

THE GENESIS OF *TOGAIL BRUIDNE DA DERGA*: A REAPPRAISAL OF
THE 'TWO-SOURCE' THEORY

Togail Bruidne Da Derga *TBDD*,¹ the tale of the accession, reign and death of Conaire Mór mac Eterscéle, legendary hero-king of Tara and eponymous ancestor of the Érainn kings has been described by Rudolf Thurneysen as 'nächst der Táin bó Cúailnge die ausgeführteste Sage des älteren Kreises'.² It is preserved in three distinct recensions. Recension I contains the earliest extant account of the tale³ which is a short summary of the significant events of the saga,⁴ possessing none of the mythological overlay or snippets of placename lore found in the later recensions. Recension II⁵ is the story with which we are most familiar from the editions of Whitley Stokes⁶ and Eleanor Knott.⁷ It contains a much longer version of the events recounted in the first recension, with a number of changes in *personae* and numerous episodic accretions and mythological motifs. The longest extant version of the tale is here termed Recension III and consists of a medley of

⁰ Abbreviations are as in E. G. Quin, et al. (ed.), *Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish language based mainly on Old and Middle Irish materials* (henceforth *DIL*) (Dublin 1983, compact edition), except *TBC / LU* = C. O'Rahilly (ed.), *Táin Bó Cúailnge, Recension 1* (Dublin 1976); *TBC/LL* = C. O'Rahilly (ed.), *Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Book of Leinster* (Dublin 1967).

¹ I am grateful to Professor G. Mac Eoin, Dr I. D. Roberts and Dr J. West for helpful comments on drafts of this article. An edition of the texts of all three recensions of *TBDD* formed the subject of my doctoral dissertation and is now being revised for publication.

² R. Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 621.

³ This recension is preserved in five manuscripts: RIA MS 23 N 10, p. 72; BL MS Egerton 88, f. 13rb; TCD MS H.3.18, p. 556 col. 2; NLI MS Phillips G 7, p. 5; RIA MS 23 E 25 (= Lebor na hUidre / *LU*) ff. 98b–99a. The tale as preserved in the first four manuscripts listed is devoid of any mythological references, and is in this aspect quite different from the first section of the tale in the fifth manuscript, *LU*, which would appear to be a later version of Recension I. Thurneysen first edited Recension I from 23 N 10, Egerton 88 and H.3.18 in *Zu ir. Hss. u. Litt.*, 27–8, but he was at the time unaware of the existence of the G 7 text. A transcript of G 7 was published by V. Hull, 'Togail bruidne Da Derga: the Cín Dromma Snechta recension', *ZCP* 24 (1954) 131–2. But see now S. Mac Mathúna's text and translation based on H.3.18, 23 N 10 and Egerton 88, with some variants from *LU*, in *Immram Brain, Bran's Journey to the Land of the Women* (Tübingen, 1985) 449–50. On the date of Recension I, see R. Thurneysen, *Zu ir. Hss. u. Litt.*, 30 and *ibid. Heldensage*, 15–18; G. Murphy, 'Baile Chuind and the date of Cín Dromma Snechta', *Ériu* 16 (1952) 145–51 and Mac Mathúna, *Immram Brain*, 421–69.

⁴ See P. Mac Cana, 'Mongán Mac Fiachna and Immram Brain', *Ériu* 23 (1972) 102–42, especially p. 113, and M. West, 'Leabhar na hUidhre's Position in the Manuscript History of Togail Bruidne Da Derga and Orgain Brudne Uí Dergae', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* (CMCS) 20 (Winter 1990) 61–98, p. 63.

⁵ Recension II is found in eight manuscripts, only two of which contain the complete text: TCD MS H.2.16 (= The Yellow Book of Lecan/*YBL*) pp. 91a1–104a17 and RIA MS D iv 2, ff. 79ra 1–92ra 40. The other manuscripts are defective in varying degrees: RIA 23 E 25 (*LU*), pp. 83ra 1–99ra, is acephalous and begins on line 222 (for ease of reference, line numbers are taken from the published version of Recension II based on the *YBL* text in E. Knott, *BDD*², see note 8 below); BL MS Egerton 92 ff. 18–23v, contains lines 1–482 and lines 644–1044 (on the correct sequence of folios in this manuscript see West, *CMCS* 20, p. 64, footnote 18), while RIA MS 23 E 29 (= The Book of Fermoy) pp. 213a–216b has lines 1045–1351. TCD MS H.2.17, 477a–82b contains three fragments, lines 164–361, 546–894, 1045–1197. BL Additional 33993, ff. 2b–5b has lines 1–145 and TCD MS H.2.16, pp. 432–3 has lines 1–99.

⁶ W. Stokes (ed.), 'The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel', *RC* 22 (1901) 9–61, 165–215, 282–329, 390–437 and *ibid.*, *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (separate reprint, Paris 1902), hereafter *BDD*. Stokes based his edition on the text of *LU*, with selected variants from other manuscripts containing the tale.

⁷ E. Knott (ed.), *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, ([Dublin 1936] 1963), hereafter *BDD*². Knott based her edition on the text of *YBL* and supplied variants from the D iv 2 manuscript in an appendix.

traditions concerning Conaire Mór, including a king-list, a version of *Tochmarc Étaíne* and extra *dinnshenchas* material, all of which has been grafted on to the essential *togail* tale as contained in Recension II. This represents the final stage of the saga's Middle Irish growth.⁸ The story as it is related in Recension II will be the focus of the present paper, although some references will be made to the other recensions when necessary.

It has long been recognised that Recension II of *TBDD* possesses all the telling features of a composite text, such as textual inconsistencies, contradictions and the duplication of episodes. An attempt to explain the origin of such confusions in the tale led Zimmer, Nettlau and finally Thurneysen to conclude that these inconsistent sections must have come about through a synthesis of two disparate versions of the tale,⁹ which they termed sources A and B. Indeed, the theory of a conflation of two sources conformed with Thurneysen's concept of the structure and development of a number of Middle Irish sagas, the most important of these being *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (TBC).¹⁰

In her examination of the recensions of TBC, Cecile O'Rahilly questioned Thurneysen's criteria for his ascription of particular variant passages in TBC, based on the same theme,¹¹ to either Source A or Source B, and argued that these passages could have originated in the same source/version. Indeed, Thurneysen himself noted that some passages of TBC had been assigned by him to Source B only because they could not be assigned with any degree of certainty to Source A, and he briefly alluded to the possibility of a third source.¹² He did not, however, depart from his two-source theory in relation to the second recension of *TBDD*, and his analysis of that tale forms the accepted doctrine for its origins up to the present day,¹³ and has been stated by Knott to be 'unimpeachable'.¹⁴ The purpose of this paper is to re-examine the methodology used to determine the ascription of episodes of *TBDD*, Recension II, to either Source A or Source B, with a view to establishing or refuting the legitimacy of the two-source claim.

At this point, it will prove useful for those not familiar with the tale to indicate the type of contradictory material in *TBDD*, Recension II, which has given rise to the A and B sources theory. I list the most frequent instances below.

⁸ Recension III is found in two manuscripts: BL ms Egerton 1782, beginning on f. 106r and ending in hiatus on f. 123vb; TCD ms H.1.14, ff. 24–52b, which is a direct copy of the text as contained in Egerton 1782.

⁹ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 623–7.

¹⁰ Ibid. 112 and *ZCP* 19 (1932) 209. According to Thurneysen, all versions of *TBC* go back to Recension I, (i.e. that version contained in *LU*), which he saw as a conflation of two ninth century versions no longer extant.

¹¹ *TBC/LL*, xvii–xx.

¹² *Heldensage*, 119: 'Dabei bemerke ich ausdrücklich, daß manches nur darum B zugeteilt wird, weil es nicht zu A gehört, und umgekehrt. Wer also nicht wie ich die Überzeugung gewonnen hat, daß im allgemeinen zwei Quellen zu Grunde liegen, wird gelegentlich an eine dritte denken können.'

¹³ See most recently K. McCone, 'Fírinne agus Torthúlacht', *Léachtaí Cholm Cille* 11 (1980) 136–73, pp. 142–8, where mention is made of Thurneysen and his A and B theory. However, on p. 142, McCone would appear to have misunderstood Thurneysen's division of the tale between the two sources, since he takes lines 1–343 to be based on A and the rest of the tale, lines 344–1539, to be based on B. Compare Thurneysen's distribution of the tale to the two sources in the discussion which follows above.

¹⁴ *BDD*², x.

TEXTUAL INCONSISTENCIES¹⁵(i) Cormac *fer na trí mbúad* and Cormac Cond Loinges

In lines 63–73, Cormac, *fer na trí mbúad*, is introduced with no attempt to explain his sudden presence other than a gloss in the Y manuscript, *.i. rí Ulad*. There is probably a section missing here in all the extant manuscripts, as Knott pointed out.¹⁶ Thurneysen, following O'Flaherty, identified him as Cormac Cond Loinges mac Conchubair,¹⁷ who was elected king of the Ulaid after Conchobar's death, and his epithet in *TBDD* concurs with his description in *Togail Brudne da Chocae*¹⁸ where he is said to possess *na huile búada*. The genealogical information given in *TBDD* at this point would make Cormac the grandfather of Conaire Mór mac Eterscéle on the distaff side.¹⁹ Later on in the tale, however, in lines 670–710, he is described as one of the warriors in Conaire's retinue, apparently in the full bloom of youthful vigour, a description which would belie his role as Conaire's grandfather in the earlier part of the tale.

