THE GENESIS OF TOGAIL BRUIDNE DA DERGA: A REAPPRAISAL OF THE ‘TWO-SOURCE’ THEORY

The tale of the accession, reign and death of Conaire Mór mac Eterscèle, 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’. It is preserved in three distinct recensions. Recension I contains the earliest extant account of the story with which we are most familiar from the editions of Whitley Stokes and Eleanor Knott. It contains a much longer version of the events recounted in the first recension, with a number of changes in personal 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


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. 1116–10447 and RIA ms D iv 2. ff. 392a–1–392b 40. The other manuscripts are defective in varying degrees: RIA 23 E 25 (LU), pp. 838a 1–99a, 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, 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 26), while RIA ms 23 E 29 (= The Book of Ferns) pp. 253a–216b has lines 1045–1551. TCD ms H.2.17, 477a–81b, contains three fragments, lines 164–364, 546–894, 1045–1157. BL Additional 1999, ff. 2b–2b has lines 1–145 and TCD ms H.2.16, pp. 432–1 has lines 1–99.


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traditions concerning Conaire Mór, including a king-list, a version of Tochmarc Etaine 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. 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, Nettrual and finally Thurneysen to conclude that these inconsistent sections must have come about through a synthesis of two disparate versions of the tale, 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 Cuailnge (TBC).

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, 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. 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, and has been stated by Knott to be ‘unimpeachable’. 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.

1 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.


3 Ibid. 112 and ZCP 19 (1932) 269. 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.

4 TBCLII, xvii–xx.

5 Heldensage, 119: ‘Dabei bemerke ich ausdrücklich, daß manches nur darum B zugeordnet 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.’

6 See most recently K. McCone, ‘Finnéine agus Torthulacht’, Léachtai Choim Cille 11 (1980) 116–73, 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.

7 BDD, x.
(i) Cormac fer na tri mbuiad and Cormac Cond Loinges

In lines 63–73, Cormac, fer na tri mbuiad, is introduced with no attempt to explain his sudden presence other than a gloss in the Y manuscript, .i. ri Ulad. There is probably a section missing here in all the extant manuscripts, as Knott pointed out. Thurneysen, following O’Flaherty, identified him as Cormac Cond Loinges mac Conchubair, 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 where he is said to possess na huile biada. The genealogical information given in TBDD at this point would make Cormac the grandfather of Conaire Mór mac Éterscêle on the dista side. 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 staid (i.e. Étain). However, the next section of the tale commences, lines 71–3, with the statement that Cormac has again taken Étain 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 Étain is asking that her own daughter be put to death for no apparent reason.

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

### Footnotes

- Line numbers throughout refer to BDD\(^2\) unless otherwise stated, see note 6 above.
- BDD\(^2\), 71, note 63.
- See Heldensage, 628 and O’Flah., 271.
- See W. Stokes (ed.), BC 21 (1900) 110 §2: .i. Cormac Conloinges mac Conchubair . . . 7 atait na huile buaida fail i. buaidh adeilbl[e] ocus gaicidh 7 n-einigh 7 firinne . . .
- Cormac is connected with Mess Bùachalla in the Prose Banshenchas, see M. Dobbs (ed.), ‘The Ban-Shenchus’, RC 48 (1931) 170 . . . 7 is i in Meas Buachalla sin mithair Conairi Moir m. Étersceoil 7 ba bean do Chonchobar m. Nesa in Meas B. sin, 7 comad hi mair Parr Cormaic Conloinges m. Chonchubair hi iartain; and in a genealogical tract, Genol. Tracts, §80: Mess Buachalla ingen Cormaic Conloinges m. Conchobuir m. Fhachtna Fathaig mithair Conairi Moir meic Étersceoil meic Eogain; §144: Étain Ilchrothach ben a sidab . . . ben Échach 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 Bùachalla Cormac’s mother, does not occur elsewhere to my knowledge.
- 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, 619, remarked ‘Aber daû muû ein Misverständnis sein. Wozu hÈatte er sie dann erst verstoûen, und weshalb soll ihre gemeinschaftliche Tochter sterben? Auch daß die Tochter Eochaids wieder Étain hieû wie ihre Mutter ist unwahrscheinlich.’ On this point see also M. Ni BhrolchŸin, ‘An Bansheanchas’, LÑachtaÖ Cholm Cille 12 (1982) 5–29, at pp. 18–22.
In lines 110–14, Conaire is said to have three foster-brothers, Fer Lé, Fer Gar and Fer Rogain, the three sons of the warrior Donn Désa. However, Fer Caille foretells the attack on the bruaiden, 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 Duiind Désa and in lines 650–1, airig na dibeirge are listed as Fer Gel, Fer Gair, Fer Rogel, Fer Rogain, Lomna Drúth and Ingcéil 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 (bíada)

