of the use of the *echtrae* to refer to various tales often associated with the genre

Narratives for which this can be established form the initial database of seven tales examined in Chapter III, which proposes a preliminary taxonomy of what can be regarded as reasonably typical *echtrai* in the light of ten significant common elements Chapter IV augments this rather restricted corpus with five further texts selected for similar analysis on the strength of significant typological affinities with the group considered in Chapter III

The role of sovereignty or kingship, which emerges as a central concern of *echtrai* in Chapters III and IV, will be examined further in Chapter V, which will also look at the royal or other connections of the persons named in the titles of various lost *echtrai* Chapter VI explores the way in which sovereignty and other motifs are exploited in individual extant *echtrai* Chapter VII examines stories relating the otherworldly expeditions of Cu Chulainn and their relationship to the *echtrai* Finally, Chapter VIII endeavours to summarise the main findings and attempts to sketch the development of the *echtrae* in the pre-Norman period

Chapter I General Introduction

I 1 1 The term *echtrae*

As indicated by its title, this thesis is concerned with a type of early Irish tale or narrative commonly known as *echtrae* The etymology of this word is quite straightforward ec*htrae* is a derivative of the preposition *echtar* 'outside' by means of the feminine abstract suffix *-e* and as such basically means 'outsideness', in effect being or going outside or away from home *Echtrae* is given three main definitions in *DIL* (35-6) The first of these is "*an expedition, journey, voyage*, usually in sense of *an expedition in quest of adventure*" This basic meaning is seen in *Geneamuin Chormaic* in a prophecy about the son born posthumously to Art as a result of his sleeping with Olc Aiche's daughter during a visit to his house the night before his death in the battle of Mag Mucrama *Ticfa ith sceo blicht d'echtra Airt do thig Uilc* "Grain and dairy produce will come from Art's outing to the house of Olc" (ll 31-2, Hull, 1952 82) The concept is also attested in the rare related verb *echtraid* "*goes out, departs*" For instance, in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (§16, Knott, 1936 6) a prohibition (*geis*) laid upon Conaire is *nir echtra cach nomad n-aidche seach Theamair* "thou shalt not be away every ninth night past Tara"

A second, more specialised definition of *echtrae* in *DIL* is as "*a warlike expedition, a hosting, enterprise*" This type of *echtrae* involving an expedition into foreign or enemy territory for military purposes is referred to in *Aided Chonchobair*, for example *Do lluid dano Cet mac Matach do chuairt echtra la hUlto* "Cet mac Matach came upon a round of adventures in Ulster" (§3, Meyer, 1906 4) The obviously military nature of Cet's expedition is emphasised by the reference to his carrying "three warriors' heads" (§3, *tri laechcind*) with him, in

accordance with Irish heroes' common practice of decapitating enemies and then keeping their heads or the like as trophies [1]

DIL's third definition, "*tale, narrative, history*" refers to *echtrae* as a tale-type, the main concern of this thesis As is well known, *echtrae* was one of the classes of tale recognised in the medieval Irish tale lists designated A and B by common modern usage (Mac Cana, 1980 33-65) [2] These lists classify stories thematically according to the subjects with which they are concerned, whereas modern scholarship, apparently beginning with d'Arbois de Jubainville,[3] has tended to operate with the four basic cycles of early Irish tales based on the characters featured in them, namely the 'Mythological' Cycle, the 'Ulster' Cycle, the 'Fenian' Cycle and the 'Historical' Cycle Thurneysen (1921 21-4) expresses the view that both lists A and B are derived from an older tenth-century list This view is widely accepted among scholars, including Mac Cana (1980 81-4), but according to Toner (2000 91) "although the second part of List B does indeed derive from the same source as List A, the first part is a wholly independent compilation " Nonetheless, Toner (2000 88) remarks that the value of the lists "lies in the fact that they often support an early date for tales that are only found in later manuscripts and even suggest the erstwhile existence of a great many tales that are not found in manuscript form "

I 2 1 Medieval tale-lists

List A appears autonomously, accompanied by a preface and colophon, in *LL,* 189 b 1 and *H 3 17* (col 797) (Mac Cana, 1980 33) The short introduction to it states *Do nemthigud filed i scelaib 7 i comgnimaib inso sís da nasnis do rigaib 7 flathib i ui coicait scel* "what follows

[1] See also *Scela Muicce Meic Da Tho* (Knott, 1936) and McCone (1990 30 and 74) for instance
[2] For studies of these lists see also Thurneysen (1921 21-4) and Toner (2000 88-119)
[3] D Arbois de Jubainville (1884) was apparently first to group the tales in cycles and Dillon followed this in (1948) Both the Metrical and Prose *Ban-Shenchus* (12th century) group the tales in similar cycles but without using the term explicitly, see Dobbs (1930 290-302, 1931 167-214)

here below concerns the qualifications of poets in regard to stories and *coimcne* to be narrated to kings and chiefs, viz three hundred and fifty tales" (ll 24917-18, Best and O'Brien, 1957 835, Mac Cana, 1980 41) These are further subdivided into two hundred and fifty *primscela* 'major tales' and one hundred *foscéla* 'sub-tales', but "in fact *LL* has only 187 titles and *H 3* only 182" (Mac Cana, 1980 33) Thereafter, the twelve categories of *primscela* are listed as follows *togla 7 tana 7 tochmarca 7 catha 7 uatha 7 imrama 7 oitte 7 fessa 7 forbassa 7 echtrada et aithid 7 airggne* destructions, cattle-raids, wooings, battles, terrors, voyages, deaths, feasts, sieges, adventures, elopements and plunderings" (Mac Cana, 1980 41, Toner, 2000 89) An extensive list of titles, each grouped under appropriate headings, follows on from the basic list of types (see Mac Cana, 1980 41-7)

List B appears in the text of a tale entitled *Airec Menman Uraid maic Coise*, 'The Stratagem of *Urard mac Coise*', in three manuscripts, namely *23 N 10*, f 29, *Rawl* B 512, f 109, and *Harl* 5280, f 47 (Mac Cana, 1980 33) In this tale the poet Urard mac Coise recounts the list of tales as the sum of his vast repertoire as a learned *fili* to Domnall mac Muirchertaig (†980), king of Tara[4] (Mac Cana, 1980 34) The narrative of *Airec Menman* imposes its own structure on the titles listed Consequently, while Lists A and B are very similar in order and content towards the end, they differ at the beginning, most notably with the inclusion of a miscellaneous group of titles at the start of list B (Mac Cana 1980 69-72, Toner, 2000 89-90)

List A recognises seventeen tale types while List B has fifteen Thirteen of these, including the *echtrai* group, are common to both lists (Mac Cana, 1980 41-9) [5] This commonality raises

[4]This recital is in fact a cunning ploy by which Urard hopes to enlist the support of the king in battle, which he duly does See Mac Cana (1980 33-8)

[5]Each list has a different arrangement of titles and each contains some subject-headings which are absent from the other (Mac Cana, 1980 41-9)

the possibility that such groups originated from a tenth century parent list, the same being the case with titles that are common to both Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that some titles seem to have been changed in order to allocate the tales concerned to one of the categories recognized by the tale-lists, as demonstrated by Mac Cana (1980 67)

> the section of *imrama* in A includes four titles beginning with *imram* and four with *longes*, but that such licence was felt to be strictly limited is evidenced by the changes wrought upon certain other titles in order to accommodate them in the lists *Fochonn Loingse Fergusa meic Róig* > *Tochomlad Loingsi Fergusa a hUltaib* (AB), *Fled Bricrenn* > *Feis Tige Bricrenn* (B), *Baile in Scail* > *Fis Chuind* (AB, but with the former title appended for the sake of clarity), *Fingal Ronain* > *Aided Maelfhathartaig maic Ronáin* (A), and *Scela Mucce meic Dathó* > *Orgain meic Datho* (AB, all the more noteworthy this in that *orgain* usually takes an objective genitive)

Mac Cana (1980 45 and 53) tabulates the lists of *echtrai* as they appear in the manuscripts as follows and I have placed those common to both in boldface

List A

LL, 189 b 45	*H 3 17* col 797
Echtra Nera	***Echtra Neara***
E Fiamain	*E Fiamain*
E Con Rui	*E Con Ri*
E Con Culaind	***E Con Culaind***
E Conaill	*E Conaill*
E Conchobair	*E Conchobair*
E Crimthaind Nia Nair	***E Crimthaind Nia Nair***
E Macha ingine Aeda Ruaid	*E Macha ingine Aeda Ruaid*
E Nechtain maic Alfroinn	*E Nechtain Alfroind*
E Ailchind maic Amalgaid	*E Eilcind maic Amalgada*
E Fhind i nDerc Ferna	*E Find a nDerirc Fearna*
E Aedain maic Gabrain	*E Aedain maic Gabrain*
E Mael Uma maic Baitain	*E Maile Uma maic Beadain*
E Mongain maic Fiachna	*E Mongain maic Fiachna*

List B

23 N 10, f 29	*Rawl B 512*, f 109	*Harl 5280*, f 47
Echtra Brain maic Febail	*Ectra Broin maic Febail*	*Echtra Brain mic Feabail*
Eachtra Fergussa maic Lete	*Ectra Fergusa mic Leiti*	*E Fercuso maic Leide*
Echtro Nero maic Niatain	***Ectra Nera maic Niadain Maic Tacaim***	***E Nera mic Niadain***
Echtra Oengusae maic Fergusa Finn	*Ectra Oengusa maic Fergusa Find*	*E Aenccus maic Fercusa Find*
Echtro Chon Culaind	***Ectra Con Culaind***	***Echtra Con Culaind***

Echtro Chrımthoınn Nıad Naır	***Ectra Crımthaınn Nıad Naır***	***E Crımtaınn Nıa Naır***
Echtro Chuınn Cetcathaıg	*Ectra Cuınd Cetchathaıg*	*E Cuınd 100 cathoıgh*
Echtro Aırt maıc Cuınd	*Ectra Aırt maıc Cuınn*	*E Aırt maıc Cuınd*
Echtro Muırquertoıg maıc hErco	*Ectra Cormaıc hui Cuınn*	*E Corbmaıc maıc Aırt*
Echtro Chorbmaıc ui Chuınn	*Ectra Murcertaıg maıc Ercae*	*E Murcertaıg maıc Erco*

In discussing the presumed common source of lists A and B, Mac Cana (1980 69) remarks of the *echtrai*

> they include only three titles common to both lists, while there are eleven additional titles in A and seven in B It is not impossible, however, that these titles represent an original nucleus (as in the case of the *tochmarca* perhaps) which has been added to generously in A and B It may be noted that the common titles are in the same order, though not in immediate sequence, in both lists Furthermore, one of the extra items in B, *Echtra Muirchertaig meic Erca*, is paralleled in A by *Imram Luinge Muirchertaig meic Erca*, and it may be that it was borrowed from the *echtrai* in order to augment the newly assembled group of *imrama*

As is obvious from this, each list has a different arrangement of titles and each contains titles absent from the other Nevertheless, the fact that the three titles in boldface are common to both lists can be used as a criterion by which to judge the antiquity of these particular tales However, "the fact that a title is found in only one of the later lists – or in neither – is far from proving that the tale to which it refers did not exist during the period of the early list" (Mac Cana, 1980 66) In other words, absence of evidence should not be taken as evidence of absence Be that as it may, the antiquity of titles can occasionally be attested from another type of tale-list found in the enumeration of miscellaneous *remscéla* "fore-tales" as a prelude to more significant tales, notably *Tain Bo Cuailnge* to which twelve such titles are attached[6] Mac Cana (1980 88) points out "at least two such lists are extant, one in LL 245b and the other in RIA, D 4 2 (15th cent ?), while a third is as it were embodied in an actual collection of the *remscéla* themselves which precedes the text of TBC in EG 1782 Despite certain discrepancies it is clear that they all comprise essentially the same group of tales " Such

[6]See II 2 1 for list of the *remscela* to *Tain Bo Cuailnge*

lists provide important evidence, given that there is no apparent reason to adjust a title to fit them, unlike the aforementioned situation applying to the medieval tale-lists (Mac Cana, 1980 66-81) Aside from the common nucleus, List A has eleven and List B seven further titles, and Chapter II will endeavour to assemble available evidence relating to these twenty-one titles It will also seek, as explained below, to identify a nucleus of surviving tales that seem to have been regarded as *echtrai* in the pre-Norman period

I 3 1 Modern scholarship on the nature and function of the *echtrae*

The extant tales commonly regarded as *echtrai* have been edited and translated and a number of them have already been subjected to considerable scholarly attention [7] For instance, in his, critical annotated edition and translation of *Echtrae Loegairi maic Crimthainn* Jackson (1942) argues on linguistic grounds that the late ninth century (1942 377, see also II 2 2 below) Based on Meyer's (1889) edition and translation, Watson (1986 129-142) offered a structural analysis of *Echtrae Nerai* that owed a good deal to the methodology developed by Levi-Strauss (1963 206-231) Thus Watson's (1986 141) "structural framework of contrasting parallelism" within the narrative is comparable with Levi-Strauss' paradigmatic model of binary oppositions The first recension of *Echtrae Chormaic*[8] is part of a composite text *Scel na Fir Flatha*, and bears the full title *Echtra Cormaic i Tir Tairngiri ocus Ceart Claidib Cormaic*, which has been edited and translated by Stokes (1891) *Echtrae Airt* is likewise found in a composite text entitled *Echtra Airt meic Cuind 7 tochmarc Delbhchaime ingine Morgain*, which has been edited and translated by Best

[7]Editions and translations include *Echtrae Airt* (Best, 1907), *Echtrae Cormaic* (Stokes, 1891, Hull, 1949), *Echtrae Nerai* (Meyer, 1889), *Immram Brain* (Meyer, 1895, Mac Mathuna, 1985) Discussions of *Echtrae Airt* and *Echtrae Cormaic* are found in Dillon (1948 110-16) *Echtrae Nerai* (Rees and Rees, 1961 297-305) and *Immram Brain* and *Echtrae Chonnlai*, have been discussed by Carney (1955), Dumville (1976) and McCone, (2000)

[8]Hull (1949 871-883) has edited and translated the second recension of *Echtrae Cormaic*

(1907) McCone's (2000) critical edition and translation of *Echtrae Chonnlai*[9] includes full transcriptions of the versions of the text found in seven manuscripts, detailed linguistic analysis and textual interpretation, not least in the light of its relationship to *Immram Brain* (McCone, 2000 104-14, see also VI 2 5 - VI 3 4)

Studies of individual texts have led to broad scholarly agreement on the basic narrative arrangement of the *echtrai* insofar as they entail a hero's journey, 'expedition' or 'adventure' away from home, to some supernatural realm or 'otherworld' [10] For example, Meyer, (1895 2) notes that the word *echtrae* "specially denotes expeditions and sojourns in Fairy-Land", while Dillon (1948 101) observes that "there is a group of stories called *echtrae* ('adventure') in which the Promised Land is the chief motif" Likewise, Rees and Rees (1961 297) propose that ' visits to a strange land and experiences among a strange race constitute a substantial part of Celtic mythology", while Mac Cana (1980 75-6) notes that "the *echtrai* tell of the hero's incursion into the world of the supernatural, whether this is thought of as being beyond the sea, under the earth or a lake, within the depths of a cave, or simply within the confines of a magic mist" Accordingly, the 'otherworld' encounter tends to be viewed as central to this particular category of tale However, there are various other old Irish groups of tales involving journeys and sojourns in an otherworld location apart from the *echtrai*, notably *Immrama* 'Voyages', *Fisi* 'Visions' and *Baili*, 'Frenzies/visions', and also individual texts such as *Serglige Con Culainn*[11] and *Tochmarc Emire* [12] Consequently this criterion can hardly be considered as definitive as such

[9]Pokorny (1928 193) suggests that the *LU* version of EC is appreciably later and that various modifications to the text reveals the hand of the Middle Irish redactor" Oskamp (1974 209) suggests that EC was ' meant to fit into a larger context of tales dealing with Conn of the Hundred Battles and his family "
[10]Carey (1982 36), Dillon (1948 101), Dumville (1976 73), Mac Cana (1980 75-6), Mac Mathuna (1985 255), Rees and Rees (1961 297-313)
[11]Dillon (1941 vii-xii) discusses the composition of the extant versions of SCC
[12]Toner (1998 71-88) discusses the two main extant versions of TE

1 3 2 The *echtrae*, the *immram* and the otherworld

The issue of demarcation between the *echtrae* as 'a tale of a hero's journey to the Otherworld" and the *immram* as "a more loosely structured voyage tale in which the protagonist visits a series of Otherworld islands" (Carey, 1982 36) has given rise to various scholarly opinions [13] According to Oskamp (1970 43), 'a sharp distinction cannot be made between the two genres, though one might say that in later *immrama* the reason for setting out is secondary to the events that take place during the journey itself Moreover, the *echtrai* do not necessarily take the traveller over the sea like the *immrama* " Dumville (1976 73), however, asserts that "in the *echtrai* one is operating within a mythological framework where pagan deities and various otherworld creatures of specifically Celtic provenance may move with ease and without incongruity' whereas "the *Immrama* are of their very nature of monastic provenance', according to Carney (1955 294) Mac Cana (1980 77) claims that "the *Imram* as a genre of narrative seems relatively late The earliest tale known as such is *Imram Brain*, 'The Voyage of Bran' and it may have been the example followed by later tales which are named *Imrama* The other two, *Imram* (*curaig*) *Maela Duin* and *Imram* (*curaig*) *ua Corra*, have a markedly ecclesiastical slant in their content and inspiration which is in contrast to the essentially indigenous and mythological cast of the *echtrai* " The problems encountered by scholars with regard to these genres are particularly acute in the case of *Immram Brain*, which appears in tale list B as *Echtrae Brain* However, this is a matter which will be discussed more fully in Chapter II

The most familiar image of the otherworld is termed the 'Happy Otherworld', by Nutt (Meyer and Nutt, 1895 101) and described by Dillon (1948 101) as "a country where there is neither sickness nor age nor death, where happiness lasts forever and there is no satiety, where food

[13]See Ni Bhrolchain (2009 78-92) for a recent survey of the otherworld in early Irish literature

and drink do not diminish when consumed, where to wish for something is to possess it, where a hundred years are as one day It is the Elysium, the Island of the Hesperides, of the Greeks, the Odains-Akr, the Jord Lifanda Manna, of the Norse " The otherworld is known by various names in early Irish literature *Mag Mell*, 'the Plain of Delights', *Tir Tairngiri*, the Land of Promise' *Tir inna mBan*, the Land of Women' *Tir na mBeo*, 'the Land of the Living' *Inis Subai*, the Island of Joy ' In *Echtrae Chormaic hi Tir Tairngiri*, the otherworld stranger describes the Land of Promise to Cormac as follows *tír nach bidh acht fír ocus nach fuil æis no ercra duba na toirsi nó tnuth no formad na miscais nó mordataidh* ' a land wherein there is nought save truth and (where) there is neither age nor decay nor gloom nor sadness nor envy nor jealousy nor hatred nor haughtiness" (§27, Stokes, 1891 193 and 212) It also has various locations, chiefly the following four according to MacCulloch (1911 362-7) (1) The *sid* Elysium, (2) The Island Elysium, (3) Land under Waves and (4) Co-extensive with this world O'Rahilly (1946 290) asserts that "in pagan Ireland every district of importance tended to have its own *sid* or hill within which the Otherworld was believed to be located, nevertheless there was in Celtic belief but one Otherworld, despite the fact that so many different locations were assigned to it "[14] Oskamp (1970 85) by contrast, asserts that an overseas otherworld "is inherent in the religious system of an island society " Nevertheless, Carey (1982 43)[15] points out, that little evidence survives to support the overseas otherworld in Celtic tradition, concluding that "outside of the *immrama* [and] two closely linked tales *Immram Brain* and *Echtrae Conlai*, the early sources give us no grounds for postulating belief in an overseas Otherworld, nor does there appear to be satisfactory evidence for such a belief in either contemporary Irish folklore or the traditions of Wales "[16]

[14] 'In the same way the deities who presided over the different *side* were ultimately the same everywhere, despite the variety of local names applied to them" according to O'Rahilly, (1946 290)

[15]The view that the Insular Celts believed in an overseas otherworld has also been questioned by Carey (1989:8-9); Mac Mathúna (1985 281-2) Sims-Williams (1986 87-8) See also Carey (1987 1-27) where he connects the otherworld with the *oenach* and burial places See Carey (1989 8-9)

[16]The overseas otherworld will be discussed further in VI 1 2, 2 5, VI 3, 3 4, VII 2 4, 2 8, 2 10, 3 1 and VII 4

I 3 3 Analysis of the *echtrai*

Notwithstanding important studies of particular tales and recognition of the otherworldly sojourn as a common feature, the *echtrai* have yet to be subjected to detailed overall scrutiny geared to broad similarities and particular variants upon them An essential first step for such analysis is the establishment of a basic corpus of texts that can be identified as *echtrai* on reasonably objective grounds The obvious initial criterion is evidence that a given surviving narrative was regarded or could be regarded as an *echtrae* in the pre-Norman period The crucial issues here are (1) manuscript authority for an *echtrae* title, (2) whether there is any internal reference to the action as *echtrae* in the text itself, (3) whether a given tale certainly or probably corresponds to a title in the tale-lists The seven tales identified as *echtrai* on this basis in Chapter II will be subjected to a thorough comparative analysis in Chapter III Ultimately, a preliminary taxonomy of what can be regarded as a reasonably typical *echtrae* will be proposed in the light ten significant common elements such as the identity of the person invited, the location and purpose of the invitation, the nature of the otherworldly intervention, the aftermath of the visit and so on Given that the group of early *echtrai* thus established and analysed is not large, the corpus will be augmented by five tales selected for similar analysis in Chapter IV on the strength of significant typological affinities with the set considered in Chapter III, even though there are no solid grounds for the tales in this second group having been entitled or seen as *echtrai* in the pre-Norman period

Sovereignty and kingship appear as a major theme in early Irish literature,[17] the imagery of the sacred marriage being particularly prominent in accordance with a notion that successful rule depended on a king's union with a woman/goddess of sovereignty (O Maille, 1927 129-

[17]See, for instance Binchy (1970), Byrne (1973 7-28) McCone (1990 107-137), Jaski (2000 37-88), Ni Bhrolchain (2009 93)

146, Breatnach, 1953 321-336) [18] According to Herbert (1992 264) "the mythic model of royal rule which the Celtic world shared with many other ancient cultures was that of the *hieros gamos* or sacred marriage "[19] On the basis of the findings of Chapter III especially, the role of sovereignty and kingship in the *echtrai* will be the primary focus of Chapter V Issues such as the royal lineage, background or connections of the person named in the title of the *echtrae*, will be treated and this particular aspect will also be considered in relation to the titles of no longer extant *echtrai* recorded in Chapter II

1 4 1 International heroic biography

The existence of a prototypical heroic biography was first posited in the 1870s by Von Hahn on the basis of legends concerning fourteen heroes such as the ancient Greek Perseus, Heracles, Oedipus and Theseus, the Roman Romulus and Remus, the German Siegfried and Wolfdietrich, the Persian Cyrus and India's Karna and Krishna (O Cathasaigh, 1977 2-4, McCone, 2000 181) Subsequent studies (see O Cathasaigh, 1977 2) of what Von Hahn termed the 'Aryan expulsion-and-return formula' altered various details but did not fundamentally change the pattern Alfred Nutt (1881) applied it to Celtic material and added Irish characters such as Fionn mac Cumaill, Cú Chulainn, Labraid Maen and Conall (O Cathasaigh, 1977 2-4, McCone, 2000 181-2) He also added two motifs to von Hahn's scheme and "extended some of the other items to allow for variants, so that in his hands the formula became a more flexible instrument" (Ó Cathasaigh, 1977 3) [20] In 1914 Otto Rank broadened the scope when he produced a study based on fifteen biographies, some from outside the Indo-European area such as the biblical ones of Moses and Jesus Christ, and thereby demonstrated that this basic patterning of heroes' lives was not exclusively 'Aryan'or

[18]See also Mac Cana (1955-6/58-9), Bromwich (1960) Herbert (1992)
[19]According to Herbert (1992 263) 'in early Ireland women were not sovereigns, but sovereignty itself was conceived of as female
[20]See O Cathasaigh (1977 3) for the slightly modified version proposed by Nutt

Indo-European (O Cathasaigh, 1977 4) Consequently, international heroic biography' has been suggested as a more appropriate designation for the pattern (O Cathasaigh, 1977 4)

De Vries, (1963 224) identifies the hero's expedition to the underworld as the eighth point in this schema and O Cathasaigh (1977 61) suggests that this can be equated with the otherworld of Irish tradition This raises the issue of the extent to which the medieval Irish *echtrai* can be equated with the 'expulsion and return' at the heart of the so-called international heroic biography' and with certain other aspects thereof Chapter VI will examine individual texts with a view to exploring the manner in which motifs relating to sovereignty may be exploited in order to deal with issues pertinent to the institution of kingship However, attention will also be paid, where appropriate, to broader perspectives relating to the international heroic biography The otherworldly expeditions of Cu Chulainn will also merit attention in Chapter VII on account of the light they cast upon the development of the *echtrae* genre

1 4.2. Rites of passage and liminality

According to Rees and Rees (1961 213), ' whereas the pattern of the hero's life has little in common with what is historically significant in the lives of men, it does, as Lord Raglan has shown, correspond with the ritual life-cycle In human societies generally the times when each person becomes the central figure in a ritual are those of his birth and baptism, initiation and marriage, death and burial The myth has a bearing upon the meaning of these rites " The term 'rites de passage' was coined in French by the Dutch Anthropologist van Gennep (1908) and subsequently rendered rites of passage' in English Van Gennep formulated this approach on the basis of evidence accumulated from many societies He describes diverse rituals/ceremonies or initiation rites that were performed to mark crucial stages in life, including childbirth, puberty, coming of age, marriage and even death These may involve

three distinct phases that the initiate must pass through before he/she can proceed successfully to the next stage

1 Separation, where the subject is physically separated from a previous status Van Gennep also refers to this phase as the 'pre-liminal' phase
2 Liminality, from the Latin word *limen* meaning threshold, describes the period where the subject is between specific states, where he/she is no longer visibly part of the previous state but has not yet attained his/her new one Thus an initiate, such as a youth who is no longer a boy but not yet a man is literally 'betwixt and between' A state of liminality is considered to be a dangerous time not only for the person concerned but for the people surrounding them The initiate in this state is unclassified and hence in the sense that he/she is 'neither here nor there', and so is uncontrollable by virtue of being outside normal rules and regulations
3 Incorporation, the time when the subject is integrated into his/her new social state This involves public recognition of his/her new status of the subject Van Gennep also refers to this phase as the post-liminal phase

According to Campbell (1949 30) the 'monomyth'[21] or standard mythological path of the hero in international literary traditions involves a cyclical pattern whereby ' a hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man ' In effect, as Campbell (1949 30) explains, the usual course of mythological narrative action involving the hero can also be understood as a magnification of the border experiences formula represented in Van Gennep's rites of passage separation-transitional/liminal-return, as outlined in his work on the concept of liminality The symbolism of 'liminality'[22] is explained by van Gennep (1960 20-1) as follows

> the door is the boundary between the foreign and the domestic worlds in the case of the ordinary dwelling, between the profane and sacred worlds in the case of a temple Therefore to cross the threshold is to unite oneself with a new world It will be noted that the rites carried out on the threshold itself are transition rites "Purifications" (washing, cleansing etc) constitute rites of separation from previous surroundings, there follow rites of incorporation (presentation of salt, a shared meal, etc) The rites of the threshold are therefore not "Union" ceremonies, properly

[21]The 'monomyth' pattern involves three stages, namely departure initiation and return This pattern is depicted in contemporary mythology', such as in Lucas' *Star Wars* trilogy, Disney's *The Lion King* and Rowling's *Harry Potter* series
[22]For further discussion on the concept of liminality see Nagy (1984, 1985, 1981/2)

> speaking, but rites of preparation for union, themselves preceded by rites of preparation for the transitional stage Consequently, I propose to call the rites of separation from a previous world *preliminal rites*, those executed during the transitional stage *liminal (or threshold) rites*, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world *postliminal rites*

The possibility of finding narrative analogues to such features in *echtrai,* will also be explored in Chapter VI, in line with Nagy's (1981/2 135) formulation of the term 'liminal' as ' the state of being in between separate categories of space, time or identity "

I 4 3 Clerical literary influences

The issue of clerical literary influences upon *echtrai* will also be addressed in the context of a debate commonly encapsulated in terms of 'nativist'[23] versus 'anti-nativist' *Immram Brain* has been a major bone of contention here Carney's (1955 280-295) argument that it was essentially a Christian tale was opposed by Mac Cana (1976 95-115), who made a case for a non-Christian *Tir inna mBan* 'Land of Women', as the island central to this tale was named The broadly common viewpoint of Mac Cana and other various other scholars[24] stresses the preservation of 'tradition' through its essentially "oral transmission and continuity with a pagan past originating in Celtic and Indo-European antiquity", as Mc Cone (1990 2) puts it Whereas this 'nativist' approach acknowledges the obvious role of Christianity and literacy in preserving early Irish literature, it tends to minimise Christian influence upon what it sees as 'secular' genres (Carney, 1955 276-323, Mc Cone, 1990 1-27) There can be no doubt about the relevance of the *echtrai* to the question of the extent of pagan survival in and Christian influence upon early Irish narrative literatures

[23]According to Carney (1955 276-7) I have come up against what I term the nativist conception of our early literatures Scholars tend to conceive of our sagas as having had a long life in oral tradition before being (with suggestive phrase) committed to writing' They find it hard to reject the sentimental notion that these tales are immemorially old and were recited generation after generation to 'halls of kings' term There has of course been transference of material from the oral plane to the written But the transmission was necessarily made in the first place by people whose minds had been opened to the great world of classical and Christian literature The fact is that these texts themselves generally show clear signs of being composed in early Christian Ireland "

[24] For instance, Dillon (1948 105-6), Binchy (1962 122-28), Jackson (1964 4) and O Coileain (1985 526)

I 5 1 Conclusion

As intimated above, tales entitled *echtrae* have not yet been subjected to comprehensive analysis as a whole Notwithstanding major contributions on individual texts such as those mentioned above and on one or two particular overall aspects, it seems desirable to attempt an integrated analysis of the *echtrai* as a group of tales in the hope of appreciating their role and nature as an early Irish literary genre more clearly One major aim of this undertaking will be to test the validity of some of the generalisations made about the *echtrae* genre hitherto against a more detailed examination of the similarities and differences between the individual tales in question than has been attempted thus far To this end this thesis will be chiefly based on three interrelated strands

1 The individual examination and intertextual comparison of surviving tales entitled *echtrae* and of other closely related texts such as *Immram Brain*, *Serglige Con Culainn* and *Tochmarc Emire*

2 The evaluation of as wide a range as possible of modern research regarding the *echtrai* and related issues with a view to testing various modern theories regarding the nature and function of the pre-Norman Irish *echtrae*

3 The sifting and incorporation of such other Irish saga material as seems useful and the gathering of such relevant information on the major characters of known *echtrai* as is available from other Old and Middle Irish sources such as the genealogies and the annals

The discussion of the relevant material in Chapters II to VII within the somewhat broader context indicated will lay the foundation for an attempted sketch of the development of the *echtrae* as an Irish literary genre in the pre-Norman period in the final Chapter VIII

Chapter II Sources used and their provenance

II 1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to assemble available evidence relating to the twenty one *echtrae* titles that appear in the already discussed pre-Norman tale-lists A and B (see I 2 1) Thereafter, the provenance of the titles commonly ascribed to six surviving tales namely *Echtrae Nerai* (EN), *Echtrae Loegairi* (EL), *Echtrae Chonnlai* (EC), *Echtrae Airt* (EA) *Echtrae Cormaic maic Airt* (ECA), and *Echtrae mac nEchach Mugmedoin* (EEM), will be explored Six tales not actually entitled *echtrae* but for various reasons considered to belong to the genre in whole or part will also be considered, namely *Baile in Scáil* (BS), The Five Lugaids'(FL), *Tochmarc Emire* (TE), *Serglige Con Culainn* (SCC), *Siaburcharpat Con Culaind* (SbCC) and *Immram Brain* (IB) The chief issues of concern here are what titles, if any, are given to them in the manuscripts, whether the text itself contains relevant references and whether a given title may be assumed to correlate with a title in the aforementioned tale-lists The occurrence of a title containing *echtrae* in one tale-list may be regarded as evidence that the tale referred to was at least so classified at the time of the list's compilation, while an *echtrae* title common to both tale-lists may be assumed to go back at least as far as the 10th century list from which both seem to derive (see I 2 1) It is important to bear in mind that some titles seem to have been changed in order to accommodate them to one of the categories recognized by the tale-lists, (see I 2 1) Information on the full titles of manuscript sources, their dates, locations and any abbreviations used in this thesis is given as Appendix 1 and 2

II 1 1 *Echtrae Con Culainn*

Echtrae Con Culainn (ECuC) is one of just three *echtrae* titles common to both tale-lists, but no tale with this title is extant among the many surviving sagas concerning the most famous Ulster hero, Cu Chulainn (Mac Cana, 1980 45 and 53) Dumville (1976 92) suggests that

ECuC may consist of a story containing elements from both *Tochmarc Emire* and *Serlige Con Culainn* More recently O Bearra (2009 190) has proposed that ECuC does not survive as "an independent text but rather as fragments contained in a number of other texts notably *Forfess Fer Fálgae, Aided Chon Roi*, the *Dindshenchas* of *Findglas*, the *Tir Scaith* portion of *Siaburcharpat Con Culaind* and in a number of shorter references in texts such as *Sanas Cormaic* " Surviving tales with *echtrae*-like structures and features relating to Cu Chulainn, including *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDuil Dermait*, *Compert Con Culainn* and a couple of Cu Chulainn's *macgnimrada* recounted in *Táin Bo Cuailnge*, will also be considered below (VII 1 1-2 10)

II 1 2 *Echtrae Chrimthainn Nia Nair*

A significant reference to the title *Echtrae Crimthainn Nia Nair* (ECNN) is embodied in the old Irish text *Airne Fingein* which mentions an occasion when Crimthann Nia Nair went on an otherworldly expedition, *a Sid Boidb for echtrai*, with Nár Túathchaech, *co mboi fo diamraib na farrgi* "so that he was under the secret places of the sea" (§5, Vendryes, 1953 8) This Nár Tuathcháech is of unspecified gender according to Borsje (2002 15), who points out that the epithet Tuathchaech belongs to a supernatural person who plays both a male and female role in tradition A male Nar Tuathchaech from *Sid Boidb* is described as one of the occupants of Da Derga's hostel in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*[25] (§140, Knott, 1936 42) and a female Nar appears in the Rennes *Dindshenchus* of Dun Crimthainn when king Crimthann went *i n-echtre* on an adventure *la Nair tuaidhigh in bansidhe, coma fe caictighis ar mis* "with Nar Thuathach the banshee with whom he slept a month and a fortnight", after which she gave him gifts to take back with him (§30, Stokes, 1894 332, see also V 1 10) According to *Coir Anmann* (*CA*) Nar Thuathach was Crimthann's wife when she took him on an *echtrae*

[25] I saw there a man blind in the left eye (*dáthchráech*) with a destructive eye He had the head of a screaming pig on fire That is Nar Tuathchaech the swineherd of Bodb from sid ' (*Muccaid Boidb a Sid ar Fhemin*) (§140, Knott, 1936 42)

> *Crimthan Nia Nár níadh i trén i trenfhear Naire i Nar Thúathach a sídhibh ben Chrimthainn Issidhe rug Crimthan lé a n-echtra n-ordhaic a Dun Chrimthainn a nEdur*
> Crimthann Nia Nair nia means warrior, i e Nar's warrior, i e Nar Thuathach from the otherworld was Crimthann's wife She took Crimthann with her on a famous adventure from Dún Crimthainn [Benn] Etair (§107, Arbuthnot, 2007 30 and 105)

Be that as it may, no tale with this *echtrae* title is extant Nevertheless, these snippets do suggest that the redactor was at least familiar with such a tale In addition, the title appears in both tale lists, thus implying that it was known as such at the time of the underlying list's compilation (Mac Cana, 1980 45 and 53)

II 1 3 *Echtrae Fiamain*

The title *Echtrae Fiamain* appears in tale-list A only but, yet again, no tale of this title is extant (Mac Cana, 1980 45) According to Mac Cana (1980 92-3), list A is "more given to multiplying titles and it includes a number of fairly obvious duplicates", including *Aithed Mugaine re Fiamain, Aided Fhiamain, Forbais Duin Binne, Echtra Fiamain* in A, and *Orgain Duin Binne* in list B Of these *Forbais Dúin Binne* in A seems a rather obvious match for *Orgain Dúin Binne* in B Thurneysen (1921 446-7) confines himself to saying that all five titles relate to a lost saga of Fiaman He also suggested that the lost tale *Aithed Mugaine re Fiamain* probably related how Mugain, Conchobar's wife, was carried off by Fiaman mac Forroi, who may then have been slain, probably by Cu Chulainn, in his own fortress of Dún Binne (Thurneysen, 1921 446-7) The battle of Dun Binne and the death of Fiaman mac Forroi are mentioned in a poem at the end of *Cath Maige Rath*[26] (O'Donovan 1842 211-13) Nonetheless, there is no extant tale entitled *Aided Fiamain*, and the location of Dun mBinne has not been identified (Meyer, 1906 vii)

[26] *Cath Maige Rath* the Battle of Mag Rath' is recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters in the year 634 A D and in the Annals of Tigernach in the year 637 A D

II 1 4 *Echtrae Con Roi*

The title appears in tale-list A only (Mac Cana, 1980 45) but no such tale survives However, the title *Aided Con Roi Maic Dairi* (ACR),'The Death of Cu Roi mac Dairi', is also listed in A only, but since two versions of this tale are extant (ACR II, Best, 1905, ACR I, Thurneysen, 1913), it is hard to say which version might fit this title (Mac Cana, 1980 69, Thurneysen, 1921 432) According to Mac Cana (1980 93) it may be a doublet of the title *Táin teora nErc Echdach* in list A[27] and *Orgain Cathrach Con Roi*, in list B, and this matter will be discussed further below (VII 2 3 - VII 2 4) Cú Roí also features in a number of other early Irish texts including *Amra Chon Roi* the 'Eulogy of Cu Rói' (Stokes, 1905 1-14), and *Mescae Ulad*, 'the Intoxication of the Ulaid' (Watson, ed 1941, Gantz, transl 1972 188-218, see also V 1 14)

II 1 5 *Echtrae Chonaill*

Likewise this title appears in tale-list A only (Mac Cana, 1980 45) As in the case of Fiaman, there is no extant *echtrae* but the death of Conall (Cernach), *Aided Conaill,* is recorded in the tale lists although it too is no longer extant under this title However, his death is recounted in a tale, the full title of which is *Goire Conaill Chernaig i Crúachain ocus Aided Ailella ocus Conaill Chernaig*, 'The Cherishing of *Conall Cernach* and the death of *Ailill* and of *Conall Cernach'* (Meyer, 1897)

II 1 6 *Echtrae Chonchobair*

No *echtrae* tale survives for Conchobar but his death-tale, *Aided Conchobuir,* is the only one of the eight Ulster hero's death-tales to have come down to us in five manuscript versions according to Meyer (1906 vi-vn) The *echtrae* title appears in tale-list A only (Mac Cana, 1980 45)

[27]Thurneysen (1921 431) suggests that the title *Tain teora nErc Echdach* probably refers to *Aided Con Roi* (see also VII 2 4)

II 1 7. *Echtrae Machae ingine Aeda Ruaid*

Machae is the only female appearing in the lists of *echtrai*, featuring in A only (Mac Cana, 1980 45), but there is no corresponding tale extant She is mentioned in the *Metrical Dindshenchas*,[28] in connection with the naming of Emain Machae and Meyer (1907) appears to have equated this episode with the title *Echtrae Machae* However there is no firm evidence to support this The place-lore of Ard Machae and Emain Machae focuses on female figures, all called Machae For example, the Rennes *Dindshenchas* of *Ard Macha* makes the following statement

> Macha wife of Nemed son of Agnoman died there (on Mag Macha) and was buried, and it is the twelfth plain which was cleared by Nemed, and he bestowed it on his wife so that it might bear her name Whence *Mag Macha* – 'Macha's Plain'
>
> Otherwise Macha daughter of Aed the red, son of Badurn – it is by her Emain was marked out – was buried there when Rechtaid of the red fore-arm killed her To lament her, *Oenach Macha* – 'Macha's fair' was established Whence *Mag Macha*
>
> Otherwise Macha wife of Crund son of Agnoman went there to race against Conchobar's horses, for her husband had said that his wife was swifter (than they) Thus then was the wife big with child so she asked a respite till her womb should have fallen, and this was not granted to her So then the race was run and she was the swiftest And she said that the Ulaid would abide under feebleness of childbed whensoever need befall them Wherefore the Ulaid suffered feebleness for the space of a *nomad* from the reign of Conchobar to the reign of Mal son of Rochraide 'Great Heart' And men say that she was Grian Banshure 'the Sun of Womanfolk', daughter of Mider of Bri Leith And after this she died, and her tomb was raised on Ard Macha, and her lamentation was made, and her gravestone was planted Whence *Ard Macha* - 'Macha's Height' (§94, Stokes, 1895 44-6)

II 1 8 *Echtrae Nechtain maic Alfroinn*

According to Meyer (1895 32) Nechtan Mac Colbrain was the hero of this tale and the incidents involving him in *Immram Brain* may relate to this no longer extant separate tale The title ENmA appears only in tale-list A (Mac Cana, 1980 45)

[28]See Gwynn, 1913 368, I 22 and II 57-84, 1924 124 and 308

II 1 9 *Echtrae Ailchind maic Amalgaid*

There is no extant tale corresponding to this title, which is featured in tale-list A only (Mac Cana, 1980 45) No trace of this character seems to be found elsewhere

II 1 10 *Echtrae Find i nDerc Ferna*

The title appears only in tale-list A (Mac Cana, 1980 45) but Mac Cana (1980 97 and 106) suggests that this might be a doublet of the title *Uath Dercce Ferna* also in list A, the two thus referring to the same story Mac Cana (1980 94) discusses the complicated problems associated with the *uatha*, noting that "the very meaning of the term in this context has been a matter of uncertainty " O'Looney follows O'Curry and translates *uatha* as 'caves'[29] but Mac Cana (1980 95) points out that "what strikes one as particularly odd is that they should have ignored so completely the commonest use of *uath*, that is in the sense of 'terror, horror', which seems to tally reasonably well with such information as we can glean concerning the tales in question " *Dercc Ferna* is identified by Hogan (1910 342) as the 'Cave of Dunmore' in County Kilkenny thus supporting Mac Cana's suggestion that both titles might refer to the same story Stern (1892 1-32) has published an incomplete text from the manuscript *Codices Vossiani Latini*,[30] vol 2 and dates this to the sixteenth century (Stern, 1892 1-2) Stern's text is mentioned and called *Echtra Finn* by Best (1969 82) According to Stern (1892 3), the first part of the text is missing due to damage to the manuscript and its opening as it stands (ll 1-66) gives an account similar to that in a poem in *LL* (ll 28323-551, Best and O'Brien, 1957 967-74), known as *Finn and the Phantoms* (Stokes, 1886 289-307) In Stern's text, Finn, Oisin and Cailte come to a giant's house, and the so-called *ech dub* episode found at the start of the poem is missing The second part (ll 67-148) relates the origins of the place

[29]See Mac Cana (1980 94-5) for various scholarly interpretations of *Uatha*

[30]Stern (1892 1-2) dates this manuscript to the sixteenth century based on its similarity to the writing of Mac-Aegan in the *Leabhar Breac* The Speckled Book , and because the language is slightly modernised Middle Irish

named *Snam-da-én*[31] 'the swimming of two birds', similar to the account given by a poem edited in the *Metrical Dindshenchas* (*LL*, ll 22149-157, Best and O'Brien, 1957 742, Gwynn, 1924 351-67) Whereas it is agreed that this text partially relates Finn's adventures with phantoms, the fact remains that Derec Ferna is not mentioned in either Stern's text or either the poems connected with it Consequently this material is hardly to be equated with the title *Echtrae Find i nDerc Ferna*

II 1 11 *Echtrae Aedain maic Gabrain*

This title is featured only in tale-list A (Mac Cana, 1980 45) While we do have references to Aedan mac Gabrain in the literature, such as *Aided Guaire maic Aedáin* (Picard, 1989), no *echtrae* tale involving him is found In *Compert Mongain* it is said that Fiachnae mac Baetáin went to Scotland to support his ally Aedan mac Gabrain (Byrne, 1973 111-2, White, 2006 64) Furthermore, Mael Uma mac Baitain is said to have fought beside Aedán in Scotland (see II 1 12 below, see also Byrne, 1973 111-2) Aedan was king of the Scotish Dal Riata (see V 1 23) and it may well be that this *echtrae* title refers to one or other of these expeditions

II 1 12 *Echtrae Mael Uma maic Baitain*

Once again this title appears in tale-list A only (Mac Cana, 1980 45) and no tale of this title is extant However, there is a reference to a meeting of Mael Uma with a hag in a dark cave in *Duanaire Ghearoid Iarla* edited by MacNiocaill (1963)

> *Tarla cailleach chugainne*
> *dár dtoras annsa bhrughsa*
> *in uaimh, dhorcha dhubh-aille*
> *mar tharla do Mhaol Uma* (§12, Mac Niocaill, 1963 21)

[31] According to Hogan (1910 614) *Snam da en*, is between Meath and Mag Ai on the Shannon "

It is recorded that Mael Uma mac Baitain made an expedition to Degsastan in 600 or 603, where he fought beside Aedan mac Gabrain against the Saxons, slaying Eanfrith, brother of the Æthelfrith of Northumbria (Byrne, 1973 259, Mac Mathuna, 1985 252) Interestingly Mael Uma's grandfather Muirchertach mac Erca (see *CGH*, 140 a 10, 38) and Áedan mac Gabrain are also the heroes of *echtrai* that are no longer extant

II 1 13 *Echtrae Mongáin maic Fiachna*

This title is featured only in tale-list A (Mac Cana, 1980 45) Although no tale of this title is extant there are four surviving early tales concerning Mongan (White, 2006) namely, *Compert Mongáin* 'Mongan's conception', *Scél asa mberar co m-bad he Finn mac Cumaill* (a story from which it is inferred that Mongán was Finn), *Scél Mongáin* 'Mongan's story' and *Tucait baile Mongáin* 'the cause of Mongan's vision/frenzy' There is also a reference to the birth of Mongán in *Immram Brain* (§§49-59, Mac Mathúna, 1985, Meyer, 1985) by his natural father Manannán, which echoes the events occurring in *Compert Mongain* Manannan goes on to describe the fabulous career that Mongán will have, making reference to his superior wisdom, connections to the otherworld and ability to take the forms of various different animals Finally, he foretells Mongan's premature death

II 1 14 *Echtrae Fergussa maic Léti*

Tale-list B alone features this title (Mac Cana, 1980 53) but no tale bearing it is extant Nevertheless, there is an account of *imthechta in rig* 'the king's adventures' (Binchy, 1952 38 and 43) as experienced by Fergus mac Leti when he fell asleep on the sea-shore, which is embodied in 'The Saga of Fergus mac Léti' edited and translated by Binchy (1952) and referred to by him as *Echtra Fergusa maic Leti* (1952 33) Cinaed hua Hartacain's poem on the deaths of some nobles of Ireland includes a summary of the same events (Binchy, 1952 33) The tale survives in prose form in two 16th century legal manuscripts namely

H 3 18 (ff 363b-365a) and *Harl* 432 (f 5), wherein it appears also in metrical form (f 46) The metrical version also survives in 16th century *H 3 17* (col 26f) Both recensions of the prose tale clearly derive from a common original with only minor points of variance in the story according to Binchy (1952 35), who based his edition and translation on the *H 3 18* recension but also included a plain transcript of *Harl* 432 Dissenting from Thurneysen's view that this story was a product of "later jurists" who used "a fortuitous resemblance between the names thus fitting their new 'saga' into the framework of the Ulidian cycle" and based solely on linguistic grounds, Binchy (1952 33-6) dates it as early as the eight century [32] He concludes (Binchy, 1952 34) that "the ancient poem itself contains a summary of the main events of the saga", which "was not the invention of 'imaginative' commentators but an early and authentic member of the Ulidian cycle "

There is an extant tale entitled *Aided Fergusa maic Leti* (*Eg 1782*, ff 30 b 1)[33] edited and translated by O'Grady (1892) but, according to Binchy (1968 51), this is basically a reworked version of the saga since "in the late Middle Ages some enterprising redactor got hold of the saga and blew it up into a very Rabelaisian fairy tale in which the king of the leprechauns plays a more prominent role than Fergus himself" Significantly for the purposes of this investigation, the key-word *aided* is referred to in its conclusion *conid iad imtechta tuaithe luchra ocus aided Fergus conuige* 'thus far the death of Fergus and the Luchra-people's doings" (§12, Flower, 1926 272, O'Grady, 1892 252) An account of Fergus' underwater adventures is given here and the implications of these adventures for sovereignty will be discussed below (V 1 13) However, since there is no firm evidence that this tale was the same as the one called an *echtrae* in list B, it will not be included in the database of the present thesis

[32]Binchy (1952 35) points out that the only text available to Thurneysen was as late as the eleventh century which "may to some extent explain his error in dating "
[33]Thurneysen dated this version to the thirteenth/fourteenth century (1921 541, Cf Borsje, 2001 60)

II 1 15 *Echtrae Oengusae maic Fergusa Finn*

This title appears in tale-list B only (Mac Cana, 1980 53), but no tale with this title is extant Whereas the name Oengus Find mac Fergusa Dubdetaich appears on some genealogical lists, no further information about him has been found (see V 1 20)

II 1 16 *Echtrae Chuinn Chetchathaig*

Yet again this title is found only in list B (Mac Cana, 1980 53), but no tale bearing it is extant However stories like *Baile Chuinn*, 'Conn's Frenzy' (Bhreathnach and Murray, 2005 73-94), *Baile in Scail* 'the phantoms frenzy'(Meyer 1901, Murray, 2007), and the opening section of *Echtra Airt maic Cuind ocus Tochmarc Delbchaime ingine Morgain,* 'The Adventures of Art Son of Conn and the Courtship of Delbchacem Daughter of Morgan' (Best, 1907 149-173) may bear some relationship to it *Baile in Scáil* will be examined in this regard below (II 2 7) and see II 2 5 on *Echtrae Airt*

II 1 17 *Echtrae Muirquertoig maic hErco*

Mac Cana (1980 69) notes that one of the additional titles in B, *Echtra Muirquertoig maic Erca* corresponds to *Imram Luinge Muirchertaig meic Erca* in A and may have been borrowed from the *echtrai* in order to expand the newer group of *imrama* (see I 2 1 above) There are numerous references to Muirchertach Mac Erca in the literature and the annals attribute a whole catalogue of successes in battle to him (see Byrne, 1973 100-3) Be that as it may, the *echtrae* title appears only in list B (Mac Cana, 1980 53) and there is no extant *echtrae* naming him His death notice appears in the year 533 A D in the Annals of Ulster (*AU*) telling about how he "drowned in a vat full of wine in the fort of Cletech, over the Boyne" (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, 1983 69), an account of which is related in *Aided Muirchertaig Meic Erca* (Nic Dhonnchadha, 1964)[34] Byrne (1973 97-104) discusses the

[34]See also Radner (1983 191 8)

similarities between *Aided Diarmata* or 'the death-tale of Diarmait mac Cerbaill' and Muirchertach's death tale According to O Hehir (1983 168) 'the highly Christianized *Aided Muirchertaig Meic Erca*" is an "anti-goddess story, reversing the pagan polarities " McCone (1990 146-7) concludes that "the fact that this text happens to survive only in a late Middle or even early Modern Irish rescension falls well short of proof that an unattested 'genuine original' has been tampered with later 'by a Christian redactor bent on discrediting otherworld goddesses as queens' " It may be that *Aided Muirchertaig Meic Erca* is either partially or wholly related to a no longer extant tale entitled *Echtra Muirquertoig maic hErco*, given the appearance of the otherworld woman Sin to the King Muirchertach of Tara, their subsequent mating and outing to Tech Cletig The significance of the appearance of the woman/goddess of sovereignty before the king will be discussed further in V 3 1-V 3 4

II 1 18 Discussion

The above sections have endeavoured to identify and source the *echtrae* titles from tale-lists A and B where no tale seems to have survived, at least under that title Where titles appear in both tale-lists, (*Echtrae Con Culainn, Echtrae Chrimthaind Nia Nair, Echtrae Nerai*) it would seem that they were presumably at least classified as such at the time of the lists' compilation, possibly as early as the 10th century Those appearing in tale-list A only, (*Echtrae Fiamain, Echtrae Con Roi, Echtrae Chonaill, Echtrae Chonchobair, Echtrae Machae, Echtrae Nechtain maic Alfroinn, Echtrae Ailchind maic Amalgaid, Echtrae Find i nDerc Ferna, Echtrae Aedain maic Gabrain, Echtrae Mael Uma maic Baitáin, Echtrae Mongain maic Fiachna*) can be assumed to have been classified as such as early as the twelfth century, and those in tale-list B only (*Echtrae Fergussa maic Léti, Echtrae Oengusae m Fergusa Finn, Echtrae Chuinn Chetcathaig, Echtra Muirquertoig maic hErco*) as early as the fifteenth century.

