

Caithreim Cellachain Caisil :

*The victorious career of Cellachan of Cashel,*

or

*The Wars between the Irishmen and the Norsemen in the middle of the 10th century*

Edited by Alexander Bugge

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Cellachan of Cashel, the hero of our Saga, was king of Munster, or of Cashel (his official title). He seems to have begun his reign in the year 934. According to the Annals of Ulster and the Annals of the Four Masters he died in the year 954. [1]) § 98 of the present work informs us that Cellachan's fight with the Leinstermen took place 42 years and a half after the death of Cormac, son of Cuilennan, king of Munster. Cormac was slain A.D. 907 or 908. The above mentioned battle consequently took place in the year 950 or 951. Cellachan died not long after this. The paper MS. says that he died A.D. 952. I believe that 954 is the actual year of his death. [2])

The tale which forms the text of the present work describes Cellachan's battles with the Norsemen in Munster, in Dublin, and in Ulster. It gives many new details as to the history of the Viking-settlements in Ireland. We hear about the Vikings of Limerick, of Cork, and of southern Munster. and get a most interesting description of a naval fight between the Irish and the Norsemen in the bay of Dundalk.

The Saga of Cellachan of Cashel has never before been edited or thoroughly studied, but it is incidentally mentioned by authors such as O'Donovan and O'Curry. They seem to think that the Saga is only a semi-historical tale. I cannot agree with this. The Saga of Cellachan of Cashel must be historical like The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill. It cannot be the fabrication of an Irish author of the 12th or 13th century, when the Saga tells us that among the Norsemen of Limerick there was a chieftain from the Hebrides, Morann, son of the fleet-king (i. e. O. N. *sækonungr*) of Lewis. In the 10th century there was really a close connection between Limerick and the distant Hebrides (cf. Steenstrup, *Normannerne III*, p. 213, and the notes to §16 of the present work). It cannot be the fabrication of an Irish saga-teller, when the poem § 44 mentions the Norwegian king Erik Bloody-Axe, who actually came to Ireland about the time of the battle of Dundalk, and who is nowhere else mentioned by the Annals. And how might it be possible for an Irishman to mention Berserks in the army of the Dublin king, if Berserks had not really existed in Dublin ! [3])

But our Saga also contains real Norse names which are nowhere else found in Irish MSS., e.g. *Eiric* (= O. N. *Eiríkr*), and *Turmun* (= O. N. *þormundr*) ; the latter name is found on a Danish Runic Inscription, but does not even occur in the Icelandic Sagas. Loan-words from the Old Norwegian, which never occur in Middle Irish, are also found in our Saga. A saga of this description cannot be semi-historical, but must be historical.

The Norse names found in our Saga are :

*Amlaibh* == Old Norse *Olafr* [A. *Luimnech* [A. of Limerick]) §§ 8, 12, 15, 19 ; *Sen-Amlaibh* [Old A., of Cork], §§ 27, 63, 69, 89, *Amlaibh* [of Armagh], § 53).

*Danair* == O. N. *Danir* (Danes) passim.

*Eiric* == O. N. *Eiríkr*, § 32 n. (p. 25).

*Henruc* (?), § 43.

*Ilbhrec*, §§ 66, 78, the same name as *Elbric* (cognate with A. S. *Ælfric*) ?

*Lagmann*, *Lagmann* (gen. *Laghnminn*). From an oblique case of *logmaðr* or *lagarmaðr* »lawman«, §§ 53, 85. [4]

*Leoghus*, *Leoghas* [Leodus] == O. N. *Ljóðús*, now the Island of Lewis, §§ 16, 19.

*Magnus*, *Maghnus*, *Maghnas* (of Limerick, §§ 8, 17, 19 ; of Dublin, §§ 27, 63, 66, 72, 89. 77) == O. N. *Magnús* (from *Carolus magnus*, Charlemagne).

*Oitir* == O. N. *Ottar* (A. S. *Ohtere*) § 53.

*Sitriuc* == O. N. *Sigtryggr* (A. S. *Sihtric*), §§ 22, 27, 29, 42 n., 43, 58, 61, 62, 63, 66, 72, 73, 76, 85.

*Tomar* = O. N. *þórir*, § 2, 43.

*Tor*, *Tora* == O. N. *þórir*, §§ 27, 63, 66, 77 n., 78, 80, 93.

*Turcaill* == O. N. *þorkell*, § 53.

*Turgeis* == O. N. *þorgestr* (cf Stokes, On the Linguistic Value of the Irish Annals, p. 59), §§ 22, 27, 53, 58, 63, 65, 72, 75 n., 77, 85.

*Turmun*, *Trumun* (pl. *Tormuinn*) == O. N. *þormundr*, 27, 63, 64, 66, 71, 80, 89.

Irish loan-words from the Old Norse occurring in the present work are :

*bord* (gen. *buird* dat. pi. *borduibh*, §§ 74, 77, 77 n., 81), side of a ship. From O. N. *borð*, n. a plank, side of a ship. (O'Reilly: *bórd*, s. m. a board, a table ; a border, coast, brink, edge. Four Masters 1463).