(ii) Cormac's wife

In lines 65–9, Cormac's wife is said to be *ingen Echach*, whom he repudiates because of her failure to provide him with a child, but who subsequently bears him a daughter thanks to the intervention of her mother, the woman from the *síd* (i.e. Étaín). However, the next section of the tale commences, lines 71–3, with the statement that Cormac has again taken Étaín back as his wife but she now commands that the daughter of the woman who has been previously repudiated should be killed. This inconsistency is difficult to reconcile within the confines of the tale, where the previous information given would imply that Étaín is asking that her own daughter be put to death for no apparent reason.²⁰

(iii) The number and names of Conaire's fosterbrothers

¹⁵ Line numbers throughout refer to *BDD*² unless otherwise stated, see note 6 above.

¹⁶ *BDD*², 71, note 63.

¹⁷ See *Heldensage*, 628 and O'Flah., 271.

¹⁸ See W. Stokes (ed.), *RC* 21 (1900) 150 §2: *.i. Cormac Conloinges mac Conchubair . . . 7 atait na huile buaida fair .i. buaidh ndeibh[e] ocus gaiscith 7 n-einigh 7 firinne . . .*

¹⁹ Cormac is connected with Mess Búachalla in the Prose Banshenchas, see M. Dobbs (ed.), 'The Ban-Shenchus', *RC* 48 (1931) 170: *. . . 7 is i in Meas Buachalla sin mathair Conairi Moir m. Etersceoil 7 ba bean do Chonchobar m. Nesa in Meas B. sin, 7 comad hi mathair Cormaic Conloinges m. Chonchubair hi iartain; and in a genealogical tract, *Geneal. Tracts*, §80: Mess Buachalla ingen Cormaic Conloinges mc. Conchobuir mc. Fhachtna Fathaig mathair Conairi Moir meic Etersceoil mc. Eogain; §144: Étaín Ilchrothach ben a sidaib . . . ben Echach Aireman 7 ba ben do Chormac Conloinges iar trill mair. The information in the genealogical tract may have been taken from the *TBDD* tradition, but the Banshenchas material, making Mess Búachalla Cormac's mother, does not occur elsewhere to my knowledge.*

²⁰ To explain this anomaly, Knott, *BDD*², 71–2, postulated that some material must have been omitted by all manuscripts at this point in the tale. Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 629, remarked 'Aber daß muß ein Mißverständnis sein. Wozu hätte er sie dann erst verstoßen, und weshalb soll ihre gemeinschaftliche Tochter sterben? Auch daß die Tochter Eochaid's wieder Étaín hieß wie ihre Mutter ist unwahrscheinlich.' On this point see also M. Ní Bhrolcháin, 'An Bansheanchas', *Léachtaí Cholm Cille* 12 (1982) 5–29, at pp. 18–22.

In lines 110–14, 192–200 and 221, Conaire is said to have three foster-brothers, Fer Lé, Fer Gar and Fer Rogain,²¹ the three sons of the warrior Donn Désa. However, Fer Caille foretells the attack on the *bruiden*, lines 1187–90, by Conaire's five fosterbrothers, Fer Cúailge, Fer Lé, Fer Gar, Fer Rogel and Fer Rogain, the five sons of Donn Désa. In lines 708, 726, 742–3 and 871, Lomna Drúth is referred to as *mac Duind Désa* and in lines 650–1, *airig na díbeirge* are listed as Fer Gel, Fer Gair, Fer Rogel, Fer Rogain, Lomna Drúth and Ingcél Cáech. It would thus seem that in some sections of the tale Donn Désa had five sons and that there were different traditions as to their names. There is, consequently, a discrepancy throughout the tale between both the number of Donn Désa's sons and their names.

(iv) The special attributes (*búada*)

In lines 115–7, Conaire is said to have three – *búada búaid chúaisi, búaid radairc 7 búaid n-airdmesa* – one of which he teaches to each of his three fosterbrothers, Fer Lé, Fer Gar and Fer Rogain. When these *búada* are again mentioned in lines 439–43, it is Maine Milscothach who claims to have *búaid chúaise* and Maine Andoe who has *búaid radairc 7 airdmesa*. Immediately thereafter, in lines 483–88, Ingcél asks Fer Rogain to judge the tremendous noise which causes the reavers' boats to be thrown back on to the sea, and this time Fer Rogain uses his *búaid n-airdmesa* to analyse the noise. In the subsequent paragraphs, lines 591–612, 688–704 etc., Fer Rogain again uses his gift of superior judgement to determine whom it is that Ingcél describes, while Ingcél would now appear to have usurped the roles of both Fer Lé and Fer Gar, since he describes what he has heard and seen so accurately.

(v) Fosterbrothers and fostersons

In lines 110–14 and 192–200, the sons of Donn Désa are referred to as Conaire's *comaltae*. and in line 505, Conaire calls them *comalta carthacha dún*. However, in line 214, they are referred to by Conaire as *mo daltaiseo* and in line 667, the sons of Donn Désa refer to him as *ar n-aitine*, so that it would seem that there are several traditions combined in the tale concerning the nature of Conaire's relationship to his fosterbrothers.

(vi) The role of Maine Milscothach

In line 106, the *dá Maine Milscothacha* are chosen by Mess Búachalla to be one of the households which will foster her son Conaire. In lines 206–7, mention is made of a certain Maine Milscothach who possesses lands in *Crích Connacht*, where one of his swineherds (*muicid Maine Milscothaig*) sees the reavers training their men. That this Maine is one of the *dá Maine*, whose *túath* seizes the reavers is implied by the next lines of the text (*Éighthi in muicid co tánic túath in dá Maine fae . . .*), which is thus in agreement with line 106 above. In lines 382–94, Maine Milscothach would appear to be inserted into the usual name-list of the seven Maine, sons of Ailill and Medb, who take up reaving, thus making their number eight.²² In lines 441–47, he is still a reaver, but this time possesses *búaid*

²¹ Fer Rogain is also the name of one of the *aitiri* given to Ingcél, along with Gér and Gabar, lines 422–3, 722–3, 740–1, as sureties that the raid in Ireland will be carried out. Gér and Gabar are not numbered among the sons of Donn Désa. These three take the place of Gér mac úi Neca, who is the only surety mentioned in Recension I.

²² *LU*, 147. Maine Moepirt is identified as Maine Milscothach in *TBC*, and is inserted in the list of seven Maine, see *TBC/ILU*, lines 169–70; only six are mentioned in *TBC/ILL*, lines 148–50.

chlúaise and in his role of scout, reconnoitres the unknown terrain for the reaving band. As such, he would seem to occupy an important position within the reavers' group, which tallies with the role assigned to Maine Milscothach as one of the chief protagonists in the first recension of *TBDD*.²³

(vii) Ingcél and his brothers

When the sons of Donn Désa are banished to Alba they meet with *mac ríge Bretan .i. Ingcél Cáech mac huí Conmaic* and his followers at sea, lines 220–1. However, in lines 404–5, we are told that they meet Ingcél Cáech and Éiccel, *dá mac huí Conmaicne di Breatnaib*, which H, the reviser of *Lebor na hUidre*, has altered *in rasura*, line 6864, to read: *Ingcél Cáech 7 Éic[cel 7 Tulchinne tri meic uí Chonmaic]*,²⁴ thereby making U the only manuscript to add a third brother called Tulchinne to the list. In line 729, Lomna Drúth prophesies that three people – Ingcél and his two brothers, *Éicell 7 Dartaid na díberga* – will escape from the *bruiden*, but in line 1495, we are told that five escaped from that battle, *Ingcél 7 a dá bráthair .i. Éicell ón 7 Dartaid na díberga*. However, in *Lebor na hUidre*, the reviser H has again altered this *in rasura*, line 7957, to read: *Ingcél 7 a dá bráthair [.i. Éicell 7 Tulchinne. . .]*, glossing Tulchinne as *.i. Dartaid na Díberca*.²⁵ Curiously enough, Ingcél's brothers are not mentioned among *airig na díbeirge* in lines 650–51.

(viii) The number of pupils in Ingcél's eye

Ingcél Cáech is described as a mighty warrior possessing one eye in the middle of his forehead. But the text is inconsistent as to whether that eye possesses three or seven pupils. In lines 406–7, he is said to have three pupils in his single eye, thereby concurring with line 641 where he surveys the *bruiden*: *cosin tres mac imlesan na hoensúla*.²⁶ He is also described thus by Tulchinne the jester to Conaire: *fer co tríun meic imblesan*, lines 1176–7. However, line 517 states that his eye has seven pupils and this is echoed in lines 1131–2, where Ingcél describes to the assembled reavers the way Lé Fri Flaith blinds *in sechtmad mac imblesin ro buí im chind-sa* with the thorny tip of his bullrush.