II 2 1 *Echtrae Nerai*

The title EN not only appears in lists A and B (Mac Cana, 1980 45 and 53) but is also included in the list of *remscéla* or introductory tales which detailed the events leading up to the start of *Tain Bo Cuailnge* (*LL* ll 32901, Best and O'Brien, 1957 1119, Meyer, 1889 212) According to Mac Cana

> LL 245 b recounts the story of the recovery of TBC (*Faillsigud Tana Bó Cuailgne*) and then proposes to enumerate the twelve *remscela*, though in fact it gives only ten titles These are (i) *De Gabail int S[h]id[a]*, (ii) *De Aslingi in maic Oic*, (iii) *De Chophur na dá Muiccida*, (iv) *De Tháin Bó Regamain*, (v) *De Echtrai Nerai*, (vi) *De Chompert Chonchobair*, (vii) *De Thochmurc* [*Ferbe*], (viii) *De Chompert Con Culaind*, (ix) *De Tháin Bo Flidais* (x) *De Thochmurc Emiri* As to the two missing titles Thurneysen refers tentatively to *Tain Bó Dartada*, which is found in the other lists, and *Tain Bo Regamma*, which may very easily have been omitted beside (iv) On the other hand he points out that *Tochmarc Emire* does not occur elsewhere in this context" (1980 89)

In addition, the title EN is found in an extract from *Harl* f 54a (see Meyer 1890a 210) and also in the *Dindsenchas* of *Ath Luain* (§66, Stokes, 1894 464)

Meyer (1889 212) points out that the tale also seems to have been known as *Táin Be Aingen* (TBA) The latter title is prefaced to one of the two extant copies of the full text in *YBL* (col 658-62), the text in *Eg 1782*, (f 71^{b}-73^{b}) lacking a title (Meyer, 1889 212) Despite giving essentially the same text, these two manuscript versions display certain discrepancies leading Meyer (1889 212) to conclude that each derived separately from a common archetype Thurneysen discussed the possibility that EN, as we have it, is a compilation of two recensions which he originally dated to the 10^{th} century, although he reputedly modified his position afterwards by not ruling out an 8^{th} century origin (Ó Duilearga, 1995 522) Cross and Slover (1936 248) too consider that EN in its present form is "the result of two unskilfully combined parallel accounts of Nera's excursion into the fairy world " Watson (1986 129) agrees that it may be the result of a compilation, whence some confusion about its title 'if

this discrepancy is not simply due to the desire of a redactor to fit the story into the class of *tana* as well as the *echtrai*, it may support Thurneysen's thesis " Nonetheless, important evidence for it being generally known as an *echtrae* is provided by its listing as EN in the *remscéla* to *Tain Bo Cúailnge,* where there is no reason so to call it in order to fit it into that category

Thus we can conclude that the extant text of this tale goes back to the 10th and perhaps even the 8th century In light of the above, it seems reasonable to assume that it was at least commonly known as *Echtrae Nerai* in the early medieval period It can thus be placed in the first group examined in Chapter III

II 2 2 *Echtrae Loegairi*

This title (EL) is not found in tale-lists A or B The text itself survives in two manuscripts, namely *LL* f 275b, 22 – f 276 b, 25, ll 35894 and *BL* f 125b, col 1, neither of which give it a title (Jackson, 1942 377 and 380) There is no internal textual reference to suggest an *echtrae* title in either The following titles assigned to it by various modern editors and translators are presumably based upon their own views of its typological affinities *Echtra Laegaire meic Chrimthainn go Magh Mell in so,* or *Sidh Fiachna* (O'Grady, 1892 256 and vii) and 'Laeghaire mac Crimthann's visit to the fairy realm of Magh Meall' or 'the Plains of Pleasure', or 'Fiachna's sidh' (O'Grady, 1892 290 and xiii), 'Laegaire Mac Crimthann's Visit to Fairyland' (Cross, 1916 155), 'The Adventure of Laeghaire Mac Crimthainn' (Jackson, 1942 380), 'Echtra Laegaire meic Crimthainn' (Best and O'Brien, 1957 1210)

In his analysis of the text Jackson (1942 377) points out that the older *LL* version includes three poems, which are omitted in the *BL* version "Apart from modernisations, the language of the prose parts is still good Old Irish, probably of the second half of the ninth century",

according to Jackson (1942 377) The situation is different with the linguistic style of the verse, which exhibits signs of very early Middle Irish, (Jackson, 1942 378) If so, the prose section is older than the verse, in which case it is likely to have constituted the entire original tale, the poems having been added later in accordance with common practice (Jackson, 1942 378-9) Nevertheless, Jackson (1942 379) considers the lack of verse in the *BL* version more likely to be due to omission by the copyist than to derivation from an exemplar written before the verse was composed Although similar to the text of the *LL*, the *BL* version does not appear to have been copied from it, as "slips and omissions in LL show" (Jackson, 1942 379) Both versions were copied from a common exemplar of "prose-and-verse" from the 10th century or, perhaps, even later according to Jackson (1942 379)

Accordingly, the language of the prose part of the extant versions of EL has been dated to the Old Irish period but there seems to be no available evidence for its title in the early medieval period Consequently it will be treated in chapter IV rather than Chapter III

II 2 3 *Echtrae Chonnlai*

Although absent from the tale-lists, EC survives in seven manuscripts and fragmentarily in an eighth (Oskamp, 1974 207, McCone, 2000 1), namely *LU*, *YBL*, *Rawl* , *Eg 1782*, *Eg 88*, *23 N 10*, *Harl* and *H1* McCone (2000 126) points out that all of the extant manuscript versions of EC, "except Eg and the R fragment" give the tale a title at the beginning Moreover, *Eg 88* even includes the two crucial words *Echtrae Chonnlai* at the end

> each of these opens with *Echtrae Chonnlai* and only N lacks the further description of the hero as *maic Cuinn Chétchathaig* Hence the archetype presumably at least contained the heading *Echtrae Chonnlai maic Cuinn Chétchathaig* 'The Adventure of Connlae son of Conn of the Hundred Battles' supported by every major branch of the stemma including E within NE(g) Indeed the basic first two words of the title are also found in Eg but at the end rather than the beginning of the tale *Finet ar Euchtra Connla co dul ar fairgi* do 'the end of Connlae's Expedition up to his going to sea' (2000 126)

Thurneysen (1921 15, translated by McCone, 2000 67-8) has placed EC among the contents of the now lost *Cín Dromma Snechta,* which he ascribed to the first half of the eighth century McCone concludes (2000 29) that the language of all of the extant versions of EC " leaves no reasonable doubt that composition of *Echtrae Chonnlai* belongs at least as far back as the Old Irish period of the eighth and ninth centuries as typified by the Wurzburg and other collections of glosses The text conforms so faithfully to Old Irish usage along with the odd possible hint of archaism that the former century seems rather more likely than the latter and, indeed, there is no apparent linguistic objection to a date as early as the first half of the eight century " The evidence, then, suggests that *Echtrae Chonnlai* was the title of this tale in the early 8th century archetype and should be treated as a 'primary' *echtrae* in Chapter III

II 2 4 *Echtrae Airt*

This text does not have an initial title in the only extant manuscript version, *BF* (f 139), but a note at the end of it (f 145) mentions *Echtra Airt meic Cuind 7 tochmarc Delbhchaime ingine Morgain*, 'The Adventure of Art son of Conn and the Courtship of Delbchaem', in support of the title given by Best in his first edition and translation of EA (1907 149-73) In addition, the title *Echtrae Airt maic Cuind* is present in all the manuscripts of list B (Mac Cana, 1980 53) The language of the tale as it survives is Early Modern Irish according to Best (1907 149), but the title's presence in list B implies the existence of an earlier version Cross and Slover (1936 491) propose that, although this story appears in a late manuscript, it "has all the appearance of belonging to the Old-Irish tradition " Dillon (1948 112) also remarks that the only extant version may be "a late derivative composition" and that "specialists in mythology may decide whether we must assume an Old Irish original '

With regard to the thematic structure of EA O'Hehir (1983 160) observes that "the story divides naturally into four main parts, only the latter two of which are accurately described by

the title given the whole story" He concludes that it might better be called *Eachtra Cuind Cetchathaig acus Tochmarc Becuma ingine Eogain Indbir* (O Hehir, 1983 160) Mac Mathuna (1985 251 fn 28) also notes that, "the tale is a composite, the first part containing the *echtrae* of Art's father, Conn Cetchathach (§§1-14) "

As noted above, the evidence of list B indicates that the title EA was recognised as early as the 10th century It also survives in the only extant version of the tale, which will be included in Chapter III despite the relative lateness of its language

II 2 5 *Echtrae Chormaic maic Airt*

This title ECA is not included in list A but is found in one manuscript of list B and with a trivial difference (*ui Chuinn* for *maic Airt*) in the other two (Mac Cana, 1980 53) "These two titles have been transposed either in R (*Rawl* B512), H1 (*Harl*) or N (*23 N 10*) ", according to Mac Cana, but he notes that, " R and H1 agree in regard to sequence (of the titles) " (1980 53)

The tale is preserved in full in *BB* ff 260b -263b and *YBL* col 889, I 26 with the title *Echtra Chormaic i Tir Tairngiri ocus Cert Claidib Chormaic* prefaced to both (Abbott and Gwynn, 1921 108) Since these two copies display only "minor, insignificant variations in their readings, they would seem to derive from a common exemplar or archetype" according to Hull (1949 871), who suggests that this first recension was probably written "sometime between A D 1150-1200, whereas the exemplar upon which it was based was, of course, made at an earlier period " Hull (1949 871-83) published and translated the only extant copy

of the *BF* version or second recension, which 'differs materially from the other recensions" but is entitled *Echtra Chormaic maic Airt* ff 92^{b} - 93^{b} [35]

Cross and Slover (1936 503) remark that "the piece is not a single unified story" but "a collection of narratives based on an ancient account of various legal ordeals, and later expanded into a story of a visit to the fairy world" Noting the composite nature of the text taken from *BB* and *YBL*, Stokes entitles his edition, [*Scél na Fír Flatha*], *Echtra Chormaic i Tir Tairngiri ocus Cert Claidib Chormaic,* '[The Irish Ordeals], Cormac's Adventure in the Land of Promise, and the Decision as to Cormac's Sword', based on the internal reference *Conid scel na fir flatha, 7 echtra Cormaic a Tir Tharrngiri, 7 Claideb Cormaic an scél sin* (§79, Stokes, 1891 202)

Hull's (1949 871-83) edition of the second recension corresponds to §§25-54 of Stokes' edition, which he entitles *Cuach Cormaic*, 'Cormac's Cup', from the opening words of §25 (Stokes, 1891 192) The *BF* text cannot be much later in date than the first recension according to Hull (1949 873), who remarks that linguistically the second recension would seem to be as early as the twelfth century but does not rule out the possibility that it derived from an "exemplar which antedates that of the first recension" Hull (1949 873) points out that a third recension of this tale is found in at least ten paper manuscripts, none of which predate 1699 A D

The suggestion of a 12^{th} century dating for the first recension based on an exemplar made at an earlier period, supports an earlier original date for the tale ECA Since, the title ECA and variants of it are attested in both the extant full versions of the tale as well the shorter version

[35] The text commences at the top of page 92, col b and continues to p 93, col b, l 32 (see Hull, 1949 872)

surviving in *BF* and tale list B also has the title ECA, a tale with this name may well have existed as early as the 10th century If so, it belongs to the first group in Chapter III

II 2 6 *Echtrae mac nEchach Mugmedoin*

This title EEM is not attested in any of the extant versions of tale-lists A or B The text of EEM is preserved in two manuscripts, *YBL* col 902, facsimile, f 188[a] I 41 and *BB* ff 264[b] 68-265 [b] 64 (Abbott and Gwynn, 1921 108, Stokes, 1903 191) In both of these it immediately follows another story concerning the sons of *Eochaid Mugmedon*, namely *Aided Chrimthainn maic Fiadaig* The title *Eachtra mac Eachach Muigmedóin* is given in *YBL* 902, I 41, f 188 (Abbott and Gwynn, 1921 108) and in *BB* f 145r, I 21 at the end of *Aided Chrimthainn* (Stokes, 1903 188) Still more conclusively, the end of both versions refers to the sons' adventure as an *echtrae*

> *Ro frecair Niall 7 ro indis in echtra 7 amail dochuadar for ia[r]raid usci 7 amail doraladar forsin topur 7 cosin mnai, 7 an ro thairrngir side doib* Niall answered and related the adventure, and how they went a-seeking water, and how they chanced on the well and (came) to the woman, and what she had prophesied to them (§18, Stokes1903 202-3)

O'Grady (1892 I, 326-30, II, 368-73) entitled his edition *Echtra mac Echach Muigmedoin* and his translation 'The Story of Eochaidh Muighmedon's Sons', both based upon *BB* Stokes (1903 172-207) based his edition of both texts (AC and EEM) on the *YBL* version with various readings from *BB* given as footnotes and (1903 173) was first to note that the story of EEM as it has come down to us cannot be older than the 11[th] century, given the references to Brian Boruma (†1014) and Maelsechlainn mac Domnaill (†1022) at §§6 and 19 respectively Cross and Slover (1936 508) and other scholars, such as Dillon (1946 38) and McCone (1990 183), concur with this dating, citing internal historical as well as linguistic grounds On the other hand, McCone (1990 183) does not rule out the possibility that this story about Niall's attainment of the kingship had been reworked from an older original, "as perhaps

indicated by a reasonable smattering of good Old Irish forms in the text " Be that as it may and while the title EEM is confirmed in the two extant manuscript versions of the tale, we do not seem to have evidence to demonstrate this *echtrae*'s existence prior to the 11th century Nevertheless, it clearly qualifies for the 'primary' label and treatment in Chapter III

II 2.7 *Baile in Scail*

One complete copy of BS 'the Phantom's Frenzy' is found in *Rawl B512* (ff 101ra – 105vb), while an incomplete copy is also found in *Harl 5280*(ff 71a - 72b, Murray, 2004 1-2) The title given in *Rawl B512* reads '*Incipit di Baile in scail in so ar slicht hsenlibuir duibh da leithi i coarpa patraic*' (f 101 ra), 'The beginning of the phantom's Frenzy' here, according to the version of the Old Book of Dub Da Leithe, i e the successor of Patrick' (Murray, 2004 103 and 50) Crucially §9 of the text itself concludes by naming the preceding episode *ocus is di sen atta Aislingi 7 Echtra 7 Argraige Cuind Chetcathaig 7 Baile in Scail,* "and from that is derived 'the Dream and the Adventure and the Journey of Conn Cetchathach' and 'the Phantom's Frenzy' (Murray, 2004 35 and 51) No title is given in *Harl 5280* but that text also includes an internal reference to the title at the end *Ocus is de sin attá aisling an scail et egtrai 7 targraide cuind* "and from that is derived the dream of the phantom and adventure and journey of Conn" (§9, Murray, 2004 35 and 51)

There is no group of *baili* in list A and Mac Cana (1980 70) argues that the *baili* are a later addition to list B, which "is indicated fairly clearly by the fact that *Baile in Scail* is included among them even though it occurs also as *Fis Chuind Chetchathaig i Baili in Scail* in the older section of *fisi* common to both A and B" The term *baile* itself is an old "native term" but its use to identify a group of tales may well have been a late development according to Mac Cana (1980 75) In addition, he draws attention to the word *fis* 'vision' which derives from the Latin *visio* and therefore cannot be a traditional notation for a category of tales (Mac

Cana 1980 76) To Toner (2000 112) "the fact that *Fís Cuind* appears under that title, rather than *Baile in Scáil* or *Baile Chuind Chétchathaig* as it is known in manuscripts, appears to show that this form was deliberately chosen so as to produce paired alliteration " Murray (2004 12) agrees with Mac Cana adding that in general, "the term *baile* is not used to denote a category of tales but is used of stories which contain a vision or a prophecy at their core and which do not readily fit into another category " He also notes "what distinguishes a *baile* is difficult to ascertain from the evidence presented by BS The story unfolds like an *echtrae* – being in essence a visit to the otherworld rather than a vision of it" (Murray, 2004 12)

Murray (2004 13-14) enumerates seven intertextual references to the title BS which suggest that it had ' established itself as part of the literary canon in Irish by the end of the Middle Irish period though their paucity (with respect to the size of the tradition as a whole) may indicate that the story never won for itself a central place in that tradition, the lack of other MS copies of BS may point in the same direction "

O'Curry (1861 419) dated BS to around 1000 A D Thurneysen (1936 215) held the opinion that the introduction of BS may be the work of a compiler and that this compilation took place in the eleventh century with the later names being added afterwards However, according to Murray (2002 54-6) the language of the introductory portion (§§1-9) of BS tends to confirm that its basic framework goes back to the late 9th century while ' the language of the remaining portion of the text reveals its compilatory nature with Old Irish forms preserved side by side with Middle Irish ones " Murray's detailed linguistic analysis of BS points to three strata

> BS contains (i) many features which can be safely dated to the late O Ir period (ninth century), (ii) developments which show re-working and addition of material in Mid Ir period, (iii) a small number of possible archaic forms, perhaps dating to earlier in O Ir period (eight century?) (2004 4 and 126 see also Appendix 4).

The appearance of later linguistic features throughout the tale leads Murray (2004 5) to conclude that the influence of the compiler is to be found throughout the text In addition, he notes (2004 5) that, "it is possible that parts of *BS* may contain linguistic archaisms which raises the possibility that the ninth-century author, and perhaps the eleventh-century compiler, may have been drawing on even earlier materials "[36]

The striking similarities between BS and *Echtrae Chormaic* noted by Stokes (1891 229) are now widely recognised (see O Cathasaigh, 1977 80-5, Carey, 1995 71-92, McCone, 2000 155-60) and Murray (2002 195-9) discusses the many thematic parallels between the two In itself this introductory section of BS (§§1-9) appears to constitute an entire tale, while the rest of the text (§§10-65) is concerned with detailing all the future kings of Tara foretold by the supernatural being or phantom called *scál*, namely Lug mac Ethnenn (Murray, 2004 1-8) Dillon (1948 107) refers to the opening part as the "*echtrae* proper" and comments as follows on the structure and content of the text

> The form of the echtrae was used by some scholar of the eleventh century, perhaps Dub Da Leithe (abbot of Armagh, 1049-64)), to introduce a list of kings of Ireland from Conn of the hundred Battles to the end of the High Kingship The list is there presented in the form of a prophecy uttered by the god Lug mac Ethnenn in the presence of Conn (1948 107)

As noted above, the title BS is well attested in both tale-lists However, it is surely significant that both extant versions include an internal textual reference to the preceding *echtrae* Although the inbuilt titles are ambiguous, or at least open to more than one interpretation, the inclusion of the word *echtrae* implies the familiarity of the redactor with similar traditional narrative elements in relation to Conn, possibly as early as the 9th century So inclusion in Chapter III's 'primary' group seems justified Although no individual tale corresponding to

[36] See Murray (2004 6-9) for detailed structural analysis and interpretation of BS

the title *Echtrae Chuinn Chetcathaig* mentioned in tale-list B (Mac Cana, 1980 53) appears to be extant, the lost tale may well have borne some relation to the opening section of BS

II 2 8 The 'Five Lugaids'

FL is found in the late Middle Irish tract *Coir Anmann* (*CA*) Two extant recensions of *CA* are commonly recognised The longer of these is preserved in three manuscripts, *H3 18* ff 565a 1 –596 a 10, *24 P 13*, ff 257 1 -292 33 and *H5 21* ff 19 25-48 32, while five complete copies and a fragment of the shorter one have survived in *BB* ff 249a 39-255a 5, *UM* ff 184vb 47-188ra 13, *Adv* 1 ff 13ra 1 –14va60, *L* ff 173ra 1-176 ra26, *Adv* 7 ff 1 ra 1-4rb 45 (see Arbuthnot, 2005 4) However, according to Arbuthnot (2005 1) "there is a third, little-noticed version in existence which is shorter than either of these" the only extant copy of which survives in *G2*, ff 16ra I- 18va 25[6]

CA consists of a series of separate entries which explain the origin and/or meaning of the names of various characters from early Irish literature In the introduction to his edition Stokes (1897 285) remarks

> What the *Dindshenchas* does for the names of noteworthy places in Ireland, the *Cóir Anmann*, 'Fitness of Names', does for the nicknames of about three hundred noteworthy Irish persons, - kings, queens, warriors, wizards, prophets, poets, leeches, elves, werewolves

The fact that *CA* relies heavily on pre-existing sources such as genealogical literature, the *Dindshenchas* 'Lore of Famous Places' and *Lebor na Cert* 'The Book of Rights' has been noted by various scholars (Stokes, 1897 412-425, Arbuthnot, 2005 39-59) However, Arbuthnot (2005 40) cautions that while "a considerable amount of the material contained in *CA* can be shown to recur, almost identically expressed, in independent texts we should not ignore other strands which probably contributed to the final form of the texts, such as the compilers writing down what they knew and composing afresh "

More often than not, the entries in *CA* consist of a few explanatory lines, such as

> Enna *Airgthech*, son of Eochaid Mumo, that is, Enna *Airgdide* 'silvery' 'Tis for him that the silvern shields were made in Airget-ross On him was conferred the leadership of Erin (§3, Stokes, 1897 289)

On occasion, however, the account of a name's bestowal is considerably longer and, in effect, constitutes an entire story Such is the case with the sections concerning the five sons of "'*Daire Doimthech'*, [<doim 'poor' + tech 'house' i e there was great poverty and shortage of food in his time] each named *Lugaid*" (Arbuthnot, 2007 96)

Although there seems to be no manuscript evidence for a title, the text displays the same configuration of narrative elements as occurs in EEM and all these will be discussed in detail in Chapter III below Moreover, the text itself refers to its central action as an *echtrae lodur iarum co hAennach Taillten innisit a sgela 7 a n-echtra d'feraibh Erenn in tan sin* "thereafter they returned to Oenach Tailten and then they related their stories and their adventure to the men of Ireland" (Arbuthnot, 2007 23 and 99)

II 2 9 *Tochmarc Emire*

The title TE 'The Wooing of Emer', appears not only in the *Tochmarca* group of lists A and B but also in one list of *remscela* to TBC, namely *LL* (ll 32901, Best and O'Brien, 1957 1119) Meyer (1890 433-443) enumerates eight extant manuscript versions of TE, but only two of these, *Harl* and *St* , give the complete text The remaining six with incomplete texts owing to missing leaves or the like are *LU, BF, Eg* 92, *Rawl B512* and two versions found in *23 N 10* (Meyer, 1890 437)

Meyer (1890 439) agrees with Zimmer's assumption of a 'twofold redaction' of various Old Irish sagas, i e a pre-Norse and a post-Norse one The *Rawl B512* version of TE (referred to as 'R') is taken as the only extant pre-Norse version on the grounds that the word *Gallus* appears to have been used in its original sense, as Meyer elucidates

> Forgall Manach's visit at Emain is thus told in R *is de iarom dolluid Forgall Manach dochom n-Emnai Machæ isnahib Gallecuscaib, amail bitis techta rig Gall do accallaim Conchabair, co n-immchomairc do di órduisib 7 fin Gall* "therefore F M went to E M in a Gaulish garb, as if it were an embassy from the king of the Gauls, to confer with Conchabur, with an offering to him of golden treasures and wine of Gaul" Here we have clearly a voice form that oldest period of Irish history, when Gall was used in its original sense of Gallus "a Gaul" Now all the other versions give the end of this passage thus *co n-immchomarc dó di ordùisib Fingall 7 cecha maithusa archena* "with an offering to him of golden treasures of the Norwegians, and all sorts of goods besides" (1890 438)

Evidence that the portion of the fifteenth century manuscript containing the R version was copied from the lost 'Book of Dub da Leithe' is based on the heading discussed above (see II 2 7) That Dub dá Leithe was the compiler of the book bearing his name is generally agreed as is his identity with the "bishop of Armagh of that name who filled the see 1049-1064" (Meyer, 1890 437) "Thus we have strong evidence that R represents a version existing about the middle of the eleventh century", according to Meyer (1890 439) Although his detailed linguistic analysis reveals the presence of some Middle-Irish forms, Meyer (1890 439) concludes that the Old-Irish character of the R version stands out so clearly that it may represent a pre-Norse adaptation, possibly of the eighth century

Toner (1998 71-88) examines in detail the relationship between the different manuscript versions and transmission of TE He agrees with Meyer (1890 435-9) that there are two main recensions of TE, "the longer version (V)" surviving in several MSS and 'the shorter version (R)"

> ... R is the earlier of the two extant recensions V is a much extended and expanded from of it The earliest recoverable form appears to be Old Irish (possibly eight

> century) but this was evidently transcribed, with some modernization, in the Middle Irish period This is the version that was copied into Rawlinson B 512 in the fifteenth century and it also appears to be the same version that was reworked to produce V (Toner, 1998 87)

Both recount the same basic events, notwithstanding considerable expansion in the longer version

> The 'remarkable expansion' of *Tochmarc Emire* in the Middle Irish period is rightly a matter of great interest, not only because of the issues of intertextuality that it raises but also for what it reveals about the text itself and the aims of the redactor The redactor of V has enshrined the earlier text to the extent of conserving almost exactly the wording of his exemplar Only occasionally does he depart from it to produce a modernized form At the same time, he expands and clarifies the text of his exemplar, weaving his own additions through the Old Irish framework into a unified whole Many incidents appear for the first time in V, some culled from related Ulster Cycle texts, others from unidentified sources V, therefore, is a careful work of scholarship, in which the redactor has endeavoured to assemble all the available materials relating to Cu Chulainn's courtship of Emer and his training in arms to produce a lucid and compelling biography of the greatest of the Ulster heroes (Toner, 1998 88)

Although purporting to be a 'wooing' tale, TE also includes an account of Cu Chulainn's journey to the otherworld abode of *Scathach* to the east of Alba (*fri hAlpi anair*) to train in arms (Meyer, 1890 444) Consequently it has sometimes been related to the no longer extant tale entitled *Echtrae Con Chulainn* (ECuC) Dumville (1976 92), for example, suggests that ECuC "may perhaps refer to a story representing some of the materials now known" from TE and SCC, while Mac Mathuna (1985 253) "would wish to equate it with the latter rather than the former "

The title ECuC is one of the three common to both tale-lists A and B and this, as noted above, allows us to assume it was recognised in narrative tradition at least as early as the 10th century While it is apparent that the text of TE encompasses common *echtrae*-like features which might well relate to the lost tale entitled ECuC, there seems to be no internal textual evidence for an '*echtrae*' title Nevertheless, TE is included in the second group for further analysis in Chapter IV

II 2 10 *Serglige Con Chulainn*

SCC 'the Wasting-Sickness of Cu Chulainn', is one of the "anomalous titles" found only in the "late miscellaneous group" at the beginning of list B (Mac Cana, 1980 67) Mac Cana (1980 91) affirms that this group comprises irregular titles which could not easily be "accommodated as they stand under any other rubrics in the body of list B " It seems that the author of List B not only added new groups such as the *baili*, and new titles such as the miscellaneous group but "on occasion he even twists a title already included so as to render it suitable for insertion under another rubric" (Mac Cana, 1985 92) The title appears in only two manuscript versions of list B, namely *23 N 10* f 29 as SCC and in *Harl* f 47 1, as *Aiged Con Culaind No Sercclidhe Con Culaind* (Mac Cana, 1985 51) According to Mac Cana (1985 93) the title ECuC in list A "perhaps wholly or partly" corresponds to TE in list A or SCC in list B

The early Irish tale entitled *Sergligi Con Culainn inso sis 7 Óenét Emire* survives in two manuscripts but, as one of these is a copy of the other, *LU* is the only independent witness Dillon (1947 139-146) discusses Zimmer's (1887) argument that H (*H 4 22*) was independent of *LU* as well as Thurneysen's view that H derived from an early version of *LU* but concludes on the basis of his own detailed analysis "that the exemplar of H was LU itself" Dillon (1947 145)

SCC is found on four leaves of *LU* (ff 43a-50a), long recognised as the work of two main scribes namely, Mael Muire (M) followed later by an interpolator H (Best, 1929 xvi) The first two leaves (ff 43-6) have been inserted, presumably in place of M's text, in the hand of H, while the remainder, (ff 47-50) are in the hand of M except for certain interpolations by H, some of them over erasures (Best, 1929 xxxi) This would mean that H was responsible for §§1-29 of Dillon's edition and M for the remainder, apart from some interpolations by H

Furthermore, there is some uncertainty regarding how much of M's text was reproduced by H and how much new material was inserted by him The heading *Slicht Libair Budi Slâni* 'Version of the Yellow Book of Slane' inserted above the title on folio 43a indicates that H's text chiefly originated in that since lost manuscript (Best and Bergin, 1929 xxxi) Thurneysen concluded with regard to the dates of M's version (recension A) and H's version (recension B) "that the language of B is not later than the 9th century, while that of A includes forms which point to the 11th century" (Dillon, 1953 xiii) Dillon (1953 xvi) concurs that, "the weight of evidence is in favour of B as the earlier text, though it is interpolated by a later hand "

The *LU* text is a combination of two versions with inconsistencies and duplications "so that Eithne Ingubai appears as the wife of Cu Chulainn in the first part of the story, while Emer is his wife later on" and "the recovery of Cú Chulainn from his sickness and his meeting with Li Ban are duplicated (§§12, 13 and 31), as is the journey of Lóeg to Mag Mell (§§13 and 32)" (Dillon, 1953 xvi) Dillon (1941-2 124-5) points out a further problem presented by an excerpt that interrupts the tale's flow when ' Cu Chulainn arises and instructs his foster-son There follows a passage entitled the *Briatharthecosc Con Culaind inso* It is in the common *tecosc* form, a series of short precepts, here put in the mouth of Cú Chulainn, many of them borrowed from the famous *Tecosca Cormaic* " Since the interpolator writes this entire passage on an inserted leaf, Dillon (1941-2 124-5) questions whether it was introduced by the scribe, who could have simply introduced a separate episode here, or was a part of B as Thurneysen proposed Dissenting from Thurneysen's view, Dillon concludes that it is best regarded as a once separate piece (Dillon, 1941-2 120-9) The possible significance of the *Briatharthecosc* episode of SCC will be discussed further below (VII 3 5)

SCC is of interest here because it is commonly regarded as an *echtrae* Dillon (1948 101) comments, "there is a group of stories called *echtrae* ('adventure') in which the Promised Land is the chief motif" and here he includes SCC primarily "because of its long descriptions of the Irish Elysium, here called Mag Mell 'the Plain of Delights' " Mac Mathuna (1989 249-50) also includes SCC in his list of *echtrai*

> Our oldest *echtrai* are *Echtrae Condl(a)i* (EC), *Echtra Laegairi maic Crimthainn* (EL), and *Echtra Nerai* (EN) – also called *Tain Be Aingen* To these may be added *Serglige Con Chulainn* (SCC) 'The Wasting-sickness of Cu Chulainn', a tale which deals with the journey of the great Ulster hero and his charioteer Loeg, to the Land of Manannan mac Lir and *Labraid Luathlaimh ar Chlaideb* 'Labraid Quick-hand on Sword'

This raises the possibility that the text of SCC bears some relation to the no longer extant ECuC Although subsequent analysis of the narrative will reveal common thematic *echtrae*-like features such as various otherworld journeys, there is no internal textual reference in SCC to substantiate an *echtrae* title and so it will be reserved for Chapter IV

II.2 11 *Siaburcharpat Con Culaind*

SbCC 'the Phantom Chariot of Cu Chulainn' is found in three manuscripts, *LU,* (ff 113a1-115b, ll 9221-565 Best and Bergin, 1929 278-87), *Eg 88,* (ff 14v-15r) and *Add* 33,993 (ff 2v-3v) (Johnston, 2001 111, Best and Bergin, 1929 xxxiv) The three texts are similar but the latter two are shorter versions according to Johnston (2001 111) Commenting on the differences between the recensions, Johnston (2001 118) remarks

> The poem is basically a diptych, the first part celebrating the past, the second part showing the limitations of paganism as personified in the suffering of the once-great Ulster heroes This holds true for the two recensions of *Siaburcharpat Con Culaind* Despite their ultimate common source, there is a difference in tone and content between the *Lebor na hUuidhre* version of the poem and that found in the other two manuscripts The three texts largely agree, although there is some variation in the ordering of the verses, up to and including Cu Chulainn's evocation of the damnation of the Ulster Heroes and his following tribute to Patrick's power At this point *Leabhar na hUidhre* diverges significantly Where Egerton 88 and BL Additional contain five more stanzas, *Leabhar na hUidhre* has fourteen These are in the interpolating hand of H who was working before the middle of the twelfth century,

> and it is possible that they represent an expansion of a previously shorter poem and that they may have come from another version of the tale to which he had access

The language of *LU*'s text "is compatible with a roughly ninth-or tenth-century date" according to McCone (1990 200) However, he subsequently discusses evidence to suggest that the tale SbCC also derived from the *Cin Dromma Snechtai,* in which case "the possibility that an Old Irish original had undergone some modernisation via a shared post-*Cín* intermediary can hardly be discounted" (for details see McCone, 2000 68-9)

Although there is no internal reference to suggest that SbCC was perceived as an *echtrae* tale, it does relate Cu Chulainn's expeditions to two seemingly otherworldly locations, *Lochlainn*[37]and *Tír Scáith* 'The Land of Shadow' Various scholarly theories regarding reflexes of the no longer extant tale ECuC have already been noted (see II 1 1) Nevertheless, SbCC is included for analysis in Chapter IV below, since it does refer to *echtrae*-like activities and may well bear some relation to ECuC

II 2 12 *Immram Brain*

IB 'the Voyage of Bran', is found in eight manuscripts, namely *LU, Rawl* B512, *23 N 10, Eg* 88, *Harl*, *S, H 4 22* and *YBL* (see Mac Mathúna 1985 1-12 for details) *YBL* is the only manuscript where a title is given to the text *Imrum Bruín m-c Febuil andso 7 a echtra annso síss* (1 37 col 395-1 44 col 398, Mac Mathúna, 1985 11 and 61) However, Mac Mathuna points out that during the course of transmission the *YBL* version has undergone "many alterations and corruptions" and he warns, "one must therefore treat it cautiously" (1985 12) Subsequently, Mac Mathúna (1985 119) gives his reasons for believing that this title is unlikely to have been in the archetype Dumville (1976 83) also notes that "even the semi-

[37]Lochlann is generally recognised as an overseas otherworld location before it became known as Vikingland, according to Ní Mhaonaigh (2006 25-6) See also VII 2 6

independent place of the YBL-text in the tradition of the work does not permit one to award any authority to this title, its absence from all the other witnesses is significant" and that "towards the end of the work (§64) all manuscripts contain the words *ata i ssenchassaib linni chenae Imram Brain*, thus providing, after the fashion of other early Irish tales, a built-in title or colophon "

The title IB is not included with the *immrama* group in tale list A, whereas the title *Echtra Brain maic Febail* appears in the *echtrai* group in list B (Mac Cana, 1980 43 and 53) In his analysis Mac Cana (1980 70) observes, "a rather surprising omission from A is the 'Voyage of Bran' its older and more accurate title, one might at least have expected it to appear among the *imrama* of A and it is just conceivable that it dropped out as a result of the uncertain demarcation between the later group of *imrama* and the older *echtrai*" Hence the title and text of IB have been subjected to much scholarly debate regarding the nature and content of the tale and particularly what Mac Mathuna (1985 275) calls "the vexed question of the *genre* to which *Bran* actually belongs Is it an *echtrae* or is it an *immram*?" Dillon (1948 104-7) saw IB as essentially an expression of pagan ideas, certain Christian stanzas being mere interpolations, and concluded that without these stanzas the story of Bran belonged with the other *echtrai* and so applied the title *Echtrae Brain* to the text Dumville (1976 87) agrees with Dillon that IB "has no essential feature in common with the *immrama* " Carney (1955 281) criticises Dillon's view because he did not support it with "linguistic, metrical, or stylistic evidence to show that these stanzas differ from the rest of the poetry in authorship or period of composition " On the contrary

> *Immram Brain* was quite obviously composed in Ireland in a Christian literate community either in the late seventh or eight century The verse is *deibide* – hence (in so far as it is syllabic, riming, and divided into quatrains) modelled ultimately on Latin hymn metres The Christian nature of the poem is quite clear It is pervaded by thoughts of the Fall, the Incarnation, and the Redemption The Otherworld kingdom, as described in the verse, so far from being presented in pre-Christian terms, is an

> early medieval idea of what form human bliss would have taken if Adam had not sinned (Carney, 1955 280 and 286)

The various scholarly attempts at analysing the nature of IB and at defining a genre to which it actually belongs elicited the following comments from McCone

> No early Irish narrative genres have been more discussed than those of the *echtrae* or 'outing' and the *immram* or 'voyage' While acknowledging some interaction, nativists tend to view the former as fundamentally pagan or traditional and the later as essentially ecclesiastical This attempt to apply a classificatory straitjacket has inevitably led to a sterile debate as to whether the early *Immram Brain*, being allegedly less Christian (at least when rid of certain inconvenient 'interpolations') than other extant voyage tales, should not rather be considered an *echtrae* (1990 79)

McCone (2000 78) adds

> The claim that the *immram* genre is later than the *echtrae* cannot, of course, be sustained in textual terms since there is little if anything between the earliest extant examples of each, namely *Immram Brain* and *Echtrae Chonnlai*, as far as date is concerned

McCone (2000 27- 43, §11 7 - §111 8) discusses the textual transmission of EC and IB, emphasising the close parallelism between their stemmas While Mac Mathuna's "considered view" (1985 418) is that, "in the form in which we possess them, the poems and prose of IB are not earlier than the ninth century", McCone (2000 47) argues cogently that "the language of *Immram Brain* like that of *Echtrae Chonnlai* is firmly Old Irish and there is no obvious obstacle to dating their respective archetypes (A and I) to the eight century A D That being so, these too could have belonged to a single manuscript " The manuscript referred to here is believed to be the now lost *Cin Dromma Snechtai*, which probably dates from as early as the eight century due to the language of a number of tales ascribed to it by Thurneysen (1912 23-30 translated by McCone 2000 68) McCone (2000 109-119) presents his own detailed analysis of the basic similarities and significant differences between both texts, concluding that "*Echtrae Chonnlai* and *Immram Brain* complement each other perfectly as the basically positive and negative panels respectively of a veritable narrative diptych So pervasive are the

correspondences and contrasts at every level of composition that coincidence is utterly out of the question " As noted above, all manuscripts contain the words *ata i ssenchassaib linni chenae Imram Brain*, thus providing, an internal reference to an *immram* title McCone (2000 111) points out "a further probably deliberate verbal resonance" between IB and EC in the mention of the word *immram* near the end of EC also, (§15) "*Imram moro do génset nad aicsea ó sin Finit*" "(It is) a voyage of the sea that they did and they were not seen thereafter The End" (McCone, 2000 197-8)

Given that the title IB is not included with the *immrama* in list A but is included as *Echtrae Brain* in tale-list B, the latter may well have fitted its title to a particular category, especially since there is no in-built reference to the word *echtrae*' in the text, with the exception of the ambiguous reference in YBL Nonetheless IB will be considered here in the 'secondary' group in Chapter IV on account of certain *echtrae*-like features

II 3 1 Conclusion

In the light of the above it seems reasonable to conclude that the titles EN, EC, ECA and EA had been established in the early medieval period, while EEM can be ascribed to the 11th century at least Notwithstanding the fact that the language of the prose part of the extant version has been dated to the Old Irish period, it appears that there is no available evidence for the title EL in the early medieval period BS (circa 9th century) and FL (from a late Middle Irish tract, Arbuthnot, 2001 285) both include internal references to the word *echtrae* and so seem to have been regarded as such by their authors While there is no such in-built reference in the three tales involving Cu Chulainn, they are nonetheless worthy of inclusion because they might represent either partially or wholly the tale entitled ECuC in both tale-lists In all of its extant manuscript versions the tale IB includes an internal reference to an *immram* title but it is included as *Echtrae Brain* in tale-list B and referred to as an *immram* or *echtrae* in

YBL Although, the internal reference shows that the title *Immram Brain* was original, its affinities with *echtrai* seem to have been recognised from quite early on and this justifies its inclusion here

Chapter III will treat EN, EC, EA, ECA and EEM essentially because there is good reason to believe that they bore these titles in the Old and/or Middle Irish period, while BS and FL are included because of internal textual evidence that their authors regarded them as *echtrai* For convenience, this group will be referred to as *echtrai* 'proper' and the aim here is to identify their common features and variants thereof with a view to establishing a basic taxonomy of a reasonably typical *echtrae* The second group of tales EL, IB, TE, SCC and SbCC are not included in Chapter III in the absence of solid evidence for an early *echtrae* title and instead will be examined in Chapter IV with reference to their similarities to and differences from the extant *echtrai* 'proper' in Chapter III on the basis of the same criteria as those employed there Finally, all of the characters named in the *echtrae* titles discussed in the first part of this chapter will be subjected to further discussion in Chapter V especially

Chapter III. A basic taxonomy of the *echtrai* 'proper' (Group 1)

III Introduction

All of the extant tales entitled *echtrae* display a similar basic theme and structure entailing the hero's journey, 'expedition' or 'adventure' away from home, often to some supernatural realm or 'otherworld', in the context of tests or difficulties to be overcome before (usually) returning home However, the use of this common thematic core as the main criterion of classification for a literary genre presents difficulties, given the existence of various other tale titles and/or types involving the hero's expedition to and sojourn in the otherworld, as discussed in chapter I 3 1 [38]

This chapter aims to outline the main themes and variations upon them in a reasonably typical *echtrae* by means of a comparative analysis of the seven extant tales for which evidence of recognition as *echtrai* in the pre-Norman period has been found (see II 2 1-2 8) namely *Echtrae Nerai* (Meyer, 1889), *Echtrae Chonnlai* (McCone, 2000), *Echtrae Airt* (Best, 1905), *Echtrae Cormaic i Tir Tairngiri* (Stokes, 1891), *Echtrae Mac nEchach Muigmedoin* (Stokes, 1903), *Baile in Scail* (Murray, 2004) and *The Five Lugaids* (Arbuthnot, 2007 20-3) A preliminary taxonomy will be proposed on the basis of a number of significant common features, notably (1) (a) the spatial and (b) the temporal context of the invitation, (2) the identity of the person(s) invited, (3) the identity of the figure(s) issuing the invitation, (4) the purpose of the invitation, (5) the location of the otherworld and the nature of the journey to it, (6) description(s) of the otherworld, (7) the nature of the hero's intervention there, (8) the hero's relationship with otherworld figures, notably (a) a woman/women, (b) key male figures

[38] These include, the *immram* (voyage), and the *fis* (vision), as well as the *aislinge* (dream), the *baile* (frenzy, vision, madness) and various other tales including *Serglige Con Culainn*

such as a king or kings, (9) objects acquired from the otherworld, (10) the aftermath of the visit

III 1 (a) The spatial and (b) the temporal context of the invitation

This is typically identified at the outset

III 1 1 EN

The initial spatial and temporal context of the action is revealed as (a) Ráth Cruachan at (b) Samain in the opening line

> One Halloween Ailill and Medb were in Rath Cruachan with their whole household (*Bui Ailill ocus Meudb aidqi samnoi hir-Raith Cruachan cona techluch huili* ,§1, ll 1-2, Meyer, 1889 214-5)

III 1 2 EC

The invitation (a) takes place at the summit of Uisnech, mentioned in the opening line, but (b) there is no mention of time or season However, if McCone (2000 54) is right about this reference being to the *Mor-dal Uisnig* 'Great assembly of Uisnech', which was intimately connected with the kingship of Tara, then Beltaine is implied as the temporal setting since this was the time when that gathering was supposed to have been be held (Binchy, 1958 113-5, see also V 5)

> Connlae the Ruddy, son of (lit to) Conn of the Hundred Battles (*Connlae Ruad mac do Chunn Chétchathach*), when he was at his father's side (lit on his father's hand) on (lit in) *i n-uachtur Uisnig* the summit of Uisnech', he saw the woman *i n-etuch anetargnad* 'in unfamiliar clothing', (§1, McCone, 2000 130)

III 1 3 EA

Art was at (a) Tara when Becuma sought him out, but (b) the temporal context of this meeting is not specified

> Thereupon she set out for Tara, and she brought *an flesc d'Art* 'the wand to Art', and laid it upon his knees The *fidchell* was brought to them, and they play (§17, Best, 1905 163)

III 1 4 ECA

The spatial location for the beginning of Cormac's adventure is (a) Tara at (b) Beltaine at dawn on

> One day, at dawn in Maytime, Cormac, grandson of Conn, was alone on *Múr Tea* in Tara (§25, Stokes, 1891 211)

III 1 5 EEM

The action begins when Niall comes to (a) Tara after having been banished from there as an infant but (b) the time of day or year is not specified

> Torna took the boy with him, and fostered him, and after that neither Torna nor his fosterling came to Tara until the boy was fit to be king (*ni thanic Torna nó a dalta co Temraig iarsin cor'bo inrigh in mac*) Thereafter Torna and Niall came to Tara (§4, Stokes, 1903 192-3)

III 1 6 BS

Conn was at (a) Tara at (b) dawn when the events which led to his expedition began to unfold, according to the opening paragraph

> One day after the fall of the kings when Conn was in Tara (*Temrach*) he ascended the royal rampart of Tara (*rigraith na Temrach ria*) early in the morning before sunrise and his three druids in front of him, i e Máel, Bloc and Bluicne, the poets Eochaid, Corb and Cessamn and Conn himself Because he used to set forth every day with that number so that the men of the *síd* or the *fomoiri* would not attack Ireland without being detected (§1, ll 1-5, Murray, 2004 33 and 50)

III 1 7 FL

The spatial location is not defined in the first instance but an *óenach* is indicated early on (Arbuthnot, 2007 96, see III 2 7) and the place to which they returned after their expedition is named as (a) Oenach Tailten 'the Assembly of Tailtiu' "an ancient institution intimately connected with the Tara monarchy" (Binchy, 1958 115), but whereas (b) no time of day or year is specified, it is implied since the Oenach Tailten was held annually around the festival of Lugnasad (Binchy, 1958 115, see also V 5)

> This is how Daire's sons ended up the next day on a level plain with no house and their dogs asleep, having remained with their spears Thereafter they returned to

> Oenach Tailten (*Lodur iarum co hAennach Tailten*) and they related their stories and their adventure to the men of Ireland (*7 innisit a sgéla 7 a n-echtra d'feraibh Erenn*) (§72, Arbuthnot, 2007 23 and 99)

Table III 1

(a) The spatial context of the invitation is marked + where it is identified as a renowned royal site, (b) the temporal context of the invitation (including EC and FL where temporal location has been inferred from customary date of *Mór-dál Uisnig* and *Oenach Tailten*) is indicated as follows S(amain), B(eltaine), L(ugnasad), D(awn), or '?' (unspecified)

	EN	EC	EA	ECA	EEM	BS	FL
Royal Site	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Time	S	B	?	B/D	D	D	L

All of the tales considered thus show a preference for a significant royal site as the location of the invitation The time, when indicated, tends to be a key point of transition in the day and/or year

III 2. The identity of the person invited

The invitee is typically male and his suitability is frequently further underlined by a range of special characteristics such as his splendid royal pedigree, his outstanding physical beauty and/or his heroic prowess

III 2 1 EN

Although no invitation is issued explicitly, it is made clear early on that Nerae is to be the protagonist, although there is no further description or information on his ancestry

> Great was the darkness of that night and its horror (*grandatai*), and demons (*demnoie*) would appear on that night always Each man of them went out in turn to try that

night, and quickly would he come back into the house "I will have the prize from thee", said Nera, "and I shall go out" Truly thou shalt have this my gold-hilted sword (*claidium orduirn-se*) here", said Ailill (§2, ll 7-12, Meyer, 1889 214-5)

III 2 2 EC

The person invited and his paternity are made known in the opening section (see III 1 2) as Connlae the Ruddy, son of the legendary king of Tara Conn Cétchathach (McCone, 2000 130) Later on his physical attributes and royal status are further emphasised by his otherworldly visitor

> "Come with me, O speckled-necked, candle-red Connlae the Ruddy" (*a Chonnlai Rúaid muinbric caindilderic*) "The yellow head of hair which is upon you above a purplish face, it will be a distinction of your kingly appearance (/form)" (*Barr buide for-dut tá óas gnúis chorcordai, bid ordan do rigdelbae*) (§5, McCone, 2000 141-3)

III 2 3 EA

The invitee is identified as Art, another son of the aforementioned Conn Cetchathach, whose ancestry is given in the opening section

> Conn Cetchathach, son of Feidlimid Rechtmar, son of Tuathal Techtmar, son of Feadach Findfechtnach, son of Crimthand Nia Nair, son of Lugaid Riabh nDerg, son of the three white triplets, even Bres and Nar and Lothar, the names of the son of Ethach Find, was once at Tara of the kings in the noble conspicuous dwelling of Ireland, for a period of nine years, and there was nothing lacking to the men of Ireland during the time of the said king (*ni roibhe ni a n-esbaidh fer nEirenn uile re linn an rígh sin*), for indeed they used to reap the corn three times in the year And his helpmate was Taebhfada, daughter of Brislind Binn, the king of Norway (*righ Lochlainne*) (§1, Best, 1905 150-1)
>
> The maiden answered, and said that she was come from the Land of Promise (*Tir Tairngire*), in quest of Art, whom she had loved from afar (*gradh hecmaisi*), because of tales about him (§6, Best, 1905 152-3)

Later on Art's physical appearance and heroic attributes are recounted Still later in the text, there is a detailed description of him in his full battle regalia

> And the maiden said "A single warrior (*enoglach*) has come to the stead to-day, and there is not in the world a warrior fairer in form, or of better repute" (§25, Best, 1905 168-9)
>
> And the young man arose, and put on his battle-harness, even his pleasant, satin mantle, and the white light-speckled apron of burnished gold about his middle (*7 do gab a errad comraic uime i mar suirc srollaighi uime 7 an mbanf[h]uatroic*

mbrecs[h]olus do or orloisc[th]e re imtus a medoin) And he put his fine dark helmet of red gold on his head And he took his fair, purple, embossed shield (*sciath mbocoidec[h] mbancorcra*) on the arched expanse of his back And he took his wide-grooved sword with blue hilt (*c[h]loidemh clais-lethan co indill gorm*), and his two thick-shafted, red-yellow spears (*dha s[h]leigh crandr[e]amhra crochbhuighi*), and they attacked each other, Art and Morgan, like two enormous stags (*dha damh dilind*), or two lions (*dha leoman*), or two waves of destruction (*dha bhuinde brata*) (§28, Best, 1905 170-1)

III 2 4 ECA

The person invited is identified at the outset as the grandson of the above mentioned Conn Cétchathach and then a very detailed description of him is given

> Once upon a time, a noble illustrious king assumed sovranty [sic] and sway over Ireland Cormac grandson of Conn (*Cormac ua Cuind*) was he (§1 Stokes, 1891 185, 203)
> At that time the men of Ireland used to proceed to assemblies and great meetings (*mordhala*)in this wise every king with his royal robe around him and his golden helmet on his head, for they used to wear their kingly diadems only on the field of battle Splendidly did Cormac enter that meeting, for excepting Conaire son of Etarscel, or Conchobar son of Cathbad, or Oengus son of Dagda, his like in beauty had never come Distinguished, indeed, was Cormac's appearance in that meeting (*Ba derscaigthech tra ecosc Cormaic isin dail sin*) Hair-braids slightly curled, all-golden upon him He bore a red shield with engraving and with *mila* of gold and bow-ridges of silver Around him was a mantle purple (*brat corcra casleactha*) folded A jewelled brooch of gold on his breast (*Liadelg oir for a bhruindi*) A necklace of gold round his throat (*Muntorc oir ima braighid*) Around him was a white-hooded shirt with a red insertion (*leni gelculpadach co ndergindliud*) A girdle of gold with gems of precious stone over him (*Cris oir co ngemaib do lig logmair thairis*) He wore two golden shoes (*moglaighi ordha*) of network with buckles of gold (*sibhlaibh oir*) In his hand (he carried) two golden-ringed spears with many clasps (?) of bronze (*Da sleigh orcrui ina laim co ndualaib imdaib don chredumæ*) He was, moreover, shapely, fair, without blemish, without disgrace (*cen ainimh, cen athais*) Thou wouldst deem that his mouth was a cluster of rowan-berries Whiter than snow was his nobly-built body (*Ba gilithir snechta a chorp scerdenmach*) His cheek was like a forest-*forcle* or a mountain-foxglove Like blue-bells (*bug[h]a*) were his eyes like the sheen of a dark-blue blade his eyebrows (*mailghi*) and his eyelashes (*abraid*) (§3 Stokes, 1891 185-6 and 203-4)

That Cormac is the only intended invitee to the otherworld is further emphasised when he is isolated after a mist descends upon him and his followers

> A great mist (*ceo mor*) was brought upon them in the midst of the plain of the wall Cormac found himself on a great plain (*magh mor*) alone (§32, Stokes, 1891 195 and 213)

III 2 5 EEM

The protagonist Niall is identified in the opening lines of the text as the illegitimate son of King Eochaid Muigmedon

> There was a wondrous and noble king over Erin, namely, Eochaid Muigmedón Five sons had he, to wit, Brian [sic], Ailill, Fiachra, Fergus, Niall The mother of Brian, Fiachra, Fergus and Ailill, was Mongfind, daughter of Fiadach The mother of Níall was Cairenn Casdub, daughter of Scal the Dumb, king of England (*ri Saxan*) Niall was hated by queen Mongfind, for Eochaid had begotten him on Cairenn instead of her (*Ba miscais lasin righain inti Niall, ar is dara ceand dorinde in ri fri Cairind he*) Great then was the hardship (*dochraidi*) which Cairenn suffered from the queen so great was the hardship that she was compelled to draw the water of Tara, apart, and every handmaid in turn in sight of her, and (even) when she was in child with Niall, she was forced to do all that in order that the babe might die in her womb (*co n-eplead in lenap ina broind*) (§1, Stokes, 1903 190-1)

III 2 6 BS

From the outset it is evident that Conn Cétchathach is the central character and the person invited to the otherworld (see III 1 6) His regal status is implied by the reaction of Fal in the first instance (§4) and then made explicit when the poet warns the rider he is casting at a king (§5) Although no physical description of him is given, his heroic status is detailed in full in the prophecy of his victory in 'one hundred warlike battles' (Murray, 2004 35, see III 10 6)

> On his arrival on the rampart from which he usually used to watch, he found a stone there under his feet He leapt on the stone then and stamped on it and the stone cried out under his feet (*geisis an chloch foa chosaib*) so that it was heard throughout all Tara and the plain of Brega (§2, ll 6-8, Murray, 2004 33 and 50)
> And then Conn asked his poet, what the stone had cried out, and what its name was, and from where it had come, and to where it would go and why it had come to Tara Then the poet said to him he would not tell him for fifty-three days Then, when that reckoning was complete Conn asked the poet again, and he had been meditating until his 'keys of poesy' (*eochra éccsi*) revealed it to him (§3, ll 9-13, Murray, 2004 33)
> " Then Fal cried out under your feet", said the poet, "and prophesied, the amount of roars it gave is the number of kings of your seed that will be over Ireland forever" (*lin rig bias ditt'sil-su for hÉrinn co brad*) Relate them to me then" said Conn "I am not the one destined to tell you", said the druid (§4, ll 14-20, Murray, 2004 33 and 50)
> While they were there then, they noticed a great fog (*ciaig moir*) around them and they did not know where they were going because of the intensity of the darkness that descended on them Then the rider threw three casts at them and the last cast came at them more quickly than the first "it is to wound a king", (*is do guin rig*) said the poet, "for whoever casts at Conn in Tara" (§5, ll 25-7, Murray, 2004 33-44 and 51-2)

III 2 7 FL

It had been prophesied to Daire Doimthech that his son Lugaid would succeed him in the kingship of Ireland Consequently he named each of his five sons Lugaid but then asked his druid to decide which one was the true heir It is, then, clear from the outset that all of the sons are intended to take up the quest proposed by the druid in order to establish the heir apparent

> The druid said "A fawn with a golden sheen on it will come into the assembly (*tiucfa loegh co néimh órdai fair isin œnach*) and the son who captures the fawn will take the kingship after you" Afterwards a fawn came into the assembly (*Doroich in lóegh iar sin isin ae[n]ach*) And the men of Ireland pursued it along with Daire's sons until they reached Benn Etair (§72, Arbuthnot, 2007 20-1 and 96)

When the five were isolated from the rest of the company after reaching Benn Etair in pursuit of the fawn, its capture became the basis of some crucial differentiation between them

> A magic mist, (*ceó druidhechta*) was driven between them (Daire's sons) and the men of Ireland Daire's sons followed the fawn from there to Dal Moscorb in Laigin and Lugaid Laigde caught the fawn And Lugaid Cosc killed [it] That is why [the name] Lugaid Cosc [<*coscraid* 'kills'] stuck to him Lugaid Laeghf[h]es cooked it, i e made them a feast from it That is why [the name] Lugaid Láeghf[h]es [< *laeg* 'fawn' + *fes* 'feast'] was granted to him Lugaid Orcde went for water, taking a pitcher with him That is why Lugaid Orcde [<?orca (Lat) 'a large-bellied vessel'] is said Lugaid Corb consumed all the leftovers he threw away That is why [the name] Corb [< *corbaid* corrupts'] stuck to him, i e corrupted [*or* degraded?] as a result Lugaid Cal slept That is why he took the name [<*cál* sleep'] (§72, Arbuthnot, 2007 21 and 97)

Table III 2

The top line is concerned with whether the human protagonist is identified as a king's son (+) or no indication of his status is given (?), while the line below summarises his portrayal under the following headings 'D' signifies a long and 'd' a short physical description, complete absence of either being indicated by '–'

	EN	EC	EA	ECA	EEM	BS	FL
King's Son	?	+	+	+	+	+	+
Portrayal	–	D	D	D	–	D	d

The royal ancestry of the male selected is specified in all of the tales, apart from EN Similarly his extraordinary physical beauty and other distinguishing attributes such as nobility and heroism are emphasised to a greater or lesser extent in all them except EN again and also EEM

III 3 Identity of the person(s) issuing the invitation.

The hero's expedition to the otherworld typically transpires in response to an invitation that is usually presaged by the sudden appearance in the human domain of an otherworldly stranger dressed in characteristically colourful clothing This outsider/stranger can be female or male and is prone to employ various strategies in order to ensure that the intended person receives and responds to the invitation However, a human may also serve as instigator of the otherworldly expedition

III.3.1. EN

There is no specific description of a person issuing an invitation to Nerae prior to his first visit to the otherworld Instead it appears that he followed the warriors whom he believed to have been on a rampage, from the fort back into the cave of Cruachu

> Thereupon he carried him back to his torture (*doridisiu*), and Nera returned to Cruachan Then he saw something The dun was burnt before him, and he beheld a heap of heads of their people (cut off) by the warriors from the dun (*Ro loisc-cid in dun ar a chuinn 7 connfaco cendail am-muinntiri lasna hoccu on dun*) He went after the host then into the cave of Cruachan "A man on track here!" said the last man to Nera "The heavier is the track" said his comrade to him, and each man said that word to his mate from the last man to the first man Thereupon they reached the *sid* of

Cruachan and went into it The heads were displayed to the king (§6, ll 44-54, Meyer, 1889 216-19)

III.3.2. EC

A 'woman in unfamiliar clothing' appears (see III 1 2) and subsequently describes herself in more detail in response to Conn's questions

> "He is talking to a young, beautiful woman of good family who does not expect death or old age" (*'Ad gladadar mnaí n-oic n-álaind socheneoil nad fresci bas na sentaid*") (§5, McCone, 2000 137-8)

III 3.3 EA

After she had been expelled for her adulterous ways from her own community in *Tir Tairngiri* Land of Promise', Becuma came to Tara and it was she who initiated Art's otherworld journey

> It was on that very day the Tuatha De Danann happened to be gathered in council in the Land of Promise, because of a woman who had committed transgression, and whose name was Becuma Cneisgel (*Bé-Cuma Cneis-gel* "Woman-shape Skin-fair", McCone, 1990 133) daughter of Eogan Inbir, that is the wife of Labraid Luathlam-ar-Claideb, and Gaidiar Manann's son it was that had committed the transgression And this was the sentence passed on her as regards herself to be driven forth from the Land of Promise, or to be burned according to the counsel of Manannan, and Fergus Findlith, and Eogan Inbir, and Lodan son of Lir, and Gaidiar, and Gaei Gormsuilech, and Ilbrec son of Manannan And their counsel was to banish her from the Land of Promise And Manannan said not to burn her lest her guilt should cleave to the land or to themselves (*ocus adbert Manannan gan losgudh do denamh nach lenadh a cin don tir na dibh fein*) (§3, Best, 1905 151-3)

III 3 4 ECA

A detailed description of the dignified otherworld warrior who was the bearer of the invitation to Cormac is given and later, when Cormac visits the otherworld, he identifies himself as Manannán son of Ler

> He saw coming towards him a warrior sedate (?), greyhaired (*oclach forosta findlith adochum*) A purple, fringed mantle around him A shirt ribbed, goldthreaded next (?) his skin (*Leni esnadach orsnáith hi custal a chnis*) Two blunt shoes of white bronze between his feet and the earth A branch of silver (*crœbh airgid*) with three golden apples (*tri hublaib oir*) on his shoulder Delight and amusement enough it was to listen to the music made by the branch, for men sore-wounded, or women in childbed, or folk in sickness would fall asleep at the melody which was made when that branch

was shaken (*Ba leor peted 7 arpeatad immorro eistecht risin ceol dognid in crœbh a[r] rochoideoldais fir athgaiti no mna siuil no fiallach galair risin ceol do gnid sin in tan docroitheadh in crœbh*, §25, Stokes, 1891 193 and 211-12)
" I am Manannan son of Ler", says he, "king of the Land of Promise (*righ Thiri Tarrngiri*), and to see the Land of Promise was the reason I brought (thee) hither " (§53, Stokes, 1891 198 and 216)

III.3 5 EEM

After the test of the burning smithy set by him had not been accepted, Sithchenn the smith instructed Niall and his brothers to go out hunting in order to determine the true heir to the kingship of Tara While on that expedition, the brothers stumbled upon an otherworldly location

Anger seized the queen (Mongfind), for that seemed evil to her But this was the voice of the men of Erin, that Niall should be king after his father Wherefore Mongfind said to Eochaid "Pass judgement among thy sons", quoth she, "as to which of them shall receive thy heritage" "I will not pass judgement", he answered, "but Sithchenn the wizard (*drai*) will do so" Then they sent to Sithchenn, the smith who dwelt in Tara, for he was a wise man (*fisid*) and a wondrous prophet (*fhaidh amra*) (§5, Stokes, 1903 193-5)
Then the smith set fire to the forge in which the four sons were Niall came out carrying the anvil and its block Brian came (next) bringing the sledgehammers Fiachra, bringing a pail of beer and the bellows Then came Ailill with the chest in which the weapons were Last came Fergus with the bundle of wood and a bar of yew therein (§6, Stokes, 1903 195, see also VI 1 1)
Then Mongfind said that she would not abide by that judgement So she sent her sons to the same Sithchenn to ask for arms Then they repaired to the smith, and he made arms for them the weapon that was finest he put into Niall's hand, and the rest of the arms he gave the other sons "Now go to hunt and try your arms"(*fromaid for n-armu*), says the smith So then the sons went and hunted, and thereafter it came to pass that they went far astray, every side being closed against them (§9, Stokes, 1903 196-7)

III 3 6 BS

An unidentified horse rider in the mist is the issuer of the invitation to Conn

They heard the sound of a horseman (*marcaig*) coming towards them "Great is our woe", said Conn, "if this fog should bring us into unknown lands" (§5, ll 22-9, Murray, 2004 33, 50-, see also III 3 5)

III 3 7 FL

Daire's unnamed druid sets a quest for the five brothers, which turns into an otherworld expedition when they get snowbound while hunting (see also III 2 7)

They went hunting then in the wilderness (*dithreibh*) Heavy snow (*snechta mor*) fell on them so that it was difficult for them to keep hold of their weapons One of them went to look for shelter And he found a wonderful house with a big fire in it and drink and plenty of food (*linn 7 imat mbidb*) and silver platters (*tolc finnruine*) and a bed of *finnruine* (§72, Arbuthnot, 2007 21 and 97)

Table III 3

The following table identifies the bearer of the invitation as o(therworldly) or m(ortal), on the top line and as f(emale) or m(ale) on the bottom, '–' being used where no such figure appears

	EN	EC	EA	ECA	EEM	BS	FL
Otherworld/ Mortal	–	o	o	o	m	o	m
Female/ Male	–	f	f	m	m	m	m

An otherworldly male issues the invitation in two of the *echtrai*, ECA and BS, while in EEM and FL a male mortal is the instigator of the quest In another two *echtrai*, EC and EA, an otherworldly female performs this function, while EN does not mention any figure of this type

III 4 The purpose of the invitation

Characteristically the hero's action and intervention in otherworldly affairs is driven by diverse motives and aims relating to the purpose of the invitation

III 4 1. EN

Nerae's otherworldly visits were motivated by a desire to prevent his own people's destruction, witnessed in a vision of the sacking of Rath Cruachan The otherworld woman who interpreted his vision subsequently facilitated the success of his mission

"Come hither a little" said Nera to his wife, "that thou mayst tell me of my adventures now" "Not hard to tell" said Nera "When I was going into the sid, methought the rath of Cruachan was destroyed and Ailill and Medb with their whole household had fallen in it " "That is not true indeed", said the woman, "but an elfin host (*sluag siabra*) came to thee That will come true", said she, unless he would reveal it to his friends "How shall I give warning to my people?" said Nera "Rise and go to them", said she "They are still round the same caldron and the charge has not yet been removed from the fire" Yet it seemed to him three days and three nights since he had been in the sid "Tell them to be on their guard at Halloween coming, unless they come to destroy the side For I will promise them this the sid be destroyed by Ailill and Medb, and the crown of Briuin to be carried off by them" (§8, ll 75-89, Meyer, 1889 219-21)

III 4 2 EC.

The assurance of eternal life in the otherworld was central to the invitation in EC The woman promised

"If you come with me the youth (and) beauty of your appearance (/form) will not perish (*ni crinfa do delbae oitiu ailedi*) until dream-laden judgement" (§5, McCone, 2000 143-4)

III 4 3. EA

Art was bound by Becuma's judgement to visit the otherworld and bring back the maiden Delbchaem, daughter of Morgan and his wife Coinchend 'Dog's-head', who fiercely guarded her

"This is a game on thee," said the girl "It is indeed," said the young man, "and give thy judgement (*breath*)" "I will," said she, "even this, that thou shalt not eat food in Ireland until thou bring with thee Delbchaem, the daughter of Morgan" "Where is she?" said Art ' In an isle amid the sea (*a n-oilen ar lar [in] mhara*), and that is all the information that thou wilt get" (§17, Best, 1905 162-5)

III 4.4 ECA

The otherworld warrior wanted Cormac to see the Land of Promise, *Tir Tairngire* (see III 3 4) However, Cormac's expedition was instigated by his desire to recover his wife, son and daughter, from whom he could no longer bear to be parted notwithstanding the alliance which he had forged with the otherworld warrior in exchange for ownership of the magical branch

> "The branch to me!" says Cormac "I will give it", says the warrior, "provided the three boons (*tri haiscedha*) which I ask in Tara be granted to me in return" "They shall be granted", said Cormac Then the warrior bound (Cormac to his promise), and he left the branch, and goes away, and Cormac knew not whither he had gone (§27, Stokes, 1891 194 and 212)
> That thing Cormac endured not He went after them and everyone then followed Cormac (§32, Stokes, 1891 213)

III 4 5 EEM

The purpose of the quest in EEM was to determine the rightful heir to the kingship of Tara in the face of the jealousy of Mongfind, wife of King Eochaid of Tara, who refused to accept the claims of Niall, the son of Eochaid and Cairenn, over those of her own her sons Brion, Ailill, Fiachre and Fergus Sithchenn the smith was asked to make arms for each of the sons and presented the finest of these to Niall Subsequently, he instructed them to go on a hunting expedition in order to try them out, thus setting a train of events in progress that would lead to Niall's victory over his brothers (see III 3 5, §9)

III 4 6 BS.