*carbh* (gen. *cairbbi* dat. *cairbh*. §§ 75, 82) a ship. O'Reilly : *carb*, s. m. a ship ; *carbhán*, a little ship. P. O'Connell : *carbh .i. long*, a ship or bark or boat ; w. *yscragh*. Gaelic *cairb*, a ship [Macleod & Dewar]. From the Old Norwegian and Icelandic *karfi*, m. a kind of ship, warship (a loan-word from the Greek, == med. Lat. *caraphus*, Riiss. *korabl*, Finn. *karvas*, Lappish *garbe*, *garbas*, the word has probably come to Norway from eastern Europe).

*cnairr* (gen. *cnairre*, ace. pi. *cnairre*, §§ 68, 75), s. f. a ship. O'Connell and O'Reilly : *cnarra*, s. f. a ship. From C. N. *knorr* (gen. *knarrar*), s. f. a merchant ship.

*coll* (dat. *coill* §4), a hill. From O. N. *kollr*, 1) the head without hair, 1) a hill (Norwegian *kolle*).

*iarla*, s. m. earl (§§ 53, 57). From O. N. *iarl*.

*laoidheang*, s. m. [collective] ships (§§ 44, 45 n.). From O. N. *leiðangr*, which often signifies ' naval forces ' (as opposed to land forces). (The word *laideng* often occurs in Togo)

Troi in the plur. [1.535, 1108, 1339. 1425], where it seems to mean ships, cf. Whitley Stokes, Glossarial Index to Tegal Troi).

*merge* (gen. pl. *mergedh*, § 55) ensign, standard. From O. N. *merki*. mark, ensign, standard, cf *gall-meirge* (Irische Texte 3, p. 69, 1. 23).

*Persa*, n. pl. berserks. From O. N. *berserkr* (see the notes to § 27. where I have tried to explain the word).

*sdiurasmann* (pl. *sdiurasmainn*, § 72), s. m. helm's-man, steersman. From O. N. *styrismaðr* (this form of the word is not, however, found in the literature where *styrimaðr* is the usual form). — Cf. *stiurusmann* (Three Fragments, p. 116) ; *stiurusimand* [gen. pi., Tegal Troi, 1428) ; *na stiurasmaind* (acc. pl., Irish Gloss., p. 138). — Hence *sdiuraighecht*, steer-ing.

*tile* (dat. *tiltibh*, § 71), plank, bottom-board (of a a boat). From O. N. *þili*, bottom-board. (Cf. *tile*, pi. gen. *tili*, *tiled*, dat. *tiledaib*. Tegal Troi 1346, 141 3, 1429).

*topta* (dat. pi. *toptaibh*, § 71), thwart, row-bench. From O. N. *þopta*, f. rowbench.

I am fully aware of the fact that our Saga does not mention all the remarkable incidents in the life of Cellachan. Thus, it does not mention that Cellachan was carried away as a captive by king Muirchertach of the Leather Cloaks on his celebrated circuit of Ireland, in the winter 941—942. [5]) Our Saga likewise does not mention that Clonmacnois was in the year 936 plundered by Cellachan and the men of Munster (Four Masters, A. D. 934). The Annals, on the other hand, know that Cellachan was a great warrior. According to the Annals of the Four Masters he in 937 (recte 939) made an expedition into Munster and went as far as Clonard. On this expedition ' he had the foreigners along with him', among whom the foreigners of Port Lairge (Waterford) are especially mentioned. We may conclude from this that our Saga is right when it states that Cellachan got the Viking-colonies of southern Munster as far as Waterford in his power. The present Saga likewise states that Cellachan and his men conquered Limerick. That this is right we can indirectly conclude from the Annals of the Four Masters which are to the effect that in the year 951 (recte 953) Clonmacnois was plundered by the men of Munster, and the Norsemen of Limerick along with them [*co nGallaibh Luimnigh amaille friú*). A joint expedition of Munstermen and Vikings from Limerick would never have taken place, if Limerick had not been in some way dependant on the king of Munster.

The war between Cellachan and the people of Ossory is also known to the Annals of the Four Masters who tell (A.D. 938) : ' At great slaughter was made of the Osraighi (i.e. the people of Ossory) by Cellachan, king of Cashel'. The battle of Cromad (Croom), where Cellachan defeated the Ui Cairbre ( § 25), is also known to the Annals (The Battle of Magh Rath, ed. O'Donovan, p. 340 ; Genealogical Table, showing the descent of the principal families sprung from Oiholl Olum, king of Munster, col. 2, n. 22).

The Saga of Cellachan of Cashel has no doubt been composed by a man from Kerry, Cellachan's native country. This is the reason why the saga-teller does not mention those exploits which are not flattering to Cellachan. I feel also inclined to think that some of his victories are exaggerated. But that the foundation of the present work is historical, is beyond doubt.