(ix) The number of reavers

The number of men in the reavers' band varies throughout the tale. Lines 206–24 give the combined forces of the sons of Donn Désa and the sons of the Irish princes as one hundred and fifty. These are banished from Ireland, together with their *senóri* (whose number is not given), in lines 217–8. This number has been expanded greatly in lines 374–99. In fact, a head-count of the combined forces of the sons of Donn Désa, Fén tar Crínach, the seven Maine,²⁷ the three Rúadchoin Cúaland and all of their camp-followers comes to a grand total of seven thousand two hundred and seventy men! The British reavers, in line 408, total thirteen hundred men. In lines 474–6, the combined forces of British and Irish reavers in

²³ See Mac Mathúna, *Immram Brain*, 450: *Maine Milscothach Mac Uae Aurbaith 7 Ger mac uae Neca 7 tri maic uí Toisich, it e not-n-ortadur . . . A n-as-mbered Maine Milscothach ba liach in cach boi isin toigh d'orgain [. . .]*.

²⁴ The square brackets indicate the extent of the insertion *in rasura* by H, the reviser of *LU*.

²⁵ Tulchinne is elsewhere described as Conaire's fool in *LU* and the other manuscripts, see *BDD*², lines 1162–95.

²⁶ *LU*, line 7054: *cosin sechtmad mac imlessan na hoensúla*, over which M, the main scribe of *LU*, who must have been aware of the contradiction here, has written *nó cosin tres*.

²⁷ Forces are attributed to only six of the eight Maine listed in lines 382–94.

one hundred and fifty currachs number five thousand men, but line 522 describes five hundred thousand men landing at Trácht Fuirbthen and the same number is repeated in lines 1493–5, where it is stated that of a band of five hundred thousand men only five have survived the *bruiden* battle. Thus, what started off as a relatively modest number has been increased to epic proportions by the end of the tale.

(x) Lé Fri Flaith / Lé Fer Flaith, Conaire's son

The tale infers that Lé Fri / Fer Flaith mac Conaire is a young warrior in lines 297–338, where he volunteers to ride after the three red men (*trí Deirg*) to prevent the infringement of one of Conaire's tabus by their preceding the king along the way to the *bruiden*. The description given of him in lines 1118–43 gives a completely different impression, because there he is described as a snivelling child being passed from lap to lap among the warriors, in an attempt to comfort him. Fer Rogain calls him *nuidiu Conaire* and states that he is seven years old. In lines 1447–9, the lad is certainly young enough to be tucked under Mac Cécht's arm when the champion goes to seek water for Conaire.

(xi) Conaire mac Eterscéle's fosterers

In lines 100–06, one set of Conaire's fosterers is called *in dá Feidlimid Rechtaidi* and the second set *in dá Maine Milscothacha*, but the two men in the company of Conaire in the *bruiden*, lines 1094–7, are identified by Fer Rogain as Conaire's two fosterers, Dris and Snithe.

(xii) Conaire's sojourn in Bruiden Da Derga

Lines 256–86 of the tale imply that Conaire intends to pass only one night in Da Derga's *bruiden* and that Mac Cécht goes to prepare a fire for his arrival. However, in lines 584–5, we are informed that Conaire caused a huge fire to be lit there every night, which would indicate that his stay at the *bruiden* might have been longer than a single night.

THE 'TWO SOURCES' THEORY

In the consideration of a list such as that above allowance must be made for the possibility that some narrative contradictions could have been due to scribal error in successive transcriptions of Recension II.²⁸ Such a reason might account for the contradictory numbers of reavers given in (ix) above, or for the number of pupils in Ingcél's eye in (viii), or for the number of sons ascribed to Donn Désa in (iii), since we know that contradictions of a numerical nature can easily arise in sagas due to the confusion of the number of minims in roman numerals, for example. But it is unlikely that all the inconsistencies cited above can be attributed to scribal error, especially those where other material of a contradictory nature is introduced: for example, the additional names of the sons of Donn Désa in (iii), or the attribution of brothers of various names to Ingcél Cáech in (vii), or the lengthy description of the Irish reavers as opposed to their first mention as a band of one hundred and fifty men in (ix) above. A more probable explanation is that

²⁸ In *TBC/LU*, x, footnote 1; C. O'Rahilly noted of some inconsistencies concerning Conall Cernach and Bricriu in *TBC*: 'This type of inconsistency is very common in a work of some length, not necessarily because two different sources have been used but merely through the carelessness of the compiler or his inability to keep the whole work in mind at the same time.'

a number of sources were combined in the composition of the tale, as Zimmer, Nettlau and Thurneysen concluded, but the question of how many remains to be seen from the discussion which follows.

Zimmer pioneered the analysis of the structure of a number of *Lebor na hUidre* texts,²⁹ and noted their composite nature. Of *TBDD*, he concluded that the redactor had two manuscripts containing two different versions before him and that he worked both versions into a single tale.³⁰ Zimmer called the sources of the two separate versions 'a' and 'b', and, on the basis of an examination of a number of the textual inconsistencies mentioned above, he assigned each episode of the tale to either source 'a' or source 'b'.³¹

Unfortunately, his analysis was based on the *LU* manuscript only, which, although chronologically earlier than the other extant manuscripts, is, nonetheless, acephalous, innovative and contains some material not found in other manuscript narrations of the tale.³² Moreover, his study may be faulted on several other counts, the most important being his conviction that either source 'a' or 'b' had to be the *Lebor Dromma Snechta* version,³³ that is to say, Recension I of the tale. In choosing 'a', he ignored the fact that it omits some of the motifs mentioned in what he took to be the summary of the *Lebor Dromma Snechta* tale, (*LU* 99a10–47), and he thus contradicted his own theory. Another problem was his misunderstanding of a certain paragraph, which led him to assign an extra fosterbrother named *Dat*³⁴ to Conaire, and this consequently accounted for his ascription of parts of his section VIII to both 'a' and 'b'.³⁵

²⁹ See 'Keltische Studien', *KZ* 28 (1887) 554–85.

³⁰ *KZ* 28 (1887), at p. 564: 'Der redaktor hatte also zwei abweichende recensionen in handschriften vor sich, von denen die eine an dieser stelle so und die andere an dieser stelle so berichtet . . . '.

³¹ Zimmer divided the tale between the sources as follows: a = I, II, V, VI, (VIII), (XI); b = III, IV, VII, (VIII), IX, X. He divided the tale as it appears in *LU* into chapters headed with roman numerals. Nettlau followed this division in his subsequent articles on *TBDD*, but Thurneysen followed Stokes's division into paragraphs. I include here a key to Zimmer, together with the correspondences with Stokes (as paragraphs) and Knott (as lines):

Zimmer	<i>LU</i>	Stokes	Knott
I	83a1 - 12	§21 - 3	216 - 28
II	83a13 - 84a39	§24 - 40	229 - 373
III	84a40 - 84b42	§41 - 7	374 - 428
IV	84b42 - 85a42	§48 - 53	429 - 78
V	85a43 - 85b41	§54 - 8	479 - 523
VI	85b42 - 86b2	§59 - 63	524 - 79
VII	86b3 - 86b38	§64 - 6	580 - 619
VIII	86b38 - 87b4	§67 - 74	620 - 69
IX	87b4 - 97a10	§75 - 140	670 - 1394
X	97a11 - 98a36	§141 - 57	1395 - 1479
XI	98a36 - 99a10	§158 - 67	1490 - 1539

³² For a full discussion of the manuscripts which contain Recension II, see West, *CMCS* 20 (footnote 5 above), p. 62.

³³ *KZ* 28 (1887), pp. 583–4.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 565–7. He interpreted *LU* lines 7068–9: *Forúcaibsemne fri láim daitis a Ingeóil fordat comaltae Conairi* [. . .] as [. . .] *for Dat, comaltae Conairi*. Nettlau calls this Zimmer's 'Dat comaltae Conairi theory', see *RC* 14 (1893) p. 144.

³⁵ *KZ* 28 (1887) pp. 579–80: 'Durch die erwähnung des *Dat comaltae Conairi* (87a420 wird das stück 87a37–43 an 85b12 geknüpft, daher der recension *a* zugewiesen, die den *Dat* als einen der söhne des Dond Désa kennt. Damit ist nun nicht bloss 87a44–87b4 der recension *b* zugewiesen [. . .]'.

Nettlau seriously doubted the validity of Zimmer's findings³⁶ and embarked on his own analysis of *TBDD*, considering for the first time all of the extant manuscripts.³⁷ However, he failed to recognise that the *Lebor Dromma Snechta* version and the Egerton 1782 version both represent two distinct recensions,³⁸ and spent a great deal of fruitless speculation on their place on the stemma of Recension II. Although he accused Zimmer of forcing the evidence to conform to a preconceived 'two source' theory, he himself adopted this same theory, this time calling the sources A and B. His distribution of sections among these two sources differed only slightly from that of Zimmer.³⁹ He examined Zimmer's identification of Source A with *Lebor Dromma Snechta*⁴⁰ and concluded that B was closest to that manuscript.

Nettlau's aims were perhaps too ambitious, in that he sought not only to refute many of Zimmer's theories, but also to analyse the relationship of all manuscripts containing *TBDD*, to consider the growth of the saga as a whole, to present a detailed *exposé* of the structure of the tale, to analyse assorted extraneous materials related to the Conaire Mór / Étaín / Mider cycle of tales and to fit all of his findings on such a wide-ranging field into the single stemma he drew up for *TBDD*. It is unfortunate that he did not discuss each of these items separately but presented everything together in a haphazard way which detracted from some of his more valuable insights about the transmission of the tale.