The purpose of Conn's invitation was to confirm the duration of his own kingship and also to legitimise the future reigns of his descendants

> He addressed them then and he said "I am not a phantom and I am not a sprite and it is from my renown I have come to you after death and I am of the seed of Adam and my name is Lug son of Ethniu son of Smreth son of Tigernmar son of Faelu son of Etheor son of Irial son of Erimón son of Míl of Spain And it is for this I have come, to relate to you the duration of your lordship and that of every lord who will descend from you in Tara forever" (§7, ll 38-42, Murray, 2004 34)

III 4 7 FL

The quest to determine which of the five Lugaids would assume Daire Doimthech's kingship was the reason for this expedition (see III 1 7 and III 2 7) Although Lugaid Laigde is subsequently singled out as the heir-apparent and assured that he will take up the kingship of Ireland, this does not appear to be quite the final outcome (see III 8 7 and III 10 7)

Table III 4

The various purposes of the invitation may be summarised (A) the quest for (a) an 'otherworld' woman/wife or (b) the hero's own wife (and children), (B) the attainment of eternal life, (D) the quest (a) to legitimise current and/or future kingship or (b) to save one's own people

	EN	EC	EA	ECA	EEM	BS	FL
Purpose	D(b)	B	A(a)	A(b)	D(a)	D(a)	D(a)

This range of purposes in the individual texts will be discussed in Chapter VI with particular reference to the subject of kingship

III.5 The location of the otherworld and the nature of the journey to it

The otherworld has various locations, being often accessible overland and sometimes shrouded in mist or fog (*ceo*), but water is frequently involved in the journey there The mode of transport to the otherworld is almost inevitably determined by the presence or absence of intervening water Where it is located overseas or in a lake, reference is invariably made to travel in a boat Otherwise the journey would appear to be on foot (EN, ECA, EEM, BS, FL) see III 5 1) or in a chariot (explicitly in SCC, see IV 5 4)

III 5 1 EN

The otherworld in the *sid* of Cruachu was reached by going over land into the Cave of Cruachu, where the entrance to it was to be found

> He went after the host then into the Cave of Cruachan (*uaim Cruachaon*) "A man on track here" said the last man to Nera "The heavier is the track" said his comrade to him, and each man said that word to his mate from the last man to the first man Thereupon they reached the síd of Cruachan and went into it (§6, ll 48-52, Meyer, 1889 216-7)

III 5.2. EC.

Here the otherworld was located across the sea and the journey there was made by boat

> "In my ship of crystal (*loing glano*) may we encounter it, if we should reach the peace of Boadag" (*sid mBoadaig*) (McCone, 2000 187-8) "There is another land that may not be the nearest to seek" (McCone, 2000 189-90) "I see (that) the sun is setting Though it be far, we shall reach (it) before night" (*ricfam re n-adaig*) (§14, McCone, 2000 190-1)

III 5 3 EA.

The otherworld was located *a n-oilean ar lar [in] mhara* "in an isle amid the sea," according to Becuma (Best, 1905 164-5) Art journeyed to the island by boat and there met Creide Firalaind, who in turn directed him to another island where he would find Delbcháem after a more hazardous sea journey

> Art set out for Inber Colptha, and he found a coracle (*curach*) with choice equipment on the shore before him And he put forth the coracle, and travelled the sea from one isle to another until he came to a fair, strange island (§18, Best, 1905 164-5)
> He remained a fortnight and a month in that island (*Caisis ar mis do 'san oilen*), after which he took leave of the girl and related his errand "and it will be no little time until the maiden will be found, for the way is bad thither, and there is sea and land between thee and her, and, even if thou dost reach it, thou wilt not go past it There is a great ocean and dark (*fairgi mhor dorcha adrut*) between thee and deadly and hostile is the way there (*neimneach naimdighi an t-slighe*), for the wood is traversed as though there were spear-points of battle under one's feet, like leaves of the forest under the feet of men (§20, Best, 1905 165)

III 5 4 ECA

Cormac set out over land from Tara in search of his wife, son and daughter After he and his followers had become enveloped in a mist he found himself alone on an otherworldly plain (see III 2 4, Stokes, 1891 213)

III 5 5. EEM

Sithchenn sent Niall and his brothers out hunting over land from Tara (see III 2 5) Subsequently they became lost and had an otherworldly encounter in the shape of an old woman guarding a well

> When they ceased from straying they kindled a fire, broiled some of their quarry, and ate it until they were satisfied Then they were athirst [sic] and in great drouth (*tart mor*) from the cooked food "Let one of us go and seek water", they say "I will go" says Fergus The lad went seeking water, till he chanced on a well and saw an old woman guarding it (*seantuindi og comet in topuir*, §10, Stokes, 1903 197)

III 5 6 BS

The journey to the otherworld takes place over land Fifty-three days after the initial meeting of Conn with his three poets and his three druids at Tara, the same group were assembled when they became surrounded by a great fog It was there that they located the otherworld (see III 3 6)

III 5 7 FL

The otherworld is located in a 'magic mist' in the wilderness and the journey there is over land (see III 2 7 and III 3 7)

Table III 5

Line 1 of the following table is concerned with whether the otherworld location is (+) or is not (–) separated by water and then with whether its location is (A) in the sea, (B) has a subterranean entrance, or (C) is separated by a mist/fog In the case of (–) the journey to it is regularly accomplished over land, while in the case of (+) a boat is typically needed

	EN	EC	EA	ECA	EEM	BS	FL
Location	– B	+ A	+ A	– C	– C	– C	– C

III 6 Name and description(s) of the otherworld

Many of the names for the otherworld include the words *tir* 'land' and *mag* 'plain' and certain features, such as inexhaustible food and drink, recur continually in the descriptions of it

III 6 1 EN

After returning from his first visit to the otherworld, Nerae found that he had not been missed because no time seemed to have passed in the human world in his absence Upon his return to Rath Crúachan after his second visit there, Nerae briefly described the otherworldly Síd Cruachan (§6) to Ailill and Medb

> Nera went to his people "Whence comest thou?" said Ailill and Medb to Nera, "and where hast thou been since thou didst go from us?" "I was in fair lands" (*tirib caimib*) said Nera, "with great treasures and precious things, with plenty of garments and food, and of wonderful treasures" (*co setaib ocus muinib moraib, co nn-imboth bruitt ocus biad ocus set n-ingnad*, §15, ll 145-9, Meyer, 1889 224-5)

III 6 2 EC.

Here the otherworld is called *Mag Mell* 'Plain of Delights' (McCone, 2000 140) The woman describes it as a peaceful sinless place where life goes on eternally and with an infinite supply of food

> "I have come from (the) lands of (the) living, in which there is neither death nor sin nor transgression (/original sin)" *do dechad-sa a tirib beo i-nna bi bas na peccad na imarmus Do melom fleda buana cen frithgnam* "We consume (ever)lasting feasts without service (exertion)" "(There is) harmony with us without strife" *Cainchomrac lenn cen debaid* "(It is) great peace in which we are so that it is from these we are called people of peace", *Síd mar i taam, conid de suidib no-n ainmnigther aes síde* (§3, McCone, 2000 131-6)"
>
> *Maig Meld imid rí Bóadag bithsuthain* "the Plain of Delights in which Boadag the everlasting is king" (§5, McCone, 2000 139-40)

III 6 3 EA

The first otherworld island that Art reached was a picturesque and hospitable place with unending supplies of food and drink Later he visited another otherworld island called *Tir na nIngnad* 'Land of Wonders' where he found Delbchaem (Best, 1905 169) This too is described as a pleasant place with hospitable houses and a stately palace

> fair was the character of that island, full of wild apples (*fiaghublaibh*) and lovely birds (*énaibh*), with little bees (*bec[h]aibh*)ever beautiful on the tops of the flowers (*scoth*) A house, hospitable and noble, in the midst of the Island, thatched with birds' wings, white and purple, and within it a company of blooming women, ever beautiful, among them Creide Fialaind, daughter of Fidech Foltlebor (§18, Best, 1905 164-5)

A hearty welcome was then given to him, and food set before him she put out her hand, and gave him a variegated mantle with adornments of burnished gold from Arabia (*or f[h]orrloisc[th]e tira Arabia*), and he put it on him, and it was sufficient for him "Tis true," said she, "that thou art Conn's son Art, and it is long since thy coming here has been decreed " And she gave him three kisses, dearly and fervently (*co díl 7 co dicra*) And she said, "Look at the crystal bower" (*grianan gloinighi*) And fair was the site of that bower, with its doors of crystal and its inexhaustible vats (*guna dabhachaib gan diabhagh*), for, though everything be emptied out of them, they are ever full again (§19, Best, 1905 164-5)

He remained a fortnight and a month in that island, after which he took leave of the girl, and related his errand (§20, Best, 1905 165)

Thus came Art to the stronghold which he was in quest of, even Morgan's stronghold (*dun Morgain*), and pleasant it was A fair palisade of bronze was round about it, and houses hospitable and extensive, and a stately palace in the midst of the stead An ingenious, bright, shining bower set on one pillar over the stead, on the very top, where the maiden was (§25, Best, 1905 168-9)

III 6 4 ECA

On his first encounter with Cormac, the otherworld warrior described the eternal life and sinlessness experienced in the otherworld named *Tír Tairngiri* 'Land of Promise', but there were also two remarkable fortresses and other wonders (Stokes, 1891 213)

"Whence hast thou come, O warrior?" says Cormac "From a land," he replied, "wherein there is nought save truth, and there is neither age nor decay nor gloom nor sadness nor envy nor jealousy nor hatred nor haughtiness" (*"A tir nach bidh acht fir", ol se, "ocus nach fuil aeis nó ercra nó duba na toirsi nó tnuth nó formad na miscais no mordataidh"*, §27, Stokes, 1891 193 and 212)

There was a large fortress in the midst of the plain with a wall of bronze around it In the fortress was a house of white silver, and it was half-thatched with the wings of white birds (*lethtuighthi do eitib en find*) A fairy host of horse-men (was) haunting the house A gust of wind would still come to it, and still the wind would carry away all of it that had been thatched (§32, Stokes, 1891 195 and 213)

Then he sees another fortress, vast and royal, and another wall of bronze around it There were four houses therein He entered the fortress He sees the vast palace with its beams of bronze, its wattling of silver (*cæl d'airgid*), and its thatch of the wings of the white birds (§34, Stokes, 1891 195 and 213)

Then he sees in the garth a shinning fountain, with five streams flowing out of it, and the hosts in turn a drinking its water Nine hazels of Buan (*nai cuill buana*) grow over the well The purple hazels drop their nuts into the fountain, and the five salmon which are in the fountain sever them and send their husks floating down the streams Now the sound of the falling of those streams is more melodious than any music that (men) sing (§35, Stokes, 1891 195 and 213)

III 6 5 EEM

The place where the old woman guards the well is neither named nor described

III 6 6 BS

Although no name is given, there is a substantial portrayal of the otherworld dwelling and its occupants (see III 7 6)

> They went until they came into a plain where there was a golden tree (*bile n-órda*) and a house under a ridge-pole of white-gold (*ochtaig findruine*)' thirty feet its size Then they went into the house and they saw a young girl in a crystal chair (*cathair glanidi*) with a golden crown (*barr ordai*) on her head wearing a cloak edged in gold (*brat co srethaib di or impe*) There was a vat of silver with four golden corners (*dabach arcait co cethraib cernaib ordaib*) in front of her, full of red ale (*dergf[h]laith*), a ladle of gold (*escra oir*) (resting) on its handle There was a golden cup in front of her And they saw the phantom himself in the house, waiting for them on his throne (*inna rigs[h]udiu*) And his distinction was great, as was indeed fitting, for there was never found in Tara a man of his size or his handsomeness, on account of the beauty of his form and his appearance and because of his wonderousness (§6, ll 30-6, Murray, 2004 51 and 34)

III 6 7 FL

The otherworld is not named, but mention is made of the dwelling and the abundant food and drink available there (see III 3 7)

> Lugaid returned to his brothers and brought them with him to the house *7 fogabait nua bidh 7 sen leanna inn 7 cuirn ina n-áenar ic dáil doibh* 'and they received the best food and drink there and goblets dispensed of their own accord for them" (§72, Arbuthnot, 2007 22 and 98)

Table III 6

The top line of the table gives the various names of the otherworld in these texts, (?) where no name is mentioned The bottom line summarises its features according to the following (a) perpetual peace and happiness, (b) lack of sin or transgression, (c) eternal life, (d) infinite food and drink, (e) wonderful treasures, (f) beautiful woman/women, (g) fair and colourful lands, (h) numerous birds, (i) melodious music

	EN	EC	EA	ECA	EEM	BS	FL
Name	Síd Cruachan	Mag Mell	Tír na nIngnad	Tír Tairngiri	?	?	?
Features	e/g	a/b/c/f	d/f/g	a/b/c/d/ e/g/h/i/	f	d/e/f	d/e

It can be seen that some of these descriptions are more elaborate and comprehensive than others

III 7 The nature and outcome of the hero's intervention there

The nature of the hero's intervention in otherworldly affairs, i e whether violent or non-violent, is typically determined by the purpose of the invitation The subsequent outcome and his subsequent fate appear to depend upon his actions in response to the events that occur while he is in the otherworld

III 7 1 EN

On arrival in the otherworld, Nerae was sent to live with a woman there and was given the menial job of wood carrier by its king However, this humble start subsequently assisted in Nerae's discovery of the otherworld treasures, which ultimately enabled him to help bring about the destruction of the sid of Cruachu and thus save his own people (see III 4 3)

> "What shall be done to the man that came with you?" said one of them "Let him come hither, that I may speak with him", said the king Then Nera came to them and the king said to him "What brought thee with the warriors into the sid?" said the king to him "I came in the company of thy host", said Nera "Go now to yonder house", said the king "There is a single woman there, who will make thee welcome Tell her it is from me thou art sent to her, and come to me every day to this house with a burden of firewood" (*cuail conuid*) (§6, ll 52-5, Meyer, 1889 219)
> Then he did as he was told The woman bade him welcome and said 'Welcome to thee, if it is the king that sent thee hither" Every day Nera used to go with a burden of firewood to the dun He saw everyday a blind man (*dall*) and a lame man (*baccoch*)

on his neck coming out of the dun before him They would go until they were at the brink of a well before the dun (§7, ll 60-5, Meyer, 1889 218-9)
Nera then asked the woman about this "Why do the blind and the lame man visit the well?" "They visit the crown (*barr*), which is in the well", said the woman, "viz a diadem of gold (*mionn n-oir*), which the king wears on his head It is there it is kept" "Why do those two go?" said Nera "Not hard to tell", said she, "because it is they that are trusted by the king to visit the crown One of them was blinded, the other lamed" (§8, ll -68-75, Meyer, 1889 218-9)
Thereupon Nera went to his people, and found them around the same cauldron (*coirt*), and he related his adventures (*ocus atfet scelo*) to them And then his sword was given to him, and he staid with his people to the end of a year 'Thy appointment has come oh Nera " "Arise and bring thy people and thy cattle (*cetra*) from the sid, that we may go to destroy the sid" (§11, ll 99-106, Meyer, 1889 220-21)

III 7 2 EC

The nature of the hero's intervention in the otherworld is not specified, as the tale concludes with Connlae and the woman sailing away never to be seen again However, everything up to that point suggests a peaceful immortal future for him there

III 7 3 EA

Art's intervention was non-violent initially but subsequently he was forced into numerous battles in his quest to bring the otherworld woman Delbchaem back to the human world

Art then set out after he had been instructed by the girl until he came to the crest of that hapless sea full of strange beasts (*piastaibh ingantacha*) And on all sides the beasts and great sea-monsters (*piasta*) rose up around the coracle And Art son of Conn donned his battle attire (*errad Catha*), and engaged them warily and circumspectly And he began to slaughter them and maim them until they fell by him (§21, Best, 1905 166-7)
After that he came to the forest wild where the Coinculind (*coin cuilind*) and the wicked, perverse hags (*na caillleacha colacha clœnbrethacha*) were, and Art and the hags encountered It was not a fair encounter for him, the hags piercing and hacking him (*'ga treghdagh 7 'ga thœbhledragh*) until morning Nevertheless the armed youth prevailed over the hapless folk And Art went on his way using his own judgement until he came to the venomous icy mountain (*sliabh neimhnech n-oigrita*), and the forked glen was there full of toads, (*loisgindibh*) which were lying in wait for whoever came there And he passed thence to Sliabh Saeb beyond, wherein were full many lions with long manes lying in wait for the beasts of the whole world (§22, Best, 1905 166-7)
After that he came to the icy river, with its slender narrow bridge, and a warrior giant (*fodhmhoir milita*) with a pillar-stone, and he grinding his teeth on it, namely, Curnan Cliabhsalach Nevertheless they encountered, and belike indeed Art overcame the giant, so Curnan Cliabhsalach fell by him And he went thence to where Ailill Dubhdedach son of Mongan was And 'tis thus that no man was a fierce champion was he, no weapon would harm him, or fire burn him, or water drown him Then Art

> and he took to wrestling and they made a manly combat, a stern, heroic, equally-sharp fight And Ailill Dubhdedach began abusing Art, and they were haranguing one another (*imagallaim ara cheile*) But Art overcame the giant, so that his head came off the back of his neck After that he wrecked the stronghold, and he seized his wife and he sought to do her injury until she told him the way to Morgan's stronghold, and the land of Wonders (*Tir na nIngnad*) (§23, Best, 1905 167-9)

Art was involved in more violence when he reached the second otherworld island where he encountered and killed the women who tried to poison him

> After that came the Coinchend, and the two daughters of Fidech along with her, Aebh and Finscoth, for to pour out poison and wine (*neime 7 an fine*) for Art (§26, Best, 1905 170-1)

When Art eventually met with Delbcháem, they assumed power together in the Land of Wonders until king Morgan arrived and Art defeated him in battle, taking possession of his otherworldly realm and making hostages of his people Thereupon he collected the land's gold and silver and gave it to Delbchaem, whom he then brought back to the human realm with followers from the otherworld

> That night they lay down merry, and in good spirits, the whole stronghold in their power, from small to great, until Morgan king of the Land of Wonders arrived, Morgan arrived, full of wrath, to avenge his fortress and his good wife on Art son of Conn He challenged Art and they attacked each other, Art and Morgan, like two enormous stags (*dha damh dilind*), or two lions (*dha leoman*), or two waves of destruction (*dha bhuinde bratha*) And Art overcame Morgan, and he did not part from him until his head had come off his neck After which Art took hostages of Morgan's people, and possession of the Land of Wonders And he collected the gold and silver of the land also, and gave it to the maiden, even Delbchaem daughter of Morgan (§28, Best, 1905 171)
>
> the stewards and overseers followed him from the land, and he brought the maiden with him to Ireland (§29, Best, 1905 171)

III 7 4 ECA

Cormac's intervention was peaceful throughout On his first encounter with the otherworld warrior, Cormac sought the musical branch of silver on his shoulder and a deal was done amicably

> says Cormac, "A question, O warrior shall we make an alliance?" 'I am well pleased to make it", says the warrior Then (their) alliance was made "The branch to

> me!" says Cormac "I will give it," says the warrior, "provided the three boons which I shall ask in Tara be granted to me in return" "They shall be granted," says Cormac (§27, Stokes, 1891 212)

A year after the otherworld warrior had taken Cormac's daughter Ailbe, his son Carpre Lifechair, and his wife Ethne in exchange for the branch, Cormac went to the otherworld to bring them back Upon his arrival there he encountered the following couple

> The warrior's figure was distinguished owing to the beauty of his shape and the comliness of his form and the wonderousness of his countenance (*Ba derscai[g] theach dealb in oclaig ar ailli a crotha, ar chaine a dealbha 7 ar ingantus a ecoisce*) The girl along with him, grown-up, yellow-haired, with a golden helmet, was the loveliest of the world's women (§36, Stokes, 1891 195 and 214)

Cormac related the truth about how his wife, son and daughter had been taken from him and how he had pursued them thither Thereupon he was offered food but refused to eat without his retinue of fifty He was induced to sleep and, when he awoke, his fifty warriors, his wife, son and daughter were present Cormac saw the cup of gold (*cuach oir*) in the warrior's hand and admired "the strangeness of its workmanship" (*ingantus a denmha*) (Stokes, 1891 197 and 215)

> "There is somewhat in it more strange," says the warrior "Let three words of falsehood be spoken under it, and it will break into three Then let three true declarations be under it, and it unites (?) again as it was before " ("*Teora briathra breigi do radha foa 7 meabus a tri Teora coibsena fira didiu radha fai 7 congaigeand dorisi fon samail cetna*") (§52, 1891 215-6)

The warrior gave the cup and the branch to Cormac and told him to take his family back to the human world He assured Cormac that his family had not been harmed while they were in the otherworld

III.7 5 EEM.

The intervention by Niall and his brothers was likewise non-violent When they became lost they set up camp and cooked food but had no water to quench their thirst Fergus went out first in search of a drink and found a well guarded by a hideous old woman

> Thus was the hag every joint and limb of her, from the top of her head to the earth, was as black as coal (*co mba duibithir gual cech n-alt 7 cach n-aigi di o mullach co talmain*) Like the tail of a wild horse was the grey bristly mane that came through the upper part of her head-crown The green branch of an oak in bearing would be severed by the sickle of green teeth (*glaisfiacla*) that lay in her head and reached to her ears Dark smoky eyes she had a nose crooked and hollow (*sron cham chuasach*) She had a middle fibrous, spotted with pustules, diseased (*medon fethech brecbaindech ingalair*), and shins distorted and awry Her ankles were thick, her shoulder blades were broad, her knees were big, and her nails were green Loathsome in sooth was the hag's appearance (§11, Stokes, 1903 197)

The hag would only permit Fergus to take away some water if he kissed her on the cheek Fergus refused and so returned empty handed Ailill and Brión went out in turn in search of water, refused to kiss the hag and returned empty handed Fiachrae agreed only to give a 'few kisses' (*poici uaddi*) to the hag in exchange for water and for this gesture she decreed that he would 'visit' Tara

> "Thou shalt visit Tara" (*Tadall i Temraig duidsi*), quoth she That fell true, for two of his race took the kingship of Erin, namely Dathi and Ailill Wether, and no one of the race of the other sons, Brian, Ailill, Fergus, took it So Fiachra returned without water (§13, Stokes, 1903 198-9)

Finally Niall went, and offered not only to kiss but also to sleep with the hag, who immediately turned into a beautiful woman

> So then Niall went a-seeking water and happened on the same well 'Water to me, O woman", says Niall "I will give it", she answers, "but (first) give me a kiss" "Besides giving thee a kiss, I will lie with thee!" (*laigfead lat*) Then he throws himself down upon her and gives her a kiss But then, when he looked at her, there was not in the world a damsel whose gait or appearance was more loveable than her! Like the end of snow in trenches was every bit of her from head to sole Plump and queenly fore-arms she had (*Rigthi remra rignaidhe lé*) fingers long and lengthy calves straight and beautifully coloured Two blunt shoes of white bronze between her little, soft-white feet and the ground A costly full-purple mantle she wore, with a brooch of bright silver in the clothing of the mantle Shining pearly teeth she had an eye large and queenly (*rosc rignaide romor*), and lips red as rowanberries (*beoil partardeirg*) (§14, Stokes, 1903 198-201)

When Niall asked who she was, the woman answered, *misi in Flaithius* "I am Sovranty " (§15, Stokes, 1903 200-1), thus confirming that he was the true heir to the kingship of Tara

The woman then instructed Niall to take water to his brothers but not to give them a drink until they acknowledged his right

> "Go now to thy brothers", she says, "and take water with thee, and the kingship and the domination will ever abide with thee and thy children, save only one with twain of the seed of Fiachra, namely Dathi and Ailill Wether, and one king of Munster, namely Brian of the Tribute – and all of these (will be) kings without opposition And thou hast seen me loathsome, bestial, horrible at first and beautiful at last, so is the sovranty (*is amlaid sin in flaithius*), for seldom it is gained without battles and conflicts (*cen chatha 7 cen chongala*), but at last to anyone it is beautiful and goodly Howbeit, give not water to thy brothers until they make gifts to thee, to wit, seniority over them, and that thou mayst raise thy weapon a hand's breath over their weapons" *Acht chena na tabair-seo in t-usce dod briathrib co tucad aisceda dait i co tucud a sindsirrdacht duid, 7 co ro thocba th'arm ed lama uas a n-armaib seom* (§16, Stokes, 1903 200-1)

III 7 6 BS

Conn was met with excellent hospitality and his intervention in otherworldly affairs was non-violen (see III 4 6)

> And the girl who was in the house was the sovereignty of Ireland (*flaith hÉrenn*) and she gave a meal to Conn, i e an ox rib and a boar rib (*damasnæ 7 torcasnæ*) The ox rib was twenty-four feet long and eight feet between its tip and the ground The boar rib was twelve feet long and five feet between its tip and the ground (§8, ll 44-7, Murray, 2004 34 and 51)
> 'upon whom shall this golden cup of red ale be bestowed and who shall drink it?", said the girl " Bestow some of it", said the phantom, "on Conn Cetchathach, he will wage them, one hundred warlike battles (*cet cadræ firfidius*) " (§10, ll 58-60, Murray, 2004 34 and 51-2)

III 7 7 FL

Lugaid Laigde and his brothers also had a non-violent encounter Lugaid Corb was first to seek shelter in the wonderful otherworldly house (see III 3 7 and III 6 7)

> Inside they [he] found the abode of a big, old woman with a around her and her teeth outside her head with great, dirty, old rags on her (*7 a curach fiacal fria cenn anechtair 7 senbriscai salcai mora impi*) She said to the youth, i e Lugaid Corb "What are you looking for?" 'I seek a bed" he answered "If you come and share my bed," she said, "you will have it " "No," said the youth He returned to his brothers and said that he had not found shelter The rest of them went, one after another, into the house And [she got] the same [answer] from them Finally Lugaid Laigde went [in] The old woman said the same thing to him "I will sleep with you," "*Oentudaidfetsa frit*", Lugaid said The old woman got into bed and Lugaid got in after her He thought that the brightness of her face was the sun rising in the month of May (*Indar lais bá grían ag turgbháil a mis Mhai soillsi a gnuisi*) Around her was a

fringed, purple tunic and hair of beautiful colour (*Fuan corcra corthorach, folt dathalainn impi*) Her scent was like a fragrant herb-garden (*Ba samhalta fri lugbort cumra a boladh*) He had intercourse with her then (*Teit ina gnais iarum*) "Your journey has been profitable," she said "I am sovereignty and you will take the kingship of Ireland" "*Misse in Flaithius 7 gébhtair rige nErenn úait*', §72, Arbuthnot, 2007 23 and 97-8)

Table III 7

The nature of the hero's intervention is summarised in the top line as follows +/– violent/non-violent (? where unspecified) The bottom line indicates the outcome of the hero's intervention in otherworldly affairs as follows (a) destruction of the otherworld, (b) no harm to the otherworld and ? (unspecified)

	EN	EC	EA	ECA	EEM	BS	FL
Nature	–/+	?	+/–	–	–	–	–
Outcome	a	?	a	b	b	?	?

III 8 The hero's relationship with key otherworld figures, notably (a) a woman or women, (b) a king or king(s).

Ultimately all of the hero's relationships with otherworldly figures, male and female alike, depend on the motivations and objectives that brought him there in the first instance

III 8 1 EN

(a) Nerae's relationship with the otherworld woman led her to betray her own kinfolk in his favour when she told him about the sacking of Ráth Cruachan which was due to occur the following Samain She instructed him to go back to the human realm and warn them to destroy the síd and steal the otherworld treasures before being annihilated themselves She

also instructed Nerae to return to take her, their son Aingen and their belongings out of the sid before this attack (see III 7 1)

> "That is not true indeed", said the woman, "but an elfin host came to thee That will come true", said she unless he would reveal it to his friends "How shall I give warning to my people?" said Nera "Rise and go to them", said she They are still round the same cauldron and the charge has not yet been removed from the fire "
> "Tell them to be on their guard at Halloween coming, unless they come to destroy the side For I will promise them this the sid to be destroyed by Ailill and Medb, and the crown of Brian to be carried off by them" (§8, ll 80-9, Meyer, 1889 219-21)
> And send a message from thee to the sid, when thy people come to destroy the sid, that thou mayest take thy family and they cattle from the sid" (§10, ll 93-96-8, Meyer, 1889 219)
> Then Nera went to his wife in the sid, and she bade him welcome (§12, ll 107-8, Meyer, 1889 219)

(b) Nerae accepted the lowly job of wood carrier assigned to him by the otherworld king but later revealed his true allegiance by betraying him in favour of his human king

III.8 2 EC

(a) Connlae's relationship with the otherworld woman was established by her first appearance in the human world When she left after that first visit, Connlae was filled with longing for her

> *Gabais éolchaire iarom Connle immun deilb inna mna ad condairc* "Longing then seized Connlae for the appearance of the woman that he had seen" (§8, McCone, 2000 163-4)

Their relationship was maintained through an ever-replenished apple, which she threw to Connlae as she disappeared for one month at the druid Corann's prompting

> Then he intoned over the seat/location of the woman so that no one heard the woman's voice and so that Connlae did not see the woman at that time When the woman went away in response to the druid's chanting she threw an apple to Connlae (§7, McCone, 2000 156-60)
> Thereafter Connlae was without drink (and) without food until the end of a month *co cenn mis cen dig cen biad*, and he did not deem any sustenance worth eating save the apple (§8, McCone, 2000 160-1)

Subsequently Connlae succumbed to his longing for the otherworldly woman and chose to leave with her following her second emergence in the human world

> It is not easy for me besides I love my people Yet longing for the woman has seized me (§13, McCone, 2000 183-4)
> Thereupon Connlae took a leap from them so that there was escape (to safety) in the pure ship (*Connle bedg n-uadib co mboi isind noi glandai*) (§15, McCone, 2000 193-5) (It is) a voyage of the sea that they did and they were not seen thereafter *Imram moro do génset nad aicsea o sin* (§15, McCone, 2000 193-8)

(b) There is no mention of any relationship between Connlae and an otherworldly king, although the ruler of the otherworld is named as Boadag (McCone, 2000 140) by the woman (see III 4 2 §5)

III 8 3 EA.

(a) Upon his arrival at the first unnamed otherworld island, Art established an ally in the woman Creide Firalaind and stayed with her for a fortnight and a month after she welcomed him and *Ocus tairbiris teora pog co dil 7 co dicra do* "gave him three kisses, dearly and fervently" (§19, Best, 1905 164-5) Creide forewarned Art of the many tests and difficulties awaiting him and advised him how to overcome these successfully in order to reach Delbchaem They included the vicious attacks of Comchend, Delbchaem's jealous mother, whom Art eventually beheaded as a prelude to taking her daughter back to the human world as his wife

> That night they lay down merry, and in good spirits, the whole stronghold in their power, from small to great, until Morgan king of the Land of Wonders arrived" (§28, Best, 1905 170-1)

(b) When Delbchaem's father Morgan, king *Tir na nIngnad* 'Land of Wonders', arrived, he challenged Art with a view to avenging the loss of his fortress and the death of his wife but was also beheaded

III 8 4 ECA

(a) In keeping with his quest for his own wife (see III 3 4), Cormac does not form a relationship with an otherworld woman

(b) His relationship with the otherworld warrior, who later identified himself as Manannan son of Ler (see III 2 4), developed from their first amicable encounter in Tara and thrived on truth and trustworthiness This is exemplified by Cormac's acquisition of the magical branch and cup of gold as well as the safe return of his wife, son and daughter to him from the otherworld (see III 3 4)

III 8 5 EEM

(a) Niall actually mated with the old hag, causing her to reveal her true identity as the sovereignty and proving his rightful legacy to the kingship of Tara by peaceful means (see III 7 5)

(b) No relationship with male otherworldly figures is specified

III 8 6 BS

(a) Conn's relationship with the otherworldly woman was friendly and hospitable (see III 4 6)

(b) Similarly his relationship with the otherworldly male was cordial (see III 4 6)

III 8 7 FL

(a) Lugaid Laigde is the only one of five brothers to accept the shelter of the old hag's bed, with dramatic consequences (see III 7 7) Not only is Lugaid Laigde's future secured by this action but the true nature of the hag is also revealed to all the brothers

> "One of you must sleep with me tonight," she said "I will sleep with you," ("*Fifitsa lat*"), said Lugaid Laigde, "for it means great fortune for me" ("*ar is damh rorath*") Lugaid Laigde slept with her that night Then it seemed to them [Lugaid's brothers?] that there was a purple tunic over the woman and over Lugaid and she had golden-yellow hair and she was the most beautiful of women "Who are you, young woman?," they asked "I am the Sovereignty of Ireland," ("*Missi Banf[h]laith hErenn*") said she, "and I was (?) restless, [going] from place to place And you will take the kingship of Ireland, Lugaid Laigde" (§72, Arbuthnot, 2007 98-9)

(b) No otherworldly male is mentioned

Table III 8

The top line indicates whether (+) or not (–) any sexual relationship(s) with an otherworld female figure (f, if present) is specified The bottom line summarises relationship(s) with key male otherworld figures (m, if present) as follows (a) hero defeats otherworld king in battle, (b) hero betrays otherworld king, thus causing his defeat and death in battle, (c) hero has a friendly, supportive relationship with otherworld king, ? no relationship specified

	EN	EC	EA	ECA	EEM	BS	FL
O/w /figs	f+	f–	f+	–	f+	f–	f+
O/w king	mb	m?	ma	mc	?	mc	?

The hero has an explicit relationship with an otherworld female figure in four of the *echtrai*, namely EN, EA, EEM and FL, while no such relationship is specified in BS Nerae actually acquires an otherworld wife with whom he remains permanently Art has the best of both worlds, since he not only acquires an otherworld wife Delbchaem, whom he brings back to live with him in the human world, but also has a relationship with an otherworld woman Creide Fírálaind during his sojourn there Níall and Lugaid Laigde each mate with an otherworld woman, who subsequently identifies herself as the sovereignty, but both return without her Cormac in ECA does not have a relationship with an otherworld woman Instead he recovers his human wife, son and daughter from the otherworld

Art actually defeats an otherworld king while Nerae is complicit in the defeat the unnamed king of the sid of Cruachu In ECA, Cormac had a good relationship with the otherworld king

as did Conn in BS No relationships with otherworld males are specified in EC, EEM or FL, in fact no otherworld king figure is even mentioned in the latter two tales

III 9 Objects acquired from the otherworld

Occasionally the hero is reluctant to return home but he frequently returns willingly to recount his adventures Not only does he bring back fabulous stories of prosperous otherworld places upon his return but he also frequently brings back tangible objects that can benefit his own existence and that of his human compatriots

III 9 1. EN

King Ailill and his army took the following otherworldly treasures after they had destroyed the sid of Cruachu

> These are the three things, which were found in it, viz the mantle of Loegaire in Armagh (*cetach Loeguiri hind-Ard Macho*), and the crown of Briun in Connaught (*barr Briuin la Connachto*), and the shirt of Dunlaing in Leinster in Kildare (*enach Dunlaithe la Laignu hi Cill Daro*, §9, ll 90-2, Meyer, 1889 220-1)

III 9 2 EC

Connlae acquired an everlasting apple from the woman when she was forced by the druid Coran to retreat on her first visit (see III 8 2) This alone sustained Connlae for one month until she reappeared

> Nothing that he ate took anything away from the apple but it remained whole (§8, McCone, 2000 163)

III 9 3 EA

Art captured Morgan's men and collected the gold and silver from Tir na nIngnad This he gave to Delbchaem after he had prevailed in all his otherworldly battles Crucially, he acquired a wife

> After which Art took hostages (*braighde*) of Morgan's people, and possession of the Land of Wonders. And he collected the gold and silver (*or ⁊ airged*) of the land

also, and gave it to the maiden, even Delbchaem daughter of Morgan (§28 Best, 1905 170-1)
The stewards and overseers followed him from the land, and he brought the maiden with him to Ireland (§29, Best, 1905 170-1)

III 9 4 ECA

Cormac acquired two objects from Tir Tairngiri as gifts from Manannán, namely the cup for discerning truth and the branch for music, but only for the duration of his own life

> "Take thy family then," says the warrior, "and take the Cup that thou mayst have it for discerning between truth and falsehood (*ocus beir in cuach corob fri etirgleodh fira 7 goa agud*) And thou shalt have the Branch for music and delight (*in craebh fri ceol 7 fri hairfideadh*) And on the day that thou shalt die they all will be taken from thee (§53, Stokes, 1891 198 and 216)

III 9 5 EEM

In return for sleeping with her, Niall acquired a drink of water from the woman who identified herself as the sovereignty

> So then Niall went a-seeking water and happened on the same well "Water to me, O woman", says Niall ' I will give it", she answers, "but (first) give me a kiss" "Besides giving thee a kiss, I will lie with thee!"
> "I am Sovranty"[sic] ("*Misi in Flaithius*'), she answered, and then she said
> O king of Tara, I am the Sovranty
> I will tell thee its great goodness, etc
> "Go now to thy brothers", she says, "and take water with thee, and the kingship and the domination will forever abide with thee and thy children (*in rigi 7 in forlamus cenmotha dias do shil*), save only with twain of the seed of Fiachra And as thou hast seen me loathsome, bestial, horrible at first and beautiful at last, so is the sovranty, for seldom it is gained without battles and conflicts (*cen chatha 7 cen chongala*), but at last to anybody it is beautiful and goodly Howbeit, give not the water to thy brothers until they make gifts to thee, to wit, seniority over them, and that thou mayst raise thy weapon a hand's breadth over their weapons" (§14, §15, §16, Stokes, 1903 199-200)

Thus Niall established his seniority over his brothers and rights to the kingship of Tara

> "So shall it be done", says the lad Then he bade her farewell and takes water to his brothers, but did not give it to them until they granted to him every boon that he asked of them, even as the damsel had taught him He also binds them by oath never to oppose himself or his children (§17, Stokes, 1903 200-1)

III 9 6 BS

As well as confirming his own reign and establishing his future successors, Conn acquired four gifts in the otherworld

> They went then into the shadow of the phantom and the fort and the house were no longer visible However, the vat and the vessel and the cup and the staves (*in dabach 7 int escra 7 ind airdech 7 na flesca*) were left with Conn And from that is derived 'The Dream and the Adventure and the Journey of Conn Cetchathach' and 'The Phantom's Frenzy' *Ocus is di sen atta Aislingi 7 Echtra 7 Argraige Cuind Chetchataig 7 Baile in Scáil* (§9, ll 53-7, Murray, 2004 35 and 51)

III 9 7 FL

Although no tangible gifts were acquired, the successful brother did capture and eat the otherworldly golden fawn and the woman assigned each Lugaid a distinctive further name on the strength of his actions in relation to the fawn (see III 2 7, Arbuthnot, 2007 98)

Table III 9

The various treasures and objects acquired from the otherworld, which will be considered later at VI 4, are classified below as (a) valuables/talismans or (b) food/drink

	EN	EC	EA	ECA	EEM	BS	FL
Objects/ Treasures	a	b	a	a	b	a	b

III 10 The aftermath of the visit

A time disparity exists between the two worlds Some who return after what seemed like a brief sojourn in the otherworld find that many years have passed by in their absence from the human realm Conversely some who return after what seemed like decades spent in the

otherworld find that no time has elapsed in the human domain The diverse events that occur while he is in the otherworld determine the hero's fate after his sojourn there Crucially, the aftermath of each *echtrae* has profound and lasting effects not only upon the hero but also upon the kingship of the human world and/or the otherworld

III 10 1 EN

The aftermath of this otherworld visit proved profitable for the human world, with the destruction of the sid and the acquisition of three major emblems of sovereignty Nerae was then fated to remain in the *sid* with his family, never to return to the human realm

> Thereafter the men of Connaught and the black host of exile *(dublaingius)* went into the síd, and destroyed the sid, and took out what there was in it And they brought away the crown of Briun That is the third wonderful gift in Erinn, and the mantle of Loegaire in Armagh, and the shirt of Dunlaing in Leinster in Kildare Nera was left with his people in the sid, and he has not come out until now, nor will he come till Doom (*ni tainic as cose, acus nie thicfo co brath*) (§19, ll 190-7, Meyer, 1889 227)

III 10 2 EC

Connlae departed for the otherworld destination in a boat with the woman and never returned to the human realm

> Thereupon Connlae took a leap from them so that there was escape (to safety) in the pure ship (*noi glandai*) They saw them (going) from them as far as their vision reached it (i e as far as their vision could follow it, namely the flight) (It is) a voyage of the sea that they did and they were not seen thereafter (§15, McCone, 2000 195-199)

III.10 3 EA

Art returned home to take up the kingship at Tara with Delbchaem Everyone welcomed them except Becuma, whom Art ordered to leave Tara

> And Art went forward to Tara, and was made welcome And there was none to whom his coming was not pleasing, but the wanton and sorrowful Becuma But Art ordered the sinful woman (*mhnai cholaid*) to leave Tara And she rose up straightaway lamenting in the presence of the men of Ireland, without a word of leave-taking, until she came to Ben Edair (§30, Best, 1905 170-3)

III 10 4 ECA

Cormac returned to resume his kingship in the human realm, with the two splendid otherworld gifts (one at least associated with otherworld sovereignty, see further discussion in V 4-5 and VI 5 -5 4) in his possession as well as his returned wife, son and daughter

> Now on the morrow morning, when Cormac arose, he found himself on the green of Tara, with his wife and his son and daughter, and having his Branch and his Cup Now that was afterwards (called) 'Cormac's Cup', and it used to distinguish between truth and falsehood with the Gael Howbeit, as had been promised him [by Manannán] it remained not after Cormac's death (§54, Stokes, 1891 198 and 216)

III 10 5 EEM

Niall returned home with his brothers, who had conceded precedence to him He assumed the kingship of Tara along with Sithchenn's confirmation that this was granted permanently to Niall and his descendants

> Thereafter they went to Tara Then they raised their weapons, and Niall raised (his) the breadth of a hero's hand above them (*ro thocaib Niall ed lama laich uastu*) They sate down in their seats Niall among them in the midst Then the king asked tidings of them Niall made answer and related the adventure (*ro indis in echtra*), and how they went a-seeking water, and how they chanced on the well and (came) to the woman, and what she had prophesied to them "What is the cause", says Mongfind, "that it is not the senior, Brian, that tells these tales?" They answered "We granted our seniority and our kingship to Niall for the first time in lieu of the water", (' *Doradsam ar sindserrdacht do Niall 7 ar rigi in cetf[h]eacht dar ceand usci*", *ar said*) "You have granted it permanently", said Sithchenn, "for henceforward he and his children will always have domination and kingship of Erin" (§18, Stokes, 1903 203)

III 10 6 BS

In addition to the aforementioned acquisitions and gifts Conn's success in 'one hundred battles', many of them named, was also guaranteed, thus confirming his appellation '*Cétchathach*' (§10, Murray, 2004 35 and 51-2)

III 10 7 FL

Upon their return to Oenach Tailten 'the assembly at Teltown' in the human realm, the five Lugaids relate their otherworldly adventures and how they acquired their appellations

Afterwards, when Dáire died, Lugaid Laigde assumed the *righdhamhnacht Muman* crown-princedom of Munster' (Arbuthnot, 2007 23 and 99)

Table III 10

This summarises the aftermath of the hero's visit as follows (A) rejection of human kingship, (B) brief return to human realm followed by permanent return to the otherworld, (C) no return from expedition, (D) return to inherit/resume human kingship

	EN	EC	EA	ECA	EEM	BS	FL
Aftermath	B	A/C	D	D	D	D	D

The aftermath in EC reveals how the hero Connlae rejected his rightful inheritance of human kingship, in exchange for life everlasting in the otherworld Nerae returned briefly to the human world but then went back to the Sid of Crúachu, where he remained forever Ultimately his intervention in otherworldly affairs entailed the acquisition of talismans of sovereignty, thus saving human sovereignty The otherworld visits in EA, ECA, EEM and BS each result in the acquisition/retention/rightful inheritance of the human kingship at Tara respectively, whereas Lugaid Laigde in FL was designated heir to the kingship of Munster

III 11 Summary

The above sections have considered the status and realisation of ten significant features in seven extant narratives with solid claims to be regarded as *echtrai* in an attempt to provide a provisional list of the main constituents and variants thereof found in them These were (1) (a) the spatial and (b) the temporal context of the invitation, (2) the identity of the person(s) invited, (3) the identity of the figure(s) issuing the invitation, (4) the purpose of the invitation,

(5) the location of the otherworld and the nature of the journey to it, (6) description(s) of the otherworld, (7) the nature of the hero's intervention there, (8) the hero's relationship with otherworld figures, notably (a) a woman/women, (b) key male figures such as a king or kings, (9) objects acquired from the otherworld, (10) the aftermath of the visit It remains now to present an overall summary of the evidence examined above as follows

1 rs = royal site, t = transitional time of day or year and '–' where not stated

2 ks = king's son, marked (d) if described in some detail and ? if unspecified

3 m(ale)/f(emale), marked (i) if immortal/supernatural issues invitation, marked (s) if invitation relates to sovereignty and ? if no invitation issued

4 w = quest for woman, a = to authenticate current/future kingship, e = for attainment of eternal life, marked (s) if explicit sovereignty motivation and ? where motivation not stated

5 (u/o)w = (under/over) water, (u/o)g = (under/over) ground and ? = location unspecified

6 +/+ = otherworld named/described, –/– = unnamed/no description given

7 +/– = fundamentally friendly/hostile intervention Both may be used in the appropriate sequence +/– or –/+ if change occurs and ? if not mentioned

8 w = acquisition/recovery of and/or (+/–) sex with a woman, k(d) = defeats or deceives an otherworld king, k(h) = helps an otherworld king defeat an enemy, (?) where relationship(s) unspecified and marked (s) where relationship affects sovereignty

9 t = acquisition of treasure(s)/talisman(s), marked (s) if any obvious sovereignty associations, f = food and/or d = drink

10 r = hero returns home, o = hero remains in otherworld, r/o = a brief return home before taking up permanent residence in the otherworld, marked (s) if hero assumes sovereignty

III 12 Summary Table

	EN	EC	EA	ECA	EEM	BS	FL
Setting	rs/t	rs/–	rs/–	rs/t	rs/–	rs/t	rs/–
Hero Is	?	ks(d)	ks(d)	ks(d)	ks	ks(d)	ks
Invitation Bearer	?	f(ı)	f(ı)(s)	?/m(ı)(s)	m(s)	m(ı)(s)	m(s)
Motivation	?	e	w(s)	w(s)	a(s)	a(s)	a(s)
Otherworld Location	(u)g	(o)w	(o)w	(o)g	(o)g	(o)g	(o)g
Named/ Described	+/+	+/+	+/+	+/+	–/–	–/–	–/–
Friendly/Hostile Intervention	+/–	?	+/–	+	+	+	+
Relationship(s)	w(+)/ k(d)(s)	w(–)/ k?(s)	w(+)/ k(d)(s)	w(?)/ k(s)	w(+)/ ?(s)	w?/ k?(s)	w(+) /?(s)
Acquisitions	t(s)	t	t(s)	d(s)	d(s)	t/d(s)	f/d(s)
Aftermath	r/o	o	r(s)	r(s)	r(s)	r(s)	r(s)

III 13 Conclusion

All of the extant texts considered here designate a renowned royal site as the spatial setting of events Similarly, with the exception of Nerae in EN, in each of these *echtrai* the human hero is identified as a king or heir apparent With the exception of Nerae once again and also the brothers in EEM and FL, each hero receives an explicit invitation to visit the otherworld and each is given a precise purpose for his visit In addition, the otherworldly nature of the invitation bearer is explicit in all of the *echtrai* apart from EEM and FL, where a mortal smith and an unnamed druid respectively instigate the princes' expedition with the object of discovering which of them will become king Location of the otherworld, which is named in all but EEM, FL and BS and an account of the journey there are also commonly featured

The nature of the hero's intervention in otherworldly affairs and also his relationship(s) with otherworldly figure(s) are omitted only in EC but are recounted in each of the other *echtrai* under analysis here While it seems that the female figure in BS is in fact the sovereignty goddess and Conn does receive a drink from her, no intimate relationship between them is asserted On the other hand, in EEM and FL Níall and Lugaid Laigde actually mate with the sovereignty goddess and are thus both assured of their rightful royal inheritance Otherworldly talismans and/or treasures and gifts of food and drink displaying obvious sovereignty connections are variously elaborated on in all of the tales here, with the exception of EC where the nourishing apple bestowed by the woman has no such apparent associations In addition the aftermaths in EC and EN are remarkable in that the hero remains in the otherworld, whereas all of the others see the heroes return home either to resume or to assume kingship

The main criterion of classification of the *echtrae* tale has long since been established as the hero's journey, expedition or adventure away from home to some otherworld [39] However, on the basis of the findings of this chapter, an *echtrae* might now reasonably be expected to include at least a significant number of these further features

[39] Carey, (1982 36), Dillon, (1948 101), Dumville (1976 73), Mac Cana, (1980 75-6), Mac Mathuna, (1985 225), Rees and Rees (1961 297-313)

Chapter IV The basic taxonomy of some thematically similar tales (Group 2)

IV Introduction

The previous chapter has examined the status and realisation of ten significant features in seven narratives known to have been actually referred to as *echtrai* in the pre-Norman period These features will now be employed as a template for considering another five extant tales that likewise involve a heroic expedition into some supernatural territory or otherworld but for which firm evidence of early classification as *echtrai* is not available, namely *Echtrae Lóegairi* (Jackson, 1942), *Immram Brain* (Meyer, 1895), *Tochmarc Emire* (Meyer, 1890), *Serglige Con Culainn* (Dillon 1953), and *Siaburcharpat Con Culainn* (O'Beirne Crowe, 1870)

IV 1 (a) The spatial and (b) the temporal context of the invitation

IV 1 1 EL

The opening lines of the text reveal that (a) Loegaire was at Enloch, 'bird lake', on Mag nAí in Connaught and (b) the time was dawn following an all-night assembly when the action began (Jackson, 1942 386)

> Once upon a time the men of Connaught were assembled at Enloch on Magh Aí Crimhtann Cass was king of Connaught at that time They stayed in their assembly that night (*i ndail in aidchi sin*, ll 35895-6, Jackson, 1942 380-1)

IV 1 2 IB

This tale is located at (a) Bran's unnamed royal dwelling but (b) the time is not specified

> This is the beginning of the story One day, in the neighbourhood of his stronghold, Bran went about alone, when he heard music behind him As often as he looked back 'twas still behind him the music was At last he fell asleep at the music, such was its sweetness When he awoke from his sleep, he saw close by him a branch of silver with white blossoms (*croib n-arggait fua bláth find*), nor was it easy to distinguish its bloom from that branch Then Bran took the branch in his hand to his royal house (*a rígthech*) When the hosts were in the royal house, they saw a woman in strange raiment (*i n-etuch ingnuth*) on the floor of the house 'Twas then she sang the fifty

quatrains to Bran, while the host heard her, and all beheld the woman (§2, Meyer, 1895 2-5)

IV 1 3 TE

The opening episode names (a) Emain Macha as the place where Forgall went in disguise to seek out Cu Chulainn (see II 2 9) The festival of Beltaine, which celebrates the commencement of *Cetshamain* 'summer half of the Celtic year' (Mac Cana, 1970 127), around the first of May and the beginning of Autumn are both referred to in this opening episode but (b) neither is explicitly made the setting of the subsequent action

> The young of every kind of cattle used to be assigned to the possession of Bel Beldine, then, i e Beltine To Bron Trogin, i e the beginning of autumn , viz it is then the earth sorrows under its fruit Trogan, then, is a name for earth (ll 1-4, Meyer, 1890 442-3)

IV 1 4 SCC.

An annual fair/assembly *oenach* (Dillon, 1953 1) at (a) Mag Muirthemne is the setting for the appearance of the flock of birds that sets events in motion for Cú Chulainn while the (b) time this occurred was during the three-day festival of Samain

> The Ulstermen used to hold a fair every year three days before Samuin and three days after it, and the day of Samuin itself That is the time that the Ulstermen used to be there in Mag Muirthemni holding the fair of Samuin every year, and nothing at all was done by them during that time save games and gatherings and pleasures and delight and eating and feasting (*cluci 7 cheti 7 ánius 7 aibinnius 7 longad 7 tomailt*), so that from that is named *na trenae samna* 'the triduum of Samuin' throughout Ireland (§1, ll 1-6, Dillon, 1953 1)
> When they were there then, birds settled on the lake beside them There were not in Ireland birds more beautiful (*Ni batar i nEre enlaith ba chaini*) The women wanted the birds that chanced to come there (?) They all began to argue (*immarbaig*) one against another about capturing the birds Eithne Aitenchaithrech, wife of Conchobor said 'I want one for each of my shoulders of those birds ' So do we all,' said the women 'If they are caught for anyone, it is for me first that they shall be caught,' said Eithne Ingubai, wife of Cu Chulainn 'What shall we do?' said the women 'I shall go from you to Cu Chulainn,' said Leborcham, daughter of Óa and Adarc (§4, ll 25-9, Dillon, 1953 1)

IV 1 5 SbCC

The prelude to the account of Cú Chulainn's otherworldly trips in SbCC finds Saint Patrick (a) at Tara on both occasions, but (b) the time is not stated

> Patrick went to Temair for the enjoining of belief upon the king of Eriu the time for he would not believe in the Lord (*Comdid*), though he used to be preached to him Loegaire said to Patrick "By no means shall I believe in thee or in God, until thou shalt awaken Cu Chulaind for me under dignity, as he is recorded in stories, that I may see him, and that I may address him in my presence here it is after that I shall believe in thee" 'That matter is possible for God (*Dia*)" said Patrick
> A messenger (*techtaire*) comes afterwards from the Lord to Patraick, that they should remain until the morrow on the rampart of the Rath (*dua na Ratha*), that is of Temair, and that Cu Chulaind would come to them there (§1, ll 9221-32, Best and Bergin, 1929 278, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 375)

Table IV 1

All of the tales considered in the previous chapter showed a preference for a royal site of note as the spatial location of the invitation and the same is also true of these five narratives (indicated by '+') The temporal context, where specified, is a key point of transition in the day and/or year as with four of the previously considered group, in this case S(amain) or D(awn)

	EL	IB	TE	SCC	SbCC
Royal Site	+	+	+	+	+
Time	D	?	?	S	?

IV 2 The identity of the person(s) invited.

IV 2 1 EL

The person invited, Loegaire, is identified and his royal lineage as son of the king of Connacht is mentioned in the opening lines of the text (see IV 1 1)

'Give welcome to the man who comes to you' said Laeghaire Li Ban, son of Crimhthann This was the noblest youth there had been among the men of Connaught, (*is ainem ro boi la Connachta*) this Laeghaire (ll 35903, Jackson, 1942 381)

IV 2 2 IB

Bran is named in the opening episode but no further physical description or biographical information is given Nonetheless we can infer that he is a king or heir-in-waiting since he joins the crowded assembly in 'his royal house' (*a rigthech*, see IV 1 2) Although all of those gathered can see and hear the otherworld woman who appeared, Bran alone is the object of her address

'Twas fifty quatrains *in ben a tirib ingnath* ' the woman from unknown lands" sang on the floor of the house to Bran son of Febal (*Bran mac Febail*), when the royal house was full of kings, who knew not whence the woman had come, *orobatar ind liss duntai* since the ramparts were closed (§1, Meyer, 1895 2-3)
"Not to all of you is my speech"(*Ni dúib uili mo labre*),
Though its great marvel has been made known
Let Bran hear from the crowd of the world (*ested Bran de betho brou*)
What wisdom has been told to him (§29, Meyer, 1895 14-15)

IV 2 3 TE

Cu Chulainn is the one who is purposely prompted to go away to train in arms in Alba by Forgoll after he had praised the hero's superior warrior skills but tantalisingly remarked how much better those skills would be if he were to further his training with Domnall

When he had sent away his men on the third day Cuchulind and the chariot-chiefs of the men of Ulster (*eirrid hUlad*) were praised before him Then he said that it was true, and it was wonderful, but then if Cuchulind were to go to Domnall the Warlike in Alba (*Domnall Mildemail ar Alpi*) it would be the more wonderful Now, it was for this that he proposed that, in order that he might not come back again Forgall went away, when he had imposed on Cuchulind what he wished (ll 15-20, Meyer, 1890 443-5)

IV 2 4 SCC

The first invitation to visit the otherworld is issued to Cu Chulainn in the presence of his wife, who is named Eithne Ingubai at this point (§10, ll 93-4, Dillon, 1953 1- 2 and 3-4), on the day before Samain a year after he had asked to be brought to his sick-bed in Tete Brecc (*'Nom berar , for se 'dom s[h]erglugu i don Teti Bricc* , §9, ll 83-2, Dillon, 1953 3)

> Lí Ban in the plain of Cruach (*Maig Crúaich*), whose place is at the right hand of Labraid Lúath, said that "it would be a delight to Fand to be with Cu Chulainn '
>
> "It would be a happy day (*la mad fir*) that Cu Chulainn would come to my country, if it came true He would have silver and gold He would have much wine to drink" (§11, ll 103-10, Dillon, 1953 4)

Since he is not sufficiently recovered, he sends his charioteer Loeg to reconnoitre (see IV 4 4) Upon Loeg's return from this otherworldly visit Cu Chulainn sends for his wife, now called Emer (§28, Dillon, 1953 11) He recovers his strength after she visits him in Emain and she rebukes him for lying in bed for love of a woman *laigi fri bangrád* (§30, Dillon, 1953 14) Cu Chúlainn then goes to Airbe Roir where he receives a personal invitation to go to the otherworld *sid* from Lí Ban (§§31- 38, Dillon, 1953 15 and 22) Nevertheless, this time Cu Chulainn refuses to go in response to an invitation from a woman, who suggests he send Loeg instead

> Lóeg set out with the maiden, and they went to Mag Lúada and to the Magic Tree, (Biliu Buada) and past Oenach Emna and into Oenach Fidga, and Aed Abrat was there with his daughters Fand welcomed Loeg 'Why did not Cu Chulainn come?' said she 'He did not wish to go at the invitation of a woman (*ar chuiriud mna*) and, also, that he might learn whether it is from you that the message came to him ' It is from me ' said she, 'and let him come to us quickly, for it is today that the battle is being fought ' (§32, ll 455-61, Dillon, 1953 16)

Cu Chulainn finally takes up the invitation to go to the otherworld when Loeg urges him upon his own return from there

> Loeg went back to where Cu Chulainn was, 'How is that, Loeg?' said Cu Chulainn Loeg answered and said 'It is time to go, for the battle is being fought today' And it is thus he was telling it, and he sang a lay
>
> I came, a splendid course, to a place that was
> wonderful though not unknown, to a mound where
> scores of companies were assembled, where I found long-haired Labraid
> (§33, ll 462-9, Dillon, 1953 16, see IV 4 4 below)

In effect the otherworldly invitation made by Li Ban to Cú Chulainnn appears to be duplicated (§12, §13, and §31), as is the journey of Loeg to Mag Mell (§13 and §32) In addition, Cú

Chulainn asks Li Ban where Labraid is *cisi airm hi ta Labraid?* (§31, Dillon, 1953 15) which is also seen as a probable duplication of §13 in which Cu Chulainn asks exactly the same question of Lí Ban Such inconsistencies and duplications in SCC can be explained by its compilatory nature, referred to in II 2 10 above

Cu Chulainn's ancestry is not mentioned but when he finally met with Fand in the otherworld, she mentioned his kingly status when singing his virtues

> He plays with fifty golden balls they bound
> aloft over his breath I have not found such
> a king (*rig*) for harsh deeds and for gentle (§37, ll 614-17, Dillon, 1953 21)

Afterwards when Li Ban welcomed him she also implied Cu Chulainn's royal ancestry

> Welcome is Cu Chulainn,
> boar of pursuit,
> great prince (*mal mor*) of Mag Muirthemne (§38, ll 647-9, Dillon, 1953 22)

IV 2 5 SbCC

Cu Chulainn recounts the events of two otherworldly trips he had undertaken but he does not specify what motivated these expeditions

Table IV 2

The top line indicates whether the human protagonist is explicitly identified as a king's son (+), or (–) where no indication of his status is given and (?) where royal ancestry is no more than implicit All three instances of the latter two involve Cú Chulainn The line below summarises the protagonist's portrayal as 'D' in the case of a long or 'd' in the case a short physical description and '–', if none

	EL	IB	TE	SCC	SbCC
King's son	+	+	–	?	–
Portrayal	D	–	d	d	D

With the exception of Nerae, the royal ancestry of the male selected is specified in all of the tales examined in the previous chapter, whether he is an heir apparent (Connlae, Art, Niall, and Lugaid) or a reigning king (Cormac and Conn) In the above five tales Lóegaire is the only heir apparent, although this is implied in the case of Bran's royal dwelling In the other three tales this key characteristic is less apparent but, while the warrior attributes of Cu Chulainn are more fully described in TE and SbCC, a royal pedigree is at least suggested by SCC

IV 3 The identity of the figure(s) issuing the invitation

IV 3 1 EL

A detailed description is given of the bearer of the invitation, an otherworld warrior who names himself

> After they had arisen next day early in the morning, they saw a man coming towards them through the mist A purple five-fold cloak about him, two five-pointed javelins in his hand (*da shleig cóicrinni i n-a laim*), a shield with a rim of gold on him, a gold-hilted sword at his belt, his golden-yellow hair down his back (ll 35899-900) 'Welcome to the warrior whom we do not know', said Laeghaire 'I am glad of it,' said he 'Where are you from?' said Laeghaire 'I am of the fairy people, Fiachna son of Reda is my name (ll 35903-05, Jackson, 1942 381)

IV 3 2 IB

An unnamed otherworldly female figure characterised by her unusual clothing appears suddenly and issues the invitation to Bran (see §2 at IV 1 2)

IV 3 3 TE

In the first instance it is Forgall Monach who conspires to send Cu Chulainn away to Alba (see IV 1 3, IV 2 3 and IV 4 3) Then, when Cu Chulainn has attained a certain standard in training, Domnall sends him to complete this with Scathach

> When they had come to Domnall, they were taught by him one thing on a flagstone with a small hole, to blow bellows Then they would perform on it till their souls were all but black or livid Another thing on a spear, on which they would climb They would perform on its point, or dropping down on their soles
> Then Domnall said that Cuchulind would not have profession of instruction until he came to Scathach, who was in the east of Alba (*boi fri hAlpai anair*) So the three of them went across Alba, viz Cuchulind, and Conchobur, the king of Emain, and Loegaire the Victorious (ll 25-28 and ll 33-36, Meyer, 1890 444-5)

IV 3 4 SCC

Oengus mac Aeda Abrat, is the bearer of the first invitation to Cu Chulainn while he is on his sickbed However, although Oengus is the bearer of the invitation, it appears that Lí Ban is the issuer on behalf of her husband

> 'Who art thou?' said they 'I am Oengus, son of Aed Abrat', said he The man went from them then, and they did not know whither he went nor whence he came (§12, ll 119-21, Dillon, 1953 4)
> Cu Chulainn set out then, and came to the pillar-stone, and saw a woman in a green cloak approaching him 'That is well, Cu Chulainn', said she 'It is not well for me if it be thy visit to me last year' said Cu Chulainn I have not come to harm thee', said she, but to seek thy friendship I have come to speak with thee' said the woman, 'from Fand, daughter of Aed Abrat Manannan son of Ler has left her, and she has given her love to thee And Li Ban is my name (§13, ll 127-33, Dillon, 1953 5)

IV 3 5. SbCC

This information is not featured in SbCC

Table IV 3

The following table identifies the bearer of the invitation as o(therworldly) or m(ortal) on the top line and as f(emale) or m(ale) on the bottom, '–' being used where there is no such figure

	EL	IB	TE	SCC	SbCC
Otherworld/ Mortal	o	o	m/m	o/o	–
female/ male	m	f	m/m	m/f	–

In the previous chapter an otherworldly male issues the invitation in BS and ECA as in EL here The same applies to the initial invitation in SCC, but the otherworldly female Li Ban finally entices Cú Chulainn to take it up In IB, the single invitation is issued by an otherworldly woman as in EC and EA In FL it is a male mortal who sets up the otherworldly expedition as in EEM Similarly, in TE a male mortal (Forgoll) instigated Cu Chulainn's visit to Alba and another male mortal (Domnall) propelled him on his otherworldly visit to Scathach The final text here, SbCC, does not mention any personage of this type, which was also notably absent from EN

IV 4. The purpose of the invitation

IV 4 1 EL

The purpose of the invitation in EL was for the human warriors to provide military support to Fiachnae and his otherworld supporters in their ongoing battles to recover his wife, who had been abducted

> 'What has sent you?' said Laeghaire 'To ask for troops,' said he 'Now my wife has been carried off from me, that is, Eochaidh son of Sal carried her off He has fallen by my hand in the field of battle, so that she has gone to a brother's son of his, Goll son of Dolbh, king of the fort of Magh Mell I have given seven battles to him, and they have all gone against me Then, battle has been proclaimed by us for to-day To ask for help, then, have I come, and I will give a payment of silver and a payment of gold (ll 35929, *urrann argait 7 urrann oir*) to every single man who desires it, in return for going with me ' (ll 35906-10, Jackson, 1942 380-1)

IV 4 2 IB.