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A comparison between the different versions of the Saga will show that the prose differs, but that the poems are the same in all versions. The poems also give details which are unknown, and partly unintelligible to the author of the prose. Thus the poem (§ 19) tells that the Island of Lewis is in the power of the Norwegians ; the same poem knows two chieftains of

the name of Morann, Morann of Lewis, and Morann mac Connra, while the prose confounds the two. The poem (§ 42 n.) mentions *Eiric Righ na n-Innse* (E. king of the Hebrides), who is not known to the author of the prose. Nothing corresponding to § 20, stanza 9, is known to the prose. The facts here referred to are now unintelligible. I conclude from this that the poems are older than the prose-text.

The Saga of Cellachan of Cashel corresponds in many respects to the Saga of Brian Borumha, king of Munster and subsequently monarch of all Ireland, who was slain in the battle of Clontarf, A.D. 1014. [6] Both Sagas especially describe the wars between the kings of Munster and the Norsemen in Ireland. The Saga of Cellachan extols the Eoghanachts of Kerry, to which race Cellachan belonged ; the Saga of Brian praises the Dal Cais (in the county of Clare), whose head king Brian was. The Saga of Brian consists of several distinct portions. Ch. I — XXXIX of this Saga consists of Fragments of Annals. The real Saga begins with ch. XL, describes the youth of Brian and the earlier portion of his reign, until he became monarch of all Ireland. The last portion of the Saga (from ch. LXXX) is a description of the battle of Clontarf and its causes.

The second portion of the Saga of Brian bears especially a strong resemblance to the Saga of Cellachan. It begins, like § 3 of our Saga, with a description of the extent of the Norse oppression. Ch. LXXX ('After the banishment of the foreigners out of all Erin' etc.) corresponds to § 27 of our Saga. The poem printed § 24 in the present work (*Uathad sin a clanna Cuirc*) has the same beginning as a poem in *Cogadh Gaedhel* (XLVI), where king Mathgamhain of Munster addresses his brother Brian : *Uathadh sin a Brian Banba* ('Alone art thou, O Brian of Banba !').

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The poems of our Saga are introduced by phrases such as : *atbert [adubairt] an laidh* ('and he recited this poem'), or *Cunadh da fhoirgiull sin do can in fili na focuilsí* ('Therefore to testify to this the poet sang these words' § 18). The same phrases are used in the Saga of Brian : *ocus adubairt in laidh* (ch. LII) ; *Ocus do roine an file an laidh aga foirgell* (ch. LIV) ; *Conidh ann do rinne an arbhna so* (ch. LXII). Only the first line of a poem is quoted, ch. LXXIX. The editor, Dr. Todd, says : 'The poem here quoted was probably so well known at the time that the scribe did not think it necessary to copy more than its first words'.

The poems in this portion of *Cogadh Gaedhel* must be considerably older than the prose-text. The colloquy between king Mathgamhain and his brother Brian (ch. XLVI) and the poem in celebration of the victory of Sulcoit in 968 (ch. LIV) cannot have been written long time after the events which they describe. The blind bard's elegy (ch. LXII) must also have been written short time after the death of Mathgamhain. It cannot be a fabrication of a later poet that the blind bard incidentally mentions his friendship with Dubhgenn, son of king Ivar of Limerick. We may conclude from this that this portion of *Cogadh Gaedhel* is based on contemporary poems.

This resemblance between the Saga of Cellachan of Cashel and what I call the Saga of Brian Borumha, cannot be accidental. Both Sagas are based on ancient and nearly contemporary poems. These poems have by later Saga-tellers been connected by means of a prose narrative, and transformed into real Sagas. The Eoghanachts and the Dal Cais had, in accordance with the will of Ailill Olum, their common ancestor, 'an alternate right to Cashel', and were rivals for centuries. In the middle of the 11th century a Saga began to grow up about king Brian Borumha and the Battle of Clontarf, based partly on early poems, and partly on prose-tales about the famous battle.

The Eoghanachts meant to have rival claims to the emancipation of Ireland from the Vikings. Their Saga-men told tales and recited ancient poems about their hero, Cellachan of

Cashel, and his battles with the Norsemen. These poems and tales must have been formed into a Saga about the same time as the Saga of Brian Borumha, and as a kind of competition with this Saga. Both Sagas date, I believe, from the later half of the 11th century. The Saga of Cellachan of Cashel is only a little younger than Cogadh Gaedhel.

The description of the battle of Clontarf is based on tales told by men who had taken part in the battle, but it cannot, as Dr. Todd means, have been written immediately after the battle. The episode of Dunlang O'Hertugan and his intercourse with the fairies is unhistorical (ch. XCVIII).