Thurneysen proposed that the composite version of the tale was the work of an eleventh century compiler (*der Kompilator*),⁴¹ to whom he attributed responsibility for a number of conflated sagas,⁴² *Táin Bó Cúailnge* amongst them, and he saw the development of the saga *TBDD* as parallel to that of *TBC*.⁴³ He agreed in essence

³⁶ Nettlau, *RC* 14 (1893) at p. 148, remarked: 'Here and there he [i.e. Zimmer] is right in details and brings forward sound hypotheses, but in my eyes the whole method is unscientific; instead of giving guesswork as what it is, he means to *prove* things by criteria which would be good criteria if we knew them to be good ones [. . .]. He starts from the two-version theory and forces everything in this procrustean bed: doublets of form and of contents, old and new doublets and still younger interpolations etc.: they all were created simply by "Flann Mainistrech" copying his texts from two MSS sources and making a few learned interpolations here and there. I do not believe this and never shall.'

³⁷ *RC* 12 (1891) 229–53 and 444–59; *RC* 13 (1892) 252–66; *RC* 14 (1893) 137–52.

³⁸ *RC* 12 (1891) pp. 449–50, for example, where he tried to see the episode *Tochim na trí nderg* as it appears in Egerton 1782 as a variant of *LU* and Egerton 92. L. Gwynn, 'The Recensions of the saga "Togail Bruidne da Derga"', *ZCP* 10 (1914) 209–22, illustrated for the first time an interpretation of the position of Egerton 1782 in relation to the MSS of Recension II.

³⁹ *RC* 14 (1893) 145: A = I, II, V, VI, VII, (VIII), (X, XI); B = III, IV, VIII, IX, X, XI. Converted to Stokes paragraphing system this would read: A = §§21–40; §§54–66; §§68–9 (in *LU* only); §73 (from *for-ácaibsem-ne* to *atá*); §§149–53; §168 (in *LU* only); B = §§41–53; §67; §§70–72; §73; §74; §§75–140; §§141–48; §§154–67. Note that Zimmer used lower case letters when referring to his versions 'a' and 'b', while Nettlau, and subsequently Thurneysen, used capitals.

⁴⁰ *RC* 14 (1893), pp. 146–7.

⁴¹ I prefer to use the term "redactor" as a reference to the compiler of *TBDD*, Recension II; any further references to the *Kompilator* denote Thurneysen's use of the term.

⁴² *Heldensage*, 24–7.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 626–7: 'Diese zwei Quellen des Kompilators, Fassung A und B, sind nun nicht zwei voneinander unabhängige Entwicklungen der ältesten Form, wie sie den Notizen der Handschrift von Druim Snechta zu Grunde liegt . . . Diese umgestaltete Form hat sich dann – wohl durch mündliche Überlieferung – in die zwei Fassungen gespalten, die beide etwa im 9. Jahrhundert niedergeschrieben und dann im 11. kompiliert worden sind.'

with Nettlau's conclusions,⁴⁴ but apportioned sections of the tale to sources A and B in a slightly different manner:

Source A = §§1–37 (*BDD*², lines 1–343); §§58–66 (lines 513–90)
 Source B = §§38–57 (lines 344–508); §§67–167 (lines 520–1539)⁴⁵

His distribution to either one of sources A or B was based on a number of textual inconsistencies:⁴⁶ the variant descriptions of the meeting of the Irish reavers with the British reaving band;⁴⁷ the discrepancy about those warriors in possession of the *búada*;⁴⁸ the number of Donn Désa's sons and their names;⁴⁹ Conaire's fosterers;⁵⁰ the variant descriptions of Conaire's son, Lé Fri/Fer Flaith;⁵¹ the accounts of Ingcél and his brothers;⁵² the Fer Caille and the Cailb episodes.⁵³

As previously remarked, Thurneysen's analysis has long been the accepted doctrine for the structure of *TBDD*, Recension II, but an examination of the criteria he used to determine which parts of the tale belong to which source highlights a number of problems connected with his methodology.

1. Thurneysen realised that the material about the number and names of Donn Désa's sons⁵⁴ could indicate the possibility of a third source. The sons are grouped as follows:

Fer Lé, Fer Gair and Fer Rogain (lines 112);
 Fer Gel, Fer Gair, Fer Rogel, Fer Rogain and Lomna Drúth (lines 650–1);
 Fer Cúailge, Fer Lé, Fer Gar, Fer Rogel and Fer Rogain (lines 1187–8).

He sought to fit all these groupings into Sources A and B by explaining the omission of Lomna Drúth in the last grouping as being due to the fact that an earlier redactor⁵⁵ knew that this character must die at the beginning of the battle, and the inclusion of Fer Cúailge as being due to that same redactor's attempt to preserve the grouping of the five names until the end of the tale. However, Thurneysen's proposal for the substitution of Fer Cúailge for Lomna Drúth makes little sense,

⁴⁴ *Heldensage*, 625: 'In der Verteilung unseres Textes auf zwei Quellen scheint mir Nettlau dagegen im wesentlichen das Richtige getroffen zu haben . . . Diese und einige weitere Anzeichen weisen auf zwei, aber nicht auf mehr Quellen.'

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 625.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ This will be dealt with further in the discussion on *Dubletten* which follows.

⁴⁸ For more specific details see remarks on Textual Inconsistencies (iv) above; Thurneysen, however, does not mention that in the latter part of the tale Ingcél appears to have the gifts of acute vision and hearing, since his is the task of describing the *bruiden*'s occupants while Fer Rogain still maintains his *búad* of excellent judgement in identifying all who are described there.

⁴⁹ See Textual Inconsistencies (iii) above.

⁵⁰ See Textual Inconsistencies (xi) above.

⁵¹ See Textual Inconsistencies (x) above.

⁵² See Textual Inconsistencies (vii) above.

⁵³ These will be discussed under in the section on *Dubletten* which follows.

⁵⁴ See Textual Inconsistencies (iii) above.

⁵⁵ *Heldensage*, 625: 'Um die Fünzfahl voll zu erhalten, mag schon ein Früherer hier Fer Cuailge hinzugefügt haben; solche Zahlen pflegen ja in den Sagen fest zu bleiben, auch wenn ein Glied ausfällt.' But this is the first time he mentions the 'earlier scribe' and he gives no explanation as to the position of this scribe in the transmission of the saga.

since Fer Cúailge is only mentioned by Fer Caille when the latter foretells the names of their attackers to the host assembled in the *bruiden*. Therefore, contrary to Thurneysen's reasoning, there is no need to find a substitute for Lomna Drúth since the battle has not yet begun and Lomna is still very much alive.

A far more likely explanation for the discrepancy in names is that there were a number of variants for the names of Donn Désa's sons, and that Fer Cúailge was taken from one of these variants. Donn Désa's sons were traditionally said to number seven, according to several independent sources listed below which indicate that they were relatively well known in the Middle Irish period. This factor, and also the seven *búada* attributed to them in these independent sources, may explain why they appear in Recension II instead of the three *maic Uí Toissich* who feature prominently in Recension I.⁵⁶ A genealogical tract in the *Book of Leinster* traces their descent from their paternal grandfather Art Mess Delmonn m. Sétna Sithbaic and gives their names as Fer Rogain, Fer Gel, Domnall Draí, Fer Leighe, Fer Temel, Rumal and Maine Milscothach.⁵⁷ An alliterative (7³) poem which must have been in circulation when the scribe H revised *Lebor na hUidre* because it was included by him in the margins of that manuscript, and is also included as part of the *dindshenchas* in the *Book of Ballymote* and the *Book of Lecan*, again attributes seven sons to Donn Désa: Fer Gair, Fer Lé, Fer Rogair, Lomna, Fer Rorogair, Gelfer and Glas.⁵⁸ None of these poems alludes to Conaire Mór. Moreover, the Fer Rogel and Fer Cúailge mentioned in *TBDD* do not occur in any of these independent sources. It would thus appear that Fer Lé, Fer Gair, Fer Rogain and Lomna Drúth were the most common names for the sons of Donn Désa, and that Temel, Rumal, Glas, Rogel, Rogair and Cúailge may all have been variants added in various traditions. Given the survival of these extraneous sources in which the sons of Donn Désa are mentioned, it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty that only two sources were drawn upon for their names in *TBDD*, Recension II.

2. Thurneysen ascribed some of the discrepancies in *TBDD* to the 'kleine Änderungen und Ausgleichungen' undertaken by the *Kompilator* himself.⁵⁹ In his discussion of Ingcél and his brothers,⁶⁰ he identified one such adjustment which he suggested had been carried out by the *Kompilator*. Here, however, it would seem that Thurneysen misunderstood the Old Irish text, since he took lines 219–22: *T'íagait ass forsin fairrgi co comairneachtair fri mac ríge Breatan .i. Ingcél Caech mac huí Conmaicni, triar fer cona senóraib leó ...* to mean that Ingcél was accompanied by his two brothers and their elders. He summarised that

⁵⁶ These may be same as the huí Tassaich of the uí Liatháin tribe, a branch of the Eoganachta, see *Corp. Gen.*, 229.