The woman allegedly chanted *cóica rand* 'fifty quatrains' (Meyer, 1895 3) to Bran, although the text contains only twenty-eight Their aim was to persuade him to partake in eternal life and happiness in the otherworld To this end she describes its wondrous beauty, prophesies the birth of Christ and describes the nature and extent of his kingdom Finally, she tells Bran that he has been chosen and urges him to begin his voyage (§ 26 to § 30, Meyer, 1895 14, see also IV 5 2 and IV 6 2)

IV 4.3 TE.

Forgall's intentions toward Cu Chulainn were confirmed when he heard from his warriors that Emer had met with the renowned warrior Therefore, while the purpose of this commission is ostensibly to advance Cu Chulainn's military prowess, it is also aimed at preventing him from meeting with Emer in the near future There was also the possibility that Cu Chulainn might be killed and thus separated from her forever

> "True", said Forgall, (*ind riastradai o Emain Machæ*), "The madman from Emain Macha " He has come to converse with Emer, and the girl has fallen in love That is why she conversed with him It shall not avail him I shall prevent their meeting" he said (ll 8-11, Meyer, 1890 442-3)

However, before he left on the ship for Alba, Cú Chulainn went across Brega to visit Emer and they made a vow together

> Each of them promised chastity to the other until they should meet again (*Tingell cach di alaili a genass co comristais*) (ll 22-3, Meyer, 1890 444-5)

IV 4 4 SCC

The purpose of the invitation is clarified by Lí Ban on behalf her husband, who requires Cú Chulainn's military support in battle against his otherworld enemies In return, Labraid promises the love of Fand to Cu Chulainn but the latter says he is not fit to fight at this time and sends his charioteer Loeg instead (see IV 2 4)

> My husband Labraid Swift-Hand-on-Sword (*Labraid Luathlám ar Claideb*) has sent thee a message he will give the woman to thee for one day's fighting with him against

> Senach Siaborthe and Eochaid Iuil and Eogan Inbir' 'I am not able to fight men today', said he 'That will not last', said Li Ban 'Let Loeg go with thee' said Cu Chulainn, 'to visit the country from which thou art come' 'Let him come then', said Li Ban (§13, ll 134-43, Dillon, 1953 5)

IV 4 5. SbCC

When Cu Chulainn is forced to prove his identity to the doubting Loegaire, he gives various accounts of his exploits in two otherworld locations He mentions a journey to Lochlann to do *mar-chatha* 'great battles' and subsequently describes treasures, which he took from that location (O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 384-5, see IV 6 5) Apart from proving his heroic warrior status, he states that the purpose of his second otherworldly visit, i e to the Land of Scath, was *di álad* 'for plunder' (ll 9379, Best and Bergin, 1929 285, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 384-5) Cu Chulainn describes the great treasures he took from there also

Table IV 4

It seems necessary to add (D) the provision of military assistance, (E) the quest to accomplish proficiency in military training and (F) the desire to assert warrior status and to plunder otherworld treasures to the various purposes of the invitation isolated in the previous chapter, namely (A) the quest for (a) an 'otherworld' woman/wife or (b) the hero's own wife (and children), (B) the attainment of eternal life, (C) the quest to legitimise current and/or future kingship

	EL	IB	TE	SCC	SbCC
Purpose	D	B	E	A/D	F/F

It is clear from the above that, apart from IB being similar in intent to EC and SCC being partly like EA and ECA in the previous chapter, the purposes of the invitation in the other four tales (EL, TE, SCC and SbCC) are basically different

IV 5 The location of the otherworld and the nature of the journey to it

IV.5 1 EL

Fíachnae stated that the otherworld was not far from its human counterpart and subsequently revealed its location under a lake

> not far from here where it is At that he turns away from them He goes before them down under the lake (*remib fon loch*), while they go after him (ll 35955, Jackson, 1942 381)

IV 5.2 IB

The woman described the otherworld island location from which she brought the beautiful branch during her first encounter with Bran

> A branch of the apple-tree from Emain (*Crótb dind aball a hEmain*)
> I bring, like those one knows,
> Twigs of white silver are on it,
> Crystal brows with blossoms (§3, Meyer, 1895 4-5)
> There is a distant isle (*inis i n-eterchein*),
> Around which sea-horses glisten
> A fair course against the white-swelling surge,
> Four feet uphold it (§4, Meyer, 1895 4-5)

In addition, she gives a detailed description of other regions in the vicinity (see §§5-25 at IV 6 2) As she leaves the branch leaps from Bran's hand and the woman takes it with her Bran set out on his journey to the otherworld island, which involves a number of days rowing across the sea in a boat Although the invitation was given to Bran alone, he took twenty-seven men with him

> Then on the morrow Bran went upon the sea The number of his men was three companies of nine One of his foster-brothers and mates was set over each of the three companies of nine When he had been at sea two days and two nights, he saw a man in a chariot coming towards him over the sea That man also sang thirty quatrains to him, and made himself known to him and said that he was Manannan the son of Ler, and said that it was upon him to go to Ireland after long ages, and that a son would be born to him, even Mongan son of Fiachna – that was the name which would be upon him So he sang these thirty quatrains to him (§32, Meyer, 1895 16)

IV 5 3 TE

Cú Chulainn set out on a ship for Alba Later, he went over land to the land of Scath in the east of Alba During his journey there Cu Chulainn met with an obliging maiden in a house, who identified herself as his foster-sister Then he met a helpful warrior who guided him on foot through dangerous terrain to the house of Scátach

> Then he came upon a house there in a glen In it he found a maiden She said they had been foster-children both with Wulfkin the Saxon (*comaltai dib linaib la hUlbecan Saxa*), "when I was with him and thou learning sweet speech", said she
> Then again he met a warrior It is he who taught him the way across the plain of Ill-luck (*mag n-dobvil*) which was before him He took a wheel with him from the warrior, that he might reach like that wheel across one half of the plain, so that he would not freeze fast He also gave him an apple that he might follow the ground as that apple would follow it Thus he escaped across the plain, which he found before him afterwards
> He told him there was a large glen (*glend mar*) before him One narrow path across it (*Oenet[sh]et coel tairiss*) yet that was his way to the house of Scathach (*thig Scathchai*) Across a terrible stony height besides (ll 46-59, Meyer, 1890 446-7)

IV 5 4 SCC

Loeg makes the first trip by boat to the otherworld located on an island on a lake

> They set out then and came towards an island They saw a boat of bronze (*lungine credume*) on the lake before them They went then into the boat, and came on to the island, and went to the door of a house They saw a man approach them (§15, ll 151-54, Dillon, 1953 5-6)
> The man then answered her and said
> 'Labraid, swift of sword, he will not be slow,
> he will have many followers He gathers troops, a slaughter
> is made, from which Mag Fidgae will be filled' (ll 159-63, Dillon, 1953 6)

On the occasion of the duplicate otherworldly visit when Lí Ban urges Cú Chulainn to send Loeg after he refuses to go himself (see IV 2 4 and IV 3 4), the location of the otherworld and journey to it are not specified When Cu Chulainn finally ventures forth after the third invitation, the otherworld is located on an island but it is unclear whether it is on a lake or is over the sea, the former being rendered more likely by the implication that it was no great distance from land.

> Cú Chulainn went abroad with her then, and he took his chariot so that they came to an island (*Luid Cú Chulaind lee iarom is tir, 7 bert charpat les co rancatar in n-insi*) Labraid welcomed them and so did all the women, and Fand gave a special welcome to Cu Chulainn (§35, ll 576-80, Dillon, 1953 20)

IV 5 5 SbCC

Cu Chulainn names one place visited as Lochland in the north' (*Loc[h]laind atúaid*) and the journey there takes an hour (l 9360, Best and Bergin, 1929 281, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 382-384) He does not state how he travelled there, but Lochlann is usually recognised as Viking lands (Ni Mhaonaigh, 2006 25-26, O Corráin, 1998 296-339), also referred to as 'Scandinavia' in annalistic literature (Nagy, 1983 132), and hence an overseas location

> 5 Another journey I went –
> O Loegaire, but that was an hour!
> That I might give battles
> Against Lochland on the north
> (ll 9357-60, Best and Bergin, 1929 278, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 385)

Cu Chulainn names the other place he visits as *Tir Scait[h], Dun Scait[h]* 'the Land of Scath' (ll 9380, Best and Bergin, 1929 282, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 384) We can infer that this land is also located overseas since he mentions that his crew were drowned from his boat on the ocean after they left it

> 10 A journey I went, O Loegaire,
> For the plunder to the Land of Scath (*Tir Scait[h]*)
> Dun Scaith in it with its locks of irons –
> I laid hand upon it
> (ll 9378-81, Best and Bergin, 1929 282, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 384-5)

Table IV 5

The following table is concerned with whether the otherworld location is (+) or is not (–) separated by water and if the latter whether its location is (A) across the sea, (B) (a) under or (b) in a lake, ? where unspecified

	EL	IB	TE	SCC	SbCC
Location/ Journey	+B(a)	+A	+A	+B(b)/?/+B(b)	+A/+A

IV 6 Description(s) of the otherworld

IV 6 1 EL

Fiachnae named it *Mag Mell* 'Plain of Delights' and his portrayal of the events revolving round the abduction of his wife depicted a place that was normally peaceful but was now stricken by ongoing warfare

> Loveliest of plains is Magh Dá Cheo,
> which pools of gore afflict (*imma-luadet linni cró*),
> the battle of the fairy men, full of valour,
> not far from here where it is
>
> We shed fierce crimson blood
> from the fair bodies of noble kindreds (*sóerchland*),
> an eager tearful very great host of women
> pours forth sorrow over their corpses
>
> The first sack of Cathair Da Chorr,
> around which there are many a wounded side,
> there has fallen with head to the battle
> Eochaidh the entrancing son of Sal
> (ll 35910-22, Jackson, 1942 380-1)

In subsequent stanzas reference is also made to its inhabitants' heroic attributes, beautiful features, royal lineages and artistic skills (Jackson, 1942 383)

IV 6 2 IB

The woman gives a lengthy and detailed account of the otherworld island called 'Land of Women' (*Tir na m-Ban*), which she calls Emain (Meyer, 1895 15, see also §§ 3-4 at IV 5 2) In addition she gives names and accounts of many other regions in the surrounding area

> In southern Mag Findargat

(§5, Meyer, 1895 4-5, *Findarggat*, 'White Silver', Mac Mathuna, 1985 287)
Feet of *findrune* 'white bronze'under it (§6, Meyer, 1895 6-7)
Joy is known, ranked around music,
In southern Mag Argatnel
(§8, Meyer, 1895 6-7, *Arggatnel*, 'Silver Cloud', Mac Mathúna, 1985 287)

Cen bron, cen duba, cen bas cen nach n-galar cen indgas,
Without grief, without sorrow, without death, Without any sickness, without debility,
That is the sign of Emain – (§10, Meyer, 1895 6-7)

Then if Aircthech is seen,
On which dragonstones and crystals drop
(§12, Meyer, 1895 8, *Aircthech*, 'Silvery Land', Mac Mathuna, 1985 287)

Wealth, treasures of every hue,
Are in Ciuin a beauty of freshness,
Listening to sweet music,
Drinking the best of wine
(§13, Meyer, 1895 8, *Ciuin*, 'Gentle Land', Mac Mathuna, 1985 287)

Golden chariots in Mag Rein ('Plain of the Sea', Mac Mathuna, 1985 287)
Chariots of silver in Mag Mon ('Plain of Sports', Mac Mathuna, 1985 287)
And of bronze without blemish (§14, Meyer, 1895 8)

Many-shaped Emne by the sea,
Whether it be near, whether it be far, (§19, Meyer, 1895 10-11)

If he has heard the voice of the music,
The chorus of the little birds from Imchiuin
('Very Gentle Land', Mac Mathuna, 1985 287)
To the plain of sport (*cluchemag*) in which he is (§20, Meyer, 1895 10-11)

There will come happiness with health
To the land against which laughter peals,
Into Imchiuin at every season
Will come everlasting joy (§21, Meyer, 1895 12-13)

Listening to music at night,
And going into Ildathach 'Many Coloured Land'
(§24, Meyer, 1895 12-13, Mac Mathuna, 1985 287)

There are thrice fifty distant isles
In the ocean to the west of us,
Larger than Erin twice
Is each of them, or thrice (§25, Meyer, 1895 12-13)

After his encounter with Manannan mac Lir, Bran sends one of his men onto the first island he reaches named *Inis Subai* 'the Island of Joy' (Meyer, 1895 30) However, they find that the 'joy' in question has major drawbacks

> Thereupon Bran went from him And he saw an island He rows about it, and a large host was gaping and laughing They were all looking at Bran and his people, but would not stay to converse with them They continued to give forth gusts of laughter at them Bran sent one of his people on the island He ranged himself with the others, and was gaping at them like the other men of the island He kept rowing round about the island Whenever his man came past Bran, his comrades would address him But he would not converse with them, but would only look at them and gape at them The name of this island is the Island of Joy Thereupon they left him there
> (§61, Meyer, 1895 28-30)

IV 6 3 TE

The otherworld's name is implied by the reference to the 'house of Scathach' *thig Scathchai* in the dún where Scáthach lived with her daughter Úathach A cold and dangerous otherworld (see IV 5 3 and IV 7 3) is indicated by the treacherous path which Cu Chulainn had to travel to find Scatach's dwelling place and by the fact that he was soon drawn into combat

IV 6 4 SCC.

On the occasion of Oengus' first appearance at Cu Chulainn's sick-bed, the otherworld is named 'the Plain of Crúach' (see §11, IV 3 4, Dillon, 1953 4) Óengus also makes reference to an abundance of gold, silver and wine there Subsequently Li Ban uses the name Mag Mell 'Plain of Delights' (see §13 at IV 5 4) to describe the place where Labraid lives when issuing her personal invitation to Cu Chulainn She also describes Labraid's heroic attributes and those of his otherworldly warriors in detail (Dillon, 1953 15, § 31) Later when Loeg returned to the human realm at Fand's behest he recited a lengthy and detailed description of the otherworld to Cú Chulainn (see also IV 3 4)

> The stead of each bed is copper (*crónda*), white pillars
> gilded, the candle which stands before them is a gleaming precious stone (*lía logmar lainerda*) (§33, ll 486-9, Dillon, 1953 17)

> grey horses with shining manes (*graig ngabor nglas brec a mong*),
> and others dark brown (*corcordond*)

three trees of purple glass, in which birds sing softly (*énlaith búan blaith*),
unceasing, to the children of the royal fort (ll 492-6, Dillon, 1953 17)

There is a tree it were well to match its music- - a silver tree
on which the sun shines, like gold is its brilliance (ll 498-500, Dillon, 1953 17-18)
three hundred are fed from every tree with abundant mast without husk (*mes ilarda imlum*) (ll 503-505, Dillon, 1953 17-18)

A vat there is of intoxicating mead which is served (*Dabach and do mid medrach*), to
the household it stays ever – a lasting custom –
so that it is always full (ll 510-13, Dillon, 1953 17-18)

a girl in the noble house who surpasses
the women of Ireland, with yellow flowing hair she
is beautiful and skilled in many crafts (*illánach*) (ll 515-17, Dillon, 1953 18)

'That is good', said Cu Chulainn 'It is good', said Loeg, 'and thou shouldst go there
And everything in that country is good' And Loeg said again to him, telling the joy of the fairy mound

As I came over Mag Luada I beheld the Magic Tree
In Mag Denna I met with two two-headed serpants
Beautiful women - virtue unbounded – are the
daughters of Aed Abrat The beauty of Fand –
brilliant name – no queen or king has attained it
in the race of Adam without transgression (*cen imarbos*), a
form more gentle there is none such in my time
I saw gaily clad warriors at play with weapons
I saw coloured raiment fit only for princes (*nocon erred anflatha*)
I saw musicians in the house playing for the maiden
Were it not that I came out quickly they would
have left me without reason
I saw the hill where dwelt a beautiful woman,
Eithne of the Sigh, but the woman I tell of here
brings the hosts out of their senses' (§34, ll 538-75, Dillon, 1953 19-20)

IV 6 5 SbCC

While Cu Chulainn names the locations Lochlainn and the Land of Scath, he does not describe either of them directly However his account of his exploits in each suggests unwelcoming and hostile places (see IV 4 5 and IV 5 5) He describes the 'thirty cubit' (*trichta cubat*) giant king that he defeats in battle in Lochlainn as well as the abundant treasures which he took from there (ll 9363, Best and Bergin, 1929 282, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 384-5)

6 After that I attacked him,
After we had fought three times
I flung off his head in battle,
so that the king fell
(ll 9361-64, Best and Bergin, 1929 282, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 384)

9 It was after that I bound
On them, for their share,
Seven hundred talents of white silver,
With seven hundred talents of gold–
That was the tribute (*cáin*)
(ll 9373-77, Best and Bergin, 1929 282, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 385)

Cu Chulainn also describes the inhabitants and treasures of gold and silver including a cauldron large enough to hold thirty bullocks (see IV 4 5 and IV 5 5) from the Land of Scath and he details his intervention there

11 Seven walls about that city –
Hateful was the fort
A rampart of irons on each wall,
On that were nine heads

12 Doors of irons on each flank –
Against us not great defences
I struck them with my leg,
Until I drove them into fragments

13 There was a pit in the dun,
Belonging to the king, is is related
Ten serpents burst
Over its border – it was a deed!

14 After that I attacked them,
Though very vast the throng,
Until I made bits of them,
Between my fists

15 A houseful of toads,
They were let fly at us
Sharp, beaked monsters,
They stuck in my snout
(ll 9382-9401, Best and Bergin, 1929 282-3, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 387)

Table IV.6

The top line of the table lists the various names of the otherworld in these texts, ? being employed when no name is mentioned The bottom line summarises the otherworldly features specified as (a) perpetual peace and happiness, (b) lack of sin or transgression, (c) eternal life, (d) infinite food and drink, (e) wonderful treasures, (f) beautiful woman/women, (g) fair and colourful lands, (h) numerous birds, (i) melodious music, ? where unspecified

	EL	IB	TE	SCC	SbCC
Name	Mag Mell	Tir na m-ban / Emain	Dun/ thig Scathchai	Maig Crúaich / Mag Mell	Lochland/ Dun Scaith
Features	a/e	a/b/c/d/e/f g/h/i/	?	a/b/c/d/e/f/g/h	d/e

It can thus be seen that some of these descriptions are more elaborate and comprehensive than others, as was also evident in the case of the tales analysed in the previous chapter The only otherworld name in these texts that also appears in the latter is Mag Mell

IV 7 The nature of the hero's intervention there

IV.7 1 EL.

Loegaire's violent intervention in otherworldly affairs follows upon an invitation to do battle in defence of Fiachnae and his troops there Together they defeated Goll and recovered Fiachnae's wife Osnadh For this Loegaire was awarded Fiachnae's daughter

> "Good Fiachnae" said Laeghaire, "I will encounter yonder chieftan [sic] with fifty warriors" (ll 35960-1, Jackson, 1942 383)
>
> "Where is the woman?" said Laeghaire "She is in the fort of Magh Mell", said Fiachna, "with half the army around her" "Wait here till I get at them with my fifty" said Laeghaire Then Laeghaire went till he reached the fort However, the capture of the fort was already in progress "It will be small profit", said Laeghaire, "your king has fallen and your nobles have fallen Send the woman out, and let quarter be given you for it" (ll 35964-66, Jackson, 1942 383)

> Laeghaire went after that and put her hand in the hand of Fiachna, and there sleeps with Laeghaire that night Der Greine daughter of Fiachna, and fifty women were given to his fifty warriors They stay with them till the end of a year
> (ll 35967-86, Jackson, 1942 385)

IV 7 2. IB.

Bran's visit to the otherworld was non-violent, although he had to be drawn ashore by the queen Thereafter he and his company were treated with the utmost hospitality

> It was not long thereafter when they reached the Land of Women They saw the leader of the women at the port Said the chief of the women 'Come hither on land, O Bran son of Febal! Welcome is they advent!' Bran did not venture to go on shore The woman throws a ball of thread to Bran straight over his face Bran put his hand on the ball, which clave to his palm (*Lil in chertle dia dernainn*) The thread of the ball was in the woman's hand, and she pulled the coracle (*curach*) towards the port Thereupon they went into a large house, in which was a bed for every couple, even thrice nine beds The food that was put on every dish vanished not from them It seemed a year to them that they were there, - it chanced to be many years No savour was wanting to them (*Nistesbi nach mblass*, §62, Meyer, 1895 30-31)

IV 7 3 TE

Initially Cu Chulainn's visit to the otherworld seemed peaceful but, before long, he was drawn into combat

> The maiden served him with water and food She made him welcome in the guise of a servant He hurt her, and broke her finger The maiden shrieked This ran through all the host of the dun, so that a champion rose up against him, viz Cochor Crufe He and Cuchulind fought, and the champion fell (ll 68-72, Meyer, 1890 447-9)

Cu Chulainn offered his military services to ease Scathach's sadness at this loss, but then, on Uathach's advice, threatened violence against her so that she would grant him three wishes

> Sorrowful was the woman Scathach at this, so that he said to her, he would take (upon himself) the services of the man that had fallen Then on the third day the maiden advised Cuchulind, that if it was to achieve valour that he had gone forth, he should go through the chariot-chief's salmon-leap at Scathach in the place where she was teaching her two sons, Cuar and Cet, in the great yew tree, when she was reclining there, there that he should set his sword between her two breasts, until she gave him his three wishes, viz to teach him without neglect, and that she should wed him with payment of her dowry, and say everything that would befall him, for she was a prophetess (ll 73-81, Meyer, 1890 449)

Later Cu Chulainn involved himself in combat in support of Scáthach against the female warrior Aífe, whom he defeated and likewise forced to grant him three wishes (see also IV 8 3)

> Now, Scathach would utter a sigh every day and knew not what would come (of it) Then he would go on the path One thing was that there was no third man with her two sons against three, and then she was afraid of Aiffe, because she was the hardest woman-warrior in the world (*banfendith ba handsom bai isin bith*)
> (ll 107-10, Meyer, 1890 450-1)
>
> Then they fought upon the path, Cuchulind and Aiffe Then she broke Cuchulind's weapon so that his sword was no longer than its hilt Then Cuchulind said "Woe is me!" said he, "Aiffe's charioteer and her two chariot-horses have fallen down the glen, and all have perished" At that Aiffe looked up At that Cuchulind approached her, seized her under her breast, threw her across (his shoulder) like a burden, and went to his own host "Life for life!" she said "My three wishes to me!" said he "Thou shalt have them" "These are my three wishes thou to give hostages to Scathach without ever opposing her, to be with me this night before thy own dun, and to bear me a son" It was granted thus and was all done (ll 115-29, Meyer, 1890 447-51)

When he was returning to Scathach after his encounter with Aife, Cu Chulainn was involved in another violent incident

> He went back again On the path before him he met an old blind woman, blind of her left eye She said to him to beware and not be in her way There was no footing on the cliff of the sea He let himself down from the path, and only his toes clung to it When she passed over them she hit his great toe to throw him down the cliff Then he leapt the chariot-chief's salmon-leap up again, and strikes her head off She was the mother of the last chariot-chief that had fallen by him, viz Eiss Enchend
> (ll 133-40, Meyer, 1890 453)

IV 7 4 SCC.

Cu Chulainn's intervention in otherworldly affairs was violent but in response to the request of the otherworldly warrior Labraid

> They went then so that they came to the massing of hosts and viewed them, and they thought the host great 'Go away now!' said Cu Chulainn to Labraid Labraid went away then and Cu Chulainn stayed by the host Two magic ravens (*da f[h]iach druidechta*) whom the hosts had made announced him 'It is likely', said the host, 'that it is the frenzied man from Ireland whom the ravens fortell'
> (§35, ll 582-7, Dillon, 1953 20)

> The hosts pursued him then, so that he did not find a place of safety in the country at their hands Éochaid Íuil came then to a spring to wash his hands early one morning Cu Chulainn saw his shoulder through the hood He flung a spear at him so that it

went through him Labraid besought him to stay from the slaughter 'But we fear', said Lóeg, 'that the man will wreak his anger upon us, for that he does not think he has had in battle enough 'Go', said Loeg, 'and let three vats of cold water be prepared to quench his fury' The first vat into which he went boiled over him The second, none endured it on account of its heat The heat of the third vat was moderate
(§36, 588-599, Dillon, 1953 20-1, see also§38)

IV 7 5 SbCC

Cu Chulainn's intervention in affairs at both otherworldly locations was violent Furthermore he boasts that, while in Lochlann, he decapitated a giant and that later he broke the defences into fragments in the Land of Scáth (see IV 6 5, see also verses 17, 18 and 19, ll 9406-17, Best and Bergin, 1929 283, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 387-9)

Table IV 7

The nature of the hero's intervention is summarised in the top line as follows +/– violent/non-violent (? where unspecified) The bottom line indicates its outcome, which once again needs to be expanded to include a fourth category 'd' as follows (a) destruction of the otherworld, (b) restoration of peace in the otherworld and (c) no harm to the otherworld, (d) death of otherworldly figure(s)

	EL	IB	TE	SCC	SbCC
Nature	+/–	–	+/–	+	+/+
Outcome	b	c	d/b	b	d/d

IB is the only tale not to involve violent intervention in otherworldly affairs and it is, perhaps, only to be expected that violence would characterise Cu Chulainn's actions in the three involving him

IV 8 The hero's relationship with otherworld figures, notably (a) a woman/women, (b) key male figures such as a king or kings

IV 8 1 EL

(a) While Loegaire did acquire an otherworldly wife, Fiachnae's daughter Der Gréine, this relationship is not elaborated upon

(b) Loegaire's military intervention enabled the otherworld king Fiachnae to recover his wife Osnad, who had been abducted by Goll son of Dolb king of the fort of Mag Mell Peace was restored to the otherworld, in which Loegaire went in to live forever

IV 8 2 IB

(a) An intimate relationship between Bran and 'the leader of the women' (*tóisech inna m-ban*) (§62, Meyer, 1895 31) during his time in the otherworld is implied

> Thereupon they went into a large house, in which was a bed for every couple, even thrice nine beds (*Arránic imde ceche lanamne and ⁊ tri noi n-imdæ*, §62, Meyer, 1895 30-1, see also IV 7 2)

(b) During the voyage Bran meets with Manannan mac Lir, who offers some friendly advice Manannán says he is on his way to Ireland to father a son who shall be named Mongán mac Fiachnai (see IV 6 2) He compares his own vision of a lush and fertile land whose inhabitants are unaffected by original sin with Bran's mere view of the sea and its wildlife (§33-§44, Meyer, 1895 16-20) After describing how the serpent brought sin into the world, he predicts the coming of Christ's salvation and concludes with eleven stanzas about his extraordinary future offspring, Mongán, and a final verse urging Bran onwards to the Land of Women (§45-§59, Meyer, 1895 23-9) However, it seems that Bran encounters no otherworldly males once he has reached the Land of Women

IV 8 3 TE

(a) Cú Chulainn has a friendly welcome from the first otherworldly woman that he encounters in the house in a glen (see 4 6 3) and then goes on to have more intimate relations with two others, Uathach and Aife The former was immediately smitten

> He then went that way He went to the dun He struck the door with the shaft of his spear, so that it went through it Uathach the daughter of Scathach, went to meet him She looked at him She did not speak to him, so much did his shape move her desire However, she went, and praised him to her mother "The man has pleased thee", said her mother "He shall come to my bed, and I will sleep with him tonight " "That (were) not wearisome to me" (ll 60-7, Meyer, 1890 447)

Thereafter his liaison with the female warrior Aife occurs, albeit after her defeat in battle by a ruse and submission in order to save her life, and ultimately she bears Cu Chulainn's only child (see also IV 7 3)

> Then she said she was pregnant She also said that it was a son she would bear (*mac noberath*), and that the boy would come to Erin that day seven year And he left a name for him (ll 130-32, Meyer, 1890 450-1)

(b) Cú Chulainn has a friendly encounter with the unnamed warrior who guided him to Scathach (see IV 5 3) He also has a violent encounter with the champion of the Dún, Cochor Crufe (see IV 7 3)

IV 8 4 SCC

(a) Cú Chulainn has an intimate relationship with Fand, who gives him a special welcome (§35, l 579, *fáelti sinredaig*) (Dillon, 1953 20) upon his arrival in the otherworld (see IV 3 and IV 4 4) After victory in battle

> Cu Chulainn spent the night then with the girl (*Foid Cu Chulaind iar sin lasin n-ingin*), and he stayed with her for a month And after a month he bade her farewell, and she said to him 'Wherever thou tellest me to go to meet thee I shall go' And then they made a tryst at Ibar Cind Trachta He told that to Emer Knives were made by her to kill the girl She came with fifty maidens to the tryst Cu Chulainn and Lóeg were there, playing chess and they did not notice the woman approaching Then Fand perceived it, and she said to Lóeg Look, Lóeg, at what I see!
> (§39, ll 682-90, Dillon, 1953 24)

(b) Cú Chulainn's military intervention was in favour of the otherworldly male Labraid While Labraid's warrior attributes are enlarged on throughout the tale, no kingly lineage is mentioned (see IV 6 4)

IV 8 5. SbCC

(a) Cú Chulainn gives no details of a relationship with any otherworldly female but he does mention that it was the king's daughter who gave him the *corn* 'cauldron' full of *or 7 argut* 'gold and silver'in the Land of Scath (ll 9418-21, Best and Bergin, 1929 283, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 389, see also IV 9 5 verse 20)

(b) In Lochlann Cu Chulainn has a violent encounter with a giant whom he fought three times and referred to as a king after defeating him (see IV 6 5)

Table IV 8

The top line indicates whether (+) or not (–) any sexual relationship(s) with an otherworldly woman is specified The bottom line summarises relationship(s) with key male figures with modification of the corresponding list in the previous chapter to include relationships with an otherworldly male whose kingly attributes are not explicit (a) hero defeats otherworld male in battle, (b) hero defeats otherworldly king in battle, (c) hero has a friendly, supportive relationship with otherworld king, (d) hero gives military support to male warrior ? where no relationship specified

	EL	IB	TE	SCC	SbCC
o/w f/figs	+	+	+/+	+	–/–
o/w king	b/c	?	a/b	d	a/b

The hero has an explicitly sexual relationship with an otherworld female figure in four of the tales, namely EL, TE, SCC and IB Cu Chulainn returns to the human realm without her in TE In SCC Cu Chulainn's attempts to meet with his otherworldly lover Fand in the human world are thwarted by his wife Emer whereas Bran leaves the otherworld woman in order to try to return to Ireland

Apart from EEM and FL, where no such personage occurs, and EC, where there is no mention of a relationship between the otherworld's king Boadag and Connlae, the protagonist did form a crucial relationship with a key otherworldly king in four texts in Group 1, namely EN, EA, ECA and BS In the group of tales considered here the hero has close contact with an otherworldly male in EL, TE and SCC In SCC Labraid is described as a mighty warrior and is not explicitly called a king In TE Cu Chulainn has a friendly relationship with an otherworldly male warrior but also defeats the champion of the dun in battle Similarly, in SbCC, Cu Chulainn defeats a giant otherworldly king while visiting Lochlann Bran encounters Manannan during his voyage but, hardly surprisingly no relationship with an otherworldly male figure is mentioned after he reaches the Land of Women

IV 9 Objects acquired from the otherworld

IV 9 1 EL

The otherworldly Fiachnae offered "a payment of silver and a payment of gold to every single man who desires it" (see IV 4 1, Jackson, 1942 381) in return for their support in battle Ultimately he gave Lóegaire and his fifty warriors horses for their return visit to transport them between the two worlds

> "Let us go to find out news of our country", said Laeghaire "If you would come back again", said Fiachna, "take horses with you, and do not dismount from them" (" *ní tarlingid dib*) That is done (ll 35986-8, Jackson, 1942 384-5).

IV 9 2 IB

Bran briefly acquired an otherworldly talisman in the shape of the branch lying beside him when he awoke from his musically induced sleep, but then lost it

> Thereupon the woman went from them, while they knew not whither she went And she took her branch with her (*ocus birt a croib lee*) The branch sprang from Bran's hand into the hand of the woman, nor was there strength in Bran's hand to hold the branch (§31, Meyer, 1895 16-17)

IV 9 3 TE

While Cu Chulainn does not acquire any material objects or treasures from the otherworld, the proficiency in warlike skills inculcated by Scáthach greatly enhanced his heroic warrior prowess, thus enabling him to acquire a wife in Emer upon his return to the human realm (see IV 3 3 and IV 4 3)

IV 9 4 SCC

No mention is made of any otherworldly objects or treasures obtained by Cu Chulainn

IV 9 5 SbCC

Cu Chulainn mentions a tribute of *sec[h]t cet talland argait bain im sec[h]t cet talland oir* "seven hundred talents of white silver, with seven hundred talents of gold" which he acquired from Lochlann (ll 9375, Best and Bergin, 1929 282, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 384-5) Later he describes the contents of a cauldron brought from the Land of Scath/ Shadow

> 20 There was much gold and silver in it –
> Wonderful was the find
> That cauldron was given
> By the daughter of the king
> (ll 9418-21, Best and Bergin, 1929 283, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 389)

Table IV 9

The various treasures and objects acquired from the otherworld are recapitulated below as (a) valuables/talismans or (b) food/drink, (– not mentioned)

	EL	IB	TE	SCC	SbCC
objects/treasures	a	a	–	–	a

EL, IB and SbCC are the only tales to name the treasures and objects acquired in the otherworld explicitly Elsewhere nothing tangible is mentioned but Cu Chulainn acquires special martial proficiency in TE

IV 10 The aftermath of the visit

IV 10 1 EL

Lóegaire and his fifty warriors returned to the human realm for a short time after their visit to the otherworld His father, King Crimthann, offered him the kingship of "Three Connaughts, their gold and their silver, their horses and their bridles, and their fair women at your pleasure" (Jackson, 1942 385) in an effort to entice him to settle back among men However, Loegaire rejected his claims on human sovereignty in favour of a shared otherworld kingship with Fiachnae

> Wonderful it is, Crimthann Cass!
> I was master of a blue sword,
> one night of the fairy nights (*oin adaig d'aidchib side*)
> I will not exchange for your kingdom"
> (ll 36015-18, Jackson, 1942 384-5)

> After that he turned from them into the fairy mound again, and he shares the kingship of the fairy mound with Fiachnae son of Réda, that is, in the fort of Magh Mell, and Fiachnae's daughter along with him, and he has not come out yet
> (ll 129-32, Jackson, 1942 386-7)

IV 10 2 IB

After what had seemed like a year in the otherworld but what turned out to be many hundreds of years (see IV 7 2), Bran was persuaded to return to Ireland because Nechtán mac Collbrain was homesick He ignored the woman's advice to visit the man they had left behind on the

Island of Joy Bran and his company were not recognised upon their return to Ireland, but they were told that the Vogage of Bran (*Immram Brain*) was to be found in their 'ancient stories' (*hi senchasaib*) Nechtan turned into a heap of ashes when he leaped ashore in breach of the woman's warning not to set foot on land, so the others did not attempt to follow suit Bran sang a quatrain of regret and then he wrote down his wanderings in Ogam before bidding farewell to the gathering and "from that hour his wanderings are not known" *ni fessa a imthechta ónd uair sin* (Meyer, 1895 33-5, §63 – §66) McCone (2000 45) points out that this ending (§66) is not present in the YBL 'proper' (Y) version of IB, one of the two main versions to have come down to us (See McCone 2000 3-5 for discussion on YBL (Y and Y^2) Ultimately McCone (2000 45) agrees with Mac Mathuna (1985 214), who considers it possible that this final paragraph explaining how Bran's journey became known in Ireland "was not originally in the archetype" of IB

IV 10 3 TE

Following his conflict with the old blind lady, Cu Chulainn went back to Scathach's land for one day before returning to the human world and taking Emer to Emain Macha

> Thereafter the hosts went with Scathach to her land, and he stayed there for the day of his recovery And she told him what befell him after he came to Erin (*iar tichtain hErend*), and Scathach said this "Great peril awaits thee" (and the rest, which is in the book) Then he came to Erin, and he chanced upon the cattle-spoil of Cualgne (*tuarmc tain bo Cualngi*)
> He went then, as he had promised, to Luglochta Loga to the dun of Forgall the Wily He leapt across the three ramparts and dealt three blows in the close, so that eight fell from each blow, and one man in the midst of nine was saved, Scibor, and Ibor, and Catt, the three brothers of the maiden And he took the maiden Emer with her foster sister, with their two loads of gold, and he leapt once more across the three ramparts with two maidens And he fulfilled all those deeds which he had promised to her, and went until he was in Emain Macha (ll 141-154, Meyer, 1890 452-3)

IV 10 4 SCC.

Upon his return to the human world, Cu Chulainn told his wife Emer that he had arranged to meet Fand there However, Emer would have no part in this proposed love-triangle and she showed her only fit of jealousy by threatening Fand's life Cu Chulainn protests

'Why shouldst thou not allow me a while trysting? First as to this woman, she is clean and chaste and fair and clever and fit for a many-gifted king, - this girl from the waves beyond wide seas, endowed with beauty and grace and nobility, with skill in embroidery and handicraft, with sense and wisdom and steadfastness, with many horses and herds of cattle For there is nothing under heaven that her fellow-wife would wish that she would not do, if thou wouldst join in a bond, Emer, thou shalt not find a hero, handsome, wounding in conflict, triumphant, who is equal to me'
(§42, ll 711-18, Dillon, 1953 25)
'Perhaps', said Emer, 'the woman thou followest is not better than I However, all that glittered is beautiful, all that is new is bright, all that is lacking is delightful, all that is familiar is neglected, till all be known, Lad', said she, thou hadst us once in dignity together and we should be so again if thou didst desire it' And she was sad 'On my word said he, I desire thee, and I shall desire thee as long as thou livest!'
(§43, ll 720-25, Dillon, 1953 25)

Fand told Cu Chulainn that he should leave her and return to Emer and she told Emer that, although she loved Cú Chulainn, she would return to her home without him Upon hearing of the danger to Fand's life, her husband Manannán arrived

Then that was revealed to Manannan, that Fand, daughter of Aed Abrat held unequal conflict against the women of Ulster, and that Cú Chulainn was leaving her And Manannan came to the girl out of the east, and was before her, and none of them perceived that save Fand alone And it was then that the girl was seized with regret and faintness of spirit, when she looked upon Manannan
(§45, ll 760-65, Dillon, 1953 26)

When Cú Chulainn realised that Fand had left him, he dementedly took himself off to the mountains Emer went to Conchobur and told him this

Conchohor sent the poets and learned men and druids of Ulster to seek him so that they might seize him and bring him to Emain But he tried to kill the learned men They sang druid spells against him, so that his feet and his hands were bound, until his sense returned for a while Then he asked them for a drink The druids gave him a drink of forgetfulness When he had taken the drink, he did not remember Fand, nor anything that he had done And they gave a drink of forgetfulness to Emer for her jealousy, for she was in no better case *Ro croth dano Manannán a brat eter Coin Culaind 7 F[h]aind connaro chomraictis do gres* And Manannan shook his cloak between Cu Chulainn and Fand so that they never met
(§48, ll 834-43, Dillon, 1953 29)

IV 10 5 SbCC

Cu Chulainn does not expand on the aftermath of his visits toLochlann but immediately went on to describe his visit to and escape from the Land of Scáth He explained that neither battles

he had endured nor what he had suffered after his boat capsized on the sea were comparable to the helplessness he felt when confronted with the horrors of hell (ll 9438-50, Best and Bergin, 1929,284, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 391) Cu Chulainn stated that it was a good thing he came in response to Loegaire's request so that Patrick might now bring him out of hell to achieve victory

> 32 It was well it went for thy word, O Loegaire,
> To Patrick a request once,
> That he would bring me from hell,
> So that for me is its victory
>
> 33 'It is a great victory for Goedil,
> Let the host hear –
> [Every one] who will believe in Patrick,
> In heaven will not be wretched
> (ll 9467-75, Best and Bergin, 1929 285, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 393)

Finally Cu Chulainn concluded by praising the benefits of believing in Patrick and by urging Loegaire to embrace the new faith The story ends (in this, the LU version) with heaven being declared open to Cu Chulainn

> "Believe in God and in holy Patrick, O Loegaire, that a wave of earth may not come over thee It will come, there is no doubt, unless thou believest in God and in holy Patrick, for it is not a demon that has come to thee it is Cu Chulaind, son of Soalta" That thing was accordingly verified earth came over Loegaire heaven is declared for Cu Chulaind Now Loegaire believed in Patrick in consequence
> (ll 9536-40, Best and Bergin, 1929 287, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 399)

Table IV 10.

This summarises the aftermath of the hero's visit as follows (A) rejection of human kingship, (B) brief return to human realm followed by permanent return to the otherworld, (C) no return from expedition, (D) shared otherworld kingship, (E) return to inherit/resume human kingship, ? no reference to kingship

	EL	IB	TE	SCC	SbCC
Aftermath	A/B/D	B	?	?	?

Bran, rather like Connlae, does not return to live in Ireland in IB However, the aftermath in the three tales TE, SCC and SbCC relating the otherworld adventures of the hero Cú Chulainn do not compare closely with EL, IB or with the seven tales in Group 1 This and other differences noted in preceding sections may be due to his primary role as a warrior rather than as a king or a king's son There is, of course, explicit reference to sovereignty and kingship in the passage entitled the *Briatharthecosc Con Culaind inso*, when Cú Chulainn instructs his foster-son Lugaid Reoderg before he is made king of Tara, but this has no relevance to the aftermath for the hero in SCC (see Dillon, 1941-2 124-5)

IV 11 Summary.

The above sections have considered the status and realisation of the ten significant features highlighted in the previous chapter It remains now to present an overall summary of the evidence examined as follows

1 rs = royal site, t = transitional time of day or year, '–' if not stated

2 ks = king's son, marked (d) if described in some detail, '–' if not specified

3 m(ale)/f(emale), marked (i) if immortal/supernatural issues invitation, marked (s) if invitation relates to sovereignty, '?' if no invitation issued

4 e = attainment of eternal life, m = military intervention, marked (k) if in favour of otherworld king, t = proficiency in military training, p = to plunder otherworld treasures, marked (s) if explicit sovereignty motivation, '–' where motivation not stated

5 (u/o)w = (under/over) water, unmarked if sea but marked (l) if lake, (u/o)g = under/over) ground,'?' where location is unspecified

6 otherworld named/described = +/+, –/– not named or described

7 +/– = fundamentally friendly/hostile intervention Both may be used in the appropriate sequence +/– or –/+ if change occurs, while +(–) denotes friendly intervention on behalf of one set of inhabitants but hostile intervention against another

8 w = acquisition/recovery of and/or (+/–) sex with a woman, k(d) = defeats or deceives an otherworld king, k(h) = helps an otherworld king defeat an enemy, ? where relationship(s) unspecified, marked (s) if explicit sovereignty associations

9 t = acquisition of treasure(s) or talisman(s) (marked (s) if any obvious sovereignty associations), f = food and/or d = drink, '–' where no treasures mentioned

10 r = hero returns home, o = hero remains in otherworld, r/o = a brief return home before taking up permanent residence in the otherworld, marked (s) if hero assumes or shares in sovereignty

IV.12. Summary Table

	EL	IB	TE	SCC	SbCC
Setting	rs/t	rs/–	rs/–	rs/t	rs/–
Hero is	ks(d)	ks	–	–	–
Invitation Bearer	m(1)	f(1)	m/m(1)	m(1)/f(1)/(1)	?/?
Motivation	m(k)	e	t	m(k)	–/p
Otherworld Location	(u)w(l)	(o)w	(o)w/(o)g	(o)w(l)/?/(o)w(l)	(o)w/(o)w
Named/ Described	+/+	+/+	+/–	+/+	+/+
Friendly/Hostile Intervention	+(–)	+	+(–)	+(–)	–/–
Relationship(s)	w(+)/k(h)(s)	w(+)	w(+)/w(+)	w(+)/k(h)	k(d)
Acquisitions	t	t	–	–	t/t
Aftermath	r/o(s)	r/o	r	r	r

IV 13 Conclusion

All of the texts considered here make a renowned royal site the spatial setting but only two, namely EL and SCC, specify a transitional temporal setting EL alone explicitly emphasises the royal lineage of the hero, this being at least implied in IB Perhaps significantly, given that his motivations differ fundamentally, the royal ancestry of the hero *par excellence* Cu Chulainn is not overtly emphasised in the tales concerning him, namely TE, SCC and SbCC

The otherworldly nature of the invitation bearer is apparent in all of the *echtrai* considered previously, except EEM and FL The possible otherworldly associations of Forgoll in TE are discussed at VII 3 (see also fn 195) Both invitations come from otherworldly figures, male and female respectively in SCC whereas SbCC lacks such information IB matches EC as regards the hero's motivation, namely the attainment of eternal life All of the texts considered in the previous chapter have prominent and unmistakable sovereignty associations, as does EL here, but this is not evident in the three involving Cú Chulainn

The otherworld has various locations both overland and over water, but the journey there is not elaborated upon in any of the *echtrai*, with the exception of EA Like EA in the first, IB stands apart in the second group by virtue of recounting the journey overseas in some detail The overland otherworld location in EEM compares with that in BS and FL, the latter two employing a great mist/fog as a separating feature In addition, all of the first group supply various names and descriptions of the otherworld apart from EEM, BS and FL The terms *Mag* Plain' or *Tir* 'Land' are commonly featured in the otherworld names here also, while the name Mag Mell, which featured in EC, likewise appears in EL and SCC

SbCC depicts the unfriendly nature of Cu Chulainn's intervention in the Land of Scath but he had some friendly as well as unfriendly relationships in TE and SCC Nevertheless, none of the female figures featured here display obvious sovereignty connections

EN, EA, ECA, BS, EL, SbCC and IB give detailed descriptions of otherworldly talismans and treasures obtained but no tangible gifts are mentioned in EC, FL, EEM, TE or SCC The aftermath in ECA, EA, EEM, BS and FL involved the heir-apparent returning to resume/assume human kingship Here Bran returns briefly to Ireland but, like Connlae in EC, he then goes off forever Notably, the outcomes for Cu Chulainn after his otherworldly adventures in TE, SCC and SbCC do not explicitly involve kingship

It seems reasonable to conclude from the above analysis that, while this group share some of the basic features identified in Chapter III as pertaining to a reasonably typical *echtrae*, such as an otherworld encounter and a royal setting, EL is the only one to display explicit sovereignty motivations The significant differences displayed in the tales relating to Cu Chulainn, not least the overseas otherworld location, will be discussed in more detail in VII 2-VII 4

Chapter V Overall evidence for the centrality of sovereignty

V Introduction

Chapters II, III and IV have established a database of what might now be regarded as more or less typical *echtrai*, namely EN, EC, EA, ECA, EEM, BS, FL, EL and, arguably, IB The structural analysis of these texts has highlighted various features connected with sovereignty, notably (1) royal personages, (2) royal sites, (3) typical sovereignty motifs, (4) otherworld gifts associated with sovereignty, (5) repercussions for the kingship of one or both worlds in the aftermath This chapter will concentrate upon the issue of sovereignty in these tales TE, SCC and SbCC are not included here because they relate to the primarily martial figure of Cu Chulainn and display certain peculiarities that will be explored in a Chapter VII

V 1. Royal personages

The protagonist in the *echtrae* tales is usually recognisable as a royal personage and this information is presented at the outset, the only exceptions being Nerae in EN and Bran in IB (see III 2 1- 2 7, Table III 2 and IV 2 1-2 2 and Table IV 2) In addition the connections of the protagonists of apparently lost tales entitled *echtrae* in the tale lists will be examined here (see II 1 1 to II 1 8)

V 1 1 Nerae

Although no family name is given in the extant versions of the text itself, (see III 2 1), the hero is named Nera mac Níadain in the *23 N 10* and *Harl 5280* manuscript versions of Tale-list B while the *Rawl* B512 version adds his grandfather's name Nera mac Niadain maic Tacaim (Mac Cana, 1980 53) However, none of these names are featured in genealogies and no information is found elsewhere

V 1 2 Conn Cetchathach

Conn is identified as king of Tara in BS (see III 2 6) He is listed under *Rig Erenn* as the son of Feidelmid Rechtmar and grandson of Túathal Techtmar in *CGH* 136 b 1 According to medieval 'historical' tradition Conn was a High King of Ireland, after whom the northern part of Ireland was called Leth Cuinn 'Conn's Half' [40] He was a genealogical lynchpin from whom major dynasties of that area, most importantly the Uí Neill, ultimately claimed direct descent (Byrne, 1973 280, O hUiginn, 1988 20-1[41]) He is said to have lived in the second century A D by the Annals and *LGE* (Dillon, 1948 102, Macalister, 1956 331-3)

V 1 3 Connlae

The central character is named in EC itself (see III 2 2) as Connlae Ruad mac do Chunn Chetchathach 'Ruddy Connlae son of Conn of the Hundred Battles' He is called Conla Cáem, 'the fair' , one of three sons of Conn Cetchathach, under *sil Cuind* 'seed of Conn' in *CGH* 137 b 50, "*Tri meic dano la Conn Cetchathach i Condla Caem, Crinna 7 Art Oenfer*"

V 1.4 Art mac Cuinn

Called Art mac Cuinn "son of Conn" (Cétchathach), in EA (see III 2 3) and listed under *sil Cuind* in *CGH* 137 b 50 (see V 1 3 above), he is said to have had two brothers, Connlae and Crínna, and also to have been known as Art Oenfer the "lone" or "solitary" The *LU* version of EC gives Connlae's disappearance as the reason for "Art's acquisition of the sobriquet 'Oenfer'" (McCone, 2000 127) In addition *CA* §113 gives an alternative account of how Art gained his epithet, namely because his brothers Connla and Crinna were both killed by their uncle Finn and Fiachu Suide (Arbuthnot, 2007 106) Like his father, he was traditionally

[40]Much of Conn's reign was supposedly spent at war with Mug Nuadat, king of Munster Consequently Ireland was said to have been divided in two between them with Conn controlling the north Leth Cuinn Conn's half, and Mug controlling the south Leth Moga Mug's Half' (Byrne, 1973 168, Jaski, 2000 218)

[41]Problems presented by the traditional translation of the name *Connachta* as 'descendents of Conn' are discussed by O hUiginn (1988 20), who notes " the ending *–acht* generally functions as an abstract-forming rather than as a collective suffix the first element of the name may not be the personal name Conn, but rather the common noun *cond/conn* 'head' "

supposed to have been a High King of Ireland, (e g *CGH* 136 b 5) and appears in the earliest extant king-list of Tara, namely the seventh-century text *Baile Chuind*, 'The Vision of Conn'[42] (Bhreathnach and Murray, 2005a 76 and 82, Byrne, 1973 91, Dillon, 1948 107)

V 1 5. Cormac mac Airt

Cormac mac Airt 'son of Art', or alternatively Cormac ua Cuinn 'grandson of Conn' (Cetchathach) in ECA (see III 2 4) has a fixed genealogical position and is regularly associated with the kingship of Tara in the sources (*CGH* 136 b 11, see also O Cathasaigh, 1977 24-5) Cormac is generally perceived as the "ideal king in Irish tradition" and his reign is assigned to the period 227-266 A D (O Cathasaigh, 1977 24-5) In the text entitled *Teasmolad Cormaic* 'The Panegyric of Cormac' he is compared to Solomon and to Octavius Augustus and *do-rinne tir tairrngiri d'Eirinn ina re* "he made Ireland a Land of Promise in his Reign" (Dillon,[43] 1946 15, O Cathasaigh, 1977 24)

V 1.6 Niall Noigiallach

Niall Noigiallach 'of the Nine Hostages' appears as an illegitimate son of Eochaid Mugmedon[44] in EEM (see III 2 5) Niall is in the direct line of descent from Cormac, Art and Conn Cetchathach and is listed under '*Rig Erenn'* in *CGH* 136 b 22 The long-established explanation for his epithet is that he took five hostages from Ireland, one from each province, and four from Scotland (Dillon, 1946 38) He was traditionally regarded as king of Ireland from 379 to 405 A D (Dillon, 1946 38) Niall functions as the eponymous ancestor of the northern and the southern Ui Neill 'descendants of Niall', who held the High Kingship in alternate sucession for more than six hundred years (Byrne, 1973 281, Dillon, 1946 38)

[42] written in the reign of Finsnechta Fledach (675-695)' (Byrne, 1973 91)
[43] It was during his reign that Find son of Cumall and the Fenian warriors performed their exploits so that the whole Fenian cycle is in a sense a part of the cycle of Cormac" (Dillon, 1946 15)
[44] 'Lord of Slaves see also genealogical material in Byrne (1973 298)

According to Byrne (1973 70-1) his political significance is thus obvious, as is that of his linear ancestors Conn, Art, Cormac etc

V 1 7 Lugaid Laigde

Lugaid Laigde is named in FL as one of five sons of Dáire Doimthech (see III 2 7) He is also listed in *CGH* 143 a 47 as ancestor of the Corcu Laigde of Munster (Arbuthnot, 2005 96) Daire Doimthech is named under *Rig Erenn* in *CGH* 135 a 15[45] while in *Scela Moshaulum*, Daire from Munster is named as one of five kings of Tara "who had acquired the position through valour and violence" according to Jaski (2000 217) Byrne (1973 74) identifies Lugaid as "ancestor of the Munster Erainn" In our text Lugaid Laigde fulfils a prophecy that a son of Dáire will succeed him in the kingship of Ireland (see III 2 7) However, its conclusion states that Lugaid Laígde only became heir to the kingship of Munster (*righdhamhnacht*[46] *Muman*) (Arbuthnot, 2007 23), notwithstanding the fact that he has intercourse with the woman who identifies herself as the sovereignty of Ireland and tells him that he will take the kingship of Ireland (Arbuthnot, 2007 22, see also III 7 7) The thrust of the text indicates that Lugaide Laigde will become king of Ireland right up until the closing episode, when Conn unexpectedly takes that kingship after Dáire's death (see III 10 7) Although FL appears in the late Middle Irish Tract *CA*[47] (see II 2 8), it may well be that the nucleus of the tale survives from an earlier date At all events, Lugaid and his son Mac Con[48] figure in a number of tales, which can be securely dated to the Old Irish period (Jaski, 2000 168) Conceivably, then, what we find in FL might be a case where a redactor made the end of a text with a Munster political bias conform to a standard 'Ui Neill' orientated scheme

[45] See also the genealogies in Jaski (2000 301) and Byrne (1973 296)
[46] See Jaski, (2000 238-247 8 2), *rigdamna* 'heir apparent'
[47] The last historical person included in CA is Niall Caille (king of Tara) 833-846 (Jaski, 2000 168)
[48] Mac Con is also listed under the genealogies of the Corcu Laigde in *CGH* 155a 5-6[48] (see also *CGH* 149 b 43)

of the kingship of Tara and Ireland[49] According to the first part of the "dindshenchas of Carn Mail" (Gwynn, 1924 136-142),[50] four sons of Daire chased and captured a fawn in the wilderness and then cast lots to decide who would get what portion of it After they had finished eating, a hideous woman entered the house and demanded intercourse with one of them or she would eat all Lugaid Laigde offered to sleep with the hag, who was then transformed into a beautiful woman and introduced herself as "the sovereignty of Alba and Ireland", stating that with her "the high-kings (*na h-airdrig*) sleep" (Jaski, 2000 168) "She says that she has revealed herself to Lugaid, but that she will sleep with his son Mac Con,[51] who will be king of Alba and Ireland" (Jaski, 2000 168) This seems to represent an attempt to square Lugaid's role in the legend with later orthodoxy whereby Mac Con became king of Tara and Ireland between Art and Cormac[52] (Byrne, 1973 66-8) Possibly there was some confusion between the two as Mac Con is also often called Lugaid Be that as it may, Daire and Lugaid Laigde are clearly kingly figures in FL

V.1 8 Loegaire mac Crimthainn

Loegaire is named son of Crimthann Cass' king of Connacht in EL (see IV 2 1) There is a Crimthann 'son of Eochaid' in the genealogy of the Eoganacht in *CGH* 150 a 32 with three sons named as Lóegaire, Aed Urgarb and Cormac There is also a Crimthann[53] and two sons named Loegaire and Aed Uagarb in the genealogies of the 'Kings of Munster - Eoganacht Raithlind" (Byrne, 1973 294) Regardless of whether Loegaire's father can ultimately be

[49]Also suggested by Bromwich (1961 451) and Jaski (2000 269), certainly the remarkably similar 11th century *echtrae* EEM is very much concerned with the claims of the Ui Neill (see VI 1 9)
[50]From *LL* Metrical Dindshenchas iv (Gwynn, 1924 136-142)
[51]According to Byrne, (1973 66-68) Lugaid Mac Conn, was "a banished representative of the older Erainn", supposed to have been king of Tara for thirty years" and he does appear in the king-list of Tara in *Baile Chuind*' (see also Byrne, 1973 276)
[52]The tale *Cath Maige Mucrama* (O'Daly, 1975) relates how Lugaid Mac Con defeated Art in Battle and took the kingship of Tara
[53]Byrne (1973 219) discusses the confusion of genealogies

identified with one of these, the text clearly states that Loegaire was the son of Crimthann, the king of Connacht

V 1 9 Bran mac Febail

Bran is named 'son of Febal' in the opening of IB (see IV 2 2) Although no pedigree is given for Bran, his royal status is implied when he returns "to his kingly house" bearing the magical branch in his hand (*Dobert iarum Bran in croib ina laim dia rigthig*, §2, Meyer, 1895 3-4) Carney (1976 174-93) discusses in detail the early stage of the Bran tradition from three primary sources, arguing (1976 81-2) that "Bran was king of Mag Febuil and presided at assemblies in Dun mBrain (Bran's Fort) the placename being implicit in the phrase *a dun* 'his fort' "

V 1 10 Summary

It is clear from the previous sections (V 1 1-V 1 9) that, where we do have extant tales entitled *Echtrae* 'X', 'X' is the person who goes on the *echtrae* Since a number of *echtrae* titles have survived without, as far as we know, the corresponding tale (see II 1 1-1 17), it seems worth examining the identity and connections of 'X' in these cases

V 1 11 Cu Chulainn

Cu Chulainn is listed as son of Soaltach or Sualtam in *CGH* 158, 32 In line with his extraordinary persona, Cu Chulainn's conception and birth are distinguished by three stages ranging from supernatural parentage to mortal in version I (§§4-5) of *Compert Con Culainn* (CCC) whereby (1) he is conceived through a wholly supernatural union between an unnamed woman and Lug mac Ethnenn, (2) he is conceived in a transitional union when the mortal Deichtine, Conchobar's daughter, is impregnated by the same Lug mac Ethnenn after ingesting a small creature in a drink, and (3) he is begotten by two mortals Sualdam mac