In lines 115–7, Conaire is said to have three – bíada bíaid clíaisi, bíaid radairc bíaid n-airdmesa – one of which he teaches to each of his three fosterbrothers, Fer Lé, Fer Gar and Fer Rogain. When these bíada are again mentioned in lines 439–43, it is Maine Milscothach who claims to have bíaid clíaise and Maine Andoe who has bíaid radairc airí na dheidhe. Immediately thereafter, in lines 483–88, Ingcéil 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 bíaid 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 Ingcéil describes, while Ingcéil 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 dín. 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 Milsoothach

In line 106, the dā Maine Milsoothach 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 Milsoothach who possesses lands in Créch Connacht, where one of his swineherds (muicid Maine Milsoothaig) sees the reavers training their men. That this Maine is one of the dā Maine, whose tūath seizes the reavers is implied by the next lines of the text (Eightieth in muccid co tānic tūath in dā Maine fea . . . ), which is thus in agreement with line 106 above. In lines 382–94, Maine Milsoothach 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.21 In lines 441–47, he is still a reaver, but this time possesses bíaid

21 Fer Rogain is also the name of one of the aitiri given to Ingcéil, along with Gér and Gabar, lines 422–3, 722–3, 740–1, as surtees 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 uN Necae, who is the only surtee mentioned in Recension I.

22 LU, 147. Maine Moepirt is identified as Maine Milsoothach in TBC, and is inserted in the list of seven Maine, see TBC/LU, lines 169–70; only six are mentioned in TBC/LL, lines 148–50.
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_cliúise_ 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 Millscothach as one of the chief protagonists in the first recension of _TBDD_.

(vii) Ingcél and his brothers

When the sons of Donn Désa are banished to Alba they meet with _mac rig Bretan_ i.e. _Ingcél Cáech mac hui Conmaic_ and his followers at sea, lines 220–1. However, in lines 404–5, we are told that they meet Ingcél Cáech and Éccel, _dá mac hui Conmaicne di Breatnath_, which H, the reviser of _Lebor na hUidre_, has altered in rasura, line 6864, to read: _Ingcél Cáech Éccel_ Túchinni _tri meic uí Chonmaic_, thereby making _U_ the only manuscript to add a third brother called Túchinn to the list. In line 729, _Lomna Dríth_ prophesies that three people – Ingcél and his two brothers, _Éccel_ _Dartaíd na díberga_ – will escape from the _bruiden_, but in line 1495, we are told that five escaped from that battle, _Ingcél a dá brúthair_ i.e. _Éccel_ _Dartaíd na díberga_. However, in _Lebor na hUidre_, the reviser H has again altered this in rasura, line 7957, to read: _Ingcél a dá brúthair_ [i.e. _Éccel Túchinn_ . . . ], glossing Túchinn as _i. Dartaíd na Díberca_. Curiously enough, Ingcél’s brothers are not mentioned among _airig na díberge_ 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_: _cosín trí mac imlesan na hoensíla_. He is also described thus by Túchinn the jester to Conaire: _fer có trúin 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 Flaithe_ blinds _sechtmad mac imblesin ro buí i 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 _senóirí_ (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, Féin tar Créinch, the seven Maine, the three _Ríadchoin Cíaland_ 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
one hundred and fifty curraghs 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 (*tri 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 1118–45 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 *nuisciu 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 Eterscél’s fosterers

In lines 100–06, one set of Conaire’s fosterers is called *in dÁ Fheidlimid Rechtaidi* and the second set *in dÁ Máná 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.