⁵⁷ See *BDD*², 72–3, where this tract is published by Knott for the first time.

⁵⁸ *LU*, 216: the poem is written along the upper margins of pp. 87–9 of the manuscript in the hand of H and entitled *Monor secht mac Duind Désa inso*; in the *Book of Ballymote* 369 a 20, the poem is incorporated into the *Dindshenchas* of Belach Conglais; for the *Book of Lecan* material, see *Lecan Facsimile* f. 233 v (= 466a col 2, lines 13–23). The language of the poem is Early Middle Irish and the version in H's hand is the older version, preserving as it does nasalization after neuter *búaid* (*búaid ngelfni galioin*), a deuterotonic verbal form (*cain treith doadbanuur*), an example of predicative genitive (*ba duind dennig daforbaig*), and possibly 3 pl. absolute s-Preterite (*brogsa[i]t brudni breogaili*); on the other hand, genitive pl. *bráthar* (*oen for sesiuur saerbrathar*) is a younger form (for OIr *bráithre*).

⁵⁹ *Heldensage*, 625–6.

⁶⁰ See Textual Inconsistencies (vii) above.

section thus: 'Auf der See treffen sie auf den Sohn des Königs der Britten, Ingcél Caech ('den Einäugigen') mac-*ui* Conmaicne, selbdritt, ebenfalls von "Senioren" begleitet.'⁶¹ According to Thurneysen, this section belonged to Source A and therefore he deduced that Ingcél and two brothers were mentioned in Source A. In fact, the *triar fer cona senóraib* of the Old Irish text is a reference to the three sons of Donn Désa and to those elders who were banished with them on Conaire's orders.⁶² Neither Ingcél's brothers nor his followers are mentioned in the description of the first encounter. The second time Ingcél is mentioned, he is accompanied by one brother, Éiccel, (lines 404-05) and Thurneysen assigned this section to Source B on the basis that Ingcél has only one brother in Source B. However, in the last part of the tale, lines 520-1539, which Thurneysen maintained also belonged to Source B, Ingcél and two brothers are mentioned twice: in line 729, Lomna Drúth foretells that Ingcél and his two brothers, Éiccel and Dartaid, will escape from the *bruiden* and these three are again named in line 1495, as survivors of the battle at the *bruiden*.

Because of his misinterpretation of lines 219-22 mentioned above, Thurneysen attempted to explain lines 729 and 1495 where a second brother is named as the *Kompilator's* intervention in adding a second name when he became aware of the contradiction between Source A (with Ingcél and two brothers) and Source B (with Ingcél and one brother).⁶³ This explanation seems contrived and it is more reasonable to accept that here the tale incorporates three variants, the first featuring Ingcél alone, the second Ingcél and one brother named Éiccel and the third Ingcél and two brothers, Éiccel and Dartaid (alias Tulchinne, if we accept the *LU* reviser's insertion). In this case, as in the case of Donn Désa's sons, the textual evidence suggests that there was available to the redactor of Recension II a number of variant accounts which differed slightly concerning Ingcél's brothers or lack of them and the number of reavers who survived the battle at the *bruiden*. These variants were included in the composite text by the redactor with little regard for consistency, and we must disregard Thurneysen's remarks on his *Kompilator's* methods here since they have been based on a false premise.

3. Thurneysen was dissatisfied with Nettlau's assignation of the Fer Caille episode, lines 344-71,⁶⁴ to Source A and he cited his reasons for assigning it to B instead:⁶⁵ first, he held that Fer Caille had strong connections with Source B in that he appears in lines 1187-90 where he foretells Conaire's downfall at the hands of the five sons of Donn Désa and he also appears in the descriptive passages at the end of the tale, lines 1350-3; second, he believed that Fer Caille was not on the original list of tabus which he ascribed to Source A, and he explained a possible allusion to

⁶¹ *Heldensage*, 633.

⁶² See lines 217-18: *Ní crochfaider ind fír acht eirced senóire léosom co rolát a ndíbearg for fíru Alban*.

⁶³ *Heldensage*, 626: 'Nach A (§22) ist Ingcél selbdritt; dagegen hat er in §44 (B) nur einen Bruder Éiccel bei sich; aber in §80, der zu B gehört, erscheinen zwei Brüder, Éiccel und Dartaid na Díbergae ... Der Kompilator hatte hier wohl den Widerspruch mit §22 entdeckt und den zweiten Bruder hinzuerfunden; er tritt dann auch in §159 (GBL) auf.'

⁶⁴ This episode describes the encounter Conaire has with an ugly churl named Fer Caille and his female companion Cichuil, as he journeys with his retinue towards the *bruiden*, another instance when he is forced to break a tabu.

⁶⁵ *Heldensage*, 626.

the Fer Caille episode in Conaire's penultimate tabu: *ní tae dām aenmna nó énfir i tech fort tar fuinead ngréne*,⁶⁶ lines 179–80, as an insertion by the *Kompilator* of *nó énfir* in this tabu which originally referred only to a lone woman named Cailb,⁶⁷ because he anticipated the occurrence of the Fer Caille episode of version B later in the narration and wished to incorporate it more smoothly; third, Thurneysen concluded that the Fer Caille episode was a doublet of the Cailb episode because of the similarity in Cailb's and Cichuil's descriptions and, since he had already assigned Cailb to Source A because of the reference to that episode in the tabu list, he reasoned that Fer Caille must belong to Source B.

Thurneysen may well have been correct in his suggestion that Conaire's penultimate tabu, lines 179–80, was altered to accommodate the Fer Caille episode, even though Fer Caille, accompanied by his woman Cichuil and his pig, cannot be described as *dām énfir*, and he does not approach Conaire in the *bruiden*, but accosts him on the way there.⁶⁸ But this possibility alone does not constitute sufficient evidence that Fer Caille must belong to the B Source.

DOUBLETS / DUBLETTEN

Thurneysen's main reason for assigning Fer Caille to Source B throughout may be attributed to his understanding of what constituted a doublet (*Dublette*), and its importance in illustrating the growth of a compilatory text. Although this is the only time he referred to a doublet in *TBDD*, these play a major part in his distribution of *TBC* among the two sources, A and B. He would appear to have understood a doublet to be the repetition of a motif or theme, and when such a repetition occurred, the second instance should always be ascribed to a different source. This view is too inflexible as Cecile O'Rahilly has already remarked with regard to *TBC*,⁶⁹ noting that the same basic motif or theme can recur in the same version of a tale, with variations of context or detail. Indeed, there is nothing to preclude the occurrence of Fer Caille in both Sources A and B, since a number of the other characters appear in both as well. The final proof for Thurneysen that the Fer Caille and Cailb episodes were doublets was his observation that the descriptions of the hags Cichuil and Cailb were identical,⁷⁰ but when compared, there is little similarity between them apart from the following phrases: *Tacmaicead a*

⁶⁶ Ibid. Y is the only manuscript which places *oenmná* first in the phrase and Thurneysen remarks in footnote 1: 'So *GBL* [i.e. *YBL*] gewiß ursprünglich; andere Handschriften: *oenfir* nó *oenmná*.'

⁶⁷ Ibid. Thurneysen maintained that the original tabu is paraphrased by Conaire in lines 566–7: *is ges damsá, ol Conaire, dām oenmná da airtin tar fuin ngréne*. For the complete Cailb episode, see *BDD*², lines 535–77.

⁶⁸ Conaire's encounter with Fer Caille and his pig on the road to the *bruiden* should be seen to hold a deeper mythological significance than than the mere violation of a tabu, see P. Ní Chatháin, 'Swineherds, Seers and Druids', *Studia Celtica* 14–15 (1979–80) 201, who points out that Fer Caille's role is that of a supernatural being guiding a mortal hero to the otherworld, and that the 'Lord of the Otherworld Feast' was sometimes depicted as a swineherd carrying a pig. For other examples of a 'porcine psychopomp', see most recently P. K. Ford, 'A Highly Important Pig', in A. T. E. Matonis, and D. F. Melia (ed.), *Celtic language, Celtic culture, a Festschrift for Eric P. Hamp*, (California 1990), 292–304. I am grateful to P. de Bernardo Stempel for drawing this reference to my attention.

⁶⁹ *TBC/LL*, xix–xxii and xxix.

⁷⁰ *Heldensage*, 626: 'Die Fer-Caille-Episode in B war die Dublette zur Cailb-Episode in A, die Beschreibung der zwei Weiber §38 und 61 stimmt zum Teil wörtlich überein.'

bél ichtarach co a glún (of Cichuil), lines 355–6, and *Tacmaicead a fés in t-ichtarach co rrici a glúin* (of Cailb), lines 539–40. Such similarity of phraseology merely indicates that this was probably a stock description taken from a common Middle Irish register which included other phrases of that kind, for example: *Cia fo-certa miach di fiadublaib for a mullach ní foichred uball for lar, acht ro giulad cach uball dib for a findiu*, which is used in the descriptions of both Fer Caille and Táidle Ulad, Conaire's steward.⁷¹ Yet Thurneysen did not suggest that these could also be doublets. Neither does he suggest that the Fer Caille episode is a doublet of Nár Thúathchaech, lines 1389–94, despite the fact that both passages are definitely repetitions of the same 'Lord of the Otherworld Feast' motif. Therefore, his assertion that the Fer Caille episode is a doublet of the Cailb episode is unjustified, indeed there is nothing in either episode to indicate that they should be assigned to any one source above another. Both episodes could occur in the same version of the *TBDD* tale and could have originated in the same source.