The author of Cogadh Gaedhel must have known the tale called 'The Destruction of Troy' [*Togal Troi*]. This Irish version of the Argonautic expedition and the Destruction of Troy is preserved in the Book of Leinster, in a transcript from about the middle of the 12th century (and has probably been translated from the Latin about a century earlier). [7] The author of Cogadh Gaedhel not only knows Hector and Priam (ch. XCV, CV), but there is a close resemblance between several passages in the two works. *Togal Troi* (l. 600 — 608) describes the assault of Hercules upon the enemy : ' Then came the rage and the might and the great wrath of the soldier Hersules, and his bird of valour rose over his breath and kept flying round his head, and he made a savage rush (?) at the Trojans, like the outburst of a flood, or like the flash of lightning ; and he dealt wounds to them so that each corpse struck against the other, on what way soever he went to the battle'. The author of Cogadh Gaedhel describes the assault of Murchadh, son of Brian, in the following words (ch. CVIII) : ' He was seized with a boiling, terrible anger, and an excessive elevation, and greatness of spirit and mind. A bird of valour and championship arose in him. and fluttered over his head, and on his breath. And he made an active, vigorous, sudden rush at the battalion of the Danmarkians, like a violent, impetuous, furious ox, that is difficult to catch ; or like a fierce, tearing, swift, all-powerfull lioness, that has been roused and robbed of her whelps ; or like the fierce roll of an impetuous, deluging torrent, which shatters and smashes every thing that opposes it ; and he made a hero's breach and a soldier's field, through the battalion of the Danmarkians'.

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There is also a great resemblance between the Saga of Cellachan of Cashel and *Togal Troi*. The beginning of the combat between Achilles and Hector is in the latter work described in the following words (l. 994 ff.) : ' For they knew that it would not be the teasing of little boys about playing-poles, nor that of a peasant with this mate seeking to be spared, nor that of a loving couple about the arrangement of one side of their bed, nor that of family friends about caps of ale (*no charat cridechair im choppánaib cormlenna*), the mutual harassment of the two valiant champions of Asia and Europe in the place whereinto would come the mutual thrusting of their spears and smiting of their swords, and clashing of their shields'. The Saga of Cellachan of Cashel begins (§ 77) the description of the combat between Segda and Congal and the Vikings Tor and Magnus in the followings words : ' The looks of the heroes were no faces of friends around ale, nor was it a maiden's love for her mate [*Ocus nir atghti carut um cuirm agna curaduibh, 7 nir serc ced-ingine da cele*]'.

A study of the Glossarial Index to *Togal Troi* will also show that Cogadh Gaedhel and the Saga of Cellachan, when describing armours, battles, ships etc. use the same words as *Togal Troi* does. It is also, in my opinion, a remarkable fact well worth of attention that *Togal Troi* contains more loanwords from the Old Norwegian than perhaps any other Irish saga text. I here give a list of these words taken from the Glossarial Index, by Whitley Stokes:

*elta, elt*, hilt (from O. N. *hialt*, n.) ; *fraig iairn*, Whitley Stokes says : some part of a hero's armour, perhaps an iron dagger (l. 1544 : *Fraig iairn imdangen aithlegtha aci*, ' A dagger (?)

of strong, refined iron he has'), in O'Davoren's Glossary the same word is written *fracc*, and is said to signify 'point or needle' [*fraig iairn* is, I believe, = O. N. *iarn-frakka*, an iron spear) ; *gler-glas*, bright-blue (Whitley Stokes : O. N. *gler*, vitrum) ; *láideng* (from O. N. *leiðangr*) ; *lypting*, taffrail (W. S. : borrowed from O. N. *lypting*, summa puppis) ; *ochor-bord*, edge-board, gunwale, bulwark? [*bord* seems to be borrowed from O. N. *borð*, plank, side of a ship) ; *serrcenn*, *seirgend*, means according to Whitley Stokes 'sawhead, some kind of ship' (it is, I believe, the Latin *serpens*, and is a translation of O. N. *drekt*, n. i) worm, snake, 2) a kind of warship) [8] ; *Sess-gal*, seems to be the creaking noise made by the rowing-benches (*sess* is borrowed from O. N. *sess*, m. seat; the size of a warship was indicated by recording the number of *sessar* or row-benches) ; *sith-bord*, bulwark, railboard (from O. N. *borð*) : *sraith*, f. street (= O. N. *stræti*) : *stiurusviand* (= O. N. *styrismaðr* : tile (= O. N. *þili*)).

Does this perhaps show that it is not Cogadh Gaedhel and the Saga of Cellachan which have imitated Togonal Troi, but Togonal Troi that has been influenced by tales of battles between the Irish and the Norsemen ? If this is right, Cogadh Gaedhel and the Saga of Cellachan must be older than Togonal Troi, and must, although they are of different origin, in early times have formed part of a now lost Saga of celebrated Munster kings.

In my edition I have tried to follow the original as closely as possible, only with some few alterations : The printed text has been punctuated : contractions have been extended, but the extensions are expressed by italics : proper names have been spelt with initial capitals : the transported *f* and *n* have been separated by a hyphen from words beginning with vowels : a hyphen has also been used to separate the præposition *i*, *a*, 'in' from a following *n* and to connect this *n* with the following word if it is separated from it, in the manuscript; e. g. *a-n-Ard Macha* (the MS. writes: an *Ard Macha*) : an apostrophe has been used where a vowel has been dropped, and, lastly, the article, possessive and persona pronouns, conjunctions, and negative particles have been severed from the words to which they are respectively prefixed or suffixed in the manuscript.