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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. Such a reason might account for the contradictory numbers of reavers given in (ix) above, or for the number of pupils in Ingcel’s eye in (viii), or for the number of sons ascribed to Donn Déusa 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 Déusa in (iii), or the attribution of brothers of various names to Ingcel 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

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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, and noted their composite nature. Of TBDD, he concluded that the redac-
tor had two manuscripts containing two different versions before him and that he
worked both versions into a single tale. 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’.10

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. 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 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’.11

For a full discussion of the manuscripts which contain Recension II, see West, CMCS 20 (footnote 5 above), p. 62.
32 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 . . .’
33 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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zimmer</th>
<th>LU</th>
<th>Stokes</th>
<th>Knott</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>83a2 – 12</td>
<td>821 – 3</td>
<td>216 – 218</td>
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<td>II</td>
<td>83a3 – 84a39</td>
<td>824 – 40</td>
<td>219 – 373</td>
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<td>III</td>
<td>84a40 – 84b42</td>
<td>841 – 7</td>
<td>374 – 428</td>
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<td>IV</td>
<td>84b42 – 85a42</td>
<td>848 – 53</td>
<td>429 – 78</td>
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<td>V</td>
<td>85a43 – 85b41</td>
<td>854 – 8</td>
<td>479 – 513</td>
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<td>VI</td>
<td>85b42 – 86b2</td>
<td>859 – 63</td>
<td>524 – 79</td>
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<td>VII</td>
<td>86b3 – 86b38</td>
<td>864 – 6</td>
<td>580 – 619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>86b38 – 87b4</td>
<td>567 – 74</td>
<td>620 – 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>87b4 – 97b40</td>
<td>571 – 140</td>
<td>670 – 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>97b41 – 98a36</td>
<td>575 – 57</td>
<td>1395 – 1479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>98a36 – 99a30</td>
<td>5158 – 67</td>
<td>1490 – 1539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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34 KZ 28 (1887), pp. 583–4.
35 KZ 28 (1887), pp. 579–80: ‘Durch die erwähnung des Dat comatalog Conaire (87b420) wird das stück
87a47 – 45 an 8b2 geknüpft, daher der recension a zugewiesen, die den Dat als einen der soleine des
Dond Désa kennt. Damit ist nun nicht blos 87a44 – 87b4 der recension b zugewiesen . . .’
Nettlau seriously doubted the validity of Zimmer's findings⁹ and embarked on his own analysis of *TBDD*, considering for the first time all of the extant manuscripts. However, he failed to recognise that the *Lebor Dromma Snechta* version and the Egerton 1782 version both represent two distinct recensions,¹⁰ 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.¹¹ He examined Zimmer's identification of Source A with *Lebor Dromma Snechta*¹² 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 *expose* of the structure of the tale, to analyse assorted extraneous materials related to the Conaire Mór / Étain / 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*),¹³ to whom he attributed responsibility for a number of conflated sagas,¹⁴ *Táin Bó Cúailnge* amongst them, and he saw the development of the saga *TBDD* as parallel to that of *TBC*.¹⁵ He agreed in essence

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⁹ 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 criterions which would be good criterions 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.'

¹⁰ *RC* 12 (1891) 239–53 and 444–59; *RC* 13 (1892) 252–66; *RC* 14 (1893) 137–52.

¹¹ *RC* 12 (1891) pp. 449–50, for example, where he tried to see the episode *Tochim na tri uderg* 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.

¹² *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); §§71 (from *for-duelm-cen* to *a%al*); §§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.


¹⁴ 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.


¹⁶ Ibid. 626–7: 'Diese zwei Quellen des Kompilators, Fassung A und B, sind nun nicht zwei voneinan-
with Nettlau's conclusions, but apportioned sections of the tale to sources A and B in a slightly different manner:

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

His distribution to either one of sources A or B was based on a number of textual inconsistencies: the variant descriptions of the meeting of the Irish reavers with the British reaving band; the discrepancy about those warriors in possession of the biad; the number of Donn Désa’s sons and their names; Conaire’s fosterers; the variant descriptions of Conaire’s son, Lé Fri/Fer Flaitth; the accounts of Ingcél and his brothers; the Fer Caille and the Cailb episodes.