Numerous examples of what both Zimmer and Nettlau⁷² also called *Dubletten* 'doublets' are listed in their discussions of *TBDD* and *TBC*, but each neglected to give a precise definition of their understanding of these. Minor contradictions and major episodic duplications were put into the same broad category of 'doublets'. Curiously enough, Thurneysen did not place the same emphasis on doublets in *TBDD* as he did in *TBC*,⁷³ and referred to the occurrence of a doublet on one occasion only,⁷⁴ the Fer Caille/Cailb doublet as has been mentioned above. Since incidents and motifs are duplicated more frequently in *TBDD* than Thurneysen has acknowledged, it would be well to set forth the parameters of the duplication of incidents and motifs as they are understood in the present study before presenting examples and discussing their implications in the light of the two-source theory.

EPISODIC DOUBLETS AND THEMATIC DOUBLETS

In *TBDD*, as in all saga literature, certain propositions are logically entailed by others throughout the course of the narrative, and thus a set of implicatures is continually being established and verified as the narrative progresses. Two universal doublet types may be distinguished within such narratives and are discussed below.

- (i) The first type contains a set of propositions which is not entailed by those in the narrative to date: that is to say, a set of circumstances which is fundamentally inconsistent with what went before, and falsifies the progression of the narrative, thereby disturbing the unity of time and place within the tale. I term this type an **episodic doublet**. This first type occurs a number of times in *TBDD* and contributes greatly to the contradictory elements in that tale. An instance would be set (i) cited below, where column 2 gives a second, expanded account of the reavers' banishment from Ireland, their

⁷¹ *BDD*², lines 347–9 and the similar description for Táidle Ulad, lines 788–90.

⁷² Zimmer, *KZ* 28 (1887) 568–72; Nettlau, *RC* 12 (1891) 250–2

⁷³ *Heldensage*, p. 118 f., especially p. 128 n. 3, where he shows his belief that one motif denotes one source.

⁷⁴ He concludes that the Fer Caille episode is a doublet of the Cailb episode, *Heldensage*, 626. We shall return to this later in the discussion on *Dubletten*.

alliance with Ingcél Caech and combined rapine abroad before their return to Ireland, which has been inserted into the tale, despite the fact that this information has already been given in a different form at a much earlier point in the narrative.⁷⁵

- (ii) The second type of doublet is superficially similar to the first insofar as both types duplicate a train of events. The distinction between the two types lies in the truth value of the propositions contained in this second type with regard to the previous narrative, because it is perfectly consistent with what has gone before. I call this type a **thematic doublet**. This second type does not cause any disturbance of the main progress of events in the narrative, but has been modelled on a previous incident / motif in the tale and is introduced at a later juncture to expand, with additional details or changes of *personae*, on the basic theme itself. This thematic duplication is very common in *TBC*, a well-known example being the repetition of the motif initiated by Cú Chulainn in his attempt to hinder the progress of the Connacht hosts, when he casts on to a pillarstone a withe which bears an *ogam* inscription forbidding them to proceed on their way until one amongst them has cast a withe in a similar way. This motif occurs no less than three times in Recension I of *TBC*, with slight changes of detail.⁷⁶

Such thematic doublets can occur an unlimited number of times within the same narrative, and need not indicate that several different sources have been used by the redactor. However, the same does not hold true for episodic doublets, which are by their nature fundamentally inconsistent with information already given in the episodes which they duplicate and, as in the case of *TBDD*, can totally distort the unity of the narrative. Therefore, we may make a distinction between the two major doublet types and state that a falsifying of the antecedent by the consequent denotes an episodic doublet and an extending of the antecedent by the consequent denotes a thematic doublet.

Episodic doublets are by far the more common type in *TBDD*, and are the reason for a number of what are initially perceived as textual inconsistencies. As previously stated, it is these doublets more than any other factor which demonstrate that *TBDD* is a compilatory text. I list below five of the most important sets which occur in the tale and in set (i) the first two are juxtaposed in columns, to show more clearly the correspondences. In set (ii) below, three variant episodes have been juxtaposed to show a triple set of episodic variants:

⁷⁵ See *BDD*², lines 204–28 versus 374–428.

⁷⁶ See *LU*, lines 4697–8, 4736–66; 4796–8, 4807–10; 5213–8.

Set (i)

Lines 205–28

1. . . . gabsat díberg co maccaib flaithi
fer nÉrenn impu .Trí .Ill. fear dóib. . .
(lines 205-06)

Lines 374–428

1. Gabtha trá díberg la maccu Duind
Désa 7 .u. c. fo churp a ndíbergi
cenmo-thá fosluag leó. . .
(lines 374–5)
Fén tar Crínach. . . Gabtha díberg
didiu la suide 7 .u.c. fo churp a díbergi
a oenur cenmo-thá fosluag.
(lines 377–81) .i. Maine Aithremail 7
[Maine] Máthramail 7 Maine Mingor
7 Mane Mórgor 7 Maine Annoe 7
Maine Milscothach 7 Maine cotagaib
uile 7 Maine co [*sic*] os mó epirt.
Gabtha díberg lui sidib. Maine
Máthramail 7 Maine Andoe ceithri
fichit déc fo churp a ndíbergi. Maine
Aithremail .l. ar .cccc. fo churp a
ndíbergi. Maine Mílscothach .u. c. fo
churp a ndíbergi. Maine cota-gaib uile
.ui.c. fo churp a ndíbergi. .u.c. fo
churp díbergi cach fir díb ol-cheana.
(lines 384–94)
Baí triar treblangi. trí Rúadchoin
di feraib Cúaland. Gabtha díberg didiu
la suidi 7 dá fichit déc fo churp a
ndíbergi . . .
(lines 395–7)
Batir díbergaig trá trian fer nÉrenn hi
flaith Conaire.
(lines 398–9)

2. . . . co-n-argabait na trí choecait fer
cona forbannaib 7 bertair do Themair
7 fogellsat in ríge imbi co n-epertside:
' . . . Ní crochfaider ind fir acht eirced
senóire leósom co rolát a ndíbearg for
firu Alban. Dogníat a nísín.
(lines 211–19)

2. Ro-mboísom do nirt 7 cumachta a
n-índarba a tír Hérenn do athchor a
ndíbergi allanall 7 tuidheacht doib
dochum a tíre íar n-athchur a ndíbergi.
(lines 399–402)

3. Tíagait ass forsin fairrgi co
comairneachtair fri mac ríge Breatan .i.
Ingcél Caech mac huí Conmaicni . . .
(lines 219–21)

3. In tan ron-áncatar formna na fairrgi
cot-recat fri hIngcél Caech 7 Éiccel, fri
dá mac hui Conmaicne di Breatnaib,
for druimne na fairrgi . . .
(lines 403-05)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>4. triar fer cona senóraib leó. . .
(line 221–2)</p> | <p>4. .xiii.c. fo churp a ndíbergi. Batar lía díberg fer nÉrenn.
(lines 408–09)</p> | |
| <p>5. co comarneachtair forsind fairrgi
(line 222)</p> | <p>5. Batar do muirchomruc forsind fairrgi.
(line 410)</p> | |
| <p>6. Dogníat cairdeas . . .
(line 222–3)</p> | <p>6. Atá ní as fearr dúib, ol Ingcél.
Dénam córai, ol atdob-rarbadse a tír Hérenn 7 atan-rarbadne a tír Alban 7 Breatan. Dénam oentaig etronn. Táftsi co n-atralaid far ndíberg im thírsea, 7 tíagsa libsi conid-athralor mo díberg i far tír. Do-gníth in chomairle hísín, 7 do-bertatar glindi ind dí siu 7 anall. Ité aitire dono do-breatha do Ingcél ó féraib Hérenn .i. Gér 7 Gabur 7 Fer Rogain im orgain fa togaidhi do Ingcél i nHérinn 7 orgain ba togaidi do maccaib Duind Désa i nAlpain.
(lines 415–24)</p> | |
| <p>7. 7 tíagad la hIngcél cor rolásat díbearg lais.
(line 223)</p> | <p>7. Fo-creasa crandchor forru dús cáa díb lasa ragtha i tosach. Do-tuit dul la hIngcél dochum a thíri.
(lines 425–7)</p> | |
| <p>8. Isí orcain tuc Ingcél dó, adaig ro curetha 7 a máthair 7 a athair 7 a seacht nderbráithri do thig ríga a thúáithi, orta uile la hIngcél in n-oenaidche.
(lines 224–6)</p> | <p>8. Lotar iarum dochum nAlban 7 ortadar a n-orcain and.
(lines 427–8)</p> | |
| <p>9. Do-lotar trá forsind fairrgi anall a tír nÉrenn do chuindchíd orcne fon orcain sin dligistair Ingcél díb.
(lines 227–8)</p> | <p>9. 7 ath-ralsat iar suidhi dochum nÉrenn.
(line 428)</p> | |
| <p>Set (ii)</p> | | |
| <p>[Lines 431–78]</p> <p>1. Is and tágadar na díbergaig co mbáatar i n-airéar Breag comardu Étair forsind fairrgi. . .
(lines 431–2)</p> | <p>[Lines 580–619]</p> <p>1. Gabsait iar sin na díbergaig tír 7 dol-lotar co mbáatar oc Lecaib Cind Slébe.
(lines 580–1)</p> | <p>[Lines 620–1394]</p> <p>1. Tos-chuirther beadc na díbergaig a Trácht Fuirbthin 7 do-beraid cloich cach fir leó do chur chairn
(lines 620–2)</p> |