My edition would never have seen the light without the kind assistance of several gentlemen. Professor dr. A. Torp, and Mr. Magnus Olsen, of the university of Kristiania, have read some of the proof-sheets of this book and given me the benefit of their advice. To Dr. Whitley Stokes I owe many valuable suggestions based on his profound knowledge of Irish, and I am likewise much indebted to my father, Professor Sophus Bugge. During my stay in Dublin, I got kind assistance and advice from my Irish teacher, Mr. O'Farrelly, who has helped me with a part of the translation, and from the officers of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, especially from the sub-librarian, Mr. J. Mac Sweeney.

I am deeply indebted, more than to anybody else, to Professor Kuno Meyer, of the University of Liverpool, whose kind assistance has made it possible for me to finish the edition and translation of the present work. Dr. Kuno Meyer has with great care read all the proofs of the Irish text and of the translation ; he was translated and corrected parts of the text which I was not able to understand, and in many other ways given me invaluable assistance.

It may seem bold in a man, whose own studies lie in another direction, and who is not an Irish scholar, to publish a work like the present. The Saga of Cellachan of Cashel is, however, of so great an importance to the students of the Viking Ages that I hope that competent judges will excuse my deficiencies.

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Alexander Bugge.

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The battle-career of Cellachan of Cashel, here.

1. A noble, lofty-spirited high-king whose name was Airtri, son of Cathal, son of Finguine, got the sovereignty and possession of the two provinces of Munster. And it was during his time that the Lochlannachs first obtained power over Erin. But from the time of Airtri to the good time of Cellachan they found battles and conflicts. And these were the kings who were over Cashel during that period, and the length of their reigns, and the [different] deaths that carried them off.
2. Airtri, son of Cathal, [reigned] 20 years, and he died a natural death.
  - Feidlimid, son of Crimthan, 27 years over Munster and over Erin, and he died a natural death through the curse of the great Ciaran, son of the Carpenter.
  - Olchobar, son of Cinaed, 4 years. And it was he who gained the battle of Sciach Nechtain over the Foreigners, in which twelve hundred of them were killed along with Tomar the earl. And he [i. e. Olchobar] died a natural death.
  - Maelguala, son of Dungal, 7 years, and the Foreigners killed him.
  - Cennfaelad, son of Mochtigern, 7 years, and he died a natural death.
  - Donnchad, son of Dubdaboirenn, 4 years, and he died a natural death at Cashel.
  - Dublachta, son of Maelguala, 7 years, and he died of pestilence in his banqueting house.
  - Finguine, son of Laegaire, 7 years, and his own brothers killed him because of his having (only) half-drunk a feast.
  - Cormac, son of Cuilennan, 7 years, and the Leinstermen killed him in the battle of Leithglinn.
  - Flaithbertach. son of Inmainen, 37 years, and he died a natural death.
  - Loroan, son of Conliagan, one year and a half, and he died a natural death.
3. Those were the tributes and taxes of the abominable Foreigners from the soldiers of Munster, namely, a king over every cantred, and a chieftain over every tribe, an abbot over every church, a bailiff over every village, and a billeted soldier in every house. Without as much as a clutch of eggs of one hen for his own food or drink. Without a cloak or a good dress on king or noble lady, but only the cast-off cloaks and clothes of the Danes and the ignoble Lochlannachs. Without sages, without noble clerics, without books, without full reliquaries in church or in building or in monastery, but Danes in [possession of] their temples, and their churches, and their beautiful forts. Without philosophers, without poets, without minstrels pursuing the lawful customs and hereditary rights of their good kings despite of the hatred of the rough Lochlannachs. Without any daughter of a king or high lord or chieftain to work embroidery, or to practise charity (?) or skilful handiwork. Without any son of a king or chieftain to acquire agility, or to practise or to learn true feats of arms. Without [permission] for the Munstermen to give banquets or old ales to a champion or to a neighbour, unless it were against the command of these true tyrants. And in this condition they were during a time of eleven and seven score years, viz. from the ninth year of the reign of Airtri to the time of Lorcan, son of Conligan.
4. Then arose a heroic, battle-victorious, valorous gentle king to repel this oppression and to contest the country against the battalions of the Lochlannachs, viz. Cellachan, son of Buadachan, son of Lachtna, son of Artgal, son of Snedgus, son of Donngal, son of Faelgus, son of Natfraech, son of Colgan, son of Failbe, son of Aed dub, son of Cremthann, son of Feidlimid, son of Aengus, son of Natfraech, son of Corc, son of Lugaid, son of Ailill Flann Bec, son of Fiachu Muillethan, son of Eogan Mor, son of Ailill Olom. It seems from the writings of the historians that from Airtri to noble Brian the heroes or territories of Munster