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 sons 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 Cuialge, 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 redactor knew that this character must die at the beginning of the battle, and the inclusion of Fer Cuialge 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 Cuialge for Lomna Drúth makes little sense,
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 *bíada* attributed to them in these independent sources, may explain why they appear in Recension II instead of the three *maic Uï Toissich* who feature prominently in Recension I.  

A genealogical tract in the *Book of Leinster* traces their descent from their paternal grandfather Art Mess Delmonn m. Sétta Sithbaic and gives their names as Fer Rogain, Fer Gel, Domnall Dráí, Fer Leighe, Fer Temel, Rumal and Mainé Milscothach. An alliterative (?) 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. 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. In his discussion of Ingéel and his brothers, 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 ßagait ass försin fáirri co comairnechair fri mac rÖg Breatan .i. Ingéel Cæch mac huï Conmaicni, triar fer cona senêrib leò ...* to mean that Ingéel was accompanied by his two brothers and their elders. He summarised that

56 These may be same as the huï Tassaich of the ui Liatháin tribe, a branch of the Eoganachta, see *Corp. Gen.*, 229.
57 See *BDD*4, 72–3, where this tract is published by Knott for the first time.
58 *LI*, 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 Conglas; for the Book of Lecan material, see Lecan Facsimile f. 213 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 *bíaid* (*bíaid* ngeallinn *galion*), a deuterotonic verbal form (*cain treith doadbanuur*), an example of predicative genitive (*ba duind denmig daforbaig*), and possibly 3 pl. absolute *s*-Preterite (*brogsa[ï] bruadno bregadil*); on the other hand, genitive pl. *brathar* (*een for sesiuur sacbrathar*) is a younger form (for OIr *brathier*).
59 *Heldensage*, 625–6.
60 See Textual Inconsistencies (vii) above.
section thus: 'Auf der See treffen sie auf den Sohn des Königs der Briten, Ingcel Caech (den Einäugigen) mac-ui Conmaicne, selbdritt, ebenfalls von “Senioren” begleitet.'

According to Thurneysen, this section belonged to Source A and therefore he deduced that Ingcel and two brothers were mentioned in Source A. In fact, the *triar fer cona senúraib* of the Old Irish text is a reference to the three sons of Donn Déa and to those elders who were banished with them on Conaire’s orders. Neither Ingcel’s brothers nor his followers are mentioned in the description of the first encounter. The second time Ingcel is mentioned, he is accompanied by one brother, Òiccél, (lines 404-05) and Thurneysen assigned this section to Source B on the basis that Ingcel 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, Ingcel and two brothers are mentioned twice: in line 729, Lomna Drúth foretells that Ingcel and his two brothers, Òiccél and Dartaíd, 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 Ingcel and two brothers) and Source B (with Ingcel and one brother). This explanation seems contrived and it is more reasonable to accept that here the tale incorporates three variants, the first featuring Ingcel alone, the second Ingcel and one brother named Òiccél and the third Ingcel and two brothers, Òiccél and Dartaíd (alias Tüchlinne, 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 Ingcel’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, to Source A and he cited his reasons for assigning it to B instead: 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

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61 *Heldensage*, 633.

62 See lines 217–18: *Ín arochfaider ind íracht ciaraid senúraid leitmos co roldás na ddíbhearg fir mô Alban.*

63 *Heldensage*, 626: ‘Nach A (§22) ist Ingcel selbdritt; dagegen hat er in §44 (B) nur einen Bruder Òiccél bei sich; aber in §80, der zu B gehört, erscheinen zwei Brüder, Òiccél und Dartaíd na Díber- gae ... Der Kompilator hatte hier wohl den Widerspruch mit §22 entdeckt und den zweiten Bruder hinzufründen; 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: *ni tae dám aenmná nó énfir í tech fort ŗar fuinead ngréine*, 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,50 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 *dám énfir*, and he does not approach Conaire in the *bruiden*, but accosts him on the way there.51 But this possibility alone does not constitute sufficient evidence that Fer Caille must belong to the B Source.