Roich and Deichtine[54] (McCone, 2005 97 and 116) A straightforward half-divine and half-mortal mix is manifested in his only conception in CCC version II (§3-4), where an unnamed divine father appears to mate with Deichtine, who is Conchobar's sister in this account (Meyer, 1905 501-2) His unusual conception in both versions clearly defines his status as an extraordinary heroic figure

Nevertheless Cu Chulainn's royal ancestry is implied in *Serglige Con Culainn* There Fand remarks *ni fuair a samaill di rig eter min 7 armin*, "I have not found such a king for harsh deeds and for gentle" and, when she welcomes Cu Chulainn, refers to him as *mal mor Maigi Murthemni*, "great prince of Mag Muirthemne" (§37, ll 616-7, §38, l 649, Dillon, 1953 21-2, see also IV 2 4) Likewise his rule over one third of the kingship of Ulster along with his foster-father Conchobur and his foster-brother Fintan is inferred at the beginning of *Mesca Ulad* (ll 20-2, Watson, 1941 2) *Is iat ra roind in coiced ra Conchobar a dalta fadessin i Cu Chulainn mac Sualtaim 7 Fintan mac Neill Niamglonnaig*, "the two who shared the province with Conchobar were his fosterlings Cu Chulainn son of Sultaim and Fintan son of Niall Niamglonnach " All the same this aspect is overshadowed by Cu Chulainn's prowess as the superhuman warrior hero and, as Sjoestedt (1949 59) points out, " heroic fury is personified especially in Setanta-Cu Chulainn, around whom Irish heroic mythology has crystalized itself " Ultimately Cu Chulainn's role as king, is implied in the account of his death in *Brislech Mor Maige Muirthemni* (§§6, 17-20, Kimpton, 2009 35-42), when the sons of Calitin predict that *tuitfid ri de* 'a king will fall by it', i e the specially prepared spear which is cast at Cu Chulainn by Lugaid This aspect may help to explain the various *echtrae*-like military expeditions to otherworld locations attributed to him

[54]Deichtine is Conchobar's daughter in version I (McCone, 2005 97, §1) Both the incestuous and the divine element are evident in the first version of Cu Chulainn's conception, Lug being the divine and Conchobar having reportedly slept with his daughter in a drunken stupor (Sjoestedt, 1982 77)

V 1.12. Crimthann nia Nair

Crimthann is named 'son of Lugaid Riab Derg *ri hErenn*' in *CGH* 144 a 55 and 136 a 42 and they both also appear under the genealogy of Clann Cholmain Borsje (2002 15) notes that, "the female Nar Tuathchaech is found in several texts[55] which refer to her taking King Crimthann on an adventurous journey (*echtrae*) and bestowing treasures on him" (see II 1 1)

V 1.13. Fiaman mac Forroi

Fiaman too was apparently a royal personage, since Forroi appears in *CGH* 147 ab 37 as a son of Dedad, king of Munster Fiaman's heroic status is also attested Thurneysen (1921 445-7) discusses 'The Lost Saga of *Fiaman mac Forroi*' and notes his appearance in various lists of warriors for example, according to *Tochmarc Treblainne* (*BF*, f 49a, Meyer, 1921 171) Fiaman is named for his attainment in the feats of Uathach, along with Cu Chulainn and Conall Cernach, as pupils of Scathach *daltan sciamhglan Scathaige forbhai eangnuma Uathaige* Fiaman is also listed along with Fer Diad, Noisiu mac Uisnig and Loch Mor mac Egomais as one of the heroes learning *clessa* (*oc foglaim cless*) with Scáthach in TE (§67, Van Hamel 1933 49) See V I 14 below on his exploits with Cu Roi (Thurneysen, 1921 445)

V 1 14 Cu Roi mac Daire

Cu Roi is said to have been king of Munster and ancestor of the Ulster Dal Fiatach in *CGH* 136 a 27 and 143 a 18 [56] In spite of this, Cu Roi's heroic warrior status is more typically emphasised along with his role as adjudicator and his mastery of disguise For example, he appears in the guise of a hideous churl (*bachlach*) in *Fled Bricrenn* Bricriu's Feast', and ultimately as judge between the three contenders for the champions portion (*curad mir*), Cu

[55]King Crimthann is mentioned in *Airne Fingein* (Vendryes 1975 8), also in *CA* (Arbuthnot, 2007 30,150), (see II 1 1)

[56]According to Stokes (1905 1) Cu Roi, was a dynast of West Munster, husband of Blathnait, daughter of the king of the Isle of Man She fell in love with Cu Chulainn, helped him to slay Curoi treacherously, and then fled with him to Ulster"

Chulainn, Conall Cernach and Loegaire Buadach, (§9, Henderson, 1899 8-9) Tymoczko (1981 13) proposes that we see from the praise of Cu Roi in his eulogy [57] and from the entire tone of his death tale that Cu Chulainn "was not the only beloved hero in the Ulster Cycle " According to Tymoczko (1981 11), "the treachery that destroys him parallels other uncontrollable forces that have the power to ensnare great heroes the gods, magic or supernatural powers, the violation of tabus and *gesa*, and fate" However, his connections were with Munster as observed above He was apparently a contemporary of Fiaman mac Forroi and Thurneysen (1921 445) refers to a tradition that they spent fifteen months together in Greece and then fought together in Asia, Denmark and Norway

V 1 15 Fergus mac Leti

Fergus mac Léti is named king of Ulster under *Anmann in so na Rig O Chimbaeth co Conchobor* in CGH 156 b 6, 157, 5 [58] Binchy (1968 44) agrees with O'Rahilly that Fergus is a double of the better-known Ulster hero Fergus mac Róich, who was also said to have met his death under water (see also Byrne, 1973 52), but this does not matter for present purposes Like *Aided Chonchobair* (see below), the death-tale of Fergus mac Leti, *Aided Fergusa maic Leti* (O'Grady, 1892 238-252, 269-285, Binchy, 1952 33-48) tells how this Ulster king was exceptionally allowed by his devoted subjects to continue in office until his death in spite of the hideous facial disfigurement he had received during his forbidden adventure under Loch Rudraige This text survives in a manuscript containing legal material, presumably because it raised and exemplified interesting legal issues The blemishing of the king obviously relates to the concept of *fir flathemon*,[59] which enjoined that the king should be perfect in every way "in his physical appearance (*delb, cruth* etc), social and martial eminence (*allud, ordan* etc),

[57] i e in the tale entitled *Amra Chon Roi*, the Eulogy of Cu Roi (Stokes, 1905 1-14)
[58] Fergus is also named in a poem attributed to Mongan mac Fiachnae about his father in *CGH* 158, 12
[59] See Kelly (1976 1-21, §§1-21) *Audacht Morainn* the testament of Morann' 7th century text on kingship, also (1988 284) *Tecosca Cormaic* the teachings of Cormac' on the proper behaviour of kings and warriors and court procedures

and judgement or discernment (*mes, érgnae* etc)" (McCone, 1990 127) [60] Watson too (1986 133) explains that "sovereignty must create order in all things This is why the king's truth is seen as so all important the king is viewed as someone whose truth and person must be flawless, for it is by upholding his honour that he upholds the honour and face of his tribe The monarch creates order in society by himself being a personification of order If the king cannot embody these concepts, then disaster can befall the tribe which he rules " If this tale or part of it does correspond to the title *Echtrae Fergusa*, then its sovereignty implications are obvious since Fergus' underwater adventure ultimately brings about the end of his kingship

V 1 16 Conall Cernach

Conall Cernach is ancestor of Dal nAraide according to *CGH* 161 b 33 and he is also listed in the genealogies of the Cruithin 'Kings of Ulaid' (Byrne, 1973 287) Moreover, in the tale entitled *Cath Airtig* 'the Battle of Airtech' (Best, 1916) Conall was offered the kingship of Ulster after King Conchobur's death, but he refused it and instead put forward his foster-son, Conchobur's younger son Cuscraid Conall's death *Aided Conaill* is listed with the death-tale titles of the other great Ulster heroes in tale-list A (Mac Cana, 1980 44)

V 1 17 Conchobur mac Nessa

Conchobur is king of Ulster in the Ulster Cycle of tales (Dillon, 1948 1) He is listed under under *Rig Erenn* in *CGH* 136 a 25 His death-tale, *Aided Chonchobair* (Meyer, 1906 2-21) recounts how he was granted a special dispensation and continued as king until his death despite serious physical disfigurement and incapacity,[61] rather as Fergus mac Leti was (see V 1 15)

[60] Part of a general discussion of Kingship and Society' (McCone 1990 107-137)
[61] i e the calcified brain of Cet Mac Magach lodged in his forehead

V 1 18 Machae ingen Áeda Ruaid

Machae is mentioned as daughter of Aed Rúad mac Baduirn in *Rig Érenn* in *CGH* 135 b 26, 32, where it also says that she ruled Ireland for seven years (*vii annos regnauit Hiberniam*) after Cimbaed fell at the hand of Rechtaid Rigderg (O'Brien, 1961 119) Furthermore, she appears in The Roll of the Kings' in *LGE*

> R[1] Now Macha was seven years in the regality (*i flaithius*) after Cimbáeth, till she fell at the hands of Rechtad Rigderg s Lugaid s Eochu s Ailill Find' s Art s Lugaid Lamderg s Eochu Uairches
> R[3] Macha Red-hair d Aed Ruad s Badarn, seven years had she in the regality of Ireland (*i rige nErend*) after Cimbaeth, till she fell, in the reign of Ptolomeus s Lairge, at the hands of rechtaid Ríderg of Great Mumu (§552, Macalister, 1956 266-7)

V 1 19 Nechtan mac Alfroinn and Ailchind mac Amalgaid

No firm information has been found on either of these characters but see Meyer's suggestion regarding Nechtan mac Alfroinn in II 1 4

V 1 20. Óengus mac Fergusa Finn

Oengus Find mac Fergusa Dubdetaich appears in the genealogical list of *Na Rig Immoro Iar Conchobor*, (*CGH* 157, 11) and that of *Rig Ulad* in *CGH* 161 bb 33, but no further information about him has been found

V 1 21 Mael Uma mac Baitáin

Mael Uma, is listed as 'hero' (*heros*) and a son of Baetán grandson of Muirchertach Mac Erca under *Sil Cuind* (*CGH* 140 a 11), while he is further identified as a *rigfennid* (*CGH* 140 a 38) Muirchertach and Baetan are both listed in *Rig Erenn* in *CGH* 137 a 32

V 1 22 Finn mac Cumaill

Finn is listed under the genealogies of the Laigin as grandson of Nuadu Necht king of Tara in *CGH* 118 a 52 [62] His genealogy also appears at *CGH* 128 b 9 He is a renowned hunter warrior of the Fenian Cycle of tales and according to Dillon (1948 32) "in the literature three leaders of the fiana are mentioned - Finn mac Cumaill, Fothad Canainne, and Aillill Flann Bec, but only Finn and his companions became famous "[63] O'Rahilly (1946 278-9) maintains that ' Finn is ultimately the divine Hero, Lug or Lugaid, just like Cu Chulainn " whereas Sjoestedt (1949 57-91) develops the notion of opposition between Cu Chulainn as hero inside the tribe and Finn mac Cumaill as hero outside the tribe Earlier material about Finn has been collected by Meyer (1910) and he emerges as a prominent heroic figure in medieval Irish literature, from about the twelfth century onwards Nagy (1981/2, 1984 and 1985) has produced a number of insightful studies of this material stressing the role of 'liminality' in traditions concerning Finn

V 1 23 Aedan mac Gabrain

Aedan maic Gabrain appears under the genealogies of *Rig Alban* (*CGH* 162 c 57) Aedán was believed to have been ordained king by Colum Cille on the evidence of Adomnán, abbot of Iona, (†704), in his *Vita Columbae* (III, 5, Jaski, 2000 62, White, 2006 61)

V 1 24 Mongan mac Fiachna

Mongan's name occurs in the genealogical material of the Dal Fiatach in *CGH* 330 d 2, while his father Fiachnae Lurgan, otherwise known as Fiachnae mac Baetain, is listed under kings

[62] "*Find mac Camaill m Trenmoir meic Suailt meic Eltaim meic Baiscne m Nuadat Necht m Setnai Sithbaicc*" (O Brien 1961 22)

[63] In the saga *Fotha Catha Cnucha* (Hennessy, 1873 86-93) we are told that Finn's father Cumall and the king of Tara, Feidlimid Rechtmar, (father of Conn Cetchatach) had the same mother

of Dal nAraide[64] in *CGH* 161 bc 33 The saga *Compert Mongain ocus Serc Duibe-Lacha do Mongan* portrays him as king of Ulster 'thus contradicting not only *AU*, which records that Mongan died before his father Fiachnae, but also the Ulster and Dál nAraidi king-lists, which do not mention him at all" according to White (2006 60) Mongán appears in some literature, such as *Immram Brain* (§§48-59, Meyer, 1895 22-8) as son of Manannan, god of the sea His death is recorded in *AU* in 625 A D (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, 1983 113)

V 1 25 Muirchertach mac Erca

Muirchertach is listed under *Rig Erenn* in *CGH* 137 a 9, 46 and also under *Sil Cuind* in *CGH* 140 a10 In addition he is named as one of the high-kings of the Northern Uí Neill (Byrne, 1973 283)

V.1 26 Summary

In summary, out of the fifteen figures named above, eight are clearly recognisable as kings, namely Crimthann nia Náir, Cu Roi, Conchobur mac Nessa, Oengus mac Fergusa Finn, Fergus mac Léti, Muirchertach mac Erca, Aedan mac Gabrain and Conall Cernach Four appear as kings' sons and/or grandsons, namely Mael Uma mac Baetain, Fiaman mac Forroi, Mongan mac Fiachnai and Finn mac Cumaill In addition, Machae is documented as someone who took the role of the king by ruling Ireland for seven years, despite being a woman Admittedly, some of the aforementioned royal personages such as Cu Roi, Fiaman and Finn seem to be better known in the literature for their heroic warrior status and the status of the remaining two, namely Nechtan mac Alfroinn and Ailchnd mac Amalgaid cannot be established Therefore, the majority of these titles are in keeping with the extant tales previously discussed in that the protagonist emerges as a royal personage Bearing in mind that we have no further information about these lost *echtrai*, those bearing the name of a

[64]For discussion on Mongan's father who was an important political figure in the late sixth and early seventh centuries see White (2006 61-62) For further discussion see also Byrne (1973 125-7 39 97, 107-9)

warrior hero with royal connections might be comparable with the otherworld adventures of the hero *par excellence*, Cu Chulainn, rather than connected primarily with sovereignty (see VII 2-4)

V 2 Royal sites

The author of the ninth century poem *Felire Óengusso*, the Martyrology of Oengus', contrasts flourishing major monastic centres with ruined and abandoned royal sites of implied former importance

> §165, Tara's mighty burgh (*borg tromm Temra*) perished at the death of her princes with a multitude of venerable champions the great Height of Macha (*Ard mór Machae*) abides
>
> §177, Rathcroghan, (*Ráth Chrúachan*) it has vanished with Ailill offspring of victory fair the sovranty over princes that there is in the monastery of Clonmacnoise (*cathir Chluana*)
>
> §189, Aillenn's (*Dun Aillinnd*) proud burgh has perished with its warlike host great its victorious Brigit and fair is her multitudinous cemetery (*rruam dalach*)
>
> §193, Emain's (*Borg Emna*) burg it has vanished, save that its stones remain the cemetery of the west of the world is multitudinous Glendalough (*Glenn dalach da locha*)
>
> §205, The old cities of the pagans (*senchathraig na ngente*), wherein ownership has been acquired by long use, they are waste without worship, like Lugaid's House-site (*Lathrach Lugdach*)
>
> §213, Heathendom (*in gentlecht*) has been destroyed, though fair it was and wide-spread the kingdom of God the Father has filled heaven, earth and sea (Byrne, 1973 53, Hughes 1972, 205, Raftery, 1994 64, Stokes, 1905 17-31)

Two of the above royal sites figure in the *echtrai* under consideration here, namely Tara[65] or Temair and Cruachu or Rath Cruachan, while a third Emain appears in the tales concerning Cu Chulainn Tara provides the setting for no less than four *echtrai*, namely BS, EA, ECA

[65]A number of locations throughout Ireland are named *Temair* or including that element, or bearing a diminutive form of the name" (O Muraile, 2005 455) Since many of them are hilltop sites where the remains of enclosures are found' it is likely "that *Temair* probably referred to hilltop sites on which sacred space or sanctuary was enclosed" (Bhreathnach, 2005 xiii)

and EEM As noted above, the protagonists in each of these tales, Conn, Art, Cormac and Niall were recognised as kings of Tara, the importance of which as a royal site is generally accepted (see, III 5 3 - III 5 6) The deer that triggers the *echtrae* appears at an *óenach* 'assembly' in FL There is good evidence that the *óenach* was an important event presided over by the king (see Byrne, 1973 31) and this was presumably the same as the *Oenach Tailten* or 'Fair/Assembly of Teltown' to which the five brothers were stated to have returned after their expedition (see III 1 7) The existence of *Oenach Tailten* "is attested in the annals from the eight century onward and in other historical documents from the sixth" according to Binchy (1958 115) Moreover "it was held annually on or about the festival of Lugnasad" and crucially "it was convened by the king of Tara" (Binchy, 1958 115) Notwithstanding Binchy's claim (1958 113) that there is not "a shred of reliable evidence that any such assembly was ever convened throughout the entire historical period", the great assembly at Uisnech (*mor-dál Uisnig*)[66] was traditionally held to be another event regularly presided over by the kings of Tara[67] (Byrne, 1973 87) and McCone (2000 54 and 129) has suggested that Connlae's appearance beside his royal father Conn Cetchathach was intended to evoke this (see III 1 2)

EN begins during an assembly at the royal site of Ailill and Medb at Rath Cruachan[68] (see III 1 1), the importance of which as a symbolic royal centre of Connacht is generally acknowledged (Waddell, 1988 5) In addition, the Cave of Cruachu was recognised as a place of entry to the otherworld[69] and this is where Nerae entered Cruachu is also described as a

[66]According to *Scel na Fir Flatha* (Stokes, 1891 183-229)
[67]The Clann Cholmain claimed the title *rig Uisnig* 'kings of Uisnech' (see Byrne 1973 87 92-3, 282)
[68]See *Banshenchas* (Dobbs, 1930 322), *Metrical Dindsenchas* (Gwynn, 1924 351-3), *Coir Anmann* (Stokes, 1897 403) and Rennes prose *Dinshenchas* (Stokes 1894 461-2) for one origin of the name from a woman Crochen, or Cruachu, the handmaid of Medb's mother, Etain is generally agreed in the sources *Prose Dinshenchas* explains how Crúachu/Crochen received her epithet *croderg* blood-red' 'because her head was blood-red with her eyebrows and eyelashes (O hUiginn, 1988 21, Stokes, 1892 493)
[69] e g *Cath Maige Mucrama* The cave at Cruachu is the door to hell see Carney (1968 148-161)

place of assembly or *oenach*, thus confirming its significance as a royal centre O hUiginn (1988 21-2) discusses the origin of the name *Cruachu* and notes that in it's attested compound form the name is "frequently followed by the place-name *Ai* which refers to the plain on which it is sited (*Mag nAi*) and is sometimes found in phrases such as *Oenach na Cruachna* 'the Oenach (assembly) of Crúachu' " Significantly EL begins after an all-night assembly at Enloch on this same Mag nAí presided over by his father Crimthann Cass, king of Connacht (see IV 1 1)

V 3 Typical sovereignty motifs

The occurrence of sovereignty motifs in the *echtrai* has been established above (see summary tables III 11 and IV 11) and the pivotal role ascribed to sovereignty and kingship in early Irish literature, especially in the field of narrative, is already well documented (Dillon, 1948 xi-xix, McCone, 1990 107) While it seems that a father might well be succeeded by his eldest son in the kingship, this was by no means a foregone conclusion in early medieval Ireland where kingship was essentially elective and more than one son might be deemed eligible (Charles-Edwards, 1993 89-111, McCone, 1990 107-137) Byrne (1973 4) points out that the "underlying concepts of kingship are often expressed in mythological terms, even when the kings are historical" (see also Dillon, 1946 1-3) The background and the role of typical sovereignty motifs and their implications in literature will now be explored more fully

V 3 1 Woman/goddesses of sovereignty

The sovereignty attributes of certain women appearing in early Irish literature in connection with kings or kings' sons are widely recognised, especially where her sexual contact with a king or a would-be king ultimately affects the transmission or fate of kingship As we have seen (III 8 5 and III 8 7) in two of the *echtrai*, namely EEM and FL, the nature of their encounters with a woman/goddess of sovereignty determines which of several sons of a king

is destined to succeed him The subject of the transmission of kingship through a woman/goddess of sovereignty has been extensively studied, not least as a reflex of *hieros gamus* or sacred marriage between the king and the goddess of the territory [70]

Carney (1955 334-9) discusses the sacred marriage in relation to *feis Temro*, 'the Feast of Tara', which is said to have specifically involved the ancient ritual by which the kings of Tara were inaugurated Mac Cana (1982 520) suggests that "in pre-Christian times this ceremony, the *banfheis rigi* presumably included an enactment of the union of king and goddess, and this doubtless explains why the Christian Church seems to have opposed it from the outset in the paramount instance of Tara, which enjoyed a special prestige as the centre par excellence of sacral kingship " According to O'Rahilly (1946 7-28) the ancient inauguration ritual of the kings of Tara and Connacht (*feis*, *banfeis*) amounted to a symbolic mating with the local earth-goddess, while Triad 202 identifies the last two of the 'three things that hallow (*neimthigedar*) a king' 'the Feast of Tara, abundance in his reign'[71] (Binchy, 1958 134) Accordingly, legitimisation of his kingship depended on this symbolic union with the woman/goddess of sovereignty in a ceremony known as *feis*, meaning to 'sleep with' in a sexual sense (verbal noun of the OIr verb *foaid* 'sleeps, spending the night') and also 'feast' and 'festival' (Carney, 1955 334-9) Such a liaison was believed to put the king in touch with supernatural powers as a sacral figure thereby capable of promoting the land's fertility and the

[70]See Binchy (1958 132-4), Breatnach (1953 321-36), Carney (1955 334-9), Herbert (1992 264-77), Jaski (2001,57-66), Mac Cana (1955 76-114,356-413, 1958/9 59-65), McCone (1990 107-37), Ni Bhrolchain (2009 102-111, O Maille (1927 129-46), O'Rahilly (1946 7-28)

[71]According to later tradition the Feast of Tara was held at intervals of a few years (Jaski, 2000 63) However, scholars have argued such an inaugural kingship-marriage' as *feis Temro* was celebrated once during a king's reign (Binchy, 1958 132, Carney, 1955 334-9) Binchy (1958 127) discusses evidence that the *feis Temro* was "a primitive ritual which, some centuries after its disappearance, was resurrected by the pseudo-historians in a totally different guise" He (Binchy 1958 127) sees two stages in the evolution of the Feast an earlier stage in which it is still celebrated once in a reign, and a later one in which it has lost all contact with history and has been converted into a regularly recurring function ", doubtless on the model of the Fair of Tailtiu with which it is so often bracketed together" The Ulster Chronicles 'mention the celebration of the Feast of Tara by three kings only Loegaire his successor Ailill Molt, and Diarmait mac Cerbaill (†565)' (Binchy, 1958 132)

people's prospects [72] McCone (1990 117-120 and 127-8) argues that sacral kingship was an Indo-European institution centring on a ceremony that probably involved an alcoholic drink, an equine ritual and a feast In addition to Irish literary sources, the theme of the sacred marriage is attested in Gaulish iconography and "despite disparities and limitations in the evidence discernible correspondences between Gaulish and Irish representations" strongly suggests that it had Celtic antecedents (Herbert, 1992 265)

V 3 2 Transmission of sovereignty

McCone (1990 117-20 and 127-8) notes that the success of the union between king and goddess depended on the king's/ruler's truth as manifested by his physical perfection, mental capacity, social standing and justice The traditional ideology of sovereignty and kingship held that the king was sacred and that the health and wealth of his people depended on his 'truth' *fir*, as represented in *fir flathemon* or *fir flatha* 'ruler's truth', and on his just rule The opening of *Scél na Fír Flatha* lists the benefits of *fir flathemon* in Cormac's reign *Ba lan in bith do gach maith fri lind in rig sin* "At the time of that king the world was full of every good thing" There was fruit of tree and earth and sea (*mes 7 clas 7 murthorud*) There was peace and ease and pleasure (*sid 7 sáime 7 subae*) (§1, Stokes, 1891 185 and 203) Conversely, the catastrophic consequences such as bad weather, famine and strife, that are liable to occur owing to *gau flatha* or sovereign's lie' are also recounted For example, when the otherworld woman Becuma choose to marry Conn instead of her originally intended royal mate Art at the beginning of EA, *ni roibhe bith na blicht a nérinn risin re sin* "there was neither corn nor milk in Ireland during that time" (§8, Best, 1905 154-5) These are reflexes of an ancient belief enshrined in much of the literature that a kingdom gained or lost fruitfulness and prosperity according as it gained or lost its true and rightful king, whose role in turn depended on a union with his true and rightful spouse

[72] See for example, Binchy, (1958 134), Jaski, (2001 58) Mac Cana, (1982, 518-524)

In early Irish sources certain women are represented as the wives of several kings traditionally belonging to different generations or periods and this too is now a widely recognised characteristic of the woman/goddess of sovereignty, although she may be represented as the mortal daughter or wife of a king (McCone, 1990 109) Furthermore, it is because of this and because of the key role, often implicitly or explicitly sexual, that she plays in the transmission of kingship, that the term 'sovereignty goddess' has been coined for her by modern scholars (McCone, 1990 109) Ó Máille (1927) was first to assemble and present evidence relating to two notable examples, Medb of Cruachu[73] and Medb Lethderg, the latter of whom was said not to let a king into Tara without his being her spouse[74] (*LL* 380 a 53, O Máille, 1927 137-8) O Cathasaigh (1977 31) argues for functional similarity between Medb Lethderg and Eithne Thoebfota, who marries Cormac Maic Airt in *Esnada Tige Buchet* 'the Melodies of Buchet's House' and appears as his wife in ECA but who also appears as his grandfather Conn Cetchathach's wife at the beginning of EA (§§1-2, Best, 1905 150-1) Whereas this figure is not actually the invitation bearer in either of these *echtrai*, her presence in both does seem significant in relation to the sovereignty and will be discussed in the next chapter

V 3 3 Behavioural aspects of the woman/goddess of sovereignty

A significant characteristic of the woman/goddess of sovereignty in the literature is that she may appear in various forms, and undergo certain transformations upon encountering her proper spouse and king, notably (Mac Cana, 1958/9 63-5) (1) from an ugly hag in rags to a

[73]The anti-heroine' of *Tain Bo Cualnge* and queen of Connacht who serially marries the kings of the province was regarded as a human figure until O Maille (1927) pointed out for the first time that she was rooted in a supernatural sovereignty figure She is said to be the daughter of Eochaid Feidlech, a prehistoric king of Tara and brother of Eochaid Airem of *Tochmarc Etaine* and in the short saga *Ferchuitred Medba* The husband portion of Medb' also known as *Cath Boinde* The Battle of the Boyne' she had six different husbands, namely, Conan Cualann,, Conchobar mac Nessa, Tinne mac Conrach, Eochaid Dala, Ailill mac Magach of the Erainn, Ailill mac Rosa Ruaid and Fergus mac Roich/Rossa (Ni Bhrolchain, 2009 102-5, O Maille, 1927 137-8)

[74]*Roba mor tra nert 7 cumachta Meidhbhe isin firu Erenn air isi na leigedh ri a Temair gan a beth fein aigi na mnai,* "Great indeed was the strength and power of that Medb over the men of Ireland for she it was who would not allow a king in Tara without his having herself as a wife (*LL* 380 a 53 see O Maille 1927 137-8) According to Green, (1955 27) in *Esnada Tige Buchet* the Melodies of Buchet s House it was this marriage and not heredity, that allowed Cormac to assume royalty at Tara

beautiful lady in fine clothes as in the *echtrai* EEM and FL, in which the king-to-be mates with her in exchange for a drink /shelter and she names herself as the sovereignty (*flaithius*), (ii) from a deranged to a sane fair female for example the tale about Mór Muman and Mis,[75] (iii) a girl of royal birth brought up among cowherds but later elevated to her true status through marriage to the king, for example the story of Mes Buachalla [76]

Another behavioural aspect of the so-called 'sovereignty goddess' in the literature is the suddenness of her appearance before the king or king-in-waiting Moreover, her beautiful appearance and clothing may be described in minute detail, and she may reveal her high status and the purpose of her visit For instance, in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* the Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel' the beautiful appearance and clothing of a woman who appears beside a well are described in great detail, after which she identifies herself as Etain daughter of Étar king of Echrade from the *sid*, and declares that she has loved king Eochaid Feidlech for twenty years before meeting and is ready to sleep with him[77] (§1, Knott, 1936 63) Similarly the woman who names herself Bécuma Cheisgel in the opening of EA (III 3 3) declares that she has come from the Land of Promise in search of Art, whom she has loved "and Art did not know that he was her lover" (Best, 1905 153), but chooses the old king Conn over his son Art with disastrous consequences discussed further below The issuer of the invitation in EC and IB is an anonymous strangely dressed woman (III 3 2 and IV 3 2) who suddenly appears before the king and/or king's son, refers to her beauty and good birth in EC and asks him to go away with her in both Even the male bearers of the invitation in both ECA and EL, Manannan son of Ler and Fiachnae son of Reda respectively (see III 3 4 and IV 3 1), likewise

[75]*Mor Muman ocus Aided Cuanach meic Ailchine* (O'Nolan 1912 261) Under enchantment, Mor wandered Ireland in rags for two years until her senses were restored after mating with Fingen mac Aeda king of Cashel
[76]In *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* the 'Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel (§§5-8, Knott, 1936 65-6) Mes Buachalla is a beautiful regally born seamstress who was reared among cowherds later elevated to wife of Etersceiae, king of Tara However, the beginning of *De Sil Chonairi Mór*, on the Race of Conaire Mor , (II 5-10, Gwynn 1912 133, 138) describes Mes Buachalla as a large and repulsive wanderer (McCone, 1990 112)
[77]See McCone (1990 110) on 'love in absence' *grad ecmaise*

suddenly appear, reveal their good birth, wear strange and colourful clothing, seek out a king or king-to-be and identify themselves as otherworldly sovereigns

V 3 4 Drink of sovereignty

The motif of the presentation of a drink to the future king is a well-known attribute of the woman/sovereignty of goddess with probably ancient origins (McCone, 1990 109-10) According to O'Rahilly (1943 16) "receiving the cup of drink from the goddess or winning her cup, was tantamount to winning the goddess herself' and Murray (2004 16) similarly suggests 'this acceptance of a drink from the goddess seems to represent rites of the king's symbolic marriage to his kingdom" This appears to be the case with Conn in BS, when he finds himself before the supernatural woman who sits on a crystal throne in the phantom's house wearing a golden crown and a cloak edged in gold The woman who identifies herself as the sovereignty of Ireland (*flaith hÉrenn*) presents him with an enormous feast and a 'golden cup of red ale' (*dergflaith*), whereupon her companion instructs her to give a drink to Conn and to each king who will succeed him (see III 7 6) An apparent play on words may be noted here between *laith* (alcoholic drink) and *(fh)laith* 'sovereignty' and, furthermore, "the very name Medb (<**Med*^{h} *w-ā*) is a feminine derivative of the old Irish word *mid* 'mead' (<**med*^{h}*u*) and must once have signified something like 'mead-woman'" (McCone, 1990 109, O Maille, 1927 144, O'Rahilly, 1943 15 and Dumézil, 1973 44-6)

The importance of the woman's handing over a drink is also evident in EEM and less explicitly in FL, while in *Tochmarc Etaine*, 'the Wooing of Etain', Eochaid is confident of choosing his wife Etain from fifty identical women since she is the best at serving drink (*oc dail*) in Ireland' but unwittingly selects a daughter born after their separation (III, 15-9, Bergin and Best, 1938 137-96) The antiquity of this motif is indicated by Aristotle's tale of the Greek foundation of the city of Massalia, present day Marseilles, which bears

"unmistakable affinities to the story of Niall's encounter with the goddess of sovereignty" according to McCone (1990 109-10)

> Euxenus the Phocaean was a guest-friend (*xenos*) to king Nanus, as he was named This Nanus, being about to order his daughter's nuptials, invited Euxenus to the feast when he turned up by chance The wedding took place in this wise after the meal the girl was to come in and give a mixed drinking bowl to whomsoever she wished of the suitors present and the one to whom she gave it was her bridegroom When the girl came in, she gave it to Euxenus either by chance or for some other reason, and the girls name was Petta When this occurred the father deemed him worthy of the gift on the grounds that it was divinely inspired, Euxenus took her to wife and lived with her, changing her name to Aristoxene And a kindred named the Protiadae descended from the woman still exists in Massalia For Protus (First') was the son of Euxenus and Aristoxene (Rose, 1886 459) [78]

McCone (1990 109) concludes that the "notion of a king's daughter transmitting sovereignty to the man of her choice by proffering him a drink prior to marriage and thus establishing a dynastic line is clearly attested among the pagan Gauls as well as the early medieval Irish", and so was of Proto-Celtic antiquity In short, women with evident sovereignty attributes play a significant role in the following *echtrai* EEM, FL, BS, EC and, arguably, IB, EA and ECA

V 4 Otherworld gifts associated with sovereignty

Gifts/treasures acquired from the otherworld are either won or bestowed upon the visiting mortal(s) by its inhabitants and typically, upon their returning to the human realm, will have implications for sovereignty Bromwich[79] (1978 cxxx-cxxxiv) discusses the antiquity of a similar underlying concept in early Welsh literature and the possibility of a common Celtic inheritance

[78]Justin's summary of a similar account of the foundation of Massalia given by Trogus Pompeius tale essentially relates the same thematic scheme At the time of King tarquin the youth (*iuventus*) of the Phoceans was carried into the mouth of the Tiber and forged friendship with the Romans From there they set out for the most distant bays of Gaul in ships and founded Massilia on that day the king was engaged in the organisation of the wedding of his daughter Gyptis, whom she was preparing to give there to a son-in-law chosen at a feast according to the nation's custom So when all the chiefs had been invited to the wedding, the Greeks were also asked to the banquet Then, when the maiden was brought in and ordered by her father to offer water to the one whom she would choose as husband, she ignored everyone, turned to the Greeks and offered the water to Protis, who was turned from guest into son-in-law and received land for the founding the city from his father-in-law" (Zwicker, 1934 95)

[79]According to Bromwich, (1978 cxxxiv), the closest Irish parallel to Welsh objects is found in the Rennes Dindshenchus of the magic treasures brought back from the otherworld by king Crimthann Nia Nar

> undoubtedly those most likely to be ancient include the talismans for the satisfaction of human wishes and for supplying abundance of food and drink, and these find some specific parallels, among the *anoetheu* in *Culhwch* It is in these objects that Professor Loomis has noted significant analogies to the properties of the Grail as they are portrayed in French medieval sources The antiquity of the concept underlying these Welsh talismans is vouched for by the parallels which they have in early Irish sources in numerous food-producing horns, cups, and vats

According to *Cath Maige Tuired (2)* 'the Battle of Moytura' one of the Four Treasures[80] brought to Ireland by the inhabitants of the *síd*-mounds, the Túatha De Danann, is the Dagda's cauldron, of which it is said that *ni tegedh dam dimdach uadh* "no company ever went from it unthankful" (§14, Gray, 1983 58, Macalister 1941 107) The role of the king as leader in battle is well documented in the sagas[81] but, as McCone (1990 125) points out, "the provision of hospitality[82] was likewise an important royal function " The catastrophic failings of king Bres in this respect are exemplified in *Cath Maige Tuired* (2), where his niggardliness brought about the end of his sovereignty (§39, Gray, 1983 34)

Another of these four otherworldly treasures, a stone monument at Tara called Lia Fail is said to have shown its approval of the king-to-be by the arguably eighth-century text *De Shil Chonairi Moir* 'On the Race of Conaire Mór'

> And there were two flag-stones (*da liaic*) in Tara Blocc' and 'Bluigne', when they accepted a man, they would open before him until the chariot went through And Fal was there, the 'stone penis' (*Ferp Cluche*) at the head of the chariot-course (?), when a man should have the kingship of Tara, it screeched against his chariot-axel, so that all might hear But the two stones 'Blocc' and 'Bluigne' would not open before one who should not hold the sovereignty of Tara, and their usual position was such, that one's hand could only pass sideways between them, also he who was not to hold Tara's kingship, the Fal would not screech against his axle (*ni screted in Fal fria fonnad*)
> (ll 23-9, Gwynn, 1912 134 and 139)

[80]The other treasures were the Stone of Fal Lug's Spear and Nuadu s Sword *LGE* IV (Macalister, 1938-57 107)
[81]*Cath Almaine* the Battle of Ailenn', gives a catalogue of kings slain in battle (*AU* 722 A D)
[82]"The proper layout of a king's feasting hall or tech midchurda is described in prose by *Crith Gablach* (par 46) and in verse by *LL* 3637-789, and Tecosca Cormaic (par 4) lists 'properties of a king and an ale-house' (*ada flatha 7 cuirmthige*)" (McCone, 1990 125)

In the opening episode of BS the Lia Fail cries out when Conn inadvertently steps on it and later his druid interprets the prophecy of kingship it had emitted (see III 1 6 and III 2 6)

A list of gifts given to king Crimthann Nia Nar by the otherworldly woman named Nar, after he had slept with her during his visit there, appears in the Rennes *Dindshenchus* under *Dún Crimthainn* [83]

> And to him she gave many treasures including the gilt chariot, and a *fidchell* set of gold, and Crimthann's *cetach*, a beautiful mantle, and many treasures also (§30, Stokes, 1894 332)

Crimthann's *fidchell* set is also mentioned in *Airne Fingein* 'Fingen's Night Watch', as one of Ireland's chief treasures

> The three chief artefacts of Ireland (*Téora primaicd Erenn*) were found and revealed tonight, namely the Crown of Brión (*Cathbarr Briain*) from the *sid* of Cruachan, The *fidchell* of Crimthan Niad Nair The diadem of Loegaire (*Mind Loegairi*) (§5, Vendryes, 1975 6-9)

A comparable set of treasures to these is taken from the *sid* of Cruachu by the men of Connacht in EN (see III 9 1), namely the crown of Brión of Connacht, the mantle of Loegaire in Armagh and the shirt of the Leinster dynast Dunlaing in Kildare (III 9 1) The main difference between the three gifts in EN and those mentioned in *Airne Fingein*, is the shirt of Dunlaing, the eponymous ancestor of North Leinster's pre-eminent Ui Dunlainge dynasties,[84] instead of Ulster king Crimthann's *fidchell* (see VI 7 4)

The talismans that other heroes of *echtrai* brought back from the otherworld appear also to impinge on sovereignty in some way For example, upon his return in BS Conn was left with four gifts, namely, the vat, the vessel the cup and the staves (III 9 6) The first three are explicitly connected with the drink of sovereignty associated, as we have seen, with

[83]This episode probably refers to an *echtrae* of Crimthann Nia Nar (see II 1 2)
[84]See for example, Byrne (1973 130-1, 136-8) and Jaski (2000 132-3)

legitimisation of the current and future kings of Tara The staves too have a similar function, since their contents dictated directly by the phantom name every king form Conn onwards 'it was difficult for Cessarnn, the poet, to memorise the incantation (*a ndichetal*) all at once, so he cut it in ogam (*ogum*) on four staves of yew (*cethóra flescae iphair*), each stave twenty-four feet long with eight ridges" (§9, Murray, 2004 35 and 51)

The silver branch for music and the golden cup for discerning truth are the two otherworldly gifts Cormac acquired in ECA (III 9 4) The attributes of the "cup of truth" can be clearly understood in terms of the concept of *fir flathemon* 'ruler's truth' (see V 3 2) When presenting Cormac with this gift Manannan said "Let three words of falsehood be spoken under it, and it will break in three Then let three true declarations be under it, and it unites again as it was before" (Stokes, 1891 215-6) In effect the truth and duration of Cormac's reign were thus legitimised, given that the cup would not remain after his death Whereas Cormac's cup and branch may have benefited both himself and his loyal subjects in his reign, possession of the similar musical branch in IB was fleeting, since it was taken from Bran almost immediately upon his receiving it and so hardly even benefited himself (IV 10 2) Connlae's otherworldly acquisition, the everlasting apple was more useful and sustained him alone for one month until he left for the otherworld (III 9 2) These gifts are significantly different too in that they are bestowed upon the protagonists before the expedition and not in the otherworld

No tangible gifts are brought from the otherworld in either EEM or FL, but the drink from the woman of sovereignty mentioned explicitly in EEM is what ultimately legitimated the son destined to be king (III 9 5 and III 9 7) The treasures of silver and gold taken from the otherworld by Art were given to his wife Delbchaem in the human world (III 9 3) as an

implicit benefit to that realm Whereas, Loegaire and his warriors received gifts of otherworldly gold, silver and horses in EL, but ultimately this did not benefit human sovereignty

V 5 Repercussions for sovereignty in the aftermath

In the light of the above it seems reasonable for the reader to expect that the woman in strange clothing who appears suddenly before the heir apparent Connlae[85] in EC and before the king or king's son Bran in IB will in fact legitimise a future king However, the opposite happens when Connlae and Bran are persuaded to give up their respective futures for eternal life in a distant sinless paradise Nonetheless, the woman in EC might legitimately be regarded as "at least having significant affinities with the mythical woman of sovereignty", (McCone, 2000 54) insofar as she "decides both his fate regarding the succession and that of the future king of Tara, his brother Art" (McCone, 1990 157-8) In EC, IB and also EL the heir apparent or king abandons his right to human kingship, upon which events thus have a negative impact Since the fates of Connlae and Bran are not specified we cannot assume that otherworld sovereignty was affected by their actions, but Loegaire's actions did ultimately have an impact on it In EL, instead of the otherworld woman/goddess figure, it is an otherworld warrior prince, Fiachnae, who lures the hero away to the otherworld However, it subsequently transpires that it is the behaviour of the otherworld woman named Osnad 'sigh'[86] (*ingen Eachach Amlabair* 'daughter of Eochu Amhlabhar'), Fiachnae's wife, who provides the motivation for the invitation (IV 6 1 and IV 7 1) The consequences of her

[85]In the light of the connection between sovereignty and *sid* in early Irish literature established by O Cathasaigh (1977/8 137-155) McCone (2000 56) discusses the woman s self-introduction *sid mar i taam*" in EC, which would normally translated as a great *sid*-mound in which we are but is here a deliberate pun placed in a context that obliges the reader to understand it as great peace in which we are' and invites interpretation of *aes side* 'the *sid*-folk McCone (2000 47-114) discusses the interplay of traditional narrative themes with Christian themes in EC and basically agrees with Carney (1955) that the author of EC is deliberately bending concepts and terms traditionally associated with sovereignty so that these may be understood in Christian terms, a point which will be discussed in the next chapter

[86]Jackson, (1942 387) suggests that the name "the sigh of the daughter of Eochu Amhlabhar" was intended to refer to the following poem in the text and is mistakenly given by the compiler as Fiachnae s wife

behaviour resulted in the death of the otherworldly king Goll son of Dolb and the destruction of the fort of Mag Mell, but crucially peace was restored in the otherworld through Loegaire's intervention Lóegaire was rewarded with a share in the otherworld kingship and the hand of Fiachnae's daughter, Der Greine, 'Tear of the Sun', in marriage This prompted him to return there forever, thus exchanging expectations of sovereignty in the mortal domain for a share in otherworld kingship

The drink of ale from the sovereignty goddess was enough not only to secure Conn's future but also to vouchsafe that of all his future successors, the four gifts brought back by him from the otherworld being a tangible manifestation of this The drink received from the sovereignty goddess in EEM and less obviously in FL confirmed sucession of Niall and Lugaid Laigde respectively from among a group of brothers but it was also necessary for them to meet the challenge of making love to an at first sight hideous hag Thus the kingship of Tara was assumed by Niall and granted permanently to his descendants, whereas Lugaid Laigde became heir apparent to the kingship of Munster (but originally likewise to the kingship of Tara in all probability, see V 1 7) Similarly, in the case of ECA we have no indication of any lasting repercussions on otherworld sovereignty in the aftermath, but Cormac's reign as king of Tara was enhanced explicitly through his acquisition of the cup of truth and implicitly through the return of his wife Eithne, the mate symbolising his sovereignty (see V 3 2) On the other hand, in the aftermath of EN the repercussions on otherworld sovereignty were catastrophic since the otherworld location was ultimately destroyed and stripped of its sovereignty emblems Nerae remained forever in the *sid*, with the otherworld woman who helped him save the human sovereignty of Connacht Having undergone a dangerous quest and slain numerous fierce supernatural adversaries and plundered otherworld gold and silver,

Art returns with his otherworldly wife and treasures to take up the kingship of Tara in the human realm

V 6 Conclusion

The above sections exploring the royal lineages of the protagonists of the *echtrai* have shown that, with the exceptions of Nerae and Bran, a royal ancestry is documented for each of them In keeping with these findings twelve of the fifteen named characters from the other *echtrae* titles considered, are clearly recognisable as kings or kings' sons/grandsons and a thirteenth regal background is documented for the only female, Machae Evidence of the prominence and importance accorded to ancient royal sites in them has been presented Some well recognized sovereignty motifs, such as the woman/goddess of sovereignty and her various guises and attributes have been explored, in particular the 'drink of sovereignty' which she bestows on the heir apparent Various parallel representations of typical sovereignty motifs indicate their pervasiveness and antiquity not only in early Irish but also Celtic and Indo-European literatures The nature of the various gifts and/or talismans from the otherworld and the way in which they impinge on sovereignty in either or both worlds following the *echtrae* has also been examined All of the *echtrai* looked at here thus display significant and recognisable sovereignty characteristics Ultimately, the otherworldly visit in ECA and BS resulted in an already established kingship effectively being confirmed, while Art's succession is confirmed in EA and the heir-apparent is determined in EEM and FL In EC and EL, by contrast, the result is the removal of a rightful heir from his kingship, as is also arguably the case in IB but cannot be demonstrable in EN The following chapter will seek to explore how the theme of sovereignty informs the narrative in individual tales

Chapter VI The role of sovereignty and other themes in individual tales

VI Introduction

The previous chapter has sought to demonstrate the widespread occurrence of persons, places, objects and motifs connected with sovereignty in the *echtrai* under consideration Individual texts will now be examined with a view to exploring the manner in which these aspects may be exploited in order to deal with various issues pertinent to the institution of kingship Attention will be paid to the origins of some of these where relevant evidence is available, and broader perspectives such as the so-called international heroic biography' will also be borne in mind

VI 1. Attainment of kingship

EEM and FL are primarily concerned with the attainment of kingship by one of a group of kings sons, namely Niall Noigiallach and Lugaid Laígde respectively, as a result of intercourse with a manifestation of the woman embodying sovereignty that is often termed the 'Loathly Lady' or *puella senilis* [87] This may be seen as a reflex of the *hieros gamus* or sacred marriage which is rooted in Irish myth and ritual [88] Since there was no automatic right of succession through primogeniture, the inherent qualities of the candidates for kingship were of the greatest significance in early medieval Ireland (Jaski, 2000 27-30 and 143-171, McCone, 1990 108-9) This concept seems to provide the backdrop for the type of narrative we find in both EEM and FL, where five sons aspire to the kingship but only one, not necessarily the eldest, obtains it

[87]For discussion on the loathly lady' or *puella senilis* in EEM see Breatnach (1953 332-6), Bromwich (1961 452-4) Carney (1955 334-5) Mac Cana, (1955/56 84-6), McCone, (1990 249)

[88]The interdependence of mythical and cultural elements have been revealed in previous explorations of the theme of king and goddess (Mac Cana, 1958/9 63-4, see also V 3 1)

The texts both display the following basic thematic structure (1) At the outset a druidic prophecy identifies the heir apparent, but (2) in his youth this is questioned (3) A quest is proposed in the form of a hunt and (4) cooking and communal feasting on the flesh of the prey caught is followed by (5) a search for water/shelter This leads to (6) an encounter with a hideous hag in rags and (7) the rightful heir turns out to be the only one of the five sibling contenders to accede to her sexual requests (8) This intercourse transforms her into a radiant beauty and finally (9) sovereignty is promised to her mate by her Both agree in representing the relationship between the king and sovereignty as a marriage or some less formal sexual liaison Crucially both texts convey the impression that Níall and Lugaid are chosen to rule partly on account of their actions in the various tests but also through the prophecies of the druid Torna and the smith Sithchenn in EEM and of the unnamed druid in FL

VI 1 1 Textual analysis of EEM

Notwithstanding overall similarities, differences of emphasis may be discerned within the narrative framework of EEM and FL For example, in EEM Brion[89] is acknowledged as the oldest of the five brothers and the ultimately successful Níall is not only the youngest of them but also a mere illegitimate half brother (see III 2 5) Subsequently great emphasis is placed on the episode in which the brothers escape from the burning forge, a test staged by the druid Sithchenn in order to determine the rightful heir but not accepted by Niall's jealous step-mother Mongfind The druid then prophesied their destinies on the basis of implements they each retrieved from the fire as follows Niall, who brought the anvil, vanquishes and will be a solid anvil forever', Brion, with the sledgehammer is for 'fighters', Fiachrae, with the pail of beer and the bellows is for 'beauty and science', Ailill, with the chest of weapons is 'to

[89]In this tale the other main contenders' age is made clear when the brothers finally return from their hunting expedition and Mongfind asks why it is not the senior Brion who relates the tale (*in sindsear indises na scela i Brian* [sic]) to the king (Stokes, 1903 202-3)

avenge', and Fergus with the bundle of withered wood and a stick of yew will get nothing (Stokes, 1903 195, see III 3 5) This ultimately seals the future of each sibling

Mongfind's refusal to accept the outcome of the choice of implements in EEM acted as a prelude to a hunting expedition proposed by Sithchenn, which culminated in the validation of the heir through acquiring the drink from the woman and mating with her (see III 7 5) After he unhesitatingly kissed and slept with her, the woman prophesied to Niall that he would take the kingship of Tara and that, with just two exceptions[90] and the sons of Fiachrae, all of the kings of Tara would be his descendants Crucially, she told Niall to bring the water to his brothers but not to give them a drink until they ceded their right of seniority to him, thus emphasising the importance of this element in the determination of the sovereignty

VI 1 2. Textual analysis of the 'Five Lugaids'

In the case of FL no great emphasis is put on the respective ages of the five brothers, who appear to be equally eligible to inherit at the outset, since their father Daire gave each of them the same name after a druidic prophecy had revealed to him that a son of his called Lugaid' would succeed him in the kingship of Ireland (see III 2 7) Although the 'drink' motif is not stressed, the wonderful house where the brothers find shelter did at least have a supply of *linn* 'ale' (§72, Arbuthnot, 2007 21) On the other hand the element of coition is more explicit in FL where we are told that Lugaid Laigde had 'intercourse' (*teit ina gnais iarum*) with the woman who identified herself as the sovereignty (§72, Arbuthnot, 2007 22) Furthermore, the hunt and the subsequent feast in the wilderness are also more prominently featured in FL Here the five Lugaids hunt a fawn with a golden sheen After feasting on their catch they each in turn seek shelter from an ugly filthily clad hag However, only the one who has actually caught the fawn in the hunt obtains it by agreeing to sleep with her, whereupon she becomes

[90] Namely Brian Boruma and Mael Sechnaill II

beautifully clothed and radiant (see III 7 7), declares herself to be the sovereignty and predicts that her bedmate will assume *rige nErenn* 'the kingship of Ireland' (§72, Arbuthnot, 2007 22) He then brings his brothers to her house where they feast and then she bestows a distinctive epithet on each of them based on their actions during the hunt,[91] her chosen mate, being called Lugaid Laigde Fawny' as the most successful in the hunt In effect, the brothers are differentiated from each other by her on the basis of the outcome of the hunt and she identifies the one who is due to be king

VI 1 3 Concealment and transformation.

The hunt followed a druidic prophecy in FL, as in EEM In this case *tiucfa loegh co neimh ordai fair isin ænach, in mac dibh ghebhus in laegh, is e ghebis in righi di t'eis* "a fawn with a golden sheen will come into the assembly and the one of them that catches the fawn, it is he that will take the kingship after you" (§72, Arbuthnot, 2007 20 and 96) Here the 'golden sheen' of the fawn caught by the heir-apparent resonates with the woman's transformation on the verge of sleeping with him, when 'the brightness of her face' becomes like *grian ag turgbhail a mis Mhai soillsi a gnuisi* "the sun rising in the month of May" (§72, Arbuthnot, 2007 22 and 98) Concealment and subsequent transformation are essential elements in both of these tales, in which the woman of sovereignty is hidden beneath an ugly uninviting exterior to be transformed upon mating with her predestined royal husband A comparable contrast may be seen in the representation of Mes Buachalla, destined to be the mate of king Eterscel of Tara, as "of great size and evil of aspect" and someone who used to come and go in elf mounds and seas near the beginning of *De Shil Chonairi Moir*[92] (§§10-14, Gwynn, 1912 133) but in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* as a "very fair and very beautiful" seamstress of royal descent who was fostered by cowherds as a child and hidden away in a hut with only a

[91]Lugaid Oreda (Orede) 'young pig , Lugaid Cal 'that is sleepy , Lugaid Corb consumed what was spoilt', Lugaid Legfhes, 'a fawn escaped' him (Arbuthnot, 2007 98)

[92]Gwynn (1912 131) notes that the *Rawl* 502 version is linguistically certainly of the Old Irish period '

skylight (§§ 5-8, Knott, 1936 3-4) The motif involving the transformation of the woman from rags to riches upon mating with her appointed spouse might plausibly be seen to mirror the elevation of the rightful heir to kingly status in EEM and FL

There are similarities between the five Lugaids' cooking and eating of the fawn after the hunt and what Gerald of Wales took to be an actual royal inauguration ritual in his twelfth century Topography of Ireland

> When the people has been gathered together, a white mare is brought into the midst Whereupon he who is to be elevated not into a chief but into a beast, not into a king, but into an outlaw, approaching bestially (*bestialiter accedens*) in the presence of all, no less impudently than imprudently declares himself to be a beast (*bestia*) And when the animal has been killed forthwith and boiled in pieces in twater, a bath is prepared for him in the same water Sitting in this, he himself feasts of those meats brought to him, his people standing around and eating with him He also quaffs and drinks the broth in which he is washed - not from a vessel, not with his hand but just with his mouth all around When these things have been carried out duly but not rightly his kingship and lordship have been confirmed [93]

In both cases, the animal is seized by the king-to-be and then killed and cooked for him to eat in the company of others, prior to him taking up his kingship

VI.1.4 The hunt and further tests

Whereas mythical representations ascribe a central role to the king's legitimisation and accession through the *hieros gamus* or sacred marriage with a goddess embodying the sovereignty, the question arises as to how this fundamental religious concept was given expression in reality or in the actual choice of a king It seems likely that further tests may have been required on occasion as a means of deciding between two or more apparently viable candidates for kingship A literary example is provided by *De Shil Chonairi Moir*, where succession to the kingship of Tara is determined on the strength of a charioteering test

[93] *Topographia Hibernica* iii 5

with marked sexual overtones This is failed by Lugaid of the Red Stripes but passed by Conaire (ll 23-9, Gwynn, 1912 134 and 139, see also V 4)

The hunt and the ensuing sexual encounter in both EEM and FL may likewise be understood as tests It appears from legal[94] and other texts that, after the termination of fosterage at the age of fourteen, many males of free birth in early Ireland passed a stage in the *fían* [95] Dillon (1948 32) suggests that, 'there were such bands of adventurers in Ireland as early as the sixth century" and ' one troop of them went to Britain in 603 to help the Irish king of Scotland, Aedan mac Gabrain, against the Angles" (see V 1 23) McCone (1990 207-9) discusses a range of evidence to show that it was customary practice for the sons of kings, *maic ríg,* to spend time as *fían*-members and concludes from this "that many an early Irish king had a youth in the *fían* behind him " In that case the period typically spent by kings' sons hunting and raiding in the wilds as members of a sodality such as the *fían* can also be understood as a period of prolonged tests of their suitability for kingship [96] Moreover, McCone (1990 218) points out "if further proof were needed that the *fían* was a part of early Christian Ireland's pagan heritage, this is supplied by plentiful evidence for the Church's strong disapproval of this practice in the pre-Norman period " Accordingly, the myth of a hunt leading to the acquisition of sovereignty by one of its participants, as exemplified in EEM and FL, may be a narrative reflex of this wild youthful phase as a prelude to kingship in real life

[94]For instance *Crith Gablach* and *Bretha Crolige* (Kelly, 1988 88-9)

[95]The *fían* has been described as 'an independent organisation of predominantly landless unmarried unsettled and young men given to hunting, warfare and sexual licence in the wilds outside the *tuath*, upon which it made claims, by agreement or force as the case might be, to sustenance and hospitality and for which it might perform certain elementary police or military services where relations were not strained by hostility Upon the acquisition of the requisite property, usually by inheritance upon the death of the father or next of kin, but not before the age of twenty one would normally pass from the *fían* to full membership of the *tuath* of married property owners" (McCone, 1990 209-10, see also 203-32)

[96]Time spent in the *fían* can also be understood in terms of van Gennep's rites of passage The three stages of transition from wild sodality to settled life as depicted on the Gundestrup Cauldron are noteworthy in this regard i e the casting off of animal pelts, a ritual cleansing or baptism as a symbol of rebirth, and the wearing of new clothes (McCone, 1986 16-18)

VI.1.5. Comparative elements

The antiquity of some of the elements found in *echtrai* is indicated by a comparison with evidence elsewhere For example, Aristotle's account of the foundation myth of Massalia (see V 3 4) assigns the acquisition of and rule over the territory to the action of a Gaulish princess in choosing a Greek visitor as her husband by proffering him a drink along lines reminiscent of EEM especially McCone (1990 110) points out a similar thematic element in ancient Sanskrit literature in the marriage of a king's daughter based on a woman's own choice

> the 'love of the unseen (one)' (*adrsta-kāma*) is mutually experienced both by king Bhīma's beautiful daughter Damayantī and by King Nala, who is described as 'Vīrasena's strong son, endowed with all the desired virtues, handsome, skilled with horses' and 'like the sun in radiance (*tejas*)' Bhīma resolves to end his daughter's repining condition by summoning suitors to a ceremony of 'own choice' (*svayam-vara*) at which she herself will choose her husband However, four gods assume Nala's appearance and oblige him to plead for them with the result that Damayantī must pick her beloved out from five look-alikes She resourcefully gets the gods to reveal themselves by uttering various truths and finally chooses Nala with their blessing and marries him This union ushered in a happy reign characterisitsed by right, due custom (*dʰarma*), religious observance including the royal *asvamedʰa* offspring and general prosperity (McCone 1990 110-11)

It is striking that here as in EEM and FL the woman selects her destined mate from among five candidates, in this case look-alikes whereas the brothers in FL all bore the same name This numerical agreement is quite circumstantial and, due allowance being made for the inversion of sexes and the less favourable outcome, an even more striking Irish analogue of Damanyantī's dilemma is provided by the look-alike women in *Tochmarc Etaíne* (see V 3 4) who numbered fifty, a multiple of five out of which Eochaid was confident of recognising his wife Etain after her abduction by Midir Moreover, according to McCone (1990 206-7) "the *diberga* or (bands of) brigands, also termed *fianna* on occasion in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*" (§145) sometimes travelled in small groups of 'three or five'"[97]

[97] The size of these bands ranges widely in the sources from small groups to several hundred strong in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*" (§§41-4, McCone, 1990 206-7)

The burning forge incident in EEM is reminiscent of an ancient Scythian legend, recorded by the fifth century Greek historian Herodotus (see McCone, 1990 216), in which implements determined succession to the kingship In this a golden plough, yoke, sword and vessel fell from heaven in the presence of the original king's sons but became hot when the two older brothers tried to grasp them However, the youngest, Kolaxais, was able to take hold of them and the other two ceded kingship and the whole nation to him McCone (1990 116) points out "a very similarly conditioned empathy in a Grimms' fairytale ('the Golden Bird') replete with sovereignty symbolism "[98] This tells how the youngest brother unexpectedly triumphs over older ones and succeeds his father as king by virtue of acquiring precious objects or animals and ultimately a beautiful princess as his wife Similarly, Niall's right to rule was symbolised by the implement he recovered, although the jealous stepmother attempted to thwart this judgement

VI 1 6. The colour gold

The gold colour of the fawn in FL has parallels in Indic mythology Referring to a statement featured in the Chronicle of Moldavia's entry for 1359A D that 'Dragos, Voirode of Maramares, came from Hungary hunting aurochs and he reigned for two years", Eliade (1972 132 and 134) claims that "we have here a case of a 'ritual hunt', for the pursuit of the aurochs ends in the discovery of an unknown country and finally in the founding of a state" He then (Eliade, 1972 151-3) describes the essential elements of a myth preserved in a medieval Siamese chronicle as follows "(1) a divine being changes into a golden stag and lingers in the king's own pleasure grounds, as if to incite him, (2) the king, unable to capture it, orders his son to do so, (3) the prince sets out with a large army, guided by thirty-two hunters disguised as stags, (4) although the golden stag always remains in sight, it proves to be unconquerable; (5) the prince falls in love with a woman of the country and lies with her;