2. 7 eththar nach
traigéscaid húaib isan tír
dús in fagbaimis
tesorcain ar n-ainech fri
hIngcél, orcain fon
orcain do-rad dúnn.
(lines 435–7)

2. Ba sí comairli na
ndíbergach íarum nech
úaidib do déicsin dús
cindus ro-mboth and
(lines 635–6)

3. Cest, cía raghas dond
éitseacht isa tír?
(line 438)

3. Cía ragas do déicsin in
tigi?
(line 637)

4. Rachta neach lasa
mbet na trí búada .i.
búaid clúaise 7 búaid
rodairc 7 búaid
n-airdmesa. Atá limsa,
for Maine Milscothach,
búaid clúaisi. Atá limsa
didiu, for Maine Annoe,
búaid radeirc 7
airdmeasa.
Is maith a dul dúib, for
na díbergaig, fón
indussin.
(lines 439–44)

4. Cía no ragad, or
Ingcél, acht mad meisi?
Húairi is mé dliges
fíachu.
(lines 638–9)

5. Do-tíagat nónbur
íarum co mbáatar [for
Beind Étair dús cid
ro-clóit 7 ad-]chetis.
(lines 445–6)

5. Ro báatar .uii. carbait
déig de chairpthib
Conaire fri cach ndorus
don tig 7 ba hairecna
don aes na déiccsin in
tsuillse mór sin tria asna
drochu na carbut
(lines 587–90)

5. To-théit Ingcél do
thoiscélad forsin
mBruidin. . .
conda-dercacha tria
drochu na carbat.
(lines 640–44)

6. Tíagait for cúlu íarum
co ndécdatar dona
díbergachaib: Ised ann
so ro-chúalamar 7
adus-connarcmar.
(lines 471–3)

6. Téit co ránic na
díberga baili i rabatar.
Fo-creas cach cúaird
imm alaile din díbeirg fri
héisteacht in scéoil.
(lines 647–9)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>7. Cid sin? for Maine Andoe. . . . Cest, cid at-chísiu hi suidiu? (lines 448–51)</p> | <p>7. Samailti lat, a Āir Rogain, for Ingcél. Císí suillse mór sucut? (lines 591–2)</p> | <p>7. Cindus sin, a Ingcél? for Fer Rogain . . . (line 654)
Cest, in dercachasu a tech co maith, a Ingcél? for Fer Rogain. (lines 662–3)
Cest, cid at-chonnarcaissiu isin fochlu féindida in tigi . . . ? (lines 668–9)</p> |
| <p>8. Fúaim n-eachraide fo rígh ro-cluiniursa. (line 449)</p> | <p>8. Nochom thása a samail mani daig do rígh. (line 593)</p> | <p>8. Cip indus, for Ingcél, is ríghda in costud, i[s] slúagda a seiseilbe, is flaitheamda a fúaim. (lines 655–6)</p> |
| <p>9. At-cíusa, orsé (i.e. Maine Annoe), echrada ána aurardai . . . (followed by a general description of Conaire's retinue in verse, (lines 452–66)
Is hí mo airdmes de, is é Conaire mac Etirscél co formnaib fear nÉrenn imme do-rét in tsligi. (lines 520–22)</p> | <p>9. Is maith a flaith, ol Fer Rogain. Ní taudcha[i]d nél tar gréin . . . [followed by detailed description of Conaire's excellent reign given by Fer Rogain, (lines 597–612)]</p> | <p>9. Is deithber dait, a Ingcél, cíá no gabtha, ol Fer Rogain. Ar n-aitine fil and .i. ardrí Hérenn, Conaire mac Eterscéoil. (lines 666–8)[There follows a series of descriptions of individual members of Conaire's retinue by Ingcél and identification of each one by Fer Rogain. (lines 670–1394)]</p> |

Set (iii) The variant accounts of Mac Cécht within the same descriptive passage, see lines 806–27 versus lines 827–33.

Set (iv) The variant accounts of Conaire Mór mac Eterscéle within the same descriptive passage, lines 995–1009 and 1045–64 versus lines 1010–44.

Set (v) The variant accounts of the three giants of the Fir Fálgai within the same descriptive passage, lines 262–74 versus lines 1274–84.

ANALYSIS OF THESE EPISODIC DOUBLETS

Set (i) above can be cited as a clear example of an episodic doublet in which two accounts, each relating a variant version of how the Irish reavers came to be banished, their meeting with the British reavers led by Ingcél, their rapine in Alba and their subsequent return to Ireland, are incorporated into the text of Recension II. The position of the second account, shows it to be an insertion taken from a source

other than that used for the first, since, in repeating the episode, no cognisance is taken of the logical progression of the narrative in which the reavers' banishment has already been explained, and no effort has been made to assimilate this repetition of events more smoothly into the tale. Admittedly, the first account places emphasis on the events which resulted in the banishment of the sons of Donn Désa, while the second recounts in greater detail the size of the reaving bands and the nature of the pact made by the sons of Donn Désa with Ingcél – indeed, this may have been the reason for its insertion – but for all that, both accounts are still recognisable as variants of the same episode. Indeed, if we were to judge from this example alone, the case for limiting to two the sources of Recension II would seem quite legitimate.

However, set (ii) above is more complex, and the separation of the text into three columns indicates the distinct possibility that a third source was used. In this example, we have three variant accounts of the reavers' arrival in Ireland, their search for a plunder to equal that afforded them by Ingcél in Alba, and their identification of Conaire and his retinue, either as he proceeds towards the *bruiden*, or *in situ* in the *bruiden*. It could be argued that lines 431–78, in which the reavers have not yet landed, but have sent scouts ashore to reconnoitre who chance to spy Conaire on his way to Bruiden Da Derga, constitute a thematic doublet of lines 620–69, in which the reavers have landed and go to spy on the *bruiden*, and that this could therefore conceivably exist within the same source as the latter. However, this argument would not take account of the fact that there is no link in the narrative between the two episodes: lines 620–69 show no awareness of 431–78, insofar as no subsequent mention is made of Maine Milsothach or Maine Andoe who have used their special gifts to identify Conaire, and although Conaire has already been identified in lines 467–70, no reference at all is made to this in lines 620–69, where ignorance is professed until Fer Rogain makes the identification, thus assuming the same role that has been assigned to Maine Andoe in the earlier episode. It is the absence of logical progression in the narrative which indicates that this has the characteristics of an episodic doublet. Moreover, lines 431–78 could indicate that the redactor included a variant here which casts Maine Milsothach and Maine Andoe in leading roles. Such a variant would consequently correspond far more closely⁷⁷ to Recension I, than the variant in which these roles are assumed by Fer Rogain and Ingcél.

Lines 580–619 represent another variant of these two episodes. This variant is closer to lines 620–669, insofar as the principal roles are assumed by Ingcél and Fer Rogain and both sets of onlookers view the *bruiden's* inhabitants through the spokes of the chariot-wheels parked in its doorways. One could argue for their belonging to the same source were it not for the fact that the unity of time and place is disturbed in the tale's narrative: lines 580–619 tell us that the reavers have landed and proceeded to a place inland called Lecca Cind Slébe, but lines 620–668 have the *díbergaig* still at Trácht Fuirbthen, with no acknowledgement of the progress in the narrative. Both situations thereafter are very similar, the reavers spy through the chariot-wheels, there is a report and identification exchange between Ingcél

⁷⁷ Maine Milsothach had a leading role in Recension I, see Textual Inconsistencies (vi) above.

and Fer Rogain. The emphasis is slightly different in both, in that the *bruiden*, the *bruiden* fire and Conaire's reign in Ireland are described in detail in lines 500–619; while the ritual of *carn* erection and a preamble to the lengthy descriptions at the end of the tale are contained in lines 620–668. Additional details of this kind may have been the reason why the redactor combined these episodes from two such similar sources. A section between lines 583–4 may have been omitted, since it is obvious that the reavers must have held counsel at Lecca Cind Slébe and sent *aes na déicsen* forward to investigate the source of the light which subsequently turned out to be Bruiden Da Derga. We already know from lines 7038–40 in the *LU* manuscript that a number of versions of how Lecca Cind Slébe received its name were in existence in the Middle Irish period: *Conid ed ármít eólaig in tsenchassa conid fer cach clochi fil i Carnd Leca ro marbait dona díbergaib oc brudin. Conid din charnd sin atberar Leca i nUib Cellaib*. There is no onomastic conclusion to the section describing the erection of the *carn* in any of the other manuscripts which contain the tale.