**DOUBLETS / DUBLETEN**

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*,52 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,53 but when compared, there is little similarity between them apart from the following phrases: *Tacmaicead a*
bel ichtarach co a glín (of Cichuil), lines 355–6, and Tacmaicead a feis in t-ichtarach co rrici a glín (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 mìach di fhiadbhraib for a mullach nì fùchbred uball for lar, acht ro giudad cach uball dib for a fìndiu, which is used in the descriptions of both Fer Caille and Taödle Ulad, Conaire’s steward. 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 Thuathcheach, 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 Nettlau 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, and referred to the occurrence of a doublet on one occasion only, 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 BDD⁴, lines 347–9 and the similar description for Taödle Ulad, lines 788–90.
72 Zimmer, KZ 28 (1887) 568–72; Nettlau, RC 12 (1891) 210–2
73 Heldensage, p. 128 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 Ingcéil 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.\textsuperscript{71}

(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 \textbf{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 \textit{personae}, on the basic theme itself. This thematic duplication is very common in \textit{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 \textit{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 \textit{TBC}, with slight changes of detail.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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 \textit{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 \textit{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:

\textsuperscript{71} See \textit{BDD}, lines 204–218 versus 374–428.

\textsuperscript{76} See \textit{LU}, lines 4697–8, 4736–466, 4796–8, 4807–10; 5213–8.
Set (i)

Lines 205–28
1. . . . gabsat diberg co maccaib flaithi
fer nÈrenn impu .Trí . .lll. fear dóib. . .
(lines 205-06)

Lines 374–428
1. Gabtha trá diberg la maccu Duind
Désa 7 .u. c. fo churp a ndibergi
cenno-thá foslúag leó. . .
(lines 374–5)
Féin tar Crínach. . . Gabtha diberg
didiu la suide 7 .u.c. fo churp a ndibergi
a oenur cenno-thá fosluag.
(lines 377–82) .i. Maine Aithremail 7
[Maine] MÁithramail 7 Maine Mingor
7 Mane MÓgorg 7 Maine Annoe 7
Maine Miliscothach 7 Maine cotagaib
uile 7 Maine co [sic] os mó épirt.
Gabtha diberg lui sidib. Maine
MÁithramail 7 Maine Andoe ceithri
fichit dèc fo churp a ndibergi. Maine
Aithremail .l. .ar .cccc. fo churp a
ndibergi. Maine Miliscothach .u. c. fo
churp a ndibergi. Maine cota-gaib uile
.u.u.c. fo churp a ndibergi. .u.c. fo
churp dibergi cach fhir dh ol-cheana.
(lines 384–94)
BaÈ triar treblang . . . .i. trá Rúadchoin
di feraib Cúaland. Gabtha diberg didiu
la suidi 7 dá fichit dèc fo churp a
ndibergi . . . .
(lines 395–7)
Batir dibergaig trá trian fer nÈrenn hi
flaith Conaire.
(lines 398–9)

2. . . . co-n-argabait na trá choercaít fer
cona forbannaib 7 bertair do Themair
7 fogellsat in ríg imbi co n-epertsíde:
' . . . Ní crochfaider ind fír acht eirced
senóire leósmo co rolát a ndibearg for
fíru Alban. Dognait a nísin.
(lines 211–19)

2. Ro-mboÈsom do nírt 7 cumachta a
n-indarba a trá Hérenn do athchor a
ndibergi allanall 7 tuidheacht doib
dochum a tíre fárr n-athchur a ndibergi.
(lines 399–402)

3. Tiagait as forsin fairrghi co
comairneachtair fri mac ríg Breetan .i.
Ingèl Caech mac huí Conmaicn Ï . . .
(lines 219–21)

3. In tan ron-áncatar formna na fairrugi
cot-recat fri hIngèl Caech 7 Èiscel, fri
dá mac huí Conmaicn di Breatnaib,
for druimnne na fairrugi . . .
(lines 403–05)
4. triar fer cona senórdaib leó... (line 221–2)

4. xiii.c. fo churp a ndíberigh. Batar lía dibergh fer nÉrenn.
(lines 408–09)

5. co comarneachtair forsínd fairrghi
(line 222)