[98] (der goldene Vogel no 57 in the1960 Winkler edition', McCone (1990 116)

(6) he remains in the country for a long time, but the stag waits for him, (7) finally the prince and his army resume the hunt, but when they arrive at the foot of a mountain, the stag disappears The erotic episode falls within the same scheme of sovereignty "

Thus it seems that the golden colour of the deer has supernatural connotations in FL as in the Siamese story, where its divine origin is made explicit In both of these narratives the hunting of this creature leads to a sexual encounter between a king's son and a woman, who is explicitly identified with sovereignty in FL The deer, like the horse in the ritual described by Giraldus[99] above, may be seen as a symbol of sovereignty, which subsequently appears in human form as a woman The deer is typical prey for wolves and the *fían*, as when young warriors of the *fían* are associated with wolves and deer wandering in the mountains in an Old Irish charm preserved in the ninth-century *Codex Sancti Pauli*, which also testifies to the role of inheritance in determining the choice between a settled farming and a vagrant hunting career in *túath* and *fían* respectively (McCone, 1990 207)

> I wish for the wood (wooden board?) of notice (?) and a silver raven (chief?) between fire and wall I wish for the three thin boars May a fairy attend my encounter with cereal and dairy produce (*ith 7 mlicht*) of whatever I move it for If I be granted good luck here may it be cereal and dairy produce that I see (*ma ro-m thoicther-sa inso rop ith 7 mlicht ad cear*) If I be not granted good luck let it be wolves (lit "wild dogs") and deer and traversing of mountains and young warriors of the *fían* that I see (*man-m rothcaither ropat choin altai 7 ois 7 imthecht slebe 7 oaic fene ad cear*)" (*Thes* II, 293)

[99]Dumezil (1966 226-7) describes a ritual in Indic tradition where a horse is a symbol of sovereignty the horse is sacrificed according to an extremely detailed ritual which entails a very rich symbolism, the horse being assimilated to the totality of what the king and through him his subjects may expect Just before the sacrifice the body of the living horse is divided into three sections, front, middle and rear upon which three of the king's wives (the titular queen, the favourite, and a woman called rejected) respectively perform unctions placed under the patronage of the gods Vasus, Rudras and Ādityas and aimed to procure for the king variously spiritual energy (*tejas*, in front), physical force (*indriya*, in the middle), cattle (*pasu*, at the rear), these three benefits, divided between the three functions, recapitulating themselves in a fourth term, prosperity or good fortune (*sri*)"

VI 1 7 Niall's heroic biography

Aside from the aspects of sovereignty common to both EEM and FL, further political conflict underlies EEM, where the king's son is banished as a child but returns to his birthplace, overcomes his persecutor, i e his step-mother, and claims his rightful inheritance to the kingship of Tara In effect, Niall s portrayal here is a classic instance of the international heroic biography, displaying as it does the typical expulsion and return formula, recognised as an established pattern[100] not just in the lives of heroes but also in the lives of kings (see I 4 1) As O Cathasaigh (1977 9)[101] has shown in his study of Cormac mac Airt, 'it is not limited to martial figures" and "does not always relate to a setting dominated by a military aristocracy and celebrating martial views " Likewise the portrayal of Niall does not focus upon his martial qualities but rather upon his destiny to become king Hence this patterning in EEM constitutes a significant structural difference between the texts Whereas in FL the action essentially begins at the assembly prefacing the hunt and ends when the matter of sovereignty is resolved at its conclusion Niall's destiny is indicated by his conception, his expulsion, and various tests endured prior to his triumphant return to claim the kingship [102] In this respect the story of EEM is more in keeping with the king-to-be Cormac's heroic biography The following summary of EEM highlights (in boldface) the types of feature commonly held to be significant in the international heroic biography

> Niall is **begotten out of wedlock** by **king** Eochaid Muigmedon Of Tara, upon a **slave woman,** Cairenn, who is also described as a daughter of the king of England (§1) His

[100]O Cathasaigh (1977 22) agrees that, "the heroic biography is concerned essentially with life-crisis' while adding that they are the mythic correlatives of the rites of passage (border experiences) identified by van Gennep in his classic work" (see also I 4 1)

[101] Whereas the general practice was to take the martial hero as the norm, the heroic biography of Cu Chulainn being the prime example of this type in Irish sources ', according to O Cathasaigh (1977 9)

[102]Rees and Rees (1961 213) agree with Lord Raglan's proposition that whereas the pattern of the hero s life has little in common with what is historically significant in the lives of men, it does, correspond with the ritual life-cycle In human societies generally the times when each person becomes the central figure in a ritual are those of his birth and baptism, initiation and marriage, death and burial The myth has a bearing upon these rites"

life is threatened by the king's jealous wife Mongfind,[103] who forces Caireen to do hard labour so "that the child might die in her womb" thus causing Niall to be born when his mother is fetching water from the well on the green (*faithche*) outside Tara, where he is **left exposed and attacked by birds** However, he is rescued and fostered **in exile** by the poet (*eices*) Torna, who **delivers a prophecy of the child's future greatness** (§2) When Niall is old enough to be king he **returns home** with Torna to Tara and **elevates his mother to her proper status** (§4) Mongfind sets up **various tests** to prevent Níall from succeeding over her sons in the kingship Nonetheless Niall **surpasses his brothers** by bringing the anvil out of the burning forge, a symbol that 'Niall vanquishes', in contrast to the lesser implements brought out by his half-brothers (§6) Torna helps Níall settle the fighting among his half-brothers which was intended to trap and kill him by Mongfind (§8) Subsequently Niall is given the best weapons for the hunt where they go astray in the wilderness (§9) When in search of a drink after feasting on their prey they encounter a hideous hag Níall is the only one prepared to sleep with her (§10) Thereupon she transforms into a beautiful maiden and reveals herself as the sovereignty thus granted to him and his successors (§14) Niall's seniority is granted over his brothers in exchange for a drink and after his **triumphant return** to Tara is recognised as heir to the kingship along with his descendants (§§10, 19, Stokes, 1903 190-207)

The explicit account of Niall's expulsion and return and his conception betwixt and between' different social categories typically marks him out as an extraordinary person, liminal in van Gennep's sense[104] (see 1 4 2) he is conceived by a high ranking father and a servile outcast mother, a foreigner who was high ranking in her own home He is born in a *faithche* or 'in-field', "a manifestly liminal place of sanctuary between the central walled homestead (*les*) and the world beyond" (McCone, 1990 189) Thus his birth on the symbolic threshold between the homestead and the world beyond matches his ambivalent social position as a child born out of wedlock to parents of unequal status, who is destined to cross and recross all manner of thresholds in his lifetime As the earlier synopsis shows, Niall is reared in exile but,

[103]Niall's lowly regarded illegitimate status is clearly shown in Mongfind's treatment of him and his slave mother Cairenn To see her eldest son assume the kingship was a matter of some importance not only to Brion but also to herself and her own continued prestige, since the mother of a king had the same honour-price as her son, provided that she is fully law-abiding" (Kelly, 1988 78)

[104]Van Gennep (1960) discusses rites of passage with a tripartite structure, of separation, liminality and incorporation McCone (1990 188) points out that ' being by definition abnormal, the hero does not fit neatly into ordinary human society and categories As a superhuman but usually only half-divine frequenter of the margin between men and god(s), society and outsiders, culture and nature, life and death etc , the hero can move freely between these worlds without belonging properly to any of them Ambivalence and liminality are the hero's essential attributes, and mediation between what threaten and may ultimately prove to be irreconcilable opposites is his more rarely her, essential function '

even after his return, he endures a further outing to and return from the wilderness before he is finally vindicated as his father's heir

VI 1 8 Exposure at birth

This account of Niall's upbringing resonates with that of Cormac Mac Airt, who was also exposed at birth, rescued from wild animals, had his future greatness prophesied at birth, was reared in exile but made the transition back to achieve his goal of Tara and the kingship, as related in *Genemuin Chormaic*

> Cormac is conceived the night before his father king Art is killed in battle He is born as his mother Etan daughter of Olc Aichi, steps out of a chariot on her way to Lugnae Fer Trí, with whom the child was to be fostered, as instructed by Art Upon hearing a thunder-clap Lugnae realized that this signified the birth of a great king A she-wolf takes the baby while his mother and maidservant slept, and keeps him with her whelps in a cave Lugnae takes Etan to his house and offers a reward for the safe return of the baby The boy was found playing with the wolfcubs by Grec mac Arod Lugnae uttered a second prophecy of Cormac's greatness and fosters him In his childhood he is referred by playmates to as 'a fatherless bastard' Distressed by the slur Cormac goes to Lugnae who reveals his exalted royal parentage and prospects to him They set out for Tara, where they are welcomed Later Cormac corrected a judgement of the king Mac Con's about the sheep and the queens woad, whereupon his rights to the kingship are acknowledged (ll 68-76, Hull, 1952 79-85)

The classic narrative of this type is Romulus and Remus (Livy I, 3-16), which tells how the future king was exposed at birth, rescued and nurtured in the wild by a she-wolf, found by a herdsman and raised by him and his wife in the wilderness, had to endure various tests but ultimately returned home and then founded Rome as her first king McCone (1990 182-190) analyses in detail the heroic biographical patterning in both EEM and the life of St Brigit, concluding that "the earliest model for a typical Irish heroic biography" is provided by the 'First Life of Brigit' *Vita Prima 1* which can "with some confidence be traced back in its essentials to around the middle of the seventh century" (1990 183-4) Accordingly, it can be inferred from this that the established pattern of the heroic biography as a means of promoting the future king's potential for rule were known to the author(s) of EEM and ECA

VI 1 9 Discussion

The above discussion shows that in Irish tradition, as elsewhere, the politics of rivalry pertaining to sovereignty can be reflected in myth and legend, an example being the case of five sons aspiring to a kingship that only one can obtain as in EEM and FL Each of these texts clearly employs sovereignty motifs to deal with the issue of identifying the rightful heir and scholars generally recognise the story of EEM as essentially an origin legend of the Ui Neill dynasty (Byrne, 1973 51, Dillon, 1946 38, Jaski, 2000 34) [105] Herbert (1992 272) concludes that through this demonstration of the legitimacy of the supernaturally bestowed Uí Neill kingship "the mythic past provided a defensive strategy in a threatening present" of the eleventh century As we have seen neither of these texts in their extant form can be firmly dated earlier than that century on linguistic grounds (see II 6 and II 8) Nevertheless, the redactors do appear to be drawing on traditional resources such as the formula of the heroic biography[106] in the case of Niall and the motif of the selection of the king-to-be as her mate by the woman symbolising sovereignty, who engages in sexual activity with and bestows a drink upon him after his success in various tests including the hunt Comparative evidence indicates that these aspects were well established and understood from well before the early medieval Irish period

VI 2 Textual analysis of EC

EC has attracted considerable scholarly attention [107] It is the earliest extant *echtrae* and evidence suggests that it was titled as such in its eighth-century archetype (see II 4) It shares basically the same thematic structure as the other *echtrai* (see table III 11), for example in the regal assembly at Uisnech with king Conn and his son Connlae at his side (§1) and in the

[105](see also fn 125 and 128 and VI 4 3)
[106]For example see Ó Cathasaigh, 1977 1-6
[107]For example Carey, (1987, 1995, 1995a), Carney, (1955, 1969), Dumville, (1976 73-94), Oskamp, (1974 207-228) For further detailed discussion of these, see McCone (2000 47-114)

sudden appearance of a woman in unfamiliar clothing (§1), who describes herself as beautiful and of good birth (§5) As we have seen, certain episodes in medieval Irish literature, such as that of Etaín's wait beside a well in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (§§ 2, 3) would lead [108] the appearance of a strange and beautiful woman to a king or a king's son in an early Irish tale to raise expectations of a sovereignty goddess who will ultimately transmit the kingship to him through a sexual act, as in EEM and FL However, the exact opposite of this stereotype happens in EC, where the woman declares her love for Connlae without any explicit sexual reference and then effectively removes him from his regal future among mortals to life everlasting in a distant overseas paradise

EC opens with Connlae at his fathers's side at the great assembly looking every bit the undisputed heir apparent In both EEM and FL, by contrast, it is far from clear at the outset which of five eligible siblings will inherit the kingship from their father Thus in EEM and FL the emphasis is on the role of the expedition and encounter with the woman in determining which of them is to become king, whereas in EC a regal succession that is seemingly obvious at the outset fails to materialise as a result of the woman's intervention A similar outcome in EL, where the heir Lóegaire declines his apparent right to inherit the kingship of Connacht, will be discussed below

VI 2.1 *Mag Mell*

The respective destinations in EEM and FL are not named or elaborated upon but were clearly accessible by land and not far from the human realm However, in EC the otherworld is named as Mag Mell (§5) and is described in some detail as a place of perpetual peace without

[108]The opening of *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, describes *Etain ba si tra as caemeam 7 as aildeam 7 as coiam ad-connarcadar suili doine de mnaib domain* the fairest and most perfect and most beautiful of all the women of the world" Furthermore she is *ingen Etair ri Eocraidi a sidaib* the daughter of king Etar of the *sid* (§§ 2, 3, Knott, 1936 2, see also V 3 1-V 3 3)

sin or transgression in a patently Christian sense (§3) that is ruled over by the immortal king Boadag (§5) and located far across the sea (see McCone, 2000 140 and 191) Thus it appears that the traditional paradigm is being subordinated to Christian ideals and, as far as the woman/goddess of 'sovereignty' is concerned "what she bestows is not kingship in this world but immortality in another" (McCone, 2000 55)

According to Carney [109] (1969 165) "in this tale we are presented with two philosophies, the first being the native, the druidic, the doomed, and this is represented by the druid Córan The other embodies a prophecy of the coming of Christianity, it tells of the existence of another world where there is neither strife nor sin nor transgression, where youth and bloom are eternal " McCone (1990 79-81) agrees that the central conflict in EC is between the ideals of paganism and Christianity reflected in a constant interplay between traditional narrative motifs and Christian themes throughout According to EC Conn's kingship will not last and he begs Corann to intervene and prevent his son's departure with the woman since (§6) *forband do-dom ánic as-dom moo airli, as-dom moo cumachtu, nith nachim thanic ho gabsu flaith* "an excessive demand has come upon me that is beyond my counsel, that is beyond my power, a struggle that has not come upon me since I assumed power" (McCone, 2000 147-9) Here an attempt is made to preserve the mortal royal succession against an otherworldly threat, whereas king Boadag's otherworldly reign in Mag Mell not only reflects the ideal of earthly kingship[110] but is also *bithsuthain* 'everlasting' (McCone, 2000 139)

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[109]Carney (1969 164-5) suggests that *Connlae s* dilemma in being torn between his desire to go to the land of the living and his love for his people echoed an aspirant's desire to enter monastic life while retaining feelings of loss for his family In this respect EC portrays all the positive things that a person can expect if he follows all the right rules and considers carefully what such a change would entail Thus he (Carney, 1969 165) proposes that EC is probably a didactic tale that "the young monastic student, reading this tale, is faced with a problem very similar to Conle's He is asked to give up all that is familiar for the sake of eternal life "

[110]i e in being without affliction "since he assumed sovereignty' (§5, *o gabais flaith*, McCone, 2000 140-1), similar to the second description of Conaire's perfect reign in *Togail Bruiden Da Derga* "since he assumed sovereignty no cloud had obscured the sun from the middle of spring to the middle of autumn" (§66, *Ni taudcha[i]d net tar grein o gabais flaith o medon erraich co medon fogmair*, Knott, 1936 18)

VI 2 2 *Fir flathemon,* sovereignty and *sid*

Physical beauty and perfection are repeatedly featured in early Irish literature as fundamental attributes of the rightful king, as when king Conchobar's son Cuscraid is described by the Ulstermen as "the makings of a king in appearance" (is *adbar rig ar deilb)* in *Scela Muicce Meic Da Tho,* (§14, Thurneysen, 1935 13) Crucially, Connlae's appearance[111] resonates with these requirements of *fir flathemon* (e g Carey, 1995 52) but the woman promises that this beauty will be imperishable in the otherworld, whereas it will be short-lived in the world of men The vital attribute of life everlasting is thus emphasised again

In a discussion of the connection between sovereignty and *sid* in early Irish narrative O Cathasaigh (1977/8 137-9) argued that the woman's statement in her opening speech (§3) *sid már i taam,* would normally mean 'a great *sid*-mound in which we are' but in EC is placed in a context inviting interpretation as 'great peace in which we are' To McCone (2000 57) "as the form of the words makes it quite clear, our author has used a conventional coupling of *sid* in the sense of 'peace' with *cainchomrac* 'harmony' as the basis of an etymology that simply and directly identifies the *aes side* to whom the woman belongs as 'people of peace' living in a Christian Paradise " Carey (1995 45) asserts that, "we are therefore to see the woman, and the realm which she represents, as having escaped the downfall of Adam and Eve " McCone (2000 105) goes further in claiming that the woman's 'act of giving Connlae an imperishable apple as a prelude to inducing him to abandon old age and death, the lot of fallen mortals, and join her in a state of everlasting youth in a sinless paradise free from toil is an obviously deliberate inversion of the narrative in Genesis, where the woman's gift of the forbidden apple to the man resulted in their expulsion from the Garden of Eden to lead a life of travail

[111]The woman describes Connlae s *rigdelb* kingly appearance (McCone, 2000 143), and upon her second visit she issues a more urgent invitation to him, warning Connlae that he sits *etet marbu duthaini oc indnaidiu eco uathmain to-t chuiretar bii bithbi* ' among the short-lived dead waiting for terrible death The everliving invite you " (McCone 2000 166-9)

followed by death " It thus seems probable that the woman's descriptions of an overseas paradise (§5), are based above all on concepts derived from Christianity and the aspirations of voyaging Christian monks rather than from native pre-Christian traditions (McCone, 2000 98-9)

VI 2 3 Corann the druid

Whereas the druidic prophecies and the woman's intervention regarding the kings' sons in EEM and FL ultimately concur, they are severely at odds in EC, where the druid, Corann tries at Conn's behest to prevent the destiny planned by the woman for Connlae (§6, McCone, 2000 105) He thwarts her on the first occasion (§7) but is no match for her upon her second visit, when she forecasts the coming to Ireland of a righteous man (§11) who is rather obviously to be equated with Patrick and his destruction of druidry (see McCone, 2000 105 and 174-5) This two-stage conflict resonates with Muirchú's seventh-century account of the similarly structured struggle between Patrick and the druids Lochru and Lucetmail that culminated in king Loegaire's conversion to Christianity (see §§17, 20, 21, Bieler, 1979 89, 91, 92-3, McCone 2000 105) The basic message of the woman in EC to Conn is that love of druidry is bad for him and his kingship and that both are ultimately doomed for failing to conform to Christian ideals According to McCone (2000 105) the woman thus "prefigures Patrick typologically and symbolises the Church allegorically "

In addition, Connlae is sought out by the woman in the human realm rather than himself encountering her in her own place of residence as was the case in EEM and FL As observed above, the woman of sovereignty typically selects a man whom she has not seen before from a number of suitors already encountered, as when Etain says she has rejected many *fir in tside eter rigu 7 chaemu* "men of the *síd* both kings and nobles" while waiting for Eochaid

Feidlech[112] in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (§3, Knott, 1936 2) Typically, when the woman appears to the man, he is instantly smitten and sex ensues as when Eochaid first set eyes upon Etain and *gabais sant in ri n-impefo chetoir* "desire for her seized the king immediately" (§3, Knott, 1936 2) When the woman leaves for the first time in EC we are told that *gabais eolchaire iarom Connle immum deilb inna mna ad condairc* "longing then seized Connlae for the appearance of the woman that he had seen" (§8 McCone, 2000 163) Given that the author appears to be bending concepts and terms traditionally associated with sovereignty to his own ends, it is likely, as McCone (2000 82-3) points out, that the term '*éolchaire*' which expresses "a longing for something lost or missing" is probably deliberately used here instead of the word '*sant*' which is typically used to denote "a greedy desire to possess or enjoy something new " If so, the use of the word *eolchaire* instead of *sant* is another deliberate play on words in EC [113] In any case there is no indication that Connlae is love-struck upon seeing the woman nor is there an explicit reference to a sexual encounter between them

VI.2 4 The everlasting apple

Another significant difference between EC and other *echtrai* is found in the gift that the woman gives to Connlae before being forced to leave (§7) The apple is an individual inducement to lure Connlae away from his kingly prospects and his consummation of it there in solitude prior to his second encounter with the otherworld woman and departure is the reverse of the communal feasts shared by the siblings away from home as a prelude to their respective encounters, one of them explicitly sexual, with the woman of sovereignty in EEM and FL McCone (2000 81) proposes that the everlasting apple in EC can be understood as the fruit of the land of eternal youth and immortality from which the woman came and he provides "an illuminating parallel to Connlae's transitional change of diet on the verge of a

[112]Aristotle's and Trogus/Justin's accounts of the foundation myth of Massalia reveal that in Gaulish tradition the woman was also likely to select someone she had not seen before as her mate (see V 3 4)
[113]Carey (1995a 85) also points out the unusual use of the phrase *gaibid eolchaire* in this sense in EC

crucial move away from a pagan environment dominated by a druid" from Brigit s 'First Life'[114] in Latin and her 'Old Irish Life',[115] which were composed in the eighth and the ninth century A D respectively and both derive from the same roughly mid-seventh-century Latin source (McCone, 2000 81, see also McCone, 1982) These episodes represent Brigit's 'liminal' phase[116] of transition between a pagan and a Christian environment in that she still lives in the druid's household but is no longer really compatible with that lifestyle Her return home follows directly after this episode (§9, *Vita I*, Connolly, 1989 7, §6, *Bethu Brigte*, O hAodha, 1978 21) Connlae's condition while he remains in his father's and the druid's environment for one month unable to digest their food similarly represents a transitional/liminal state before his departure from home and mortality to the otherworld and immortality[117] (McCone, 2000 81)

VI.2.5 Discussion

The above discussion has endeavoured to show how EC modifies narrative motifs and patterns typical of other *echtrai*, particularly EEM and FL The latter present the selection of one of a number of brothers to succeed their father as king as a result of an encounter abroad with an otherworldly woman after a shared meal It seems reasonable to agree with McCone that, by calling Connlae's experience an *echtrae* at an early date, the tale's author was

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[114] The holy girl was nauseated by the druid's food and vomited daily Considering this the druid (*magus*) investigated the cause of the sickness and found it and said I am impure (*immundus*) but that girl is full of the Holy Spirit However, she does not accept my food' Then he selected a white cow and assigned it to the girl and a certain Christian woman, an exceedingly religious virgin, used to milk that cow and the girl used to drink the milk of that cow, and with healthy stomach she used not to vomit that up and the Christian woman was nursemaid to the girl ' (§8, *Vita I*, Connolly, 1989 7)

[115] When it was time to wean her the druid (*druí*) was anxious about her, anything he gave her she used to vomit up at once and her colour was none the worse 'I know' said the druid what ails the girl, (it is) because I am impure (*immundus*) Then a white cow with red ears was assigned to sustain her and she was healthy there from (*Bethu Brigte* §5, O hAodha 1978 2 and 21)

[116] This phase being understood here in terms of the transitional phase exemplified in Van Gennep's rites of passage

[117] McCone (2000 105) concludes that ' the Christian inspiration and message in EC is palpable ' He agrees with Carney that "EC is about individual redemption" and that "Connlae's dilemma when confronted with the way to eternal life was highly relevant to the monastic ideal After a month s silent rumination and agonising he suddenly broke free of the ties that bound him and took the decisive leap of faith

drawing attention to a traditional narrative pattern familiar to himself and his audience If so, this seems to have centred upon one brother's attainment of kingship after a group expedition abroad and to have been deliberately inverted by him in order to get a desired Christian message across To that end an apparently obvious royal heir is taken away to an overseas realm of immortality after two encounters with a woman from there, both located at his home territory and separated by a solitary meal If these deductions are correct, EC provides indirect evidence that an *echtrae* narrative along the lines seen in the later surviving tales EEM and FL was well-established at least as early as the later seventh century and reasons have already been given for seeing this as an inherited traditional pattern

VI 3 Textual analysis of IB

IB has received rather more scholarly attention[118] than EC, especially with regard to patent Christian elements in so old a vernacular narrative and to the respective natures of *immram* and *echtrae* (McCone, 2000 60) McCone (2000 1-27) argues at length that all extant manuscript versions of IB and EC derive from an eight century archetype, probably *Cin Dromma Snechta*, and that thereafter the transmission of each was remarkably similar Carney (1976 193) considered both tales to be the product of a single author or at least of one school Likewise, Carey (1995a 85) notes unmistakable verbal and thematic resonances between them and posits a profound literary interaction indicating that they emanate from the same author or school McCone (2000 108) agrees and concludes that "an overall plan covering both may well have been involved at the outset " Thus it seems appropriate to consider IB in the light of its relationship to EC

[118](Carey, 1995a 83-4, Carney, 1955 281-6, Dillon, 1948 107, Dumville, 1976 86 Mac Cana 1980 77, Mac Mathúna, 1985 286-296) See McCone, 2000 57-114 for detailed discussion of scholarly commentaries (see also II 10)

IB is similar to EC in some ways but both texts also display significant differences For instance, sovereignty motifs are markedly less palpable in IB than in EC For example, in IB the royal setting and regal status of Bran are only inferred from the mention of 'his royal household' (*a rigthech*) in this opening episode (§1, Meyer, 1895 2-3, see also V 1 9) Like Connlae, Bran had two encounters with a woman on his own territory He received a gift from her after her first visit (§2) but unlike Connlae he is not allowed keep it and set out across the sea straight after her second visit, whereas a whole month intervened in EC (§32) Bran was alone when he heard music and fell asleep at the woman's first appearance (§2) On her second visit she addressed the entire gathering (§2) but at the end she indicated that her message was intended for Bran only (§§29-30) There is no debate or conflict in IB, in contrast to those initiated by Conn and the druid in EC [119]

VI 3 1 *Tir na mBan*

The woman's lengthy poem gives a description of the physical beauty, riches and delights of her home, the 'land of Women', as well as other regions in the vicinity and only briefly mentions the absence of grief, sorrow, sickness and death before revealing her Christian intent at the end by predicting the coming of Christ in IB (§10, 26-8), whereas the woman in EC discusses the attributes of her immortal home in a more serious way [120] In the end of IB, the woman urges Bran (§§29-30) to avoid sloth and begin a voyage (§30, *immram*) across the sea so that he may reach Tir inna m-Ban 'the land of women' but makes no promise of eternal life like that given by the woman in EC Moreover the objects that Connlae and Bran each received are appreciably different McCone (2000 111) concludes that "Connlae's apple was a

[119]In EC both of the woman's visits are structured in the same way and she makes three statements each time while engaging in dialogue with Connlae and Conn In IB by contrast both of the apparitions take place in quick succession, are different in nature and there is no dialogue The first time she is invisible and does not speak while on her second appearance she is visible to and is heard by all the company, but singles out Bran as the person to follow her

[120]McCone, (2000 110) points out that the woman in IB appeals more to Bran's senses by means of music and evocative descriptions

nourishing gift pointing the way to the inalienable possession of eternal bliss, whereas Bran's branch was a mere bauble on temporary loan beckoning an experience of paradise that would be neither profound nor permanent "

Divergences that appear to be deliberate continue between IB and EC For instance, Connlae abandoned his friends and family and set off in the sole company of the woman for the lands of the living, whereas Bran made the journey (§32) in the company of his foster-brothers and coevals (*dia chomaltaib ocus comaisin*, §32, Meyer, 1895 17) Thus it seems that Connlae's experience was intensely individual in nature compared to Bran's group experience Both stories can be seen to share an arguably similar beginning up to the point of the voyage but notable differences are found in the protagonists' attitudes Connlae deliberated for a month before his departure, whereas Bran's was hasty and without proper consideration of the consequences In effect, it seems that Bran did not make the clean break from his past life that Connlae so patently had EC concentrates on events leading up to Connlae's departure but, once his decision is reached, jumps aboard the woman's boat and the story ends On the other hand Bran's departure and preparations seem inadequate His journey marked the beginning of his problems and, "that is doubtless why his story refers to itself as *Immram Brain* (§64), the mention of *immram* near the end of this text and *Echtrae Chonnlai* constituting a further probably deliberate verbal resonance between them" (McCone, 2000 111) [121]

VI 3 2 The journey

Whereas no account of Connlae's journey after his departure is given, the action continues on Bran's voyage across the sea when he meets Manannan, who delivers a poem matching the woman's in content and length, describing the otherworld beneath the sea and naming it Mag

[121]Both EC and IB ' can confidently be regarded as two of the earliest vernacular Irish tales to have survived in virtually their original form" and moreover "their monastic author(s) called one *Immram Brain* and the other *Echtrae Chonnlai*" (McCone, 2000 77-8)

Mell (§49) [122] Finally, in an unmistakable analogy of Christ's birth (Carney, 1955 290, Mac Cana, 1972 119, McCone, 1990 198-9), Manannán describes his own mission to Ireland to become supernatural father to a great son (Mongan) (§§49-60) Bran and his company fail to see the land described by Manannan, an indication that they are "unable to penetrate the surface of transient things to behold a deeper eternal reality", according to McCone (2000 113) Observing their failings, Manannán urges them on to the land of women (§60) However, they reach an island populated by happy imbeciles where one of the crew lands, and becomes just like them, and so has to be left there (§61) Upon reaching the land of women, Bran was reluctant to go ashore, in contrast with Connlae's determined leap into the boat once his decision was made The woman has to literally drag Bran ashore by means of an adhesive ball of thread (§62) which she throws at him, a deliberate inversion of the incident at the start with Bran's failure to hold on to the branch (McCone, 2000 113)

VI.3 3 Otherworld hospitality

Once ashore Bran and his company all enjoy some feasting on otherworld food (§62), whereas in EC Connlae alone experienced otherworld sustenance before he left the human realm Furthermore, an intimate relationship between Bran and the leader of the women is implied (see IV 8 2), which is not the case in EC After a year Nechtan suffered 'homesickness', (§63, *eolchaire*, see VI 2 3 above) and Bran yielded to his wishes to return to Ireland, again in contrast to Connlae who left forever despite his love for his family Bran and his company ignored the woman's three recommendations not to leave, and to visit the man they had left on Inis Subai, and not to set foot on land in Ireland Subsequently, when Nechtan jumped ashore, he perished and the rest of the company were forced to return to sea (§65)

[122]This emphasises the wonderful land beneath the sea over which Bran is travelling (§§33-44), and the freedom of all living things there from wrongdoing, decay or death owing to the fact that original sin has not reached them yet (§§41-4) This he contrasts with disease, death and damnation in the mortal world because of the fall of man (§§45-7), a situation which might salved through God's incarnation (§48)

The implication seems to be that Bran and his company in IB should have deliberated more on the woman's advice as Connlae did in EC The similarities and contrasts identified by him between IB and EC lead McCone (2000 106) to suggest that 'ultimately each tale was intended to be contemplated as one half of a diptych rather than in isolation" Accordingly "*Echtrae Chonnlai* displays an essentially positive and *Immram Brain* an essentially negative paradigm of the quest for eternal life as linked to anchoritic or monastic ideals" Indeed, the latter is a "well constructed cautionary tale" according to McCone (2000 109)

Mac Mathuna (1985 281) points out that 'it is extremely likely that the location of the otherworld in Bran on an island far out in the western sea, is primarily dependent on ecclesiastical inspiration" and the same has been seen to apply to EC In addition, McCone (2000 78) is inclined to assert Dillon's suggestion that IB 'was the springboard for the subsequent elaboration of what has since come to be regarded as the typical *immram* or *navigation* linking descriptions of numerous different islands and other maritime wonders"

VI 3 4 Discussion

In the light of the above it seems reasonable to agree with McCone's (2000 114) conclusions that, "the archetypes of both tales as reconstructed from extant versions have turned out to be thoroughly well constructed, stylistically sophisticated and thematically consistent compositions that deliberately give pre-existing narratives a new and different slant" Thus it appears that like EC, IB is a deliberate composition of someone prepared to reshape an existing pattern drastically in order to get the desired message across and that, as McCone (2000 114) states, "the dialectical mainspring of *Echtrae Chonnlai* was provided by certain traditional patterns of storytelling geared to the sovereignty and that of *Immram Brain* was rather obviously *Echtrae Chonnlai* itself" Ultimately that places IB at a still further remove

than EC from a traditional pattern and helps to explain the greater degree of thematic deviation it displays from the other tales considered in Chapters III and IV

VI 4. Textual analysis of BS

Whereas a king's son plays the central role in EEM, FL and EC the protagonist of BS, Conn, is already the reigning king of Tara However, sovereignty aspects soon emerge and the central motif involves a beautiful otherworld woman proffering an alcoholic drink in revelation of the future kings of Tara (see V 3 4) Although the end of this text includes a list of kings foretold by Lug, the opening sections (§§1-9) conform to a narrative pattern familiar from *echtrai* by introducing a gathering of the king, his druids and poets at Tara early one morning (see III 1 6 and III 2 6) Conn steps on a stone, which cries out under him His chief poet Cessamn explains that it is called *fal* and the number of roars it had made signified the number of Conn's descendants who would rule over Ireland, while declaring that he is not the one destined to relate the prophecy (§4)

Blocc and Bluigne appear in the guise of two druids in BS[123] (see III 1 6 and V 4), reflecting "confusion in the literary tradition regarding whether the names represent stones or druids" (Murray, 2004 17-18) [124] Be that as it may, the opening of BS reflects Conn's good kingly practice in maintaining a prohibition on the king of Tara's allowing *turccbháil greine fair ina ligh i mMaigh Themrach* "the sun to rise upon him as he lies in the plain of Tara"[125] (§1, Dillon, 1951 8) In the tale *De Shil Chonnairi Móir* it is the people of the *sid* themselves who instruct the new king Conaire *na funfed 7 na taurcebath grian fairsium i Temair* ' that the sun should not rise upon him in Tara" (ll 61-2, Gwynn, 1912 135)

[123]Also seen in the *Dindgnai Temrach* (§21= *LL*3840-2, Stokes, 1894 282-86)
[124]The Metrical *Dindshenchas* of Tara implies that the druids may have been changed into stone because their wisdom was foolish, or that the three great stones may have usurped their functions (Murray, 2004 18)
[125]The standard list of prohibitions of the kings of Ireland in its oldest probably dates from the ninth century (Carey, 2005 33)

A 'great fog' surrounds the company in BS and out of this there emerges a horseman who at first attacks but then greets and invites them to his dwelling place (§5) In contrast to EC and IB, the otherworld is not named or described in BS, which agrees with EEM and FL in this respect as well as in making the otherworld accessible over land and close to Tara They come to a magnificent hall, in which a beautiful woman sits beside a vat of ale Her beautiful appearance is described in detail (see III 4 6 and III 7 6), thus contrasting with that of the ugly hag in EEM and FL but resonating with some other manifestations of the goddess of sovereignty such as the descriptions of Etain's superlative beauty beside a well in the opening of *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (see V 3 1-V 3 4), where it was said of her *cruth cách co hEtain Caem cach co hÉtain* "shapely all until Etain, fair all until Etain" (§2, Knott, 1936 2)

VI 4 1 Conn and Lug

In BS a splendid warrior is enthroned beside her The author refers to the latter as *scál* 'the phantom' (§7) but he himself informs his guests that he is Lug mac Ethnenn[126] and introduces the woman as the 'sovereignty of Ireland' *flaith hErenn* (§8, Murray, 2004 51, see also III 4 6) Lug denies that he is a phantom and claims descent from Adam, thus placing himself roughly fifty generations before Conn (Carey, 2005 40-1) The role of Lug in early Irish literature has been well documented [127] In *Cath Maige Tured* he takes the place of Nuadu as king of Tara (§74, Gray, 1982 42) Carey (2005 44) proposes that "Lug was a god associated with the ideal of kingship - an ideal which has always included the claim of Tara - rather than that he was associated with the site of Tara itself" As O Cathasaigh (1989 31) notes, "in *Baile in Scáil*, he is presented as legitimator of the Dal Cuinn (and hence also of the Uí Neill) kings

[126]Lug is commemorated at Lyon, Laon Leyden and every other *Lugudunum* (Byrne, 2001 55) After he is recognised as *Samildanach* or master of all arts Lug is admitted to Tara (Byrne, 2001 55) Lug s good looks many talents, skill on the harp, valour, judgement and ability to slay the Fomorian giant with a slingshot bear an uncanny likeness to the attributes of that slayer of the Philistines Goliath and paragon of the Old Testament kingship David that is all hardly due to coincidence " (McCone, 1990 198)

[127]Chadwick (1935), O'Rahilly (1946 310-14), Mac Neill (1962 3-10), O Riain (1977), O Cathasaigh (1983)

of Tara " Furthermore, O Cathasaigh (1983 12) suggests that when the kings listed receive the drink of sovereignty from the woman ' each of them in turn will be wedded to Lug's consort, and in that important sense take the place of Lug, and be his surrogate for the time being in the kingship of Tara "

VI 4 2 Conn and the woman

The woman serves Conn with supernaturally large pieces of meat (§8) and Lug then instructs her to pour a drink from her vat to Conn and to each of his successors, one after the other, until the day of judgement (§9) Thus she fulfils her traditional role as pourer of the liquor of kingship (see V 3 4) Unlike in EEM and FL, there is no reference to a sexual encounter between Conn and the woman, but it has been seen that the drink motif implies a relationship and O'Rahilly (1943 6) has argued that the "receiving the cup of drink from the goddess, or winning her cup, was tantamount to winning the goddess herself " The women in EEM and FL identified themselves as the sovereignty of Ireland and themselves named the future king, whereas in BS Lug introduces his consort as the sovereignty of Ireland and tells her who the drink is to be bestowed upon Herbert[128] notes that in this instance "it is his action therefore, which ultimately designates the ruler" and that "in its gender asymmetry the mythic image reveals itself in dialogue with the Irish historical era, when royal rule had become a matter of achievement by male sovereign rather than assignation by female sovereignty" (Herbert, 1992 269) Be that as it may, it is further inferred that the locus of power has shifted from the druids and poets in BS insofar as Conn is told that these were not destined to relate the prophecy emitted by the stone of *fal* at the outset This is in contrast to the importance attached to the druidic prophecies in EEM and FL but it may be worth recalling that Conn was warned not to love moribund druidry as it would soon be destroyed in EC Nevertheless,

[128]According to Herbert (1992 270) as the legendary kings of Tara were regarded as premier rulers, so too historical holders of the title, the Ui Neill dynasty, claimed primacy among Irish kings the Ui Neill were set fair to convert this primacy into authority over fellow rulers from about the late ninth century "

aside from Lug claiming succession from Adam there are no overtly Christian aspects to the otherworld as depicted in BS, which resembles EEM and FL but contrasts with EC, IB and ECA in this regard

When all of the future kings have been named in BS, the otherworld stronghold vanishes, as it did in EEM, FL and ECA,[129] but the vat, the vessel, the cup and the staves are left in Conn's possession (see III 9 6) In effect, since Conn is already the reigning king of Tara in BS the traditional drink motif confirmed his status as it did the destiny of all of his followers in that kingship The gifts he received can be seen as tangible proof of the legitimisation of his succession and that of a line of kings descended from him

VI 4 3 Discussion

There is an earlier text entitled *Baile Chuind Chetchathaig* (BCC[130] hereafter) which Thurneysen included in his list of texts from *Cin Dromma Snechta* (Murray, 2005 69) BCC is similar to BS in that both entail revelation of the future kings of Tara to Conn Cetchathach However, in BCC Conn has a vision/frenzy and himself utters the prophecy concerning the kings who were to succeed him Moreover the list of kings in each text is different, Dillon (1948 107) remarking that "two prophecies do not agree in form or in content, for the earlier is an archaic 'rhetoric' and many of the names in the latter part of it are disguised in 'kennings' " According to Murray (2005 70) "BS represents an expansion, reworking and reuse of BCC in an effort to reassert the rights of the Ui Neill to the kingship of Tara "[131]

[129]The vanishing otherworld household also features in *Compert Con Culainn* (see VII 1 1)

[130]BCC is preserved in two sixteenth-century manuscripts, *23 N 10* (p73) (N), and *EG* 88 (f 12b) (E) (Murphy (1952 146) Murphy (1952 150) states that 'linguists familiar with the ways of Irish scribes will find nothing in *Baile Chuind* to contradict a seventh-century date, and much to bear it out Byrne, (1973 168-9) agrees with Murphy s dating

[131]According to Murray (2005 71) BS is an Ui Neill propaganda document revised in the eleventh century to focus on the concerns of the Cenel nEogain, while BCC is more concerned with the fortunes of the Sil nAedo Sláine " In addition BCC reveals a much greater awareness of Munster admits the claim of Crimthann mac Fidaig" whereas ' BS practically ignores Munster and especially the claim to kingship of Brian Boruma, which

There is no attempt to provide a narrative framework in BCC, whereas we have seen from the above considerations that the opening sections of BS (§§1-9) seems to constitute a brief '*echtrae*' Murphy (1952 152n) has claimed, "that the first hearers of *Baile Chuind* knew of the tradition indicated in the introductory portion of *Baile in Scail* according to which wedding a goddess, by drinking intoxicating liquor poured by her, marked the inauguration of a reign " References to drinking in BS support Murphy's assertions for example, §1 *ibthus Art* "Art will drink (*ibid*) it" (3rd sg fut + 3rd sg fem suff pron , *–us* referring to *flaith*), §4 *Corbmac coten-ibau* "Cormac will drink it (*con ib*)", (3rd sg fut + 3rd sg fem class B infix pron *-te-* + *nas*) In addition, Murray (2004 54-6) has argued (see II 8) that many features of the language of this introductory portion of BS can be safely dated to the late old Irish period (ninth century) and a small number of possibly archaic forms may point to the eighth century At all events, in the light of the above, BS (§§1-9) can be regarded as an early Irish narrative resonating with the *echtrai*

VI 5. Textual analysis of ECA

O Cathasaigh (1977) has shown that Cormac mac Airt is the central figure in a cycle of tales and anecdotes recounting his unusual conception and birth along with prophecies of his future destiny as king, his exile and return and finally his career from youth to his death and burial These thus constitute a classic representation of the international heroic biographical schema As seen above (VI 1 8), Niall's conception, birth and kingly destiny are all included in EEM, whereas ECA is set at a time when Cormac is already king of Tara rather like Conn in BS Other similarities between ECA and BS are widely recognised[132] and Murray (2002 199) emphasises that the end of ECA directly alludes to BS, as pointed out by Stokes (1891 229)

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is added almost as an afterthought and which may be an earlier gloss now incorporated in the text"according to Murray (2005 71)

[132]See O Cathasaigh, (1977 80-85), Carey, (1982 41 and 1995 71-92), McCone, (2000 155-60), Stokes, (1891 229)

> The wise declare that whenever any strange apparition was revealed of old to the royal lords, - as the ghost appeared to Conn (*in Scal do Chund*), and as the Land of Promise was shewn to Cormac, - it was a divine ministration (*timthirecht diada*)that used to come in that wise, and not a demoniacal ministration (*timthirecht deamnach*)
> (§80, Stokes, 1891 202 and 220-1)

Some thematic parallels between ECA and BS are analysed and discussed by Murray (2002 195-9) For example (1) an unknown figure appears to the reigning king of Tara, (2) this figure persuades the king to go to the otherworld, (3) the otherworld is hidden in a great mist, (4) a magnificent dwelling is found in the otherworld, (5) the remarkable appearance of the otherworld figures is described in detail, (6) the otherworld figure is accompanied by a beautiful woman, (7) food and drink are served to the king of Tara, (8) the identity of the otherworld figure is revealed, (9) the king of Tara returns safely to the mortal world and resumes his kingship with gifts received from the otherworld Although these thematic parallels are undeniable, some significant differences can also be discerned

Just as BS begins with Conn on the ramparts of Tara, so too we find Cormac at Tara in the composite text *Scel na Fir Flatha,* including *Echtra Cormaic i Tir Tairngiri ocus Ceart Claidib* where his prosperous reign is detailed at the outset (§1, Stokes, 1891 185 and 203) O Cathasaigh (1977 81) points out that ECA differs from other *echtrai* in that Cormac's otherworld journey is primarily geared to the rescue of his family, namely his wife Eithne Thóebfota, his daughter Ailbe and his son Cairpre Lifechair [133] Be that as it may, the relevance of sovereignty to the journey is also evident since Eithne Thoebfota symbolises Cormac's kingship and losing her is tantamount to losing it (see V 3 2) Moreover "in a traditional oneiromantic text she is explicitly identified with the sovereignty of Tara" (O

[133] It seems to me that ECA may be related to the international tale entitled the Quest of the Three Princesses The motif of the rescue of three personages from the underworld/otherworld is common to both it would be easy to explain the wife, son and daughter in ECA as a development of the motif of the international tale" (O Cathasaigh (1977 81)

Cathasaigh, 1977 31) In this text, entitled *Nia son of Lugna Fer Tri* (Carney, 1940), Cormac had a dream in which he saw his wife Eithne Thoebfota sleeping with the Ulidian Eochu Gunnat and returning after a time to Cormac The druids explain *do bhancheile immorra do fheis leis ised dofoirne do righe faifes leis 7 ni bia acht oen-bliadhain i flaithius Temra*, "thy wife sleeping with him, it is this that it signifies, that thy kingship will sleep with him, and he will be one year in the kingship of Tara" (§§5-6, Carney, 1940 192-3) This is clearly a different representation of the same basic idea as is found in ECA

Unlike Conn in BS, but like Bran in IB, Cormac is alone when visited by a distinguished warrior holding a marvellous sleep-inducing and fruit bearing branch (§25) He tells Cormac that he is from the land that knows only truth and has neither age nor decay nor sorrow nor pain nor pride (§27), a description with a Christian slant reminiscent of IB and EC Cormac acquires the branch by promising three wishes to the visitor, who after a year and a month returns three times to collect his dues in the shape of Cormac's daughter, his son and finally his wife (§§27-31) After the unendurable final loss, Cormac followed the warrior and, after becoming enshrouded in a great mist, discovered a fine palace where he was welcomed by a handsome warrior and his beautiful female companion (§§33-36) This scenario is strikingly similar to the otherworld dwelling and occupants likewise discovered in a mist in BS [134] In both cases the otherworld is located on land and does not involve a boat trip as in EC and IB Nevertheless, instead of being offered a drink by the woman like Conn in BS, Cormac decides to bathe himself[135] after observing her washing her feet (§36) and she does not address Cormac at all, thus playing an even less prominent role than woman in BS

[134]Carey (1982 41) points out that an otherworld hall reached through a 'great mist' appears only in these two texts BS and ECA

[135]It may be worth noting that the ritual described by Giraldus surrounding the inauguration of the king-to-be involved him bathing in the broth of a slain mare (see VI 1 3)

VI 5 1. Test of truth

One of the main themes in ECA is the test of truth to which Cormac is subjected unlike Conn in BS It might however, be compared with the test of sleeping with an at first ugly hag undergone by Niall and Lugaid in EEM and FL O Cathasaigh (1977 83) points out that "one of the clearest elements of kingship literature in ECA is the Test which Cormac faces in the Otherworld " Crucially, this relates to *fir flathemon* or 'ruler's truth' and Dillon (1947 137 and 1948 110) observes that the Act of Truth, which is significantly featured in ECA, is one of the features common to Hindu and Irish belief In the otherworld Cormac firstly encounters a pig that can only be boiled by the recital of truth over each quarter (§§37-52) After he has accomplished this task, his family are then restored to him and he is shown the cup which breaks in three when *teora briathra breice* "three words of falsehood ' are uttered over it but becomes whole again when *téora coibsena fira* "three true confessions" are made to Cormac by his host, who firmly excludes sexual behaviour by declaring that neither Cormac's wife nor daughter had seen the face of a *ferscal* 'a male phantom' since they were brought to Tara and that his son had not seen the face of a *banscal* 'a female phantom' (§52, Stokes, 1891 197 and 215) The echo of BS is palpable and ultimately "what Cormac is allegorically vouchsafed in this tale is nothing less than a divine revelation about the three-in-one nature of truth essential to the proper exercise of kingship" (McCone, 1990 157)

VI 5 2 *Tír Tairngiri*

The warrior then identified himself as Manannán mac Lir, king of the Land of Promise *Tir Tairngiri*, and proceeded to share his wisdom with Cormac by explaining the marvels of the otherworld to him while indicating that Cormac had been deliberately brought there to witness these (§53) By contrast, the otherworld paradise described in similar terms by Manannan to Bran in IB is under water and is named Mag Mell The resonances between this and the New

Testament Biblical 'Promised Land (e g Hebrews, 11 9, *terra repromisionis*) are inescapable and McCone (1990 157)[136] proposes that Manannán can be seen as an allegory of God himself in ECA, just as he was in IB Accordingly, in ECA the sovereignty personified by Cormac's wife Eithne "is briefly withdrawn from him only to be returned in a newly perfected form born of a sojourn in the sinless paradise that is the home of truth and angelic beings",[137] (McCone, 1990 157) Manannan mac Lir is described in *CA*[138] as a former god of the sea but also appears as king of the Tuatha De Danann who dwell on an otherworld island named Tir Tairngiri in EA and as the king of the Tuatha Dé Danann who expels his host Elcmar from Brug na Bóinne in favour of his fosterson Oengus (§§1-5) in *Altram Tighe da Medar* (see McCone, 1990 149-150)

Finally, when Cormac awoke the next day he was in Tara with his family, the branch and the cup of truth, which nevertheless were only retained for Cormac's lifetime (§54) Thus, like Conn in BS, Cormac has his rule over Tara confirmed by an otherworld male figure and his reign is enhanced by acquisition of the cup of truth representing a key sovereignty attribute [139]

[136] The king of these, Manannan, can be seen as an allegory of God himself here as in *Immram Brain*, in which the close of Manannan's great poem about paradise, the fall of man and Christ's redemptive incarnation draws a patent parallel between this and his own mission from the land of promise to the world of men in order to sire a remarkable son upon a mortal woman" (McCone, 1990 157)

[137] McCone (1990 157) concludes that the notion of angelic guardians and revealers of sovereignty such as the Scal or Manannan in pre-Christian Ireland would conform nicely to Isidore s doctrine ' that there is no place over which angels do not preside '

[138] *CA* [§ 160] a wonderful merchant who was in the Isle of Manu, i e he is the best steersman there was on the sea in the western world He used to find out through his understanding of, i e through his observation of, the appearance of the sky, i e the atmosphere, how long the good or bad weather would last and when each would change into the other And for that reason the Britons and the men of Ireland thought that he was the god of the sea And he used to be called Mac Lir, i e 'Son of the Sea He was also called Manannan fron Manu" (Arbuthnot, 2007 119)

[139] O Cathasaigh (1977 85) points out that ECA "corresponds most closely to Campbell s monomyth - A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man " (see also Campbell, 2004 30)

VI 5 3 Cormac and conversion

According to McCone (1990 157) "there can be no doubt that this tale (ECA) functions in *Scel na Fir Flatha* as an allegory of Cormac's attainment of the truth of God's law that was the bedrock of his regal excellence according to this and other texts" It is evident that Cormac's justice and righteous reign are ascribed to *rechta Maisi* "judgements of the law of Moses" that served his reign in Scel na Fir Flatha (§24) [140] Likewise he is said to have "had faith in the one God according to law" in *Senchas na Relec* where we are also told that Cormac believed in God before the coming of Patrick

> For he had said that he would not worship stones or trees but would worship the one who had made them and was lord behind every creature namely the one mighty Lord God (*ropo chomsid ar cúl na uli dúla i in t-óen Dia*), who fashioned creation, it is in him he would believe Consequently he is the third person in Ireland who believed before the coming of Patrick, i e Conchobar son of Ness to whom Altus recounted Christ's passion, Morand son of Cairbe Cat-head the second man, Cormac the third, and thus it is likely that other people followed in their footsteps in the faith (*LU* ll 4043-52)

In addition, the early Irish gnomic text *Tecosca Cormaic* consisting of doctrines allegedly uttered by him to his son, opens with an explicit statement telling how the benefits of a good and pious king come through God *ar is tria fir flaitheman do beir Dia in sin uile* "for it is through his ruler's truth that God gives all" (§1, Meyer, 1909) Ó Cathasaigh (1977 65) proposes that "in its repeated emphasis on *fir flathemon* and its beneficial effects, the cycle of Cormac mac Airt expresses, in terms of the heroic biography, the native ideology of kingship which also informs the wisdom literature and the Laws In this way it points to the integrity of Irish tradition, lending support to the view espoused by Dumezil that mythology embodies an ideology which pervades the whole culture"

[140]See *Scel na Fir Flatha* (§§12-16, Stokes, 1881 206-11)

VI 5 4 Discussion

Cormac mac Airt is represented in the genealogies as a direct descendant of Conn, the eponymous ancestor of the Dal Cuinn, and as direct ancestor of Niall Noigiallach, the eponymous ancestor of the Ui Neill Consequently, the celebration of his achievements in ECA may have had political implications[141] (O Cathasaigh, 1977 92) Be that as it may, the implications of ECA for sovereignty are evident, particularly in Cormac's pursuit of his wife Eithne Thoebfota and the repeated emphasis on *fir flathemon* and the importance of truth in his reign The prominence of Christian ideals such as the sinless otherworld Land of Promise is also evident but a notable difference between ECA, EC and IB is the fact that Cormac does actually make it back to resume his mortal life In this regard Cormac's otherworldly visit involved a bathing process, which might be viewed as a ritual cleansing or 'baptism' prior to his attainment of quasi-Christian perfection in preparation for his return to the mortal realm As in the case of EC and IB, the traditional narrative framework of the *echtrae* shows its potential for Christian exploitation

VI 6 Textual analysis of EA

According to O Hehir (1983 179) "the entire first half of the extant text of *Echtra Airt meic Cuind ocus Tochmarc Delbchaime Ingine Morgain*" can be seen as "a late and entirely Christian invention" and only the last half involving Art's otherworld quest for the goddess was the original *Echtrae Airt* named in tale-list B Nevertheless, the opening of the tale acts as a prelude motivating Art's *echtrae* This begins with Conn alone at Ben Edair mourning the death of his wife Eithne Tháebfata (§§1-2), Becuma arrives in a boat having been expelled from Tir Tairngiri for committing adultery with Gaidiar, son of Manannán (§3) O Hehir (1983 171) observes that Becuma's adultery, corruption, and infidelity belong to a Christian

[141] O Rahilly (1946 284) proposes that "Cormac has become an idealization of the first Goidelic king of Tara" while Carney (157) says Cormac was regarded in some ways as the founder of Tara "

culture since "old Irish kings and queens are judged 'good' or bad' according to their effects, not their private morals" (O Hehir, 1983 171) However, Bécuma tells Conn that her name is Delbchaem and declares that she has been in *gradh hecmaisi* 'absent love' with Art for a long time (Best, 1905 152), a traditional sovereignty motif already discussed[142] (see V 3 3) Nevertheless she decides to marry Conn instead but does not reveal her transgression to him and she convinces him to ban Art from Tara for one year, which ' the men of Ireland deemed wrong" (§§7, 8)

This union has disastrous consequences, since after a year there was "neither corn nor milk in Ireland during that time" (§§7-8) Thus the legitimating significance of the woman of sovereignty's change from hideous hag to a beautiful woman on encountering her royal mate seen in EEM and FL, in effect, is reversed in EA where Becuma conceals a malevolent nature behind her alluring appearance and proves destructive to her royal mate Conn and his kingship As we have seen (V 3 3 and V 3 4), women symbolising the various destinies of individuals eligible for kingship can not only be represented as bestowers of sovereignty but also as withholders of it It is evident that Bécuma is the wrong wife for Conn, when the crops only partially flourish in contrast with his reign before Eithne died, when "nothing was lacking" and "they used to reap the grain crops thrice every year" (§1) It is clear that Conn's true reign is over with the death of Eithne and that Delbchaem ("Form-fair") had really come in search of Art, Becuma ("Woman's likeness") being a perversion of her produced by her inappropriate mating with Conn [143] As O Hehir (1983 168) puts it "Becuma identifies herself as Delbcháem because she is Delbchaem and she sends Art in quest of Delbchaem so that she will come into her own Art will have her avatar that is especially for him She is sending

[142]For example when the king approaches Etain at the start of *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* and asks to sleep with her she responds that this is the purpose of her visit, she having loved him, for his fame and reputation, and recognises him at once although she has never seen him before (§1, Knott, 1936 63)
[143]According to O Hehir (1983 169) "Conn does try to hold on to kingship by marrying the successor goddess, who belongs rightly to the successor king The result for him is failure and the end of his reign "

him for her correct self"[144] McCone (1990 134) agrees there are two related ambiguities affecting Becuma, the first being her "love-hate relationship with the king's son Art, and the second her status as Delbchaem's flawed *alter ego* and ultimately rival, the Hyde to Delbchaem's Jekyll, so to speak"

VI 6 1 Conn and the kingship

Conn's druids ascribe these hardships to his wife's wickedness and suggest that the human sacrifice of the *mac lanamhna nemcholaidhe* "son of a sinless couple' (§8, Best, 1905 154) will atone for this Conn sets off across the sea on this quest and arrives in Tír Tairngiri, where he is received with magnificent hospitality by a couple "who, like their parents before them, had only departed from their chastity once in order to produce their son" (McCone 1990 153) Here again OHehir (1983 164) points out that the "ideal of reproduction by one sexual union per generation is a monastic fantasy"[145] This feature is not included in the description of the similar otherworld couple found in BS and ECA, but Conn has his feet bathed (§§9-10) rather as Cormac chose to bathe when he visited Tir Tairngiri in ECA Subsequently, Segdae is allowed to go with Conn to Ireland under the protection of "the kings of Ireland" (§11)

Upon their arrival back in Ireland the druids want to put Ségdae to death and the lad ultimately agrees However a woman, who turns out to be Segdae's mother, turns up and suggests the sacrifice of a cow in his stead (§13) The cow is slaughtered and two bags are opened containing a one-legged bird and a twelve-legged bird respectively The birds fight and the one-legged bird is victorious The woman drawing the moral for the men of Ireland

[144]See O Hehir (1983 171-2) for discussion of evidence indicating that Becuma, Delbchaem and Eithne Thoebfota are, in essence, the same goddess

[145]Furthermore the concept of 'sinlessness' can only be understood in terms of Christian ideals since it is alien to pagan culture, and cannot therefore be a relic from a truly early version of the story" according to O Hehir (1983 173)

that "ye are the bird with twelve legs, and the little boy the bird with one leg, for it is he who is the right" (*oir is é ata ar an firinde*, §14, Best, 1905 160) She goes on to instruct Conn to hang the druids and she warns him that the land will be lacking fertility until he gets rid of the sinful woman (*mnaí colaidh coirpe*) Becuma, to which Conn responds that he cannot put her away With that the woman and her son go away (§15)

O Hehir (1983 174) notes the Biblical inspiration underlying "the self-sacrificing Segda a parabolic Christian boy, a type of Christ" and that "the substitution of the cow for the boy is modelled on the sacrifice of Isaac " McCone (1990 153) agrees with this interpretation and observes that "the son of parents from paradise, the sinless Segdae is ready to die in order to save others but is snatched back from the jaws of death to paradise, leaving the restoration of the men of Ireland's beatitude incomplete as long as the she-devil Bécuma is still in their midst " This particular sinless otherworld woman not only comes into conflict with pagan druids like the woman in EC but, instead of only predicting their imminent destruction, actually sentences them to death Crucially, the survival of the sinless boy Segdae and "the destruction of his druidic would-be executioners" can be understood in terms of the "superiority of true belief in the one God over pagan belief in a plurality of deities" as illustrated by the fight between the birds (McCone, 1990 153)

VI 6 2 Art and Becuma

Art's adventures begin when he is back at Tara after being effectively kept out of the kingship for a year by Becuma, rather as *Esnada Tige Buchet* tells how Medb Lethderg, Art's widow, kept the kingship after Art's death and would not let Cormac have it (Green, 1955 31) Conn and his druids are no longer mentioned in this episode of EA Like Connlae in EC, Art seems to be about to inherit the kingship, but instead Becuma seeks him out and challenges him to

play *fidchell* for a wager She loses and he imposes the task of bringing him the *flesc miledh* 'the warrior's rod' of Cu Roi mac Daire (§§16-17, Best, 1905 162) With the help of her foster-sister, Aine, Becuma brings this to him from the *sid* mounds and they play *fidchell* again This time she wins and she imposes the quest upon Art to bring Delbchaem, Morgan's daughter, to Ireland from an otherworld island across the sea This episode is similar to the *fidchell* games played between Eochaid Airem and the otherworld warrior Midir in *Tochmarc Etaine* (§§1-15) but has the reverse outcome, since Midir loses to Eochaid at first but ultimately wins and claims his prize of Eochaid's wife, Etain, whom he then takes to the otherworld *Sid Femin* (or *Sid Ban Find*) with him (Bergin and Best 1938 175-185) As in EC and IB, the otherworld woman seeks Art out in the human realm and the otherworld is located on an "isle amid the sea" However Becuma neither names it nor mentions the nature of life there, in contrast with the descriptions of a sinless paradise across the sea in EC and less explicitly in IB (§18) Becuma sends Art off alone on a boat trip from which she does apparently expect him to return, whereas the woman in EC actually accompanies Connlae on a trip from which he did not return