were not freed, except what the nimble-sworded Cellachan did to defend them. For that was the man who spent a year and a half in searching Munster, both wood, and hill, and gentle valley, both stream, and lake, and full river, both harbour and smooth strand and sea-port, both fort and strong fortress and the broad land of every Norseman, seeking charity in every fortress, and shelter in every town, poorly for his melodious clerical offices, and with his mottled bag round his neck, spying out every place, and making a close examination of every stronghold, in order that he might get knowledge of its lands, its waterfalls, and its fresh woods, when it should be laid upon him to fight for its territory. So that he did not leave one stead of a landholder or purveyor in the two provinces of Munster unvisited, in order that he might know the name of every village and of every tribe and have knowledge of every lord of the country. And after searching the territories he came to Cashel. For it is there his mother was, and she, the noble queen, was the wife of the coarb of Cashel. And Cellachan had been begotten in violation of her marriage with him. And during the year and a half that Cellachan was traversing the country, she was herself collecting arms, and clothes, and treasures, and retaining companies of foot-soldiers and gentle household-troops. And this is the number of those who were fed (?) by and fully bound to her, viz. 500 armed men.

5. The day on which Cellachan came to Cashel after he had obtained this host, was the day on which there was a great host of the two provinces of Munster at Glennamain of Cashel electing a king. And according to their opinion it was Cennedig, son of Lorcan, whom they would make king. For this is the arrangement of the high-kingship that was between the descendants of Eogan Mor and the descendants of Cormac Cas : The man who was the senior of the gentle clans, his was the kingship. If the high-king was of the descendants of Eogan, the tanist-ship belonged to the descendants of Cormac Cas. And if the noble king was of the descendants of Cormac, the tanist-ship went to the descendants of Eogan Mor. The kingship not to go to any of them, unless he were the best in knowledge, and true learning, and princely honour of the noble heroes. On that day while they were electing a king, his mother said to Cellachan, that he should come to visit them, and that she would herself go before him and tell his story to Cennedig and to gentle Donnchad. And [she told him that] when the nobles of Munster were sitting down, he should come with his people in the best of arms and dress, and ask hostages and pledges of them and tell Cennedig to remember justice.
6. The queen proceeded to Glennamain, and arriving there, she said to the nobles of Munster : ‘ Remember the arrangement, which Cormac Cas and Fiachu Muillethan made between their great descendants ! And there is of the descendants of Eogan a man who is senior by age and knowledge to you, o Cennedig, and he is a king in figure and appearance’. Cennedig asked who he was. The queen said that he was the son of Buadachan and she made the lay :

Remember, o pleasant Cennedig !  
the arrangement of Fiachu and Cormac Cas,  
that they left it so that Munster should be divided  
rightly between their gentle descendants, etc.

When the champions of Munster heard these great words and the speech of the woman, Clan Eogan said that the heir (?) should be brought to them, that they might make him king. Cennedig left the assembly, for he did not consider it an honourable or proper thing that the kingship should be assigned away from himself to another man. And moreover, he did not consider it an honourable thing that his brotherhood should be broken. And Donnchad left the mound, when he saw that the chiefs of the tribes were electing Cellachan. And that is what they said, that they would not quarrel with him, for neither rent nor tax nor fair

tribute would any of them get out of it [i. e. the land of Munster?], but the full benefit of it would go to the Lochlannachs, and they themselves would defend it [i. e. Munster?]. And thus it was arranged.

7. Then arose the seventeen tribes right readily in order to make Cellachan king. And they set up his ‘ *gairm rí*’ [i.e. they proclaimed him king] and gave thanks to the true, magnificent God for having found him. The following were the best of those chieftains. The slender, valiant Suilleban before the festive race of Fingin, and the sportive Ribordan before the valorous children of Donngal, and the fierce Caellaídi, and the heroic soldier Laidacan, and the bold Duinechad, and the brave Cuilen, and the battlesome Eigertach, and Ligan of daring deeds. These nobles came to Cellachan and put their hands in his hand and placed the royal diadem round his head, and their spirits were raised at the grand sight of him. For he was a king for great stature, and a brehon for eloquence, and a learned saga-man for knowledge, and a lion for daring deeds.
8. However, Cellachan addressed the clan Eogan and told them to make valiant war with him, and they said they would do it. And they said that they would advance, ten hundred men in number, to Limerick to burn it. And when they arrived, they sent word to the heroic Amlaib of Limerick, and to the clan Connra, namely to Morann, and to Magnus, and to great Lochlann, to tell them quickly to leave Limerick or to give hostages to them.

When the messengers came to the heroes of Limerick, they began to deride them, and this is what they expected, that never would Munster or even Limerick be contested against them. And they said that they would give battle.

9. When the clan Eogan heard this, Suilleban of the noble hosts addressed them, and told them to fight a brave and hardy battle against the Lochlannachs and valiantly to guard their king in this onslaught. And he said to the nobles of the Eoganachts : ‘ Let not the clan of Cormac Cas hear of (any) conditions in your deliberations, let not clan Echach hear of weakness in your princes, but proceed together to the battle, and give your first battle valiantly in defence of your own country against the Danes. If there be defeat and rout of battle before you upon the heroes, it will be all the better for yourselves, and for your prosperity, and your positions. Limerick will be in your hand, and Cashel in your succession, and Munster will be in the possession of your nobles, if yours is the victory in this battle to day. And if it is not yours, I do not see land or dwelling-place left to your nobles, but only defeat on your soldiers, and destruction upon your heroes on this very day. Hence it behoves you to contest it and to fight bravely against the champions of Lochlann. And the following lay was made to urge them on.