5. Bátar do muirchomrúc forsínd fairrghi.
(line 410)

6. Dognátaí cairdeas... (line 222–3)

6. Atá ní as fearr duib, ol Ingcéil.
Dénam cóirai, ol atdob-rarbáide a tír Hérenn 7 atan-rarbáide a tír Alban 7 Breatan. Dénam oentaig etronn. Taíntsi co n-a-trálaíð far ndíberigh im thírsea, 7 tága líbsi conid-athralaíí mo dibérgh i far tír. Do-ghníth in chomairle húsín, 7 do-bértar glindaí ind dí siú 7 anáil. Ité aítire dono do-breachta do Ingcéil ó féaraí Hérenn i. Géir 7 Gabur 7 Fer Rogain im orgain fa togaídhí do Ingcéil i nHéirínn 7 orgain ba togaídhí do maccaíb Duind DÉasa i nAlpáin.
(lines 415–24)

7. Úd tíaíad tàm la hIngcéil cor roláist dibéar glais.
(line 223)

7. Fo-creasa crandchor forru dús cí sa díb lasa ragtha i tosach. Do-tuit dul la hIngcéil dochum a thíri.
(lines 425–7)

8. Is órcain tuc Ingcéil dó, adaig ro curetha 7 a m úhair 7 a athair 7 a seacht nederbáíthi do thig rígh a thúaithi,
orta uile la hIngcéil in n-oenaidche.
(lines 224–6)

8. Lotar íarum dochum nAlban 7 ortadar a n-orcain and.
(lines 427–8)

9. Do-lotar tráí forsín faírri anall a tír nÉrenn do chuindchid orcaí don orcaí sin dligistair Ingcéil dib.
(line 227–8)

9. Úd-ralasat far suídhí dochum nÉrenn.
(line 428)

Set (ii)
[Lines 431–78] [Lines 580–619] [Lines 620–1394]
1. Is and tángadar na dibéar gáig co mbátar i
dhíbergaír co mbátar oc Lecaíb
tiúr forsín faírri... (lines 431–2)
[1. Gabsait iar sin na
dihúraig tir 7 do-lotar
cí mbátar oc Lecaíb
Cind Sléibe.
(lines 380–1)]
1. Tóis-chuirther beaca na
dibéar gáig a Trách
tiúrthiinis 7 do-beraid
cloch cach tir leó do
chur chuir
(lines 620–2)
2. The genesis of ‘Togail Bruidne da Derga’

2. 7 eithtar nach
	traigéascaid húaib isan tír
dús in fagbaimis
tesorcaín ar n-aínech fri
hÍnGêl, orcaín fon
orcaín do-ráid dúinn.
(lines 435–7)

2. Ba sí comairli na
	ndíbergach iarum nech
úaidib do déicisín dúis
cindus ro-mboth and
(lines 635–6)

3. Cest, cá raighs dond

díitsacht isá tír?
(line 438)

3. Cá raighs do déicisín in
tigí?
(line 637)

4. Rachta neach lasa

mbet na trí búada i.
búaid chúaisé 7 búaid
rodairc 7 búaid
n-airdmesa. Atá limsa,
for Maine Milscothach,
búaid chúaisí. Atá limsa
didiu, for Maine Annoe,
búaid radeirc 7
airdmesa.
Is maith a dulfáib, for
na díbergáig, fón
indusín.
(lines 439–44)

4. Cía no raigad, or

ÍnGêl, acht mad measí?
Húairí is mé dlíges
fhachú.
(lines 638–9)

5. Do-thiáig nóinbur

íarum co mbátar [for
Beind Éair dúis cid
ro-clóis 7 ad-]chetsí.
(lines 445–6)

5. Ro bátar .u.íi. carbaí
deg de chairphib
Conaire fri cach ndorus
don tig 7 ba hairecna
don aís na déicisín in
tsuílle mór sin tria asna
drochu na carbut
(lines 587–90)

5. To-thiét ÍnGêl do

thoiséalaííh forsin
mBruidín. . .
conda-dercach tria
drochu na carbat.
(lines 640–44)

6. Thiáigait for cúlu íarum

co ndéedáitar dòna
díbergacháib: Ised ann
so ro-chúalamár 7
adus-connarcmar.
(lines 471–3)