VI 6 3 *Tír na nIngnad*

After seeing a number of islands on his voyage, Art finally lands at a beautiful unnamed island of women, whose leader, Creide Fíráilind, welcomes and "kisses him fervently" His stay with her for a month and two weeks (§18) implies a sexual liaison comparable to Bran's relationship with the leader of the women in IB Art finds a house thatched with birds wings and "with doors of crystal and its inexhaustible vats" similar to the one in ECA, whence the traditional libation of an otherworld visit can also be inferred (§19) Subsequently Art is guided by the woman on a perilous onward journey over an ocean full of "beasts and great sea-monsters" (see III 7 3) to find Delbcháem (§§20-26) Whereas Cormac underwent tests of

truth in his quest to recover his wife and family from the otherworld in ECA, Art has to assert his military prowess in a series of combats in his quest for Delbchaem in EA The ultimate battles involved Art killing both her jealous mother Coinchend and her father Morgan (see III 8 3) Although Art's eventful expedition is notably different from the events that the protagonists endure in EEM, FL, BS and ECA, his ultimate aim is the typical one of seeking out the woman who will legitimate his kingship

The extraordinary features of the stronghold, named *Tir na nIngnad* 'Land of Wonders', and of Delbchaem herself are described in familiar detail when Art finally reaches it and he is told that his arrival has long since been prepared for (§§25, 28, see III 6 3) He makes hostages of Morgan's people and gives all the gold and silver to Delbchaem They return to Ireland but Delbchaem remains at Benn Edair after instructing Art to ask Becuma to leave at once (Best, 1905 170-2) Art returns triumphantly to Tara and everyone welcomes him apart from the *mhnai cholaid* "sinful woman" Bécuma (§30 Best, 1905 170-2) He orders her to leave and the *fir eola 7 righruire* "wise men and the chiefs" were sent to welcome Delbchaem (§31, Best, 1905 170-2)

VI 6 4 Discussion

The above discussion clearly indicates the presence of traditional motifs, centring upon a woman of sovereignty's behaviour in relation to the reigning king Conn in the opening episodes and to the king-to-be Art in the subsequent ones O Hehir (1983 160) concludes that "a genuinely old theme has been thoroughly reworked in this story, from a specifically Christian impetus" However, Art did at least return with Delbchaem to succeed in the kingship unlike Connlae who opted for a Christian life everlasting instead Ultimately, Art's triumphant return from his overseas adventure leads to the banishment of Bécuma, whose

presence had a fatal effect on the fertility of the land, and it can be inferred that her replacement by her 'alter ego' Delbchaem led to the restoration of its fertility In terms of the Irish ideology of kingship this is tantamount to the restoration of righteous rule (O Cathasaigh, 1977 28) Be that as it may, Art's access to the otherworld sovereignty goddess only came about after a hazardous overseas journey and a series of dangerous combats, which contrast with the more usual overland otherworld adventures of Niall, Lugaid, Conn, and Cormac It thus has the appearance of a rather evolved type of narrative drawing and elaborating upon a range of motifs typical of other *echtrai* and even *immrama*

VI 7 Textual analysis of EN

The elaborate story EN has likewise attracted much scholarly interest Thurneysen (1921 311-12), for instance, discussed the possibility that it is a compilation of two parallel tales [146] While O Duilearga[147] (1940 522) agrees that this is a composite text, he dubbed the opening episode 'Nera and the Dead Man', an originally separate tale which "had nothing whatever to do with Nera's further adventures " On the other hand, Watson (1986 130) warns against the temptation to split the tale, since it is called EN as a *remscel* and in itself this is "a strong indication of the antiquity and relative structural integrity of the surviving narrative" (see

[146]Thurneysen (1921 311-12) exemplifies repetition of events and verbal duplications in EN, such as ll 90-92, *Is ed tredi frith hi suidiu i cetach Loeguri hind-Ard Macho ocus in barr Bruin la Connachto ocus ind enach Dunlaithe la Laigniu hi Cill Dara* repeated at ll 192-4, *'Is hi sin tra in tres issa amra ind-hErinn 7 cetach Loegaire ind-Ard Macho 7 enech Dunluinge la Laigniu hio Cill Dara'* (Meyer, 1889 220 and 226) He considers that the title EN found in Lists A and B as well as in the *LL remscela* refers to the episode ending at line 140, and that what followed (beginning with *Erg ass tra* line 141) originally belonged to the YBL title *Tain Be Aingen*, since it is only in this later section that the otherworld woman is named as *be n-Aingen* (Thurneysen, 1921 311-12) In this he is essentially followed by O Coileain (1990 429) who notes however that "Thurneysen would also allow that the YBL title may not be original but a later inference from the text of the story '

[147]O Duilearga (1940 522-3) compared the narrative content and structure of EN with a particular Irish folktale He analysed thirty-nine variants of a story from various regions in Ireland displaying general affinities with the opening episode of EN These stories are in the catalogued portion of the manuscripts collection of folktales preserved in the Irish Folklore Commission O Duilearga (1940 523) concludes that EN has existed orally for a very long time Subsequently, Rees and Rees (1961 301) compare the opening episode of EN with the setting of the famous Indian Twenty-five Stories of the Spectre in the Corpse' by way of validating the extreme antiquity of the tale, while they also note that, ' some of the main features of Nera's initial adventures have been preserved in a modern Irish folktale, though the hanged man has been superseded by the devil, and the pagan practices are interspersed with Christian ones "

II 2 1) Carey (1988 67-8) also makes a case for the "thematic wholeness" of EN as it stands He stresses the importance of the sequence of events as they unfold into significant constituents of the entire tale and argues on linguistic and stylistic grounds that the "conflation hypothesis" is problematic and that there are no obvious differences between the episodes highlighted by Thurneysen by virtue of the fact, "that they share a rather peculiar combination of grammatical features, (i) conservative restriction of the augmented preterite to use as a perfect tense, a distinction fading in the course of the ninth century, (ii) almost exclusive use of the innovative absolute fut 1 sg ending *-(a)it/-(e)at*, barely attested before Saltair na Rann which implies the distinctive diction of a single redactor" (Carey, 1988 67-8)

Like the other *echtrai* discussed so far, the action in EN begins at a regal gathering However, unlike them it does not mention Nerae's lineage, royal or otherwise As with EA and ECA, there is no reference to druids at this assembly Moreover, the setting is notably different by virtue of being a feast held at Samain by Ailill and Medb, by whom "two captives" (*cimbid*) have been crucified (*ro crochtha*) the day before (McCone, 1990 151, §1, Meyer, 1881 215) For the prize of Ailill's gold-hilted sword a challenge is proposed entailing placing a chain (*id*) around the foot of one of the captives on the cross (*issin chroich*)[148] (McCone, 1990 151 §2, Meyer, 1881 215) Everyone fails in their attempts because of the 'darkness' (*dorchatu*) of the night and its 'awfulness' (*grandatu*) when 'demons' (*demna*) used to appear (McCone, 1990 151), until Nerae went out and on his third attempt, with the help of the dead man, succeeded in the task (§3) Although the test of the burning forge in EEM and the *fidchell*

[148] In view of this text's penchant for sets of three the presence of only two crucified captives may be intended to hint at a third, perhaps Christ himself between the two thieves crucified on either side of him (Mark 15 27, McCone, 1990 151)

game in EA prefaced the otherworld journeys, the gruesome challenge in EN is very different [149]

VI 7 1 *Samain* activities

It may be that the temporal setting of Samain at the outset of EN is what gives rise to this forbidding scene and intertextual comparison may throw some light on traditional activities surrounding Samain For example, *Serglige Con Culainn* occurs at Samain and it opens with a lengthy description of the week-long celebrations by the Ulstermen at Mag Muirthemne when 'nothing in the world would be done by them but games and assemblies' (§1, Dillon, 1953 1, see also IV 1 4) Subsequently, we are told why the Ulstermen met at this time each year *ba hairi no fertha leu fo bith tabarta do chach a chomraime ocus a gascid do gres cecha samna* "the reason it used always be held by them was on account of the bringing to everyone of his contest and of his valour every Samain" (§2, Dillon, 1953 1) Traditionally, Samain was considered a time of change marking the first day of winter and also the first day of the new year, but crucially it was a liminal period when contact between mortal and the otherworldly figures was possible According to Rees and Rees (1961 89-90) "a supernatural power breaks through in a most ominous way on November Eve and May Eve, the joints between the two great seasons of the year Hallowe'en, the Calends of winter, was a solemn and weird festival The *sid*-mounds were open on this night, and their inhabitants were abroad in a more real sense than any other night At Hallowe'en the elimination of boundaries between the dead and the living between the present and the future all symbolise the return of chaos " Consequently this aspect of EN prefigures the potential danger and disruption of the norm As McCone (1990 151) points out, "this grim opening acts as a cue for the absence of Christian redemption and presence of malefactors and demons in the narrative about to

[149]This challenge is issued along the same lines as in the commentary on "a pledge for facing fear' (*gell fri saigid n-omna*) in a legal heptad (McCone, 1990 151)

unfold " In effect, Ailill devises a contest of bravery which "incorporates all the psychological and physical terrors inherent in the celebration of Samain," and moreover "the test uses the element of the supernatural to distinguish between the ordinary warrior and the extraordinary warrior, the hero" (Watson, 1986 136)

VI 7 2 The dead man and the drink

To reciprocate the assistance received, Nerae takes the dead man on his back in search of a drink of water (§4) After passing two houses, which could not be entered according to the dead man, because they were surrounded by fire and water respectively, they reach a third containing three vessels of dirty water The dead man drinks from each and sprays dirty water on the occupants of the house killing them Then Nerae carries him back to his torture (§§5-6) The moral of this episode stated to be, that a house with waste water indoors after nightfall is a poorly kept one (§5) Thus the drink, which usually has positive implications for sovereignty and kingship in other *echtrai* (see VI 3 4) has a negative impact in EN As already observed (VI 5 1), embedded in the concept of *fir flathemon* is the notion that a true sovereign creates order in all things Thus "the presence of dirt implies disorder" and "disorder leads to chaos" therefore "the buckets and their contents stand for sovereignty gone awry" (Watson, 1986 133) McCone (1990 151) agrees that the connection of impurity and death with a drink elsewhere prone to symbolize kingship supports Watson's (1986 133) conclusion that ' the captive's search is a negative paradigm which indicates what sovereignty must not be " McCone (1990 152) elucidates "what is clear here is that Nerae and his captive passenger's deadly encounter with the house containing three vessels both correlates and contrasts with the visits of the blind man with the lame man on his back to the well containing the three great talismans of sovereignty over Connacht, the Ui Neill and Leinster respectively "

VI 7 3 The otherworld king and the destruction of Cruachu

Upon his return to the assembly, Nerae sees the destruction of Cruachu and follows the perpetrators into the otherworld cave of Cruachu, where the king sends him to live with an unnamed woman and gives him the daily task of carrying firewood to his fort (§§6-7) Here the otherworld journey is made over land as it is in EEM, FL, BS and ECA, but in venturing there uninvited Nerae's motivations are at variance with the protagonists' of the other *echtrai* It is implicit in the text that Nerae is of the heroic warrior class, given that he was eligible to partake in the challenge for Ailill's prized sword Thus it seems that his intention is to avenge the destruction of the sovereignty of Connacht and the deaths of his compatriots It follows then that, by making a servant of the hero Nerae, the unnamed othrworld king in EN is showing the ineptitude of his reign, rather as king Bres did in *Cath Maige Tuired* (§37) when he imposed the menial job of wood-carrier upon the champion of the gods Ogmae (McCone, 1990 152, Watson, 1986 134) The king's shortcomings are compounded when the woman subsequently betrays her own people out of loyalty to Nerae, an act which leads directly to the destruction of his otherworld sovereignty A similar situation to this is found in *Cath Maige Tuired* (§93) when the Dagda sleeps with the daughter of a hostile king, Indech of the Fomoiri, and she ultimately proves her loyalty to her paramour by warning against her father's magic powers Accordingly, the ultimate sacking of the *sid* and the enhancement of the sovereignty of Connacht in EN can be justified by the otherworld king's unsuitable treatment of the hero Nerae

VI 7 4 The otherworld woman

It is while carrying his burden of wood that Nerae encounters a blind man carrying a cripple on his back to check the contents of a well This mirrors the motif of Nerae carrying the dead man on his back in the human realm and is one of the striking structural parallelisms in the

narrative framework identified by Watson[150] (1986 132-3) The woman informs Nerae that the object being guarded in the well is the king's *mionn n-oir* 'diadem of gold' which he wears on his head (Meyer, 1889 218-19) She assures Nerae that the destruction of Cruachu he had seen was a premonition of what would happen at Samain the following year unless prevented by the destruction of the *sid* by Ailill and Medb and she also urges that the *barr Briuin*, the 'crown of Brion',[151] be taken by them (§§7-8) Watson (1986 133) points out the contrasting parallelism between the contents of the well in the otherworld, (a symbol of pure sovereignty which must be guarded at any cost), as a positive paradigm of sovereignty and the contaminated water in the containers in the human world which led to death and destruction, as a negative paradigm of the same

Nerae goes back to warn his people and finds them still around the same cauldron (§§10-11) Whereas there is no mention of life everlasting comparable to that found in EC and IB in the otherworld *sid* in EN, the element of temporal disparity between the two worlds is emphasised when Nerae returns to the human realm believing he has been away for some time but finds no that time has passed in his absence This is the reverse of Bran's experience on return in IB, when he finds that hundreds of years have passed in his absence, although it had seemed like just one to him and his men Likewise, the otherworld is only described briefly in typical terms after Nerae's second visit there (see III 6 1) Rather as Creide Firalind and Delbchaem assisted Art in overcoming otherworldly dangers in EA, thus implicitly promoting his kingly prospects, the unnamed woman is acting on behalf of Nerae and mortal sovereignty in EN

[150]McCone agrees that the episode of carrying the dead man should be taken as Watson (1986 132-7) proposed, ' in conjunction with two further episodes involving the carrying of burdens", i e the narrative element involving Nerae carrying wood on his back, and the blind man carrying the lame man on his back (1990 151)

[151]"The crown of Briuin [sic] was originally owned by one of the three De Danann It appeared as one of three marvellous objects whose discovery accompanied the birth of Conn Cetchathach Its association with Conn, perhaps the greatest of the legendary kings, gives the crown enormous value as a symbol of sovereignty" according to Watson (1983 132-3)

VI 7 5 Aingen

Upon his return to the *sid* after warning his people of the imminent attack, temporal disparity between the worlds is again evident when Nerae finds the woman has borne him a son Aingen in his absence, and to whom she has given a cow (§12) The birth of a child as a result of the otherworld expedition does not feature in any of the other *echtrai* Back in his otherworldly routine, Nerae falls asleep while tending the cattle The Morrígan takes the cow to mate with the Donn of Cuailnge During her return she is challenged by Cu Chulainn but manages to outwit him (§§13-14) Nerae goes back a second time to warn his people Then, as he drives his cattle out of the *sid*, the bull calf sired by the Donn Cuailnge on Aingen's cow challenges the bull Finnbennech of Connacht (§15) This prompts Fergus mac Róich to make a dire prophecy (§16) The bull calf is defeated but challenges the Finnbennech to fight the Donn of Cuailnge Queen Medb swears an oath to see the two bulls fight (§18), whence it is understood that the bull calf's bellowing about its parent, the Donn Cuailgne, is what brings this crucial trigger of the resultant disaster of *Táin Bo Cuailgne* about

The men of Connacht sack the *sid*, take the crown of Brion from the well, along with *cetach Loegairi* "mantle of Loegaire" in Armagh and *enech Dúnlainge* 'shirt of Dunlang" in Leinster, but Nerae and his family remain there forever (§19) These acquisitions resemble the otherworldly gifts received by Cormac in ECA and Conn in BS, since they ultimately enhance the mortal kingship of Connacht, and Tara respectively The importance of the gifts originating from Rath Crúachan in EN is indicated by their mention twice in the text (ll 90-92 and ll 192-194, Meyer, 1889 220 and 226) McCone (1990 152) points out that these treasures seem to be "three great talismans of sovereignty over Connacht, the Ui Neill and Leinster respectively " Accordingly, the destruction of the *sid* bestowed much greater rewards upon the human perpetrators, namely "these three tangible benefits, emphasis being upon the

barr Briúin in a tale centring upon Connacht's chief royal site Equally significant is the information that at least two of these major emblems of kingship are now located in great monasterises" (McCone, 1990 151) Watson (1986 129-142) argues the case for a thematic orientation towards sovereignty in EN and Ó Coileáin (1990 439) essentially agrees that one of the functions of EN "could be to serve as an aetiological tale in respect of what may have been dynastic heirlooms" of the Uí Neill, Ui Dunlainge and Uí Briuin dynasties [152] While this reference might serve to underline the importance of Ui Neill dynasty via Lóegaire and of the Ui Dúnlainge in Leinster, the point is that these important emblems of kingship are now located in the great monastic centres of Armagh and Kildare respectively This is in line with the status of Armagh as the chief Church of the Ui Néill, as asserted in *Felire Oengusso* (see V 2 and V 3 1), and elsewhere (Byrne, 1973 53, Hughes 1972, 205, Stokes, 1905 17-31)

VI 7 6 Discussion

It is clear that Nerae's otherworld expedition is not motivated by individual aspirations to kingship such as those of Niall, Lugaid, Conn, Cormac, Art and arguably Connlae Conversely it appears that his heroic warrior status, witnessed by his success in the gruesome challenge at the outset of the tale and his willingness to avenge the deaths of his compatriots, is what ultimately led to his *echtrae* Conceivably this explains the lack of evidence for a royal line for Nerae Be that as it may, he ventures forth on an otherworld expedition and has a relationship with an otherworld woman Moreover, although the aftermath and the tokens of sovereignty taken from the otherworld do not appear to benefit Nerae personally, since he remains in the *sid* forever, the repercussions on the sovereignty of Connacht and on otherworld sovereignty are unequivocal, just as they are for one or both worlds in EEM, FL, EC, BS, ECA, EA and arguably in IB

[152]See Byrne (1973 84-5, 230, 232-3), Mac Niocaill (1972 115, 117), O Corrain (1972 9-10, 26, 30)

The striking structural parallelisms identified by Watson (1986 142) are convincingly employed by him to present what he regards as the main concerns of the tale, namely, "an elucidation of the concept of sovereignty in relation to the function of the hero", "the advancement as well as the preservation of the sovereignty of Connacht" and finally the presentation of "the sovereignty of this world in a more favourable light than that of the otherworld "[153] McCone (1990 151) supplements Watson's findings by suggesting "that this relatively old saga's distinctly unpleasant aura helps to highlight the unredeemed and malignant nature of a pagan otherworld source of kingship liable to destroy unless destroyed" (1990 151) Crucially, with regard to the three wonderful gifts (two of which are obviously relocated in two leading monastic centres) McCone concludes "a central message of our text, then, is that they, and consequently the sovereignty embodied in them, have been released from a moribund and demonic pagan environment into proper Christian custody" (1990 152) Thus it seems reasonable to agree that the narrative framework of EN, which was probably well known in the early medieval period (see II 2), is being exploited to deliver a Christian message

VI 8 Textual analysis of EL

Dillon (1948 116) notes that in EL "the poems resemble closely, even in details and vocabulary, those in *Echtrae Conli*, and *Serglige Con Culainn*" Carney (1955 293) agrees essentially and considers that "the adventures of Loegaire son of Crimthann may best be taken as a derivative of *Serglige Con Culainn,* using as it does, the pattern of a human hero going to the Otherworld to assist one Otherworld chieftain against another, and obtaining the love of a

[153] According to Watson (1986 135), the supremacy of the sovereignty of Connacht is suggested by the victory of the Finnbennach over the bull calf of dual parentage (part otherworld and part Ulster by the Donn Cuailgne) Thus Watson (1986 135) concludes, that the victories of Connacht mark EN as a tale which is obviously pro-Connacht, contrary the usual biases of the so-called 'Ulster Cycle' of tales to which Thurneysen (1921 311-12) ascribes it Moreover the victory of Connacht over Ulster is inferred in the episode where the Morrigan outwited the Ulster hero Cu Chulainn and prevented him from keeping *Bo Aingen* within his protective custody

woman as a reward " However, more recently Ni Mhaoldomnaigh[154](2008 167-8) suggests that the reverse is the case and that ' what we have in SCC is a text modelled on *Echtrae Laegaire* in outline, with significant inversions in the detail " Be that as it may, EL can be seen to share certain characteristics with the other *echtrai*, although Loegaire's inspiration to visit the otherworld is quite distinctive

EL begins at a typical *echtrae*-like setting, a royal assembly with king Crimthann Cass presiding over the men of Connacht in the company of his son Lóegaire Li Ban (ll 1-9, Jackson, 1942 386) Jackson (1942 386, fn 1-7) notes the correspondence of the name Li Ban "in various tales, e g Serglige Conculaind, as that of a fairy, Brightness of Women'", but he concludes that "of a man, it must mean rather 'Delight of Women' " In contrast to the usual appearance of the woman of sovereignty (see V 3), here a male stranger suddenly appears out of a mist indicating his otherworldly nature even before he says he is 'of the fairy people' (*do fheraib side*, ll 11, Jackson, 1942 380-1) Conversely there is no mention of mist when the male bearer of the invitation suddenly appears in ECA However, when Cormac goes in pursuit of him, he becomes enveloped in a mist encompassing the otherworld

The distinctive clothing of the stranger in EL clearly suggests his regal and martial status "a purple five-fold cloak about him, two five-pointed javelins in his hand, a shield with a rim of gold on him, a gold-hilted sword at his belt, his golden-yellow hair down his back" (ll 12, Jackson, 1942 380-81) The man identifies himself as Fiachnae mac Retach and says that he has come to ask for troops to assist in an otherworldly battle This collective invitation in EL,

[154]According to Ni Mhaoldomnaigh (2008 168) "while SCC follows this model of *Echtrae Laegaire* in its main aspects, the details of *Echtrae Laegaire* are largely inverted in SCC The circumstances surrounding the invitation to visit and its reception, the details regarding the woman s plight (an abandonment in the case of SCC and an abduction in the case of Echtrae Laegaire), the control displayed by Lóegaire in the battle scene and the total lack of it in Cu Chulainn's battle scene, the inversion at the climax with Laegaire opting to stay in the Otherworld and Cu Chulainn's return to the mortal world "

contrasts with the individual ones in other *echtrai*, as Dillon (1948 116) notes "here it is not a girl who entices the hero away to an island of peace but a fairy warrior who seeks aid of mortals against other fairies" Fiachnae describes the ongoing battles occurring because his wife Osnad ('sigh') had been abducted by Eochaid mac Sail, whom he had killed, but then had gone with Eochaid's nephew, Goll mac Duilb king of the fort of Mag Mell (ll 13-16) He promises a payment of silver and gold to everyone who goes to assist him in another battle scheduled on that very day (ll 16-7, see also V 4)

VI 8 1 *Mag Mell*

Unlike the promise of eternal life used by the woman to spur Connlae on his expedition, in EL Fiacnae uses the more tangible inducement of gold and silver He chants a verse portraying the beauty of the otherworld, which is now marred by ongoing bloodshed He also relates the prowess of his otherworldly warrior allies At that Fiachnae walked away from them (ll 16-65) In this instance Fíachnae describes the otherworld as *ailditi maigib* 'the lovliest of plains' called Mag Mell, as in EC, but without the emphasis upon Christian ideals found in EC and IB However, his account resembles representations of the otherworld in ECA, EN and, for the most part, in EA

Loegaire ridiculed his men for not having offered to help Fiachnae and then went straight after him beneath the surface of the lake, with fifty warriors in train (ll 65-8) Thus the otherworld is here placed under a lake but, nevertheless, matches the locations in EEM, FL, BS, ECA and EN in its proximity and accessibility by land There they saw the battle lines already assembled with Fíachnae's forces on one side and Goll's on the other The battle ensued with the mass destruction of Goll and his warriors by Lóegaire and his men, who remarkably suffered no casualties (ll 69-75) Loegaire and his men proceeded to the fort of

Mag Mell, which was already under attack, and the king and his nobles were killed In EA, Art similarly was victorious in numerous otherworldly battles, some of which involved superhuman monsters, although he stood alone unlike Loegaire Then Osnad came out and lamented the death of her abductor, after which Loegaire brought her back to Fiachnae (ll 75-94) Loegaire was rewarded with the love of Fiachnae's daughter, Der Greine ('tear of the sun/dewdrop'), and his fifty warriors with that of fifty otherworld women Whereas this happy outcome was not mentioned as part of Loegaire and his warriors' inducement to enter the otherworld in the first instance, love of the otherworld woman Delbchaem was the sole purpose of Art's expedition in EA

VI 8 2 Fiachnae's warning

After a year Lóegaire decided it was time to visit home (ll 95-9) Fiachnae supplied them with horses but warned them not to dismount, if they wished to return to the otherworld Lóegaire and his warriors went back to the assembly site at Enloch, where they found the men of Connacht had remained for the entire year lamenting them (ll 101-5) The time disparity in the otherworld is implied in Fiachnae's warning against dismounting, bringing to mind the woman's warning not to go ashore in IB and the disastrous consequences of Nechtan's leap on land where he immediately turned to ashes as hundreds of years had passed since they left The men jumped up to welcome Lóegaire but he warned them not to approach since they had only returned to say farewell Crimthann pleaded with his son not to leave and he promised "the kingship of Three Connachts"[155] with all of their "gold and silver, their horses and bridles, "and their fair women at your pleasure" (ll 106-8) Loegaire then chanted a verse praising the beauty of the otherworld, his wife Dér Greine and his warriors fifty wives, and the wonderful otherworld treasures (ll 109-125) This final episode of EL resonates with EC,

[155]'The Three Connachts' were traditionally the three subject peoples of Connacht in early times the Fir Dhomhnann, Fir Chraibhe and Tuatha Taidhen (Jackson, 1942 388 fn 1 100)

where the king's heir apparent forsakes his mortal life in favour of an otherworld future Although we have no indication what that future held for Connlae after he leaped aboard the boat, Lóegaire returned to share an otherworld kingship with his father-in-law His final words to his father are *oin adaig d'aidchib side ni thiber ar do ríge* "one night of the fairy nights I will not exchange for your kingdom" (ll 126-7, Jackson, 1942 386-7) After that he turned away and went back into the fairy mound to his wife, where he shared the kingship with Fiachnae (ll 132) Remarkably, there is no mention of returning under the lake in order to access the otherworld this time

VI 8 3 Discussion

Although there seems to be no available evidence for the title EL in the early medieval period, the language of the prose part of the extant versions of the tale has been dated to the Old Irish period (see II 3) As the above discussion has shown, EL is unusual among the *echtrai* considered in this chapter, since it is motivated by the enlisting of human troops to assist in an otherworldly battle However, it does contain other traditional motifs such as the royal heir embarking on an otherworld journey and experiencing the love of an otherworld woman, which ultimately removes him from sovereignty in the mortal world In this end result, EL is close to EC Nonetheless, whereas the Christian inspiration and message of EC have been elucidated (McCone 2000 105), no such aspects are obvious in the case of EL Be that as it may, Carney (1955 294) claimed convincingly that the "*Immrama* are of their very nature of monastic provenance" and also that IB, SCC, EC and EL "are related one to the other on the level of Christian literature rather than on the level of pre-literary oral tradition " If so it would follow that Loegaire's permanent sojourn in the otherworld like Connlae's may be understood as having Christian significance (Carney, 1955 294)

VI 9 Conclusion

The above discussion indicates that in Irish tradition as elsewhere, socio-political aspects of kingship can be reflected and discussed in myths or legends A good example of this is the issue of sibling rivalry figuring in the narratives EEM and FL where five sons aspire to a kingship that only one can obtain Although neither of these texts in their extant form can be firmly dated prior than the eleventh century on linguistic grounds (see II 2 2 and II 2 6), they contain motifs shown to be old by the comparative evidence such as transformation of the woman of symbolising sovereignty on mating with the king-to-be and her bestowal of a drink on him after his success in various tests

EC is one of the earliest extant Old Irish texts (McCone, 2000 29) and the evidence suggests that it was called *echtrae* as early as the eighth century (see II 2 3) However, as seen above, EC seems to reverse the process seen in the likes of EEM and FL This can be attributed to the author having modified traditional sovereignty motifs and patterns with a view to undermining in favour of Christian ideals If so EC provides indirect evidence that an *echtrae* narrative along the lines seen in the later EEM and FL was well established by as early as the later seventh century at least If the dialectical mainspring for IB was EC (Carney, 1976 193, McCone, 2000 108), then IB stands at a still further remove from the traditional pattern than EC and this helps to explain the appreciable degree of thematic deviation it displays from the other tales considered in Chapters III and IV

Whereas BS centres upon a prophetic king list revealed to Conn Cetchathach, its opening sections (§§1-9) have been shown to conform to a narrative style typical of various *echtrai* Its probably ninth-century author would seem to be exploiting a well established traditional motif of wedding a goddess and drinking intoxicating liquor poured by her in order to underline

dynastic claims of some political consequence BS (§§1-9) can thus be regarded as an early Irish sovereignty narrative combining motifs typical of *echtrai* with prophetic king list similar to the earlier one seen independently in BCC

Although a twelfth century dating of the first recension is suggested for ECA, it seems that the tale may well have existed as early as the tenth century (see II 5) The possible political implications of ECA have been noted and its concerns with sovereignty are made abundantly clear by the presence of motifs such as Cormac's pursuit of his wife in the otherworld and the repeated emphasis on *fir flathemon* symbolising the truth of his reign Be that as it may, the prominence of Christian ideals such as the sinlessness of the otherworld Land of Promise indicates that, as in the case of EC and IB, the narrative framework of the *echtrae* has been exploited for Christian ends

Whereas the language of the only extant version of EA is early Modern Irish, the title's presence in tale-list B implies the existence of an earlier version (see II 6) EA exhibits many sovereignty motifs including the otherworldly expedition and the mating with the goddess of sovereignty leading to hero's final accession to the kingship of Tara However, Art's hazardous overseas journey reminiscent of an *immram* and various Christian aspects suggests that it represents an elaboration of certain more traditional themes

The evidence suggests that EN was at least commonly known as such in the early medieval period (see II 2 1) Aside from the lack of a royal pedigree for Nerae and its gruesome opening episode, this tale also displays motifs typical of the *echtrai* for instance Nerae does venture forth on an otherworld expedition and has a relationship with an otherworld woman with crucial consequences for both worlds in the aftermath, just as in other *echtrai* One may

accept McCone's (1990 151) suggestion that by depicting the final destruction the otherworld *sid* and the removal of its sovereignty emblems from a demonic pagan environment to proper Christian custody, quite explicitly in two cases, it also delivers a Christian message

The enlisting of human troops to assist in an otherworldly battle as the motivation for the expedition places EL apart from the *echtrai* considered in this chapter However, the language of the prose parts of the extant versions of EL have been dated to the Old Irish period (see II 3) and it does exhibit the traditional motif of the royal heir encountering an otherworld woman and having a sexual relationship with her, which has serious consequences for the sovereignty of both worlds Given that early Irish authors had a particular penchant for intertextual borrowing and inversion of narrative motifs (McCone, 2000 105), it is possible, as Carney (1955 294) suggested, that EL had a Christian significance with Loegaire remaining in the otherworld just like Connlae in EC Finally, the fact that Lóegaire restores a woman to her rightful husband against her will may well by reflecting the sanctity of marriage in Christian ideals

The previous chapter sought to validate the hypothesis, based upon the findings in Chapters III and IV, that sovereignty was a major concern of typical *echtrae* narratives The present chapter should have shown that there is considerable variation in the way the genre was exploited in individual texts, not least in the interplay between apparently inherited pagan and newer Christian motifs Before an attempt can be made to draw some overall conclusions about the evolution of the *echtrae* it is necessary to look in greater detail in the next chapter at a small group of tales concerning Cu Chulainn that have been considered in Chapters IV

Chapter VII Cu Chulainn's otherworld expeditions

VII Introduction

The most prominent texts relating Cu Chulainn's expeditions to seemingly otherworld locations are SCC, TE and SbCC Accordingly, these three are frequently considered in relation to an apparently no longer extant tale entitled *Echtrae Con Culainn* (ECuC), one of just three *echtrae* titles common to both tale-lists A and B as noted above (see II 10, II 12, and II 13) However, Cú Chulainn also visits such places in other texts, notably *Forfess*[156] *Fer Fálgae* (Meyer, 1912), *Aided Con Roi* (ACR I, Thurneysen, 1913, ACR II, Best, 1905) and *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDuil Dermait* (Hollo, 2005) As seen above (see IV 12), the first three narratives display certain peculiarities in relation to the other *echtrai*, not least a shortage of sovereignty motifs They will be accorded particular attention in this chapter but the last three will also be examined So too will *Compert Con Culainn*[157] (CCC, McCone, 2005 97 and 116) which was ascribed by Thurneysen to the now lost *Cin Dromma Snechta* and is apparently one of the earliest Irish sagas to have survived (McCone, 2005 8)

VII 1 Cu Chulainn's conception and birth

As seen in the case of Niall and Cormac above (VI 1 7-8) the conception and birth of the hero according to the scheme of the heroic biography[158] sets him apart from an ordinary mortal and

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[156] *Forfess/forbais* 'beleaguring, siege night-watch' This is a compound of the preposition *for* and *fess/feis* verbal noun of *foaid* spends the night" (Mac Cana, 1980 76) As well as being included in list A as a *forbais* (Mac Cana, 1980 71) FFF is one of the miscellaneous group tale titles at the beginning of list B

[157] Two versions of CCC are extant Version I (McCone, 2005 8) is found in several manuscripts, including *LU* The part of the *LU* text in the hand of the principal scribe M conforms to that version right down to the final birth of the boy but the original brief account of his fosterage by Culann has been replaced by an account in H's hand, of rivalry between various major Ulster figures as to who should foster him H also added a note to the tale's title saying that M's version came from *Cin Dromma Snechta* (McCone, 2005 8) Version II (Meyer, 1905), also known as *Feis Tige Becfholtaig*, is found in *Eg* 1782 and *D 4 2* Here an account of Cu Chulainn's fosterage is found in full in the final section (see McCone, 2005 8, Ó Concheanainn, 1990 441-5, van Hamel, 1933 1-2)

[158] In this, the hero's conception and birth are not normal For example, the child is born of parents from unequal social strata, or born outside wedlock or born as a result of incest or even occasionally through incarnation of a supernatural nature (de Vries, 1963 210–226, Rees and Rees, 1961 225-231)

confirms his ambivalent status [159] Cu Chulainn's conception and birth away from the normal domain and beyond the territory of Ulster are found in a text specifically dedicated to them, namely CCC, whereas the births of Niall and Cormac merely form part of EEM and *Scela Eogain 7 Cormac* or *Genemuin Chormaic* respectively In line with Cu Chulainn's extraordinary persona, his conception and birth are distinguished by three stages ranging from supernatural to mortal parentage, thus manifesting otherworldly connections and prefiguring a propensity to traverse boundaries throughout his career As already observed (fn 153, see also V 1 11), there are two extant versions of CCC whereby version I maintains a triple conception and version II, a half-divine and half-mortal mix is manifested (§§4-5, McCone, 2005 97 and 116, §3-4, Meyer, 1905 501-2) Cú Chulainn is born in an obviously otherworldly house in both versions, but this only applies to his first conception in version I McCone (1990 198-9) suggests that Cu Chulainn's triple conception[160] is a 'native typology" of Christ's mysterious incarnation as found in the New Testament Be that as it may, his unusual conception in both versions clearly defines his status as an extraordinary heroic figure

VII 1 1 Textual analysis of CCC

In both versions of CCC a number of elements typical of *echtrai* are evident Conchobar and Deichtine along with some other Ulster warriors are lured away[161] from Emain Machae, a royal setting seen to be typical of *echtrai*, to a seemingly otherworld location where they are treated to hospitality and from which they return with gifts In this case the trigger is a flock of elusive magical birds chained in pairs that had stripped the land bare *co-nna facbatis cid*

[159] These births typically take place outside the normal realm emphasising the 'supremely liminal' nature of this event according to McCone (1990 189) The birth of Saint Brigit was likewise outside of her father's territory (§§4-7, Connolly, 1989 15)

[160] The gospels of Luke (1 26-38) and Matthew (1 18-25) tell how the an angel appears to tell the virgin Mary and Joseph respectively that she has been impregnated by the Holy Spirit and that the child should be called Jesus

[161] Thus the Ulstermen are collectively induced by what can only be perceived as otherworldly birds This motif of magical birds chained in pairs is found also in the arguably later tale SCC (*LL* 59-60, §1 Dillon, 1953 1)

mecnu inna fer na lossae hi talam "so that they did not leave even the roots of grass or of vegetables in the ground" (§§1-2, McCone, 2005 97) The motif of the land being stripped bare by birds is also found in *Cath Maige Muccrama*, where a flock of birds[162] came out of the cave of Cruachu, referred to as *dorus iffirn na Hérend sin* "Ireland's gateway to Hell", and *coro chrinsat i nHérind nach ni taidlitis a n-anala, condaro marbsat Ulaid dano asa tablib* "withered up everything in Ireland that their breath touched until the Ulaid killed them with their slings" (§§34-35, O'Daly 1975 49)

In CCC the Ulstermen pursue the birds southwards over Sliab Fúait and across Brega in version I (§§1-2, McCone, 2005 97) and also apparently southwards in version II (§§1-2, Meyer, 1905 501) Ultimately they become lost in a heavy snowfall, find a house containing a man and a pregnant woman and are welcomed by them with an abundance of food and drink (§2) The woman gives birth to a son while simultaneously a mare gives birth to twin foals By the following morning the house and couple have vanished, leaving Conchobar's daughter Deichtine with the boy and the foals, which they bring back with them to Emain Machae (§§2-3, McCone, 2005 97) The motif of the snow enshrouded otherworld dwelling replete with food and drink resonates with the similarly endowed otherworld locations initially concealed by mist in ECA, BS and FL (see III 5 4, III 5 6 and III 5 7), while the welcoming couple who subsequently disappear also feature in ECA and BS (see III 6 4, III 6 6) In *Cath Maige Muccrama* (O'Daly, 1975 58-9), the motif of *lommiad* 'stripping" involved a sequence of offences and retributions (O Cathasaigh, 1981 215-16) culminating in Lugaid and Cormac's[163] conflicting judgements regarding the stripping/shearing of the sheep for the

[162]The land is also stripped bare by evasive magic pigs (*mucca gentiluchta*) as well as by a swarm of three-headed creatures (*tellen trechend*) out of the cave in Cruachu in *Cath Maige Mucrama* (§§34, 36, 37, O Daly, 1975 49)

[163]When the matter was referred to Lugaid he decreed that the sheep should be forfeited but Cormac decreed the sheering of the sheep for the cropping of the *glassen* would be more just, for the *glassen* will grow and the wool will grow on the sheep" (O Cathasaigh, 1981 213-4)

queens's woad, *lomrad na cairech i llomrad na glasne* Cormac's judgement was accepted by all as the word of *mac na fir flatha* "the son of the true prince" but Lugaid remained in the kingship of Tara and the land was barren of vegetation for a year until his deposal (§§63-64, O'Daly, 1975 56-61) This raises the possibility that the attack of the birds in CCC was likewise a response to some sort of offence Be that as it may, the implication of their devastation of the territory is that all is not well in Conchobai's kingship If so, the otherworldly acquisitions of the boy and foals, i e the nascent Cú Chulainn and his faithful team of chariot horses destined to defend the Ulster kingship, may be compared with the otherworldly gifts bestowed upon Cormac and Conn respectively in order to enhance their sovereignty upon their return to the mortal realm (see III 9 4)

VII 1 2 The *macgnimrada* 'boyhood deeds'

The progress of Cu Chulainn's martial career commenced at an early stage recorded by his *macgnimrada* 'boyhood deeds' (*TBC*, Rec I ll 373-824), which began as soon as he joined the novice warriors at Conchobar's court in Emain Machae at the age of five years (*TBC*, Rec I, ll 376-7) In this first encounter he proves his superiority over the whole group, the boys granting Cu Chulainn's protection while he likewise promises their protection from that day forward (*TBC*, Rec I, ll 446-54) Nagy (1984 26) points out that this assumption of the role of protector of the boy troop by Cú Chulainn "is a foreshadowing of his function as protector of the entire province, which he assumes later in life " A further step in this direction is taken when he slays Culann's hound and vows to guard all of Mag Murthemne in its stead (*TBC*, Rec I, ll 540-607)

His final *magnimrad* (*TBC*, Rec I ll 616-824) describes how the seven year old tricks Conchobar in order to secure his first arms McCone[164] (1990 121) notes that receipt of *gaisced* or arms was a key element in a young warrior's initiation, "as when Conchobar simply gives the precocious Cu Chulainn a spear and shield in response to the latter's request for *gaisced*" (*TBC*, Rec I ll 616-26) Jackson (1964 18) notes that "when a young man reached the age of manhood he seems to have been ceremonially initiated into the status of the warrior by receiving from his lord a set of weapons, a spear and a shield, precisely the *gaisced* just mentioned, and formally mounted a chariot "[165] A similar tradition is attested among the Germanic tribes, according to the first century classical author Tacitus[166] (*Germania* 13) "but it is not customary for anyone to take up arms (*arma sumere*) until the community (*civitas*) has satisfied itself that he will be up to it Then in the assembly itself either one of the leaders (*principum aliquis*) or the father or relatives provide the youth with shield and spear (*scuto frameaque iuvenem ornant*) Among them this is the toga, this is the first honour of youth Before this they are regarded as part of the household, afterwards (as part of) the state "

Upon receiving arms Cú Chulainn leaves Ulster and goes to *Loch nEchtrae* 'Outing lake' in search of *oaic féne* 'youths of the *fian*' to try out his arms (*TBC*, Rec I ll 676-8) However, finding no one there, he sets out to slay and behead the three sons of Nechta Scene, enemies of the Ulstermen, and then to hunt deer and birds successfully before returning home displaying his booty *Conid samlaid sin luid do Emain Macha dam allaid i ndiaid a charpait 7 iall gésse oc folùamain uassa 7 trí cind inna c[h]arput* "in that wise he went to Emain

[164]McCone (1990 121) discusses the term to *gaisced* which describes a young warriors initiation, 'as a compound of *gae* spear' and *sciath* 'shield', *gaisced* set of arms' and then by extension 'martial prowess, valour "

[165]According to Jackson (1964 18) this 'bears a loose resemblance to that associated with receiving knighthood in medieval Europe "

[166]See also McCone (19861-22) for discussion of "certain images and terms for the warrior that occur in the literature and mythology of various Indo-European peoples

Macha with wild deer behind his chariot, a flock of swans fluttering over it and three severed heads in his chariot" (*TBC*, Rec I ll 799-801) This is Cu Chulainn's first expedition as a young warrior into foreign territory, past a boundary location identified as *Loch nEchtrae* [167] Its selection may well be significant, given that *fían* warriors were classic 'outsiders'[168] and what might be regarded as Cú Chulainn's first *echtrae* here was basically an expedition into adjacent enemy territory for military purposes

VII 1 3 Martial expedition

This type of martial expedition abroad on receiving arms was customary according to *Scéla Muicce Mac Da Thó*, where the Connachtman Cet mac Magach wins a boasting contest by referring to his defeat of Loegaire on his first armed expedition in the light of (§9) *bés dúib-si far nUltaib cech mac gebes gaisced acaib, is cucainn cenn a báiri* "a custom of you Ulaid that every lad who takes arms makes us his goal " The reference, of course, is to Connacht, and Cet subsequently vilifies Cúscraid in a similar vein by referring also to his "first feat of arms" there (§14, *chétgaisciud*) Warriors' forays into enemy territory in search of booty and glory may be regarded as the classic *echtrai* of real life and not unnaturally also appear in the literature Although sometimes recounted in a rather embellished form as in the last of Cu Chulainn's *macgnímrada*, they have no supernatural aspect as such By contrast, the supernatural elements of the typical *echtrai* experienced by the kingly heroes discussed above (see III 1 - III 13) are evident from the outset, although the otherworldly locations are nevertheless often overland despite being 'shrouded in a mist' (ECA), in a *sid*-mound (EN), or under a lake (EL) on occasion

[167] *Loch nEchtrae* is mentioned in a number of sources and was located 'between Sliab Modairn and Sliab Fuaid in Oirgialla", according to Hogan (1910 498)

[168] According to Nagy (1985 18) 'the fennid usually appears as a figure living and functioning outside or on the margins of the tribal territory and community (the *tuath*) He pursues his hunting and warring, generally in the company of other fennidi, who together form a fian 'See also Sjoetedt (1949 81-91) The Heroes outside the Tribe"

VII 1 4 Discussion

Regarding the two earliest Irish tales to feature the motif of an overseas otherworld, Carey[169] (1982 43) claims that "in the light of the age and popularity of *Immram Brain* and *Echtrae Conlae*, it is they and the Ulster literary movement which produced them which introduced this topos into Irish literature" and also "that it was foreign to the native tradition at every stage appears evident"[170] (1995 43) However, while the following discussion of the Cu Chulainn tales will throw light on the first part of Carey's proposal, McCone (2000 96-7) disagrees with "attempts to ascribe this motif to clumsy redaction at a relatively early stage in transmission of these two texts", while maintaining that "the paradisiacal distant overseas Otherworld is an integral element of both narratives and looks suspiciously like an innovation on the part of their author(s)"[171] Mac Mathuna (1985 272) points out that "just as the *Immacallam* is a crucial link in the Bran chain, the *Dindshenchas* of *Sinend* has preserved what appears to be a remarkably old tradition which might have provided the motivation for linking Condla(e) with an Otherworld voyage"[172] Similarly, it appears that typical overland military excursions by Cu Chulainn such as the one described in his final *magnímrad* may have been elaborated into overseas expeditions from an early date

[169]According to Carey (1982 39-40) in various texts, Otherworld beings are depicted as living in hills, beneath lakes or the sea, or on islands in lakes or off the coast

[170]See McCone (2000 96-9) for scholarly discussion and arguments on this point

[171]McCone (2000 96-7) points out that ' in Connlae's case the oldest account of his loss to his father seems to have been a mundane one entailing death at the hands of a rival dynast and there is a possible hint of an earlier underwater legend bearing a relationship to *Echtrae Chonnlai* similar to that obtaining between the Lough Foyle legend and *Immram Brain* ' McCone (2000 99) concludes that the seventh and eighth centuries "were a time when the theory and practice of seeking spiritual fulfilment on one of the islands in the ocean to the West and North of Ireland were very much in vogue in ecclesiastical circles Surely one need look no further for the source of the almost certainly non-traditional motif of a sinless overseas paradise, desire for the attainment of which motivates the action of the monastically produced *Echtrae Chonnlai* and *Immram Brain*" Mac Mathuna (1985 281) concludes that it is extremely likely that the location of the Otherworld in Bran on an island far out in the Western sea, is primarily dependent on ecclesiastical inspiration" while McCone (2000 78) agrees that the same applies to *Echtrae Chonnlai* "

[172]It relates that Sinend daughter of Lodan Lucharglan mac Lir, from the Land of Promise (*tir tairngire*), went to Connla's well which is under the sea in order to behold it " (Mac Mathuna, 1985 272)

VII 2 Textual analysis of FFF

According to Hollo (2005 10) the tales *Forfess Fer Fálgae* (FFF), *Aided Con Roi* (ACR) and SbCC involving expeditions by Cu Chulainn are "related thematically", telling how he "travels overseas, fights there, and brings back treasures to Ireland " FFF consists of a brief prose narrative introducing a couple of obscure rhetorics and has also been identified by Thurneysen as one of the tales from *Cin Dromma Snechta* In McCone's (2000 67-8) words, "on the basis of the texts ascribed to it, Thurneysen (1921 15) concluded that the book of Druimm Snechtai thus belonged to the first half of the eight century or, as is less probable, had been copied from a manuscript of that age We thereby obtain a welcome indication of the date of the texts contained in it " FFF begins at Emain Machae with the Ulstermen and the appearance before them of a strange bird (*ind heún-grip*)[173] bearing a 'honeyed blossom' (*scoith milide,* §1, Meyer, 1912 564) The royal site is typical of *echtrai*, the unusual bird resonates with the motif of the magical birds' encounter with the Ulstermen in CCC (§1, McCone, 2005 97) and SCC (§1, Dillon, 1941 1), and the 'honeyed blossom' resembles the magical musical blossomed branch borne by the otherworldly visitors in IB (§2, Meyer, 1895 2-5) and ECA (§25, Meyer, 1891 193) Nevertheless, Cu Chulainn is apparently the only one to take the birds' appearance as a sign and go off to lay siege to the men of Falgae, or Man (§1, *Incipit forfess Fer Fálgae i Fer Mano* [174]), whereas all the Ulstermen went in pursuit of the birds in CCC (§1) and fifty warriors accompanied the mortal Loegaire to do battle against the otherworldly king of Mag Mell in EL (see IV 4 1) Although it is not specified that Cu Chulainn travels overseas to this location, this is implied by the name *fir Mano* referring to the Isle of Man [175]

[173]Thurneysen (1913 234) describes the bird as a griffen (*der Vogel Greif*)
[174]On the other hand, Stokes (1894 449n) points out the *Fu falgae* is glossed in *LL* 169b by *inse Gall indiu*, 'the Hebrides today'
[175]Carey (1982 40) identifies this as an otherworld location

Cu Chulainn defeats all of the men of Fál (§1 *firu Fàal*) in single combats (§1 *ar galuib oinfir*) in FFF and then does battle with a king, Get, who is also described as the king of the Fomorians (§1, *rig Fomoiri*) Thereafter the rhetoric in the form of a "dramatic dialogue" begins, the speakers being Get, perhaps Cú Chulainn, and a woman (Hollo, 2005 10) However, although two manuscripts specify Cu Chulainn, it seems that the king rather than Cu Chulainn must have referred to the latter's use of his *gae bolga*, and sword in one-to-one combat, *cotom gai bolgai ben fortom claidiub fortben fortom chaindil dibti*[176] "he strikes me with the *gae bolga*, he strikes upon me with a sword, he extinguishes the (hero's) light (candle) from me", (§3, Meyer, 1912 565, Thurneysen, 1921 431) Towards the end of the rethoric, there is a reference to "lying in the blood-grave of Cú Roí" (*feis hi crolecht Caunrai*) (§3, Meyer, 1912 565) The story ends thus with no mention of any abduction, otherworldly acquisitions of cattle, cauldron or woman Nevertheless, the appearance of a woman at this juncture in FFF implies her involvement somehow While Loegaire's battle seemed justified on account of the otherworld king's wrongful behaviour in EL, this is not made explicit in the case of Cu Chulainn in FFF

VII 2 1 Textual analysis of ACR II

A thematic relationship between FFF and ACR I (§1, Thurneysen, 1913 190-1) and ACR II[177] (§1, Best, 1905 20-1) appears at the outset of the latter texts The narrative in both of them leads up to the death of Cu Roi and this may help to explain the reference to his 'blood-grave' at the end of FFF

[176] *For dibdi?*

[177] Thurneysen (1921 432) has dated the oldest version of ACR (ACR I) found in *Eg* 88 to the 8th or 9th century whereas the longer version (ACR II) found in YBL can be dated no earlier that the 10th century (Tymoczko, 1981 16)

ACR II relates how Cu Chulainn and the Ulstermen, including Cu Roi disguised as an old man with 'a grey mantle" (§2, *broit lachtna*), lay siege of the *Fir Falgae*, abduct Bláthnait, daughter of Mend, and carry off "three cows of Iuchna" along with a cauldron that "was their calf"(§1, *bo hé al-loeg*) [178] Upon their return, the Ulstermen do not share the spoils with Cu Roí despite his assistance in the otherworldly battle In retribution, he makes off with the entire loot, including Blathnait, and defeats Cu Chulainn, who pursues him alone (§3) After a year avoiding the Ulstermen, Cu Chulainn conspires with Bláthnait and kills Cu Roí (§§4-10) Blathnait is identified later in ACR II as the daughter of Iuchna (§4), *Rig fer Falgai i fal na mara i n-indsib mara nobitis* "king of the Men of Falga, that is they were a 'sea-wall' in the islands of the sea", thus again emphasising the overseas destination of this expedition

VII 2 1 Discussion

In ACR II the account of the siege on the *Fir Falgae* is fundamentally different to the brief narrative of FFF and may be summarised as follows, (1) there is no trigger for the siege of Fal, such as the bird in FFF, (2) it is a collective expedition unlike Cu Chulainn's apparently solitary journey described in FFF, (3) the king's daughter Blathnait is abducted in ACR II, but no such incident is mentioned in FFF, (4) the otherworldly acquisitions of cows plus a cauldron and the future events in ACR II are not mentioned in FFF

VII 2 3 Textual analysis of ACR I

ACR I also begins with the Ulstermen at Emain Machae but diverges significantly from ACR II and particularly FFF in detail Here, a strange man approaches carrying with him "Solomon's *fidchell* set" from the "great world" (§10), as opposed to a bird bearing a honeyed blossom in FFF and the lack of any such feature in ACR II He demands Blathine, who is

[178]In both ACR I (§2, Thurneysen, 1913 191) and II (§1, Best, 1905 20-1,) Cu Chulainn praises the extraordinary capacity of the cauldron thus exemplifying its magical qualities

Conchobar's daughter this time She goes willingly with him, rather as Osnad went willingly with her abductor in EL (see IV 4 1) Subsequently, the Ulstermen set off on a voyage across the Irish sea, this time to Aird Echdi, "to the Headland of the men" (*i Cenn Tire Fer*) or Kintyre, in pursuit of Echde Echbel's cattle This was because their grazing of the lands of Ulster had vexed them (§1-3), just as that of the magical birds had at the start of CCC (see VII I 1)

In ACR I, unlike ACR II and FFF, Cú Chulainn at first declines to go, only joins the expedition later and, while in his boat, meets a darkly clad warrior who turns out to be Cu Roí (§3) It seems that the latter alone knows that Bláthine's abductor was Echde They are entertained for three nights, but, while Echde sleeps, the Ulstermen make off with Bláthine, the three cows and a special cauldron called their 'calf' on account of holding their large yield of "60 *sextarii*" of milk (§4-5) Thus the booty is more or less as described in ACR II and there is also a resonace with Cormac's retrieval of his wife Eithne in ECA and Loegaire's rescue of Fiachnae's wife Osnad in EL (see III 8 4 and IV 8 1) Whereas otherworldly treasures including "thirty cauldrons and thirty drinking horns" are taken from the defeated fort of Mag Mell by Loegaire and are mentioned by him when extolling the virtues of the otherworld before the unrest in EL, there is no statement that he brought them to the mortal world upon his brief return there (Jackson, 1942 387, n 1 79)

Afterwards the Ulstermen promise all of the booty to Cú Roi in ACR I, if he defends them when they are pursued and attacked by Echde Cú Roi kills Echde but his reward is postponed twice, for a year each time After the third attempted deferral by the Ulstermen, he carries off the booty and Blathine Cú Chulainn follows but is defeated by him Subsequently the Ulstermen discover Cú Roí's identity when his poet Ferchertne boasts about his three

wonderful gifts' Cu Chulainn persuades Blathine to betray Cu Roi's weakness and thus kills him by splitting the golden apple containing his soul, which is found inside a salmon that only surfaces every seven years (§6-8) This is reminiscent of the biblical story of Delilah, who betrayed Samson's weakness to the Philistines, thus ultimately causing his death (Judges 16) Cú Roi then duly advises that one should never tell a woman a secret or give wealth to a slave [179] It seems that Cú Roi's arguably honourable behaviour contrasts with the unfair actions of the Ulstermen and with Cu Chulainn's deceitfulness after being defeated by him in combat

Thus the significant peculiarities of detail in ACR I can be summarised, (1) a strange man appears in Emain and abducts Blathine, Conchobar's daughter this time, (2) the Ulstermen set off to Airde Echdi in pursuit of cattle, whereas the siege of Fal mentioned in FFF and ACR II is not mentioned, (3) Cu Chulainn does not respond immediately as in FFF and ACR II, but follows on later accompanied by Cu Roi in disguise, (4) they receive otherworld hospitality for three days, a feature not mentioned in FFF or ACR II, (5) they steal the cattle and cauldron and abduct Blathine while Echde is sleeping, thus not explicitly engaging in battle as in FFF and ACR II, (6) they postpone Cu Roi's rewards rather than excluding him from a share as in ACR II, while this feature is not found in FFF anyway, (7) Cu Chulainn conspires with Blathine to kill Cú Roi

VII 2 4 Discussion

Dissenting from Dumville's (1976 92) suggestion that *Echtrae Con Culainn* may contain elements from TE and SCC, Ó Béarra (2009 190-1) proposes that this tale "has not survived

[179]A similar sentiment is ascribed to Crimthann mia Nair at the beginning of *Scela Muicce Mac Da Tho ni tarda do ruin do mnaib Run mna ni maith con celar, main mug ni aithenai* 'tell no secrets to a woman A woman's secret is not well kept, jewels are not given to slaves" (§3, Thurneysen, 1935 3) Conchobar is also mentioned here and interestingly both of these characters are the subject of *echtrae* titles (see II 1 2 and 1 6)

as an independent text but rather as fragments contained in a number of other texts, most notably *Forfess Fer Fálgae, Aided Chon Roi,* the *Dindshenchas of Findglas* the *Tír Scaith* portion of the *Siaburcharpat Con Culaind* and in a number of shorter references in texts such as *Sanas Cormaic*" Furthermore, he points out that "the medieval *Sagenlisten*" also mention a tale called *Tain Teora n-erc nEchach* 'The Stealing of the Three Kine of Echu'", which has not survived under this title Finally, "the plethora of references and allusions to its own subject matter and that of *Echtrae Chon Culaind*, in various sources, leads one to conclude that all of this floating material shares a common thematic association" and "it appears that *Forfess Fer Fálgae, Echtrae Chon Culaind, Aided Chon Roi, Tain Teora n-ech* [sic] *nEchach,* the *Tír Scáith* portion of the *Siaburcharpat Con Culaind* poem and the *Dindshenchas* fragments, all belong to the same literary plot, and are nothing more than garbled and tangled variants or retellings of the same episodes" (O Bearra, 2009 190-1)

However, while the entry in *Rennes Dindshenchas* of *Findglas* (*LL* 169b, ll 22490, Best and O'Brien 1957 755, §53, Stokes, 1894 448-9) alludes in part to the proceedings of FFF and ACR I and II, it does not make any mention of an expedition overland or otherwise by Cu Chulainn Essentially, it refers to Blathnait as Cu Chulainn's 'paramour' and to their conspiring to kill Cu Roi in a manner similar to that at the beginning of ACR I and II *Ni ansa i Blathnat ingen Mind ri Fer Falga, bancele Conroi meic Daire, banserc-side Conculainn Is i rogell Coinculainn o[i]dhchi samna dia saighid do digail [na] n-erc n-Iuchna Eachach Echbeoil, 7 in coire* "Not difficult i e Blathnait daughter of Menn king of the Fir Falga, wife of Cu Roi son of Dáire and paramour of Cú Chulainn, it is she that pledged Cu Chulainn to come to her one Samain night to avenge the cows of Iuchna Eochaid Echbel and the cauldron " Given the prominence of an illicit love affair and Blathnait's initiative, this entry might conceivably correspond to the tale of elopement entitled *Aithed Bláthnaite ingine Puill*

maic Fhidaig[180] *re Con Culaind*, which, like *Echtrae Con Culainn*, is also common to both tale-lists A and B (Mac Cana, 1980 46 and 56) Conversely, the concluding reference to the massacring of the 'city' (*oircset in cathraig iarum*) would fit the title *Orgain Cathrach Con Roi* appearing in list B (Mac Cana, 1980 63)

Notwithstanding thematic similarities between FFF and ACR, the divergences of detail highlighted above, particularly regarding the issue of Echde's cattle in ACR I, raise doubts as to whether they are mere retellings of the same events Unfortunately, FFF does not give a complete narrative account despite an early date indicated by its language and evidence for its presence in *Cin Dromma Snechta* The appearance of the title *Forbais [Forfess] Fer Falgae* in both tale lists may indicate that it was recognised as such as early as the eighth century (Mac Cana, 1980 45, 52 and 71) Conversely, the title *Aided Con Rui* appears in tale-list A only and it is hard to say which version (I or II) might fit this title (Mac Cana, 1980 69, Thurneysen, 1921 432) However, it seems evident that, unlike FFF and ACR II, ACR I depicts a classic example of *rop-chaithig* 'animal-trespass' as described in *Bretha Comaithchesa*[181] 'the Judgements of Neighbourhood', which "was clearly a major source of legal action in early Ireland" (Kelly,1988 142-3) Arguably what the Ulstermen are doing is taking redress for the cattle's trespass and damage to their land by means of *athgabal* 'distraint' (literally 'taking back'), a law that "allows a private individual to enforce a claim against another" by "the formal seizure of property belonging to the other, without recourse to a court of law" (Kelly, 1988 177) Thurneysen, (1921 432) is surely right to suggest that ACR I corresponds to the title *Tain teora n-erc Echdach* in tale-list A (*LL* 189 b 45) and possibly to

[180]No trace of this character is found elsewhere as far as I am aware

[181]*Bretha Comaithchesa* (Kelly, 1988 142) "deals with damage to land and crops by domestic animals of a neighbour" also discusses "the various forms of animal trespass The general principle is the obvious one relating to the amount of compensation to the amount of damage done it deals mainly with trespass by cattle and pigs " See also 'Distraint and Legal Entry" (Kelly, 1988 177-89)

Orgain Cathrach Con Roí in list B (23 N 10 p 29) [182] One is reminded of *Táin Bé Aingen* as an alternative title for EN (Meyer, 1889 212)