The description and identification sections in lines 431–78 and 580–619 could be seen as shorter versions of lines 670–1394, and it may be that both of these were taken from sources containing shorter versions of the *TBDD* tale, which may have laid greater emphasis on the actual fight at the *bruiden*. However, since the longer version of the descriptions and identification formulae were also included by the redactor he may have had little desire to repeat it all again in the description of the fight at the *bruiden*. We can infer this from lines 7913–4 of *LU*, penned by scribe M:

Cid fil and trá acht is fota fri haisnis is tophliúin menman is búadred do chétfaidib is emilius fri hestidib is imarcraid n-innisen tíachtain darna nechib inundaib fó dt. . .

which lead us to suppose that M was aware of at least one other source which had a full-length version of the *bruiden* fight to equal the exaggeratedly long descriptions prior to it. Since these other versions are no longer extant, one can only speculate as to what they contained by drawing on the evidence of these episodic variants.

Thus, this second example of episodic duplication could be looked upon as an indication that the redactor was drawing on a third source, which was not considered by Zimmer, Nettlau or Thurneysen in their apportioning of the text to two sources only. Moreover, the additional evidence adduced from *LU*, our earliest Middle Irish codex, alludes to other variant accounts which are no longer extant, and presents the possibility that any number of these might have been used as source material for the second recension of *TBDD*.

Set (iii) above, also contains material which suggests a derivation from several sources. Mac Cécht, Conaire Mór's champion, is described in both verse and prose but neither description is linked to the other in any way, apart from the adjective *cúicses* with which both passages qualify *noe* / *núi*.⁷⁸ The verse passage describes three men, one of whom is identified as Mac Cécht. However, the prose

⁷⁸ *Dí noe cúicsescurach*, line 816, and *In dá núí cúicseschurach*, line 843.

alludes to *Días mael and sin im fer co fult*⁷⁹ which is later explained, not as a reference to Mac Cécht's tonsured companions, but rather to Mac Cécht's two knees. Both descriptions have no other points of similarity. Moreover, the identification passage elucidates the preceding prose practically word for word, but makes no reference at all to the verse. It would appear that the prose and verse have their origins in different versions and have been combined rather clumsily here. Yet, the two-source theory put forward by Zimmer and Nettleau, and later refined by Thurneysen, did not suggest the combination of several sources here, since it proposed that the material between lines 620 and 1539, which includes this section, was derived only from Source B.

The section concerning Conaire Mór, set (iv) above, also contains contradictory material which suggests the combination of two descriptions, taken from different sources. Conaire is initially described as a *maethóclach*, but then the narrative is interrupted to insert the poem *At-chiu flaith n-ard n-aireagdaí*, which depicts a powerful lord, ever-vigilant against his enemies and strong enough to overcome all their attacks. After the conclusion of the poem, the theme of Conaire the *maethóclach* is again resumed and he is described as lying asleep, with his head in the lap of one of his fosterers and his feet cushioned in the lap of the other. The contradictory material is evident, particularly when one considers the plaintive lay uttered by the tender youth, lines 1049–66, reminiscent of the weeping of Lé Fri Flaith in line 1119, and contrasts it with the poem about the mighty, confident ruler some lines before. In fact, the picture of Conaire as a youth of tender years concurs with the description of Conaire upon his assumption of kingship: *gilla óc amulcach*, line 161; while the poetic portrayal of the powerful *flaith* concurs with that of the ruler we imagine to be in full control of his kingdom, lines 1010–44. Both could be parallel descriptions of the same king at different stages in his career, and, if we accept that there were several traditions about Conaire's age when he tragically met his death, then the redactor probably amalgamated descriptions of Conaire Mór from several sources here. However, the proposers of the two-source theory also assigned this whole section on Conaire to Source B, despite the contradictory descriptions of Conaire which suggest that several sources were used.

Set (v) above concerns the descriptions of the three giants of the Fir Fálgai. Thurneysen did recognise that there were two parallel descriptions following on each other here.⁸⁰ He again attributed them to a 'kleine Ausgleichung' carried out by his *Kompilator*, and ascribed them to the same source. Yet, it is clear that these two descriptions of the giants have been juxtaposed, each contains essentially the same material but has differences in terminology: eg. *teora sísta iarnae = sithrogait*⁸¹ *iairn sithremir cuing n-imechtair*, (lines 1270–01 = 1278–9); and variations of detail, e.g. *teora monga echdaí húathmara segtha co slissiu = cúlmonga tiuga ba hechda foraiib ro-segat a ndruiib*, (lines 1268–9 = 1274–5).

The identification passage which follows, lines 1285–98, qualifies the verse rather than the prose. Thurneysen's explanation may be correct, but equally plausible is

⁷⁹ *BDD*², line 827.

⁸⁰ *Heldensage*, 625.

⁸¹ This is incorrect in *YBL*, which reads: *iseadrogoet*, see *BDD*², 93.

the theory that the prose section has come from elsewhere, perhaps to elucidate the verse.

CONCLUSIONS

The extent of textual inconsistencies and duplications of episodes in Recension II demonstrates beyond doubt that it is a composite text. In our discussion it has been shown how Zimmer, Nettelau and Thurneysen sought to accommodate all the variants which they could identify in that recension within two sources, which they labelled A and B. Thurneysen proposed a structural pattern for *TBDD* similar to that which he had advocated for *TBC*.⁸² However, in his distribution of *TBC*'s episodes to two supposed sources, even he could not always mould them all to fit into the A and B framework. At one stage he noted:

Dabei bemerke ich ausdrücklich, daß manches nur darum B zugeteilt wird, weil es nicht zu A gehört, und umgekehrt. Wer also nicht wie ich die Überzeugung gewonnen hat, daß im allgemeinen zwei Quellen zu Grunde liegen, wird gelegentlich an eine dritte denken können.⁸³

But although he alluded to the possibility of a third source in *TBC*, he rigidly adhered to the two-source theory for the second recension of *TBDD*.

Our analysis clearly shows the necessity for a more flexible attitude towards the source material which forms the basis for much of the *TBDD* tale. We cannot limit ourselves to two sources only, because to do so would leave too many facets of the tale unaccounted for. Although we can see that particular episodes have been duplicated, we cannot state with any degree of certainty where each of these variant episodes might have begun or ended, nor at what point in the narrative any one of them might have been again resumed, nor whether one episode might have been contaminated by another within the narrative, nor, indeed, how much of the duplicated material might be attributed to the redactor's own creativity. On the one hand, there is strong reason to posit a third source, particularly when we consider doublets of the type discussed above. On the other hand, we cannot now determine whether the redactor used only three sources which contained whole versions of the tale, or whether he drew on fragmented variants from different traditions with which he was familiar.

Lebor na hUidre bears witness to the way in which its scribes combined many variant traditions in the tales recorded therein. The *LU* text of *TBDD* contains a number of interpolated passages, one of the most important being an additional list of descriptions, lines 7578–7673, which has been inserted by the reviser H among the descriptions which *LU* has in common with the other manuscripts containing Recension II. The language and style of these, together with the absence of stock formulae, show a marked contrast to the other descriptions. Thurneysen decided that these could not be accounted for in his A and B sources theory,⁸⁴ but

⁸² *Heldensage*, 112–3.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁸⁴ *Heldensage*, 625.

ignored the fact that their very existence in one of the manuscripts presented a strong case for a third source of the tale. Furthermore, Egerton 1782 (in which Recension III of the tale is preserved), contains a number of these passages, as well as other passages written in a similar style which are not found in *LU*. There are sufficient differences between the *LU* and Egerton 1782 texts of these passages to justify a rejection of any suggestion that these were the individual composition of the reviser H, which were copied later from *LU* by the Egerton scribe. Therefore, these interpolated passages in *LU* must be derived from another source which is neither A nor B.

The part of *TBDD* penned by scribe M in *LU* has many references to material contained in *araile libair* and we must assume that the additional material concerning the fate of Cormac Con Loinges and other members of Conaire's retinue in *LU*, lines 7898–7926, which is not present in the texts of the other manuscripts, was gleaned from these sources. Thus, both scribe M and the reviser H must have had access to material which was not used by the redactor of Recension II, whose redaction is found in the other manuscripts.

TBDD was an important tale which enjoyed widespread popularity and, as such, there were probably many written and oral variants on the central theme of Conaire's tragic downfall. Some of these may have depicted him as a young king wise beyond his years, others as an older king skilled in the art of sovereignty; some may have attributed his downfall to an unjust judgement, others to the reaving practised during his reign; some may have given brief accounts of the retinue that accompanied Conaire, while others may have elaborated and woven into the account all the popular heroes of particular regional traditions. One must also allow for the likelihood that some or all of these variants may have contained material culled from more than one source. The redactor of Recension II seems to have attempted to amalgamate a number of these variants into one tale, and he must have used whole and/or fragmentary versions of the tale as his source material, together with a good deal of his own creativity. To propose the strictures of a two source-theory on this tale is to impose a rigidity of structure which all the evidence within the tale denies. The A and B sources theory which was so dear to the hearts of Zimmer, Nettleau and Thurneysen should finally be laid to rest.⁸⁵

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