10. Come to Limerick of the ships,  
O Clan Eogan of the noble deeds !  
Around the gentle Cellachan,  
To Limerick of the riveted stones.

Defend your own beloved land,  
O descendants of Ailill dear!  
In the battle of Limerick of the swift ships.  
Set Munster of the great tribes free!

Defend Cellachan valiantly,  
The king of your country, the noble of your host !  
Do not leave the van of battle to him  
Against the usurpers!

Let the sportive Ribordan come  
Before us into the hard-contested battle !  
Let the valiant Caellaidi come,  
Let the full-lively Ligan come!

Let Duinecadh of many colours come,  
And Fogartach of the variegated arms!  
Let Lainnechan of the forts come  
Before us into the hard, well arranged battle!

Let Donnchad, famous in song,  
Come before us against the heroes of Lochlann,  
And Cuilen of the hard battles.  
The descendant of Eogan, who carries off fair victory !

Let Aed, son of Coll, the friend of the clergy [or :  
of the bands of poets],  
come before us to the slaughter of battle,  
And Aed, the son of fair Ailginan,  
Let the ready king come before us!

I myself shall come, with a hundred and fifty swords,  
Before you to the great and fierce Morand,  
And I shall slay for you the hero of the blades,  
The festive descendant of the king of Cold Lochlann.

Arise, o handsome, valiant host.  
Whose hereditary right is Munster of the great forts !  
Contest Cashel eagerly  
Against the sharp-bladed host of Lochlann !

Let not nimble Cennedig,  
The son of Lorcan of the new-blue blades.  
Hear that your fighting is weakspirited and cowardly,  
O host of Cashel of the beautiful spears !

Let not Donnchad in his house hear.  
The son of the gentle descendant of the warlike Caem,  
Of our having been overthrown in the battle,  
routed ignominiously,  
By the champions of Lochlann.

Seventeen dexterous tribes to you,  
O son of gentle, generous Buadachan !  
A champion of each bold-tribe  
Of Clan Eogan is with us.

Give battle bravely,  
O heroes of Munster with great pride !  
Let your country be delivered from bondage  
O heroes of Munster, it is you who can do it !  
Come to Limerick of the ships.

11. Then towards the battle arose the descendants of Eogan fiercely, prudently, bravely around their gentle king, around Cellachan. And there was arrayed bravely by the heroes an ever beautiful, very strong, fold (?) of battle, surrounded by standards, and a solid, very thick pallisade of spears, and a strong, princely-ensigned tower of chiefs, and a skilful phalanx of blue blades, and a handsome (?), strong enclosure of linen cloth around the heroes. For the heroes had neither blue helmets nor shining coats of mail, but only elegant tunics with smooth fringes, and shields, and beautiful, finely wrought collars to protect bodies, and necks, and gentle heads.
12. Then there was arrayed by the heroes of Lochlann a solid, skilful and firm rampart of strong coats of mail, and a thick, dark stronghold of black iron, and a green-polished, hard-sharp city of battleshields, and a strong enclosure of stout shafts around the heroic Amlaib, and around Lochlann, and Morann, and Magnus. For these were the four battle-heroes of the Lochlann champions, and four hundred accompanied each hero of them.
13. Then the valorous descendants of Eogan placed themselves at the upper end of the plain in high spirits around their gentle king Cellachan, and they put the hooks of their shields over each another, and they made 'champion-knots' by attaching their broad belts to each other, and they arrayed the seventeen brave men who were the most noble of the high lords around their royal prince to protect him well. Great spirit arose in their king, and anger in their champions, and courage in their soldiers, and fury in their heroes, and valour in their gallant men and fierceness in their youths.
14. However, when their youths, their champions and their proud, haughty folk came to the front of the battle to throw their stones and slender arrows and pointed spears from each side of the heroes, the ground of the plain was left to the soldiers, and the battle-field to the heroes, and the place of slaughter to the veterans. And when the noble warriors of Lochlann and the soldiers of Munster arrived at the place of defence they began to smite their battle-clubs heroically and to strike their swords on each another. However this full encounter was one-sided. For the bodies and skins and hearts of the bright champions of Munster were quickly pierced through the fine linen garments, and their very sharp blades did not take any effect upon the Lochlannachs because of the rough solidity of their blue coats of mail, and their clubs did not maim the heroes, and the swords did not lacerate the heads because of the hardness of the helmets that protected them, and the Lochlannachs made a great havock among the Munstermen during a part of that day.
15. However when Cellachan perceived, that the soldiers were being slain, and that the heroes were being wounded, and that the champions were being maimed, and that Clan Eogan was being slaughtered, then arose his wrath, his rage, and his vigour, and he makes a royal rush, caused by fits of mighty passion, at the nobles of the Lochlannachs, while the noble descendants of the race of Eogan protect him. Cellachan reached the war-like Amlaib and made an attack on the rough mail-coat of the warrior, so that he loosened his helmet under his neck, and split his head with his hard strokes, so that the Lochlannach fell by him.
16. Then Suilleban with his 150 brave, valiant swordsmen arrived to his defence, and he made a breach of savage ferocity through the centre of the heroic batallion of the Lochlannachs. Then arose the unviolated pillar, and the unsubdued hero, and the lion unconquered until that day, namely the long-haired, high spirited Morann of the fierce people, i.e. the son of the fleet-king of Lewis, with 150 heroes who arose with him. And when the chiefs had met, they smote each another fiercely, like true foes, and with hard strength. Suilleban however planted his spear through the boss of the buckler and beneath the rim of the helmet into the hero, so that it passed quickly into the hero's neck, and placed the head in the power of the battle-soldier. And he beheaded the brave man and