Nevertheless, Cu Chulainn is not the only warrior figure of note on these expeditions Some of these tales might conceivably correspond either wholly or partly to the no longer extant tale entitled *Echtrae Con Ruí* from tale-list A, given his status as a significant warrior figure and king of Munster in the literature (see II 14 and V 1 14)

VII 2 5 Textual analysis of SbCC

The intertextual relationship between ACR I, II and SbCC is marked by the almost identical verses spoken by Cu Chulainn in all three to claim credit for having carried off the three cows, the fabulous cauldron and the king's daughter, presumably Blathnait Both ACR I and II state that the verses come from SbCC, which McCone (1990 200) dates linguistically to the ninth or tenth century (see also II 13) However, Thurneysen (1921 232) concludes that "apart from the brief mention in *Forfess Fer Falgae*, *Aided* I is to be regarded as the oldest extant form of the Cu Roi saga " If this is the case, then Thurneysen's (1921 433, n2) proposal that these verses are deliberate later interpolations in ACR, which follows immediately after SbCC in the manuscript, seems feasible Furthermore, the verse spoken by Cú Chulainn in SbCC relates that the booty, including a cauldron large enough to hold thirty bullocks, "was given by the daughter of the king", and brought by him from his overseas trip to a place named *Dun Scáith* in *Tir Scáith*[183] here and not the island of Fal as in (§1) ACR II or Airde Echdi as in (§1) ACR I (O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 389, see IV 9 5)

[182] See also Mac Cana (1980 93)

[183]Hogan (1910) identifies *Tir Scaith* with the Isle of Skye and *Dun Scaith* with Down Skayth on the coast of Sleat Thurneysen (1913 196, n 4) warns that this place is not to be confused with the land of Scathach in TE, whither Cu Chulainn travelled foi training in arms The name Scáthach derives from the word *scath* shadow, phantom, spectre' by addition of an *-ach* suffix and so may be translated as shadowy one

In the tale SbCC Cú Chulainn, having been summoned from Hell by Patrick, recounts some of his exploits to the pagan king of Tara, Loegaire, whom he regales with his expeditions to two otherworldly locations, *Lochlann*, and *Tir Scaith* (see also IV 5 5) A third reference at the beginning of this section (I 9343, Best and Bergin, 1929 281, verse I, O'Beirne Crowe, 1870 382) *aile-thuath* 'other land', might be taken to refer to yet another otherworldly location but given the use of the imperfect, *immaredind-sea margraige*, "I used to hunt their great flocks", rather implies that Cu Chulainn is merely referring to a general tendency to go on expeditions into a foreign territory

VII 2.6. *Lochlann*

Lochlann is generally associated with the home of the Vikings[184] but was apparently also recognised as an otherworld location [185] *Compert Mongain ocus Serc Duibe Lacha do Mongan* may display a similar usage and O Bearra (2009 188) points out that, because "the text is admittedly late, the possibility arises that the scribe may indeed have understood *Lochlainn* as the home of the Vikings (as is common in later *rómánsaiocht* and *fianuigheacht* texts) However, the purely magical and mythological character of both the tale and its *personae*, as well as the mention of red-eared cows, all point to *Lochlainn* as a name for the Otherworld " At any rate, whereas we are not told how Cu Chulainn reached it in SbCC, the statement that his boat sank on his way back clearly indicates an overseas location While in Lochlann Cu Chulainn fights and slays a giant 'thirty cubits' tall, who is subsequently identified as a king, and then carries off treasures of silver and gold (see IV 6 5, IV 8 5 and IV 9 5)

[184]McCone (2005 118) discusses the word *Lothlann/lochlann* with reference to a single-quatrain poem in the Milan glosses, which obviously applies to the home of the Vikings and "provides us with our earliest attestations of the Irish name for their land of origin ' See also Etchingham (2007 11-33), Ni Mhaonaigh (2006 25-37), O Corrain (1998 317-18)

[185]Derb Forgaill is described as the *ingen rig Lochlainne* 'daughter of the King of Lochlann' in *Aided Lugaid ocus Derbforgaill* (Martrander, 1911 208) According to Marstrander (1911 208) her ability to transform herself into a swan confirms her otherworldliness (cf O Bearra, 2009 186-7)

It is possible that the Lochlann episode in SbCC corresponds to Cu Chulainn's trip to Fál in FFF, which equates it with the Isle of Man, an island also known to have been settled by Vikings [186] In FFF Cu Chulainn fights and wins many single combats and in SbCC's Lochlann episode he defeats numerous enemies In addition the Gét killed by Cú Chulainn is called king of the Fomorians in FFF These were not only sometimes viewed as a race of giants, but a giant king of theirs, Balor, also figures in *Cath Maige Tuired* (§§133-5, Gray, 1983 60) Possibly then the giant king killed by Cú Chulainn in SbCC is to be identified with Get It is true that no context for this violent otherworldly intervention in Lochlann is given in SbCC's anyway brief and impressionistic account

VII 2 7 *Tír Scaith*

The hostile nature of these otherworld locations is further emphasised on Cu Chulainn's second expedition in SbCC to Tir Scáith, where Dun Scaith has locks of iron, is surrounded by seven walls and has a rampart of iron spikes with a human head on each In order to reach it Cú Chulainn has to overcome serpents, toads, and other monsters Thus the names fit the nature of the place described by Cu Chulainn, since the word '*scáth*' means 'shadow, phantom, spectre' and may thus be translated as 'land/fort of Shadow' Although *Tir* 'land', is an element commonly found in otherworld names and typically refers to a land without strife, illness or mortality such as, *Tir inna mBeo* 'Land of the Living' in EC (§3) and *Tir Tairngiri* 'Land of Promise' in ECA (§53), in SbCC the reverse is depicted[187] (III 6 4 and IV 6 5) The hostile nature of these places and the overseas location in SbCC resonates with the depictions in FFF, ACR I and II Cu Chulainn's desire 'for plunder' (*di alad*) motivating the visit to Tir

[186]For instance an entry in *AU* 1102 notes Magnus king of Lochla(i)nn came with a great fleet to Man and a year's peace was made by them and by the men of Ireland'(*Maghnus ri Lochlainni co longais mor do thuidhecht i manainn ; sith mbliadhna do denum doibh ; do feraib Erenn*, Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983 AD 1102 7)

[187]According to O Bearra (2009 184-5) "this is what might be termed the Unhappy otherworld, usually a dark, foreboding and sinister realm, quite often located in the north, where dwell horrible creatures and monsters which the hero must vanquish to reach the otherworld fortress "

Scaith in SbCC in a manner consistent with the quest for the cattle and other objects in ACR I and II

VII.2 8 Discussion

Tír Scáith only appears in SbCC as a name for the otherworld Although it might have been suggested by the name Scathach (see fn 180), the latter's status as a derivative of *scáth* raises the possibility that the name of the figure who trained Cu Chulainn in arms in TE was extrapolated from SbCC At any rate, the comprehensive list of *clessa* recounted when Cu Chulainn appears early on in SbCC is quite separate from the subsequent *Tir Scaith* episode (ll 142-68, O'Beirne Crowe, 1890 379) Nevertheless, Scathach's role as Cu Chulainn's tutor in arms would seem to have been established early since (i) *Verba Scathaige*, a prophecy about Cu Chulainn's role in the *Tain* put into her mouth, appears linguistically old and was probably found in *Cin Dromma Snechta* (Thurneysen, 1921 248-51), (ii) his journey to her to learn arms and feats (*do foglaim gaiscid 7 chless la Scathaig*) is placed in the sixth year between his joining the youths at Emain in his fifth year and his taking up of arms in his seventh in the preamble to his *macgnimrada* in *Tain Bo Cuailgne* (*TBC*, Rec I, ll 377-8),[188] (iii) the title TE is common to both tale-lists and is also listed in the *remscéla* to *Táin Bó Cuailgne* [189] Consequently, *Tir Scaith* seems unlikely to have been the basis of her name Conversely, however, there is no indication in SbCC that Scathach's realm was the one referred to as *Tir Scaith*, whereas there is a clear allusion to the three cattle and their cauldron and 'calf' being taken from it as in ACR I, which has no obvious connection with Scathach Its title 'Land of Shadow' may simply have been due to its function as what McCone (1990 201) calls a "pale allegorical reflection of hell" (McCone, 1990 201) In that case, the

[188]*Issin tsessed* (*sechtmad* Y) *bliadain luid do foglaim gaiscid 7 chless la Scathaig* Y adds that he also went to woo Emer at this stage (*7 luid do thochmarc nEmiri*) but a gloss in LU (in M's hand) declares this version to be at odds with Tochmarc Emire *obicitiv Tochmarc Emire de so* (see O'Rahilly 1976 12)
[189]See Thurneysen (1921 248-251) on various manuscript versions of the remscela to *TBC*

name's resemblance to Scathach would be a mere coincidence, even if Cu Chulainn's connection with her may have provided a further stimulus for its creation in SbCC

Although FFF, ACR I and II, SbCC and the *Rennes Dindshenchas* of *Findglas* fragment contain some common thematic elements, they also display significant differences as indicated above Hence FFF and ACR and probably the Tir Scaith episode in SbCC seem to reflect two originally separate narratives, quite likely also reflected in SbCC, rather than being mere "garbled and tangled variants or retellings of the same episodes" as O Bearra (2009 190-1) suggested Be that as it may, these texts relate a series of raiding trips made by Cu Chulainn, either alone or with others, to unusual overseas locations, from which he returned with some booty and on occasion a woman The supernatural overseas locations constitute the only significant point of difference between the accounts in FFF, ACR I, II or SbCC and those of more normal warrior expeditions such as the one depicted in the last of Cu Chulainn's *macgnimrada* above (VII 1 2)

VII 2 9. Textual analysis of LMDD

Hollo (2005 10) points out that *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDuil Dermait* (LMDD) is also thematically related to FFF, ACR I, II and SbCC, 'although the return with treasure is not a focal point in the former, but rather secondary to Cu Chulainn's successful search for the answer to the question that was set him " The story begins at a feast prepared for king Conchobar and the Ulstermen in Emain Machae by Bricriu, who takes offence at the fact that no great feats of valour have yet been performed This is reminiscent of the opening of EN at an assembly at Cruachu and the contest of bravery proposed by Ailill for his warriors (§1, see III 1 1) Fifty warriors, including Cú Chulainn Loeg, and Lugaid Reo nDerg, duly set off from Ulster in response to Bricriu's taunt (§1-5). They encounter Findchóem, daughter of Echu Rond king of the Ui Maine, and Cú Chulainn, decides to take her and her retainers back to

Emain Machae (§§6-15) Just as Forgoll was opposed to Cu Chulainn's advances to Emer in TE (see IV 1 3) and coerced him into an overseas expedition, Echu objects and places an injunction on Cu Chulainn *nit-raib sáim suidi na laigi, a Chu Chulainn, co-fesa[i]r cid ruc tri maccu Duil Dermait asa tír* "may you not have ease of sitting or lying down Cu Chulainn, until you may find out what took the three sons of Doel Dermait from their land" (§16, Hollo, 2005 55 and 100) Afterwards Cú Chulainn could not sit without his clothes seeming to burn him and was thus obliged to make the journey He was given a boat by the son of the king of Alba on the coast of Traig in Baili, to the east of Dun Delcae (§§18-21) and encountered a few mysterious islands on the sea journey, as Bran and Art did in IB (§32) and EA (§18-23) respectively

Landing at a big island, Cu Chulainn came to a fine house with pillars, inside which he encountered "a couple with light-grey hair" wearing purple robes[190] (§24) An obvious parallel is provided by the otherworld house and the welcoming couple encountered by Conn in BS (§6) and EA (§9) as well as by Cormac in ECA (§36) Apparently on his own when he reached the island, he was washed along with Lugaid Reo nDerg and Lóeg mac Riangabra in a vat (§§26-28), a feature recalling the hospitality and bathing experienced by Cormac in ECA (§36) and Conn in EA (§§9-10) Fifty warriors led by a 'single man" wearing a "purple fivefold cloak" approaced the otherworld dwellers (§27), a group resembling Loegaire and his fifty warriors in EL (see IV 3 1) Feasting and drinking was enjoyed by all and the three girls "of the same age and appearance" in the house were identified as Eithne,[191] Etan and Étáin That night Cu Chulainn slept with Etan and the next day gave her a "thumbring of gold"

[190] He saw three times fifty compartments in the house There was a *fidchell* board and a *brandub* board and a *timpán* above each compartment"(§24 Hollo 2005 101)

[191] Eithne Ingubai is referred to as Cu Chulainn s wife in the first part of SCC but Emer is his wife later on (§§12, 13, 31)

(§§29-30, *ornuisc n-oir*) Thus Cu Chulainn has a sexual encounter with a woman as in EEM, FL and EA, where she functions as a goddess of sovereignty (see V 3-V 3 1 2)

The next day Cu Chulainn went to another island where a daughter of Doel Diarmait lived with her husband Condla Coel Corbracc, who was a giant (§31-3) like the one encountered by Cú Chulainn in Lochlann in SbCC (§VI) She directed him to the third island, where the missing son's uncle Cairpre Cundail lived After being defeated but not killed by Cú Chulainn, despite the latter's brandishing of the *gae bolga*, Cairpre divulged the whereabouts of the sons of Doel Diarmait That night Cu Chulainn slept with the king's daughter (§§33-9) and the following day defeated and killed Eochaid Glas, who had been holding the sons and the *sid*-people in captivity (§§40-1) This is reminiscent of the way in which Loegaire and his warriors defeated the king of Mag Mell to free Fiachnae's abducted wife Osnad in EL and Lóegaire afterwards slept with the king's daughter[192] (see IV 7 1) Although this overseas expedition was motivated by his quest for specific knowledge in order to rid himself of Echu's burning injunction, Cu Chulainn is given "great and marvellous gifts" by Cairpre (§42) However, as these are not detailed, there is no indication of any potential to benefit the mortal world Nonetheless, the act of receiving treasures, as opposed to pillaging them, is in keeping with ECA and BS, where the gifts admittedly enhanced the respective kingships of Cormac and Conn (see III 9 4 and III 9 6) Finally, Cu Chulainn returned to Emain Machae, made a pact with Echu, and Findchoem[193] stayed with him Cu Chulainn related his adventures (*a imtheachta*) and joined the feast (§43, Hollo, 2005 61)

[192]Fifty women were also given to the fifty warriors

[193]Hollo (2005 12-13) points out that LMDD and SCC are the only texts from the 8th to 12th century period in which a wife other than Emer is featured

VII 2 10 Discussion

LMDD is found only in the YBL and Hollo (2005 1) asserts that it "is best regarded as a text first written down in the late Old Irish period that was subject to a certain amount of revision " The thematic relationship of LMDD with Cu Chulainn's adventures in the group of texts discussed earlier is evident from the above brief discussion, as is the presence of some motifs found in typical *echtrai* Although the inclusion of a sexual encounter in LMDD with a woman otherwise liable to be associated with sovereignty is noteworthy, it has no bearing on kingship in the aftermath in the way that it does in a more typical *echtrae*

VII 3 Textual analysis of TE

The oldest version of TE (Meyer, 1890) begins at Emain Machae,[194] to which Forgall Manach goes in disguise in order to seek out Cu Chulainn and thwart his attempts to woo his daughter Emer (ll 1-17, see also IV 1 3) Hoping that the ordeal will kill him, Forgall suggests Cu Chulainn should train in arms with the warrior Domnall in Alba This he duly agrees to and sets off on a ship after visiting Emer and promising to remain faithful to her (ll 20-4) Having given him some instruction, Domnall tells Cu Chulainn that he would not perfect this until he went to Scathach in the east of Alba (ll 25-36) At this point Cu Chulainn is forced to travel on alone after being isolated from his companions by a vision and impeded by various monsters, all of which were arguably raised by Forgoll,[195] thereby indicating his otherworldly nature[196] (ll 37-40, 43-72, see IV 5 3) In keeping with typical *echtrai*, TE opens at a royal site and the expedition is instigated by a male otherworldly figure as in the case of ECA, EL and

[194]As such the focus in this version is on Cu Chulainn's travels to the train in arms with Domnall and Scathach

[195] There Emain Macha appeared before their eyes Conchobar, and Loegaire do not go beyond that Cuchulind went on his own (will) from them, He did not stop for the powers of the maiden were supernatural She wrought harm against him, so that his friends were severed from him' (Meyer, 1890 445) Alternatively it suggests that Forgall Manach had raised the vision to induce Cu Chulainn to turn back (van Hamel, 1933, 46, §61)

[196]Forgall s status as a *rig-brugu* (§57, Van Hamel, 1933 44-5) is an indicator of his otherworldly links According to McCone (1990 32), "in literary descriptions of the *bruidnea* or hostels of certain idealized mythical representatives of the socially important early Irish class of *brugaid* or hospitallers emphasis is laid upon the dispensation of food to all visitors from magic' cauldrons See McCone (1984 1-30) for detailed discussion of the otherworldly associations of such a *brugu*

BS (see summary table IV 5) Moreover, in ECA and FL Cormac (§32) and the five Lugaids (see III 2 7) respectively become separated from their companions owing to a mist rather as Cu Chulainn becomes separated by a vision in TE Unlike these *echtrai* but like EA and LMDD, TE has Cú Chulainn make an expedition overseas to a destination only reached after overcoming many arduous battles through the intervention of an otherworldly female figure However, whereas Art apparently has a sexual relationship with this woman in EA and Cu Chulainn sleeps with two women in LMDD, in TE the first woman Cu Chulainn meets is identified as his foster-sister and no such relationship is mentioned (see III 5 4, III 8 3, IV 5 3 and IV 8 3) Later in TE Cú Chulainn is welcomed by Uathach, daughter of Scathach, and does mate with her whereas his sexual encounter with Aife is markedly different

The martial intent of TE is further elucidated when Cu Chulainn fights and kills Scathach's champion, Cochor Crufe (ll 60-84), and then overcomes Scáthach herself, threatening to kill her in order to secure thorough training in arms from her (ll 75-82, see IV 7 3) This granted, he fights Aife, the hardest woman warrior in the world' (ll 110, Meyer, 1890 450-1), in single combat The two are evenly matched, but Cu Chulainn overcomes her by means of a trick and then spares her life on condition that she bear him a son (ll 95-121, see IV 7 3) The warrior-hero's violent otherworldly liaison here differs from the hero-kings' friendly sexual encounters with otherworld women in EEM, FL, EA, EN and EL (see IV 8 and III 8) Scathach teaches Cu Chulainn all the arts of combat These include the use of the *gae bolga*,[197] a terrible barbed spear thrown with the foot that expands into many heads on impact and has to be cut out of its victim Subsequently, Cu Chulainn returns fully trained in the arts

[197]In version III of TE, (§78, van Hamel, 1933 56) a full list of Cu Chulainn's feats acquired in his training with Scathach is given, including his instruction in the use of the *gae bolga* The *gae bolga* is described in *Tain Bo Cuailnge* (*TBC* Rcc I, ll 3095) 'Look out for the *gai bulga*!' cried the charioteer and cast it to him downstream Cu Chulainn caught it between his toes and cast it at Fer Diad into his anus It was a single barb it entered but it became twenty-four (in Fer Diad s body)' *Fomna an gai mbulga!' ol in t-ara Doleci ndo lassan sruth Gaibt[h]il Cu cona ladair 7 imambeir do F[h]ir Diad a timt[h]iracht a churp Tochomlai amail oenga co mba cetheora randa fichet*

of combat, storms the ramparts killing twenty-four warriors, abducts Emer and steals Forgall's treasures Forgoll falls from the ramparts and dies (see IV 10 3) Ultimately, this ferocious success reflects his recently acquired mastery of all of the martial arts through his training with Scathach TE is similar to LMDD in that both fathers oppose the union of Cu Chulainn with their respective daughters and instigate the otherworldly trips, whereas none of the previously discussed *echtrai* are motivated in this way The aftermath in LMDD was merely Cu Chulainn's liberation from the painful injunction imposed on him, but his triumphant return in TE explicitly underlines his exemplary heroic warrior status, particularly in his mastery of the *gáe bolga*, by showing how he proved himself worthy of such training in his decisive victory over Scathach and Aife in the otherworld

VII 3 1 Discussion

The exclusivity of this martial accomplishment is illustrated in the tale *Aided Óenfir Aife*, when Cu Chulainn kills his otherwise equally matched son in combat *Luid risin mac iarom asin uisciu, coro brec cosin ga bulga, ar níro muin Scathach do duine riam in gaisced sin acht do Choin Chulainn a oenur* "then he went against the youth out on the water, so that he deceived him with the *gae bolga*, for Scathach had never taught anyone that feat except Cu Chulainn alone" (§1, van Hamel, 1933 15) Rather as Cormac's otherworldly talismans of truth were specific to his mortal calling as an exemplary ruler charged with maintaining 'truth' so too Cu Chulainn's otherworldly acquisitions relate to his mortal calling as the supreme warrior and virtually invincible protector of his king and people thereafter Accordingly, a sovereignty objective of ECA is matched by a martial one in TE, particularly the Scathach episode

VII 3 2 Textual analysis of SCC

SCC opens with the Ulstermen at the *oenach* of Mag Muirthemne The week-long Samain celebrations involved "games and assemblies and pleasure and delight and eating and feasting' (§1) and 'each would boast his trophies then openly" (§2) Whereas the motif of head-hunting and the status it afforded the hero warrior is found in numerous sagas,[198] in SCC the unusual motif of tongues as trophies is encountered [199] *ba bes leu dano di ág inna comraime ferthain ind óenaig i rind aurlabra cech fhir no marbtais do thabairt inna mbossan Ocus dobertis aurlabrai na cethrae do ilgud na comram hi sudiu* "it was a custom with them to hold the assembly for the sake of the contest, that is to bring in their wallets the tip of the tongue of every man that they used to kill and they used to bring the tongues of cattle to increase the contests there" (§2, Dillon, 1953 1) The deceitful inclusion of tongues of animals to bolster heroic prestige and "to impress the ever-judging audience at all costs, would invalidate the whole contest" according to O'Leary (1986 22) However, it transpires that this dishonesty is counteracted, *ar imsoitis a claidib friu in tan dognitis gúchomram* "for their swords used to turn against them when they used to make a false contest" (§2, Dillon, 1953 1) Thus, the preface of SCC depicts some martial boastings not typical of the *echtrai* but at least alluded to in EN (see III 2 1)

In addition to this remarkable introduction, Cú Chulainn receives three invitations to go to do battle in the otherworld, as opposed to the single invitation typical of most *echtrai* [200] In contrast to his keenness to go to the lands of Scáthhach for further training in TE and for plunder in SbCC, in SCC Cu Chulainn declines the first two invitations issued by Oengus son

[198]For example Cu Chulainn's final *macgnimrad* (*TBC*,Rec I 676-8), above describes how he returned to Emain with the heads of the three sons of Nechta Scena whom he had slain, thus displaying his accomplishments in his first feat in arms See also *Scela Muicce Mac Datho* (§16, Thurneysen, 1935 14) when Conall Cernach won the right to carve the pig by boasting with the head ofhis slain victim, the Connachtman Anluan

[199]According to Carey (1994 78) the use of severed tongues rather than severed heads as proof of heroic exploits is not attested elsewhere in the early literature

[200]EC features two invitations

of Áed Abrat and the otherworldly woman Lí Ban respectively Before these encounters, two unusual birds appear over Mag Muirthmne (§4, see also IV 1 4) singing soporifically and linked by a golden chain reminiscent of those joining the linked pairs of birds that induced the Ulstermen to the otherworld in CCC above Ignoring the warnings of his wife Eithne[201] and his charioteer Loeg, Cu Chulainn attacked and wounded one of the birds He then fell asleep and had a dream or nightmare in which he was severely whipped in apparent retaliation by two women (§7), presumably to be identified with the pair of birds and also with the two otherworld females Li Ban and Fand who appear later in the tale At the end of this it is stated that these events were destructive visions (§49, Dillon, 1941 48) shown to him by the people of the *síd* or demons This is reminiscent of the destruction of Cruachu shown to Nerae at the outset of EN and also subsequently described as a vision (§8)

A number of tales feature the transformation of birds into women or vice versa [202] For example, in *Tochmarc Emire* Cu Chulainn cast a shot at two birds but later found two women, namely Derbforgaill and her handmaiden, when he approached them (§84, van Hamel, 1933 62) Similarly, *Aislinge Oengusso* includes birds linked by chains and when Ailill asks what special power Caer Ibormeith possesses, he is told that *biid i ndedb eum cach la bliadnai, i mbliadnai n-aili i ndeilb duini* "she is in the form of a bird every other year and in the form of a person in another year" (§12, Shaw, 1976 59) [203]

[201]Certain duplications and discrepancies arise from the compilatory nature of the extant text (For details see Dillon, 1941 vi-viii) For instance, Eithne is listed as Cu Chulainn's wife in the earlier part of SCC and Emer in the later part

[202]For example, in version II of CCC, as seen above, the Ulsterwomen turn into birds and attack the lands in front of Emain Machae (Meyer, 1905 500)

[203] Other transformations of a similar nature are found in *Tochmarc Etaine* where Etain turns from human form to water, then into a worm and lastly into a fly (§§16, 18, Bergin and Best, 1938 152- 5)

VII 3 3. *Serglige* 'wasting sickness'

Cu Chulainn comes down with *serglige*, 'wasting sickness', literally *serg* 'wasting' and *lige* 'lying' (Dillon, 1941 105, *DIL* 538) It is not the same word as *serc* 'love' and there is a notable contrast to EC, where Connlae was seized with longing (§8, *éolchaire*, McCone, 2000 163) for the appearance of the woman when she had left him after her first visit It is clear in SCC that the wasting sickness was a debility brought about by the woman's flogging in retaliation for his attack on the otherworldly birds However, there is a similarity with *Aislinge Oengusso*, where Cáer Ibormeith *ingen Etail Anbail a Sidaib a crich Connacht* "daughter of Etal Anbail of the *sid* of the territory of Connacht" appeared to Oengus, the son of the Dagda, in a dream and caused him to pine and waste away His debility is also referred to as *serg(g) bliadain lan do os si occa aithgid fon séol sin conid corastar i sergg* "a full year for him and she visiting him in that manner so that he lapsed into wasting away" (§2, Shaw, 1976 44)

At any rate, Cu Chulainn cannot accept the first two invitations in SCC (see IV 2 4) Emer berates her husband into shaking off his illness after a year and he finally journeys to Mag Mell with Laeg (§15) The otherworld named Mag Mell, which was under a lake but nonetheless accessible by land in EL (see IV 6 1) is on an island in a lake in SCC and Loeg travelled there by boat (see IV 5 4), thus contrasting with the other *echtrai* apart from EA and EC Cú Chulainn dispatches Labraid's enemies and, although the account of this otherworldly battle is brief, he is victorious and earns the prize of Fand (see IV 8 4)

VII 3 4 Cú Chulainn and Fand

SCC makes Cu Chulainn's principal reason for travelling to the otherworld the provision of military assistance to a leader against his enemies there, a woman[204] then being given as a reward This is similar to EL where Lóegaire went to assist Fiachnae in battle in return for his daughter Dér Greine However, the aftermaths in SCC and EL diverge significantly There is a major impact on the sovereignty of both worlds in EL, where after returning home briefly to Connacht, Lóegaire returns to the *síd*-mound to live with his otherworldly wife (see IV 10 1) like Nerae in EN (see III 10 1) Cú Chulainn, by contrast, returns home to an arranged tryst with the otherworldly Fand a month later at Ibor Cind Trachta in the mortal world (§39, see IV 10 4) Emer finds out and, accompanied by fifty Ulsterwomen with knives, confronts the lovers This is interrupted by the appearance of Fand's husband Manannan mac Lir, who takes Fand back to the otherworld and shakes his cloak between her and Cú Chulainn so that they may never meet again In the end, the druids give Cu Chulainn and Emer a potion of forgetfulness (§§46-8, see IV 10 4)

The implication that sexual encounters initiated in the otherworld were not feasible beyond it is observed by Rees and Rees (1961 309), who note that the "supernatural mistress entices the hero to a friendly feminine world" as in the case of *Immram Brain* and that ' those who succumb altogether to the fascination of the mysterious otherworld woman are thus lost forever to the world of men " Although Cu Chulainn did manage to make the transition back to the mortal realm in SCC, it seems that his liaison with the otherworldly woman Fand could not be sustained there By contrast, Art and Delbchaem's sexual union does appear to have

[204]The woman is named Fand in SCC Dillon (1953a 32, n 171) points out that the name Fand meaning 'tear' does not occur anywhere else and the possibility that Der Greine in EL is the equivalent This suggests an acquaintance on the part of one author with the work of the other Ni Mhaoldomnaigh (2007 114-171) has since argued that the satirically motivated author of *Serglige Con Culainn* actually took motifs from *Echtrae Laegairi* in order to undermine the hero

survived the transition from one world to the other in EA, with positive implications for the kingship of Tara in line with the primary motivation of that *echtrae*

VII 3 5 The *Briatharthecosc* episode and discussion

The *Briatharthecosc* episode in SCC is generally regarded as an interruption of the tale, since the last words written on the reverse side of the inserted leaf (46), *imthúsa immurgu Con Culaind iss ed adfiastar sund coleic* "of Cu Chulainn however, it will now be told here", signals a shift of focus in the tale (§28, ll 311, O Cathasaigh, 1994 88) Dillon (1941-2 124-5, n 9) discusses Thurneysen's view that the whole passage is written by the interpolator on an inserted leaf and the question is whether to regard it as part of version B or as due to a compiler or even to the H interpolator himself, who would simply have introduced a separate text as a filler here Opting for the latter view, Dillon (1941-2 124-5) asserts that the *Briarthecosc Con Culaind* or 'Instructions of Cu Chulainn' episode in SCC "belongs to the group of *tecosca* of which *Tecosca Cormaic* is perhaps the best known example, and it can hardly belong to the story in its original form " Furthermore, "it seems to be best to regard the *tecosc* as a separate tale composed for the glory of the hero, who is thus made wise as well as brave, and inserted here by the compiler who was the interpolator's source" according to Dillon (1941-2 124-5, n 9) O Cathasaigh (1994 88) points out that its inclusion at this juncture may "owe something to the Irish ideology of kingship", and in view of its placement immediately after Loeg has informed Cu Chulainn about the otherworld, may "reflect the notion found elsewhere in early Irish literature that the otherworld was the source of the righteous kingship which would ensure a Golden Age of peace and plenty in Ireland "

Significantly, the *briatharthecosc* is prefaced by an account of the *tarbfeis is amlaid dognithe in tarbfhes sin, tarb find do marbad ocus oenfher do chathim a shatha dia eoil ocus da enbruthi ocus chotlud dó fon saith sin* "this is the way that the bull-feast used to be made, to

kill a white bull and one man to eat his fill of its flesh and of its broth and to sleep under that sufficiency" (§23, Dillon, 1953 9) It was carried out in order to select a new king of Tara [205] *ár batar fir Hérend cen smacht rig forro fri re secht mbliadna iar ndith Chonaire i mBrudin Dá Derga* "for the men of Ireland were without the rule of a king for seven years after the death of Conaire in Da Derga's Hostel" (§21, Dillon, 1953 8) O'Rahilly (1946 177) suggests that 'a suitable place in Irish pseudo-history had to be found for certain personages such as Conchobar and Cúchulainn It was, however, impossible to associate these personages with the reign of any particular 'king of Ireland' The difficulty was surmounted by supposing that there was an interregnum in the kingship of Ireland during the years immediately following the death of Conaire Mór " Be that as it may, the text goes on to list kings present at the assembly, explaining that Ulster was not represented as there was hostility between it and the other four provinces When messengers go and relate the vision of the *tarbfeis* to Conchobar in SCC, he immediately recognises the description of the next king as applying to Lugaid Rioderg, fosterson of Cú Chulainn, who is standing by his sickbed (§24, Dillon, 1953 9)

Thus, in this episode, Lugaid is identified as the one destined for kingship like Niall and Lugaid Láigde in EEM and FL Ultimately, Lugaid receives wise advice from his warrior foster-father Cu Chulainn on how a good king should conduct himself (§§24-25, Dillon, 1953 9) Since pertinent sovereignty issues are thus highlighted, O Cathasaigh is surely right to view this episode as a commentary on the early Irish ideology of kingship In that case it may well be that the author, compiler or interpolator deliberately inserted an instruction to a king because of the common association of sovereignty with *echtrai* If this is the case, then

[205] *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (§23, Knott, 1936 9) contains a similar description of the *tarbfeis* as a prelude to Conaire's accession to the kingship of Tara

the *briatharthecosc* episode in SCC is an instance of the deliberate combination of typical *echtrae* concerns with traditional warrior-raid motifs in it

VII 4 Conclusion

CCC displays some typical motifs found in the *echtrai,* such as an overland expedition, bad visibility due to weather conditions, arrival at an otherworldly location and the acquisition of benefits there These can be attributed to authorial familiarity with an *echtrae*-like narrative pattern Like EC and IB, CCC seems to have been contained in the *Cin Dromma Snechta,* which can probably be dated from as early as the eight century (McCone, 2005 8) If this date is correct and EC deliberately inverts traditional *echtrae* motifs as McCone suggests (see VI 2 - VI 2 5), the mysterious vanishing dwelling and the welcoming couple found in CCC, ECA and BS, but not featured in EC, may be an old traditional feature of the genre Be that as it may, it appears that the author/redactor of CCC is deliberately exploiting a framework of this type in order to endow the extraordinary warrior born as a result with remarkable "ambivalence and liminality" as "the hero's essential attributes" from the outset (McCone, 1990 188)

The early looking text FFF, also from *Cin Dromma Snechta,* likewise displays some similarity to the *echtrae,* especially to the variants with an overseas location and the involvement of a mortal in battle there The implicit invitation by a bird in FFF resonates with the summoning of Cu Chulainn, after encountering birds, to resolve an otherworldly conflict in SCC However, there is nothing in FFF to suggest any impact on the sovereignty of one or both worlds through gifts, acquisitions or the like typical of the aftermath of most *echtrai* Conversely the honourable single combats successfully performed by the mortal hero Cu Chulainn evidently serve to enhance his martial prowess by taking place in an otherworldly location, which is what chiefly distinguishes FFF from a more normal warrior raid on another

territory such as a *tain bo* or the foray in Cu Chulainn's last *macgnimrad* Accordingly it may have resulted from early interaction between an expedition of this type and an otherworldly *echtrae* usually associated with sovereignty

It can be agreed that ACR I and II are thematically linked with FFF, insofar as combat occurs and booty is taken from an overseas otherworldly location in all three In the former a fight was fought and won, treasures including cattle were taken and a king's daughter, presumably Blathnait, was rescued Although Cu Roí is depicted in a more favourable light than Cu Chulainn and the Ulstermen, particularly in ACR I, the martial element is still central to both versions Notwithstanding the acquisition of three cows plus the cauldron holding their abundant milk and the initial hospitality in ACR I, the otherworldly expeditions in ACR I and II do not appear to show a concern with sovereignty typical of most extant *echtrai* Since the action in ACR I was motivated by the desire of the Ulstermen to go to Echde's territory to capture his three cattle (*erca*) because they were visiting and grazing their territory, ACR I presumably corresponds to the title *Táin teora n-erc Echdach* in tale-list A as suggested by Thurneysen (1921 432) and Mac Cana (1980 93)

The intertextual relationship between ACR I, ACR II and SbCC is clear but the last of these must be considered in light of the text's overall theme as outlined at the start, which was to induce the non-believing Loegaire mac Neill, described as *ri hErenn* (*CGH* 137 a 8), to abandon the old ways of paganism, embrace Christianity and so save his soul from the torments and horrors of hell Accordingly, McCone (1990 201) insists that the author of SbCC was concerned with supplanting old pagan beliefs with current Christian ones, ascribes the portrayal of Dun Scaith as a starkly unpleasant place to its function as a "pale allegorical reflection of hell" (McCone, 1990 201) as opposed to a peaceful everlasting paradise of the

type found in EC, for example Discussing the development of the binary opposition between light/white and dark/black imagery found in otherworld descriptions, Ó Béarra (2009 195) duly notes the "common penchant for Christian redactors" to include "the dualistic notion of contrasting diametrically opposite concepts and/or their imagery, through the creation of homonymic pairs - which Eliade (1997 232-4) terms *coincidentia oppositorum* " That said, none of the episodes discussed here (FFF, ACR I, ACR II and SbCC) goes beyond a typical warrior raid apart from their transmarine otherworld locations

LMDD shares with FFF, ACR I, ACR II and SbCC the theme of an overseas expedition embarked on by Cu Chulainn, but the emphasis is different, as Hollo (2005 11-12) points out, since the quest was for knowledge and not treasure Although Cu Chulainn did have a sexual encounter in the otherworld with a woman of a type recognised as the goddess of sovereignty elsewhere this had no apparent impact upon kingship in the aftermath With the exception of Loegaire, the heroes of the *echtrai* enjoy a peaceful otherworldly encounter with ultimate consequences for the sovereignty in one or both worlds, but the reverse is true in the aforementioned tales concerning Cu Chulainn There, as well as in SCC and TE, a hostile world is depicted It may be, as Mac Mathuna (1985 267) suggests, that "a warlike and less arcadian aspect of otherworld life" is presented in EL and SCC because the expeditions are motivated by military aims Ultimately, all of these narratives concern a series of expeditions made by the warrior-hero Cú Chulainn to overseas otherworldly locations, and thus contrast with the single overland expedition undertaken by the king-heroes Níall, Lugaid, Conn, Cormac and Loegaire, as well as the warrior Nerae

Although purporting to be a wooing tale, TE also contains the significant episode of Cu Chulainn's perfection in martial training, including mastery of the *gáe bolga* from the sole

instructress of that weapon, Scathach It is noteworthy that Cu Chulainn's training in arms with Scathach is listed in the preamble to his *macgnimrada* (*TBC*, Rec I II 377-8), the implication being that this episode may have existed as a tale independent of TE but then have shifted away from the boyhood deeds, where it no longer figures, to the hero's wooing activities Be that as it may, TE does not display the aspect of sovereignty typical of the *echtrai* discussed in the previous chapter but does go beyond the other tales under discussion here in depicting the advancement of Cú Chulainn's martial status Whereas Cu Chulainn's portrayal in SCC is quite untypical and unheroic in some respects, his customary martial prowess is seen in the otherworld battle and his role in an otherworldly dispute reinforces the supernatural connections forged at his conception and birth Notwithstanding the *briatharthecosc* episode, there is no obvious effect upon sovereignty in the aftermath of SCC comparable to that seen in typical *echtrai*

EEM, BS, ECA and EA all begin at Tara, while FL and EC occur at two locations intimately associated with the kingship of Tara (see V 2) and EN and EL commence at Cruachu Crucially the kingships in question are impacted upon as a direct result of the associated *echtrae* Notwithstanding the spatial anchoring of FFF, ACR I and II, LMDD, SCC, TE and SbCC at various royal centres, notably Emain, Tara and an *óenach* at Mag Muirthemne, the action has no obvious bearing on kingship If the outcome of the typical *echtrae* was crucial to sovereignty, it follows that the royal status of the protagonist was likewise crucial It was duly emphasised at the outset, apart from the case of Nerae, whose *echtrae* nonetheless had serious consequences for the sovereignty of both worlds By contrast, Cu Chulainn's royal pedigree, anyway only through his mother, is only implied later in SCC when he visits the otherworld and is not mentioned at all in TE or SbCC (see IV 2 3, 2 4 and 2 5) It may not have seemed

necessary to release such widely known biographical details about the Ulster Cycles chief hero, especially if they were deemed irrelevant to his exemplary status as a warrior

In conclusion, all of the above tales relating the adventures of Cú Chulainn have an otherworldly expedition by him in common If this is taken as the only criterion for distinguishing an *echtrae*, then any one of them might conceivably correspond either partially or wholly to the title *Echtrae Con Chulainn* However, if the motif of sovereignty is included as an essential criterion, then none of these tales would appear to fit that title, with the arguable exception of SCC and the *briatharthecosc* episode Given that a martially orientated otherworldly expedition is found in FFF, ACR I, ACR II, LMDD, TE, SCC and SbCC, it might be tentatively suggested that these stories represent a cross between a more or less standard kingly *echtrae* and a traditional overland raid or expedition by a warrior into a foreign territory within the mortal realm as described, for instance, in Cu Chulainn's 'taking of arms' in order to assert his martial prowess If so the apparent innovation of the overseas location itself may have been borrowed from the likes of *Echtrae Chonnlai* or *Immram Brain*, two of the earliest Old Irish sources in which an overseas otherworld appears (Carey, 1982 39-40), and Cu Chulainn's various expeditions are narrative hybrids combining traditional warrior motifs with otherworld ones typical of the 'royal' *echtrae*

Chapter VIII General Conclusions

As argued in I 1, in its most basic sense an *echtrae* is a journey or stay away from home, such as Art's outing to the house of Olc on the night before he was killed in the battle of Mag Muccrama A more specialised usage of the same basic concept involves a military expedition, such as Cet's in *Aided Chonchobair*, and *Scela Muicce Meic Da Thó* informs us that a raid of this type was customary after a warrior's initiatory receipt of *gaisced*, his first set of arms A good example is seen in Cu Chulainn's final *macgnímrad*, (VII 1 2), when the young hero received first *gaisced*, then a chariot and horses and finally left Ulster in search of military adventure to try out his arms, his first port of call being *Loch nEchtrae* as a place frequented by *oaic fene* 'youths of the *fían*' Warrior initiation involving presentation of a spear and shield followed by a test is likewise ascribed to the ancient Germani by Tacitus (VII 1 2) An *echtrae* of this type is an expedition away from home with no evident supernatural connotations

By contrast, a supernatural encounter seems to be central to the type of narrative typically called *echtrae* (III 5 1-7 and table III 5), which would appear above all to be connected with sovereignty (VI 1-1 8 2) This concern appears in the royal lineages of the protagonists, the selection of ancient royal sites as initial locations, the presence of recognised sovereignty motifs such as the woman/goddess of sovereignty in her various guises, the nature and effect of various gifts and/or talismans brought back from the otherworld, and finally repercussions upon the kingship in either or both worlds (V 1-5) The issue of sibling rivalry featuring in the narratives EEM and FL, where five sons aspire to a kingship that only one can obtain, indicates that in Irish tradition as elsewhere socio-political aspects of kingship can be reflected and deliberated in legends (VI 1 1-2) Although neither of these texts in its extant form can be firmly dated prior to the 11th century on linguistic grounds (II 2 6 and II 2 8), they

contain motifs shown to be old by comparative evidence adduced not only from early Irish literature but also from material relating to the ancient Celts and other Indo-European peoples For example, the antiquity of the motif of the woman transmitting sovereignty to the man of her choice by proffering him a drink prior to marriage and thus establishing a dynastic line is attested in Aristotle's tale of the Greek foundation of the city of Massalia, present day Marseilles (V 3 4) McCone's (1990 204-232) study shows that it was customary for the sons of kings, (*maic rig*) to spend time hunting and fighting in the wilds as *fian*-members The narrative of a hunt leading to the acquisition of sovereignty by one of its participants, as exemplified in EEM and FL, may plausibly be regarded as a mythical reflex of this wild youthful phase as a prelude to kingship, to which no more than one son could hope to succeed as a rule This pattern thus bears obvious affinities to the basic fighting and hunting expedition exemplified by the last of Cu Chulainn's *macgnimrada* but with an added supernatural dimension centring upon a decisive encounter with a woman symbolising sovereignty

A journey overseas to the otherworld is seen in EC, the earliest extant *echtrae* dating from at least the early eight century and apparently so entitled from the outset (II 2 3) If arguments that traditional narrative motifs are deliberately inverted in EC in order to promote a Christian message are correct, EC provides indirect evidence that an *echtrae* narrative pattern along the lines seen in the later EEM and FL was an established traditional genre by the seventh century at latest (VI 2 5) In EC a woman in strange clothing suddenly appears before the apparently unrivalled heir-apparent Connlae but, instead of transmitting the sovereignty to him, induces him to reject his claim to human kingship for life everlasting in an overseas otherworld This inverts the apparently traditional pattern evinced by EEM and FL, where the heir to mortal kingship may be any one of five siblings until he is finally selected by the woman of

sovereignty and returns from his encounter with her in the wilderness to take up his rightful inheritance Likewise the apple given to Connlae by the woman after their last meeting, being an individual inducement consumed by him in solitude at home, is the reverse of the communal feast shared by the brothers away from home before their respective decisive encounters with the woman of sovereignty in EEM and FL (VI 1 1, VI 1 2, VI 1 9 and VI 2 5)

Moreover, the woman's act of giving Connlae an everlasting apple as a prelude to a journey with her to a realm of immortality can be seen as a deliberate inversion of the story of the fall in Genesis (VI 2 4), in which case central Christian concerns are to be seen in the first literary manifestation of the *echtrae* genre There is a good reason to doubt whether the overseas location of the otherworld in EC and IB derives from pre-Christian Irish or Insular Celtic belief Christian inspiration is surely responsible for its depiction as a sinless paradise (VI 2 1) Its transmarine location may well reflect the aspirations of voyaging Christian monks, given that the seventh and eighth centuries were a time when a prominent role in the anchoritic movement was played by the "desire on the part of ascetics to find a *terra deserta* out in the ocean, and the penitential longing for *ailithre*, a pilgrimage away from one's own native soil and friends for the greater love and glory of God" (Mac Mathuna, 1985 281) IB is more or less as old as EC and it has been argued that it deliberately presents a negative counterpart of the action seen in EC (VI 3 4) If the main inspiration for IB was EC, it stands at a still further remove from the traditional pattern than the latter and this helps to explain its appreciable degree of thematic deviation from the other tales considered in Chapters III and IV It seems that IB's principal importance for future literary developments was as a springboard for the fully developed genre of the *immrama* or voyage tales (see Dillon, 1948 101, Oskamp, 1970 40-1 for example) Be that as it may, a voyage to an overseas

otherworld had clearly become a possible constituent of a literary *echtrae* by the early eighth century

The encounter with the woman centres on the drink motif in EEM and in FL the woman entertains the siblings in a house (III 6 7) Insofar as an otherworld dwelling is mentioned in the *echtrai*, it tends to be described as a palatial place offering an abundance of hospitality An initially uninviting house occupied by supernatural beings is found in CCC after a loss of orientation due to a snow storm (VII 1 1) Given that CCC, like IB and EC, is linguistically early and seems to have been in the *Cin Dromma Snechta*, this representation of the otherworld also has claims to being considered old The location of the otherworld in a *síd* may likewise be plausibly regarded as traditional For example, Mac Mathúna (1985 451) points out that in *Tochmarc Etaine* III, (*LU* 132a 6, ll 10878-80), *Cín Dromma Snechta* is "specifically cited as source for the words spoken by Midir and his people as they carried out the tasks set by Eochaid" before he carried off Etain in the shape of a swan to *Síd Femuin* or *Sid Ban Find* (§§1-15, Bergin and Best 1938 175-185, see also VI 1 6 2) On the whole, it seems reasonable to posit that around the early eighth century a traditional view of the 'otherworld' as a supernatural abode in the wilderness had come into competition with a newer one of Christian inspiration locating it on a distant island over the sea

Chapters III, IV and V have identified what might now be termed a 'royal' *echtrae* with a motivation evidently geared to sovereignty and arguably seen in its most basic form in EEM and FL The remaining examples of this type will now be considered in the light of the foregoing BS combines an introduction (§§1-9) conforming to a traditional *echtrae* type narrative with a prophecy of kings apparently based on an earlier list found in the text entitled *Baile Chuinn Chétchathaig*, which was included in the list of titles from *Cin Dromma Snechta*

by Thurneysen (VI 4 3) The introductory section displays an otherworldly encounter with the traditional 'wedding', a sovereignty motif involving liquor poured by a goddess as seen in FL Accordingly, the introductory section of BS may well bear some relationship to the title *Echtrae Chuinn Chetchathaig* mentioned in tale-list B (Mac Cana, 1980 53) In that case, the probable ninth-century author of BS would be exploiting some well established narrative sovereignty motifs typical of certain *echtrai* for obvious political purposes geared to dynastic claims

ECA displays many sovereignty motifs such as Cormac's pursuit of his wife in the otherworld and the repeated emphasis on *fir flathemon* symbolising the justice of his reign Cormac was a central figure in a cycle of tales recounting his career from his conception and birth to his death and burial in broad conformity to a classic international heroic biography (VI 1 8 and VI 5-VI 5 4) Although a twelfth-century dating of the first recension of ECA is suggested, it seems that the tale may well have existed as early as the tenth century (see II 5) Notwithstanding the wealth of arguably traditional sovereignty motifs in ECA, the prominence of Christian ideals such as the sinlessness of the otherworld Land of Promise indicates that, as in the case of EC and IB, the traditional narrative framework of the *echtrae* has been exploited for Christian ends

Evidence has been adduced to suggest that EN was at least commonly known as such in the early medieval period (II 2 1) Aside from the lack of a royal pedigree for Nerae and its ominous opening episode, EN displays various traditional narrative motifs, including an otherworld journey and a relationship with an otherworld woman Nevertheless, whereas his otherworldly intervention has no personal relevance to sovereignty (unlike in the case of Niall, Lugaid, Conn, Cormac, Art and Connlae), the aftermath of Nerae's visit does have

consequences for the kingship in both worlds His heroic warrior status, as witnessed by his success in the gruesome challenge in the unusual prelude to the tale, acts as a stimulus for Nerae's *echtrae* and it has been argued that EN also delivers a Christian message by depicting the final destruction of the otherworld *sid* as a source of sovereignty and the removal of three talismans of sovereignty emblems from a demonic pagan environment to proper Christian custody (VI 7 6)

Although the title EL does not appear in the pre-Norman tale lists, the language of the prose parts of the extant versions have been dated to the Old Irish period (II 2 1) Furthermore, it exhibits the traditional motif of the royal heir encountering an otherworld woman and having a sexual relationship with her that has serious consequences for the sovereignty of both worlds, insofar as the royal heir gives up his mortal inheritance in favour of a shared otherworld kingship However, the enlisting of human troops to assist in an otherworldly battle as a motivation for the expedition sets EL apart from the other 'royal' *echtrai* considered Given that early Irish authors had a particular penchant for intertextual borrowing and manipulation of motifs, it seems possible that EL had an implied Christian significance with Loegaire remaining in the otherworld just like Connlae in EC Moreover, the importance of the sanctity of marriage to Christian doctrine might also be reflected in the issue of Lóegaire's task of restoring Osnad to her legitimate husband Fiachnae in EL (VI 8 3 and VI 9)

Although the language of the only extant version of EA is early Modern Irish, the title's presence in tale-list B implies the existence of an earlier version (II 6) EA includes many traditional sovereignty motifs, such as the otherworldly expedition and Art's mating with the goddess of sovereignty leading to his final accession to the kingship of Tara However, it also

includes a hazardous overseas journey resonating with the *immrama* and this involves some fighting reminiscent of certain overseas expeditions of Cu Chulainn's to be discussed below EA may be regarded as a development of the traditional theme of king and goddess and, if so, it has exploited and combined a number of strands of the developing *eachtre* and *immram* genres (VI 6 4)

FFF apparently shares a presence in *Cin Dromma Snechta* with EC, IB and CCC and has been seen to display some similarity to the *echtrai*, especially those variants thereof with an overseas location and the involvement of a mortal in battle there (VII 2) In addition, it has been observed that, whereas Cu Chulainn's honourable single combats serve to enhance his martial attributes, there is no impact on sovereignty in either world in the aftermath of FFF In effect, what distinguished FFF from an *echtrae* as a mere warrior raid into enemy territory is the overseas otherworld destination FFF may, then, have resulted from early interaction between a straightforward warrior-raid narrative and an overseas otherworldly *echtrae* of a type established by EC

ACR I and II are dated to the eighth and tenth century respectively and both are thematically linked with FFF, insofar as a martial combat occurs and booty is taken from an overseas otherworldly location in all three (VII 2 1-VII 2 4 and VII 2 10) In ACR I a fight was fought and won, treasures including cattle were taken and a king's daughter was rescued Notwithstanding the acquisitions of three cows plus the magical cauldron and the initial provision of hospitality in ACR I, the otherworldly expeditions in ACR I and II do not appear to show a concern with sovereignty typical of most extant *echtrai* Whereas Cú Chulainn is depicted in a less favourable light than Cú Roi, particularly in ACR I, the military intent is still fundamental to both of these tales

Cu Chulainn's otherworldly adventures in SbCC are assigned to two overseas locations named as Lochlann and Tír Scaith An overtly hostile otherworld in which he defeats numerous enemies in combat is displayed here as in FFF and ACR I and II One can agree with O Bearra (2009 193) that Tir Scaith "is anything but the Happy Otherworld" and "the sinister, dark and menacing nature of this otherworld realm is manifest in the nature of the quest undertaken by Cu Chulainn, as well as the dark connotations of the word *scath* itself" McCone (1990 201) asserts that the author of SbCC was primarily concerned with supplanting old pagan beliefs with newer Christian ones and he ascribes the portrayal of Dun Scaith as a starkly unpleasant place to its function as a "pale allegorical reflection of hell" The Christian development of traditional motifs in SbCC matches the text's overall concern with persuading the pagan king Loegaire mac Neill to embrace Christianity (VII 2 5-VII 2 8)

In contrast, to the other Cú Chulainn tales, LMDD does involve a sexual encounter with an otherworld woman of a type elsewhere liable to be associated with sovereignty Nonetheless, this had no impact on kingship in either realm in the aftermath With the exceptions of Lóegaire and Art, the heroes of the *echtrai* proper enjoy a peaceful otherworldly encounter However, the reverse is true for Cú Chulainn in LMDD and the aforementioned tales, where a hostile otherworld suitable for martial encounters is depicted Whereas LMDD, which probably dates from the late Old Irish period, shares the theme of an overseas expedition with the others, the emphasis is different since the quest is for knowledge and not for treasure (VII 2 9-VII 2 10) Be that as it may and aside from the appearance of the woman of sovereignty, LMDD resembles the other tales concerned with Cu Chulainn's otherworldly adventures in not going beyond an overseas warrior raid, albeit one with certain supernatural connotations

TE also contains a significant overseas episode involving Cu Chulainn's perfection in martial training, including mastery of the *gáe bolga* from the sole instructress of that weapon, Scathach As previously mentioned (VII 2 8), Cu Chulainn's training in arms with Scathach is listed in the preamble to his *macgnímrada*, the implication being that it may have existed independently of TE but then have been shifted away from the boyhood deeds, where it no longer figures, to his wooing activities Nevertheless, aside from the adventures overseas, TE does not have much in common with the *echtrai* proper as established in Chapter III especially (VII 3-VII 3 1)

SCC similarly recounts a martially orientated overseas expedition in essence Although Cú Chulainn's portrayal here is untypical and unheroic in some respects, his martial prowess surfaces in his decisive role in an otherworldly conflict Cu Chulainn's royal pedigree is alluded to in SCC when Fand welcomes him (IV 2 6 and VII 3 1-4) but, notwithstanding the *briatharthecosc* episode, there is no obvious effect upon sovereignty in the aftermath of SCC unlike that of a typical 'royal' *echtrae*

The above, then, constitute a series of transmarine expeditions made for martial purposes by the warrior-hero Cu Chulainn The prominence of the overseas location in them points to influence from the two earliest Old Irish sources to feature this motif, namely EC and IB Ultimately, it seems that the relevant stories about Cu Chulainn represent a combination of narrative motifs from these with a basic warrior expedition Cu Chulainn's status as the supreme warrior hero (V 1 11) may help to explain this attraction of *echtrae* motifs and narratives otherwise more usually and intimately concerned with primarily royal figures than with warriors pure and simple

In summary, it appears that there was considerable scope in various individual texts for exploiting and developing motifs relating to an *echtrae*, not least in the interplay of apparently inherited pagan and newer Christian motifs An attempt has been made above to identify three basic building blocks at a time close to the beginnings of written narrative literature in early Ireland as a prelude to a tentative sketch of subsequent further developments of the *echtrae* in the course of the pre-Norman period

Appendix 1 - Manuscripts

Locations

BL British Library

BLO Bodlian Library, Oxford

NLI National Library of Ireland

NLS National Library of Scotland

RIA Royal Irish Academy

SRL Stockholm Royal Library

TCD Trinity College Dublin

Manuscripts referred to, with abbreviations

Add 33993 Additional 33,993, 16th century, BL, (Flower, 1926 1-6)

Add 35090 Additional 35,090, (photographic reproduction of 'S' below) 15th /16th century, BL, (Flower, 1926 323-5)

Adv 1 Advocates' MS 72 1 1 , 15th century, NLS, (Mackechnie, 1973 111)

Adv 7 Advocates' MS 72 1 7 , 15th century, NLS, (Mackechnie, 1973 144)

BB Book of Ballymote, MS 23 P 12, 14th century, RIA, (Abbott and Gwynn, 1921 108)

BF Book of Fermoy, MS 23 E 29, 15th century, RIA, (Mulchrone, O'Rahilly *et al* 1940 3091-3125)

BL Book of Lismore, 15th century, (Duke of Devonshire's Private Library, see Jackson, 1942 380)

D 4 2 15th century, RIA, (Mulchrone and O'Rahilly *et al*, 1942 3297-3307)

Eg 88 Egerton 88, 16th century, BL, (Flower, 1926 85-140)

Eg 92 Egerton 92, 15th century, BL, (Flower, 1926 505-519)

Eg 1782 Egerton 1782, 15th/16th century, BL, (Flower, 1926 259-298)

G2 14th century, NLI, (Ní Sheaghdhada, 1967 16-23)

Harl 432 Harley 432 15th/16th century, BL, (Flower, 1926 146-7)

Harl 5280 Harley 5280, 16th century, BL, (Flower, 1926 298)

H 1 13 18th century, TCD, (Abbott and Gwynn, 1921 298-300)

H 2 16 14th century, TCD, (Abbott and Gwynn, 1921 328-337)

H 3 17 MS 1336 16th century TCD, (Abbott and Gwynn, 1921 347-353)

H 3 18 MS 1337 16th century TCD, (Abbott and Gwynn, 1921 53-9)

H 4 22 17th century, TCD, (Abbott and Gwynn, 1921 373-4)

H 5 21 MS 1393, 15th century, TCD, (Abbott and Gwynn, 1921 381)

L Book of Lecan, MS 23 P 2, 14th century, RIA, (Mulchrone, O'Rahilly *et al*, 1948 10)

LL Book of Leinster, MS 1339, 12th century, TCD, (cited according to Best and O'Brien, 1957)

LU Lebor na hUidre, Book of Dun Cow, MS 23 E 25, 11th/12th century, RIA, (cited according to Best and Bergin, 1929)

Rawl B502 Rawlinson B 502, 11th/12th century, BLO, (Ó Cuív, 2001 163-200)

Rawl B512 Rawlinson B 512, 15th century, BLO (O Cuív, 2001 223-254)

S MS Vitterhet Engelsk II, 15th/ 16th century, SRL, (see Mac Mathuna, 1985 9)

St Stowe, D ii 3, 14th century, RIA, (Mulchrone, O'Rahilly *et al*, 1943 3431)

UM Book of *Uí Maine*, MS D ii 1, 14th century, RIA, (Mulchrone, O'Rahilly *et al*, 1942 3314-3356)

YBL Yellow Book of Lecan, MS1318, 14th/15th century, TCD, (see Abbott and Gwynn, 1921 108)

23 N 10 23 N 10, formerly Betham 145, 16th century, RIA, (Mulchrone, O'Rahilly *et al*, 1937-2769-2780)

24 P 13 24 P 13, 17th century, RIA, (Mulchrone, O'Rahilly *et al*, 1938 2975-2977)

Appendix 2 - Abbreviations

ACR	*Aided Con Roí* (ACR I Thurneysen, 1913, ACR II, Best, 1905)
AU	Annals of Ulster (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, 1983)
BS	*Baile in Scáil* (Murray, 2004)
CA	*Coir Anmann* (Arbuthnot, 2007)
CCC	*Compert Con Culainn* (McCone, 2005 97 and 116, van Hamel, 1933)
CGI	*Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (O'Brien, 1962)
DIL	*Dictionary of the Irish Language*, Dublin (1913-75)
EA	*Echtrae Airt* (Best, 1905)
EC	*Echtrae Chonnlai* (McCone, 2000)
ECA	*Echtrae Cormaic i Tir Tairngiri* (Stokes, 1891)
ECúC	*Echtrae Con Culainn*
EEM	*Echtrae Mac nEchach Muigmedóin* (Stokes, 1903)
EL	*Echtrae Lóegairi* (Jackson, 1942)
EN	*Echtrae Nerai* (Meyer, 1889)
FFF	*Forfess Fer Falgae* (Stokes, 1891)
FL	*The Five Lugaids* (Arbuthnot, *CA*, 2007 20-3)
GOI	*Grammar of Old Irish* (Thurneysen, 1946)
IB	*Immram Brain* (Meyer, 1895, Mac Mathuna, 1985)
LMDD	*Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDúil Dermait* (Hollo, 2005)
LGE	*Lebor Gabala Erenn* (Macalister, 1938-1956)
SCC	*Serglige Con Culainn* (Dillon, 1953)
SbCC	*Siaburcharpat Con Culainn* (O'Beirne Crowe, 1870)
TBC Rec I	*Táin Bo Cuailnge* Recension I (O'Rahilly, 1976)
TE	*Tochmarc Emire* (Meyer, 1890)

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