6. Téit co ránic na
díberga baili i rabatar.
Fo-creas cach cúaidir
imm allaide din díbeirg fri
heístecht in scóil.
(lines 647–9)
7. Samailt lat, a Fir Rogain, for Ingcēl. Cis suillese mór sucut? (lines 591–2)
7. Cindus sin, a Ingcēl? for Fer Rogain . . . (line 654)
Cest, in dercachasu a tech co maith, a Ingcēl? for Fer Rogain. (lines 662–3)
Cest, cid at-chonnarcaissiu isin fochlu féindida in tigi . . . ? (lines 668–9)
8. Fúaim n-eachraide fo righ ro-cluiniursa. (line 449)
8. Nochom thása a samail mani daíg do righ. (line 593)
8. Cip indus, for Ingcēl, is riighda in costud, i[s] slúagda a seiseilbe, is flaitheamda a húaim. (lines 655–6)
9. At-cūsa, orsē (i.e. Maine Annoe), echrada ána aurardai . . . (followed by a general description of Conaire’s retinue in verse, (lines 452–66)
9. Is deithber dait, a Ingcēl, cia no gabtha, ol Fer Rogain. Ar n-aitine òl and .i. ardrō Hērenn, Conaire mac Etersceûil. (lines 666–8)[There follows a series of descriptions of individual members of Conaire’s retinue by Ingcēl and identification of each one by Fer Rogain. (lines 670–1394)]

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 Móir mac Eterscēl 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 Fältai within the same descriptive passage, lines 262–74 versus lines 1274–84.

ANALYSIS OF THESE EPISODIC DOUBLES

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 Ingcēl, 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 Ingcel – 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 Ingcel in Alba, and their identification of Conaire and his retinue, either as he proceeds towards the buidien, or in situ in the buidien. 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 buidien, 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 Miliscothach 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 Miliscothach and Maine Andoe in leading roles. Such a variant would consequently correspond far more closely to Recension I, than the variant in which these roles are assumed by Fer Rogain and Ingcel.

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 Ingcel and Fer Rogain and both sets of onlookers view the buidien'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 Lecc Cind Slébe, but lines 620–668 have the dihergaig still at Tracht 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 Ingcel

77 Maine Milscothach 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 Slebe and sent *aes na déicen* 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 Slebe received its name were in existence in the Middle Irish period: *Conid ed armit eslaig in tsechassa conid fer cach cloch fíl i Carnd Leca ro marbait dona dibergaib oc bruidin. Conid din charnd sin aterbar Leca i nUib Cellai. 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:

\[
\text{Cid fíl and trá acht is fota fri haisnis is tophliín menman is biaadred do chéitlaidib is emiltius fri hestidib is imarcraid n-innisen tíachtain darna nechib inundaib fo \ldots}
\]

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 Cáecht, 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 *cícisc* with which both passages qualify *nuí l nuí*.

\[\text{Dí nuí cíciscrubach, line 816, and In dá nuí cíciscrubach, line 843.}\]
alludes to *Dias mael and sin im fer co fult* which is later explained, not as a reference to Mac Céit's tonsured companions, but rather to Mac Céit'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 Nettlau, 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 *maethúclach*, but then the narrative is interrupted to insert the poem *At-chiau faith n-ard n-aireagdai*, 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 *maethúclach* 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 Flaithe 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 òc 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.⁷⁷ 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: e.g. *teona siasta iarnae = sithrogait*⁷⁸ *iairn sitbremir cuing n-imechtair*, (lines 1270–01 = 1278–9); and variations of detail, e.g. *teona monga echdai híathmara segtha co slissiu = cílmonga tiuga ba hechda foraib re-segat a ndruib*, (lines 1268–9 = 1274–5).

The identification passage which follows, lines 1281–98, qualifies the verse rather than the prose. Thurneysen’s explanation may be correct, but equally plausible is

⁷⁷ *BDD*, line 827.
⁷⁸ *Heldensage*, 625.
⁷⁹ This is incorrect in *YBL*, which reads: *isadrogait*, see *BDD*, 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, Nettlau 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

81 Heldenrage, 112–3.
82 Ibid., 119.
83 Heldenrage, 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 in 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 araille 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, Nettlau and Thurneysen should finally be laid to rest.\footnote{I should like to record here my personal gratitude to the late James Carney, with whom I enjoyed many interesting discussions on Togail Bruidne Da Derga and a wealth of other Irish topics during my time working under his direction at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies and from whose friendship and scholarly guidance I derived great benefit.}

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