brought the head with him to Cellachan to boast of his triumph. And the people of the Lochlannach fell in that fight.

17. Then Donnchad and brave Magnus met together in the battle. They struck off the points of their broad-grooved swords, and battered their shields into pieces with their full-heavy clubs, and wounded their bodies with their javelins. Magnus however fell by great Donnchad.
18. Then Lochlann and Ribordan engaged in battle before Cellaclian, and Locblann inflicted very sharp, terrible wounds on Ribordan. When the hero was wounded, and the champion pierced through, and when he perceived that his arms took no effect upon the veteran who was before him, Ribordan made a heroic rush upon Lochlann, and left his sword, and his longbladed spear, and he put in mind his sharp iron-blue mail-coat and laid dexterously hold of the lower part of the cuirass of the Lochlannach with his left hand, and gave the champion a sudden pull, so that he maimed the broad bosom of the hero, and that his bowels and entrails fell out of him. And he beheaded the champion and lifted his head in triumph. Nevertheless there fell these four valiant champions of the Lochlann heroes, and the (other) heroes left their places, and the soldiers were overthrown and made for Limerick to shut themselves quickly up there. And it was through the rear of the Lochlannachs that the nobles of Munster went into the town, so that the Lochlannachs were not able to close the gates, and the champions were killed in the houses and in the towers. They brought their wives, and children, and people in captivity to the nobles of Munster, and collected the gold, silver and various riches of the town, and brought the heads, trophies, and battle-spoils of the heroes to Cellachan, and the heads of the four who were the most noble of the Lochlannachs were exhibited to him. Therefore to testify to this the poet sang the following words in relating the slaughters and triumphs, and in enumerating those who were killed of the great Lochlannachs and those who were slain of the Munstermen in this great battle, and he said :

Valiant are you, o descendants of Eogan,  
And fierce are your lions.  
Noble is your king as he comes from the battle,  
The heroic, triumphant Cellachan.

Vahant Suilleban of the hosts.  
Son of Mael Ugra of the red arms,  
After having slain the long-haired Morann  
From the country of Lewis of the Norsemen.

Valiant Donnchad, red his face,  
When he killed the cheerful Magnus,  
And let his fury play upon him,  
So that the red-handed hero fell.

Valiant Ribordan of the quatrains,  
By him fell the hero of the blades,  
Morann, son of plundering Connra,  
Of the ‘ stranger tribes’ [?] of Eogan of the high judgments.

By the nimble Cellachan fell  
Amlaib of Limerick of the blue blades,  
And thirty by wound of spears  
Of his people in the great fight.

Five-hundred heroes — hard was their fight —  
Of the host of Lochlann, without full deceit,  
That is the number, that was slain by you.  
Of the host of Limerick of the mighty ships.

Three-hundred heroes — it was no trifling number —  
Of the heroes of Munster of the great blades,  
This is the number that fell in the battle  
Of our champions with bright success.

Sweet Buadachan is not to be pitied.  
The descendant of Aed of the beautiful arms,  
Since he left a son without deceit,  
Cellachan who defends his home.  
Valiant are you, o descendants of Eogan.

[1] Four Masters, A. D. 952 (recte 954) ; A. of Ulster 953 (alias 954).

[2] Cf. the notes to §§ 4 and 98 of the present work.

[3] Cf. the notes, pp. 140 — 141.

[4] Cf. Whitley Stokes, On the Linguistic Value of the Irish Annals, p. 57.

[5] Móirthemhell Eirenn uile dorigne Muirchertach mac Neill, ed. Hogan, stanza 27—29.

[6] The Saga of Brian is otherwise called *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* (The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill).

[7] Ed. by Whitley Stokes, Calcutta 1882.

[8] *Draic*, a dragon, occurs also in Middle-Irish in the meaning of a war-ship : *Amail draic di thuind cen táir Níall mac Echach Muigmedain* ‘ Like a dragon-ship from the wave without a flaw was Niall the son of Echu Mugmedon.’ (How King Niall of the Nine Hostages was slain (§ ii), ed. Kuno Meyer, *Otia Merseiana* II. p. 85).

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