

E. C. QUIGGIN MEMORIAL LECTURES 11

UÁITÉAR MAC GEARAILT

On the date of the Middle Irish Recension II
Táin Bó Cúailnge



DEPARTMENT OF ANGLO-SAXON, NORSE, AND CELTIC

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Edmund Crosby Quiggin (1875-1920) was the first teacher of Celtic in the University of Cambridge, as well as being a Germanist. His extraordinarily comprehensive vision of Celtic studies offered an integrated approach to the subject: his combination of philological, literary, and historical approaches paralleled those which his older contemporary, H.M. Chadwick, had already demonstrated in his studies of Anglo-Saxon England and which the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic continues to seek to emulate. The Department has wished to commemorate Dr Quiggin's contribution by establishing in his name, and with the support of his family, an annual lecture and a series of pamphlets. The focus initially was on the sources for Mediaeval Gaelic History. Since 2006 the Quiggin Memorial Lecture is on any aspect of Celtic and/or Germanic textual culture taught in the Department.

On the Date of the Middle Irish Recension II *Táin Bó Cúailnge*
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Abbreviations (other than those contained in DIL)

- CRR-LL: The text of *Cath Ruis na Ríg* contained in the Book of Leinster
DIL: E.G. Quin *et al.* (eds.), *Dictionary of the Irish Language based mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials* (Dublin, 1913-76)
Heldensage: Rudolf Thurneysen, *Die irische Helden- und Königsage bis zum siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (Halle, 1921)
MU II: The Middle Irish second recension of *Mesca Ulad*
TBC I: Cecile O’Rahilly (ed. and trans.), *Táin Bó Cúailnge Recension I* (Dublin, 1976)
TBC-LL¹: Ernst Windisch (ed. and trans.), *Die altirische Heldensage Táin Bó Cúailnge, nach dem Buch von Leinster, in Text und Übersetzung mit einer Einleitung* (Leipzig, 1905)
TBC-LL²: Cecile O’Rahilly (ed. and trans.), *Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Book of Leinster* (Dublin, 1967)
TBC-LU: The text of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* contained in *Lebor na hUidre*
TBC Stowe: Cecile O’Rahilly (ed.), *The Stowe Version of Táin Bó Cuailnge* (Dublin, 1962)

On the Date of the Middle Irish Recension II *Táin Bó Cúailnge*¹

Dr Uáitéar Mac Gearailt

In 1900, at the age of 20, E.C. Quiggin completed his doctoral dissertation at the University of Greifswald.² Written in German and dedicated to his teacher and friend Heinrich Zimmer, this 60-page work presents the first detailed linguistic analysis of an entire text of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (TBC). His topic was the unusual representation of pretonic preverbs in the Book of Leinster (LL) text of the Middle Irish Recension II *Táin*, TBC II,³ and their possible significance as regards the development of Irish and the pronunciation of the language in the 12th century.⁴

The Orthography of the Book of Leinster versions of Táin Bó Cúailnge and Cath Ruis na Ríg

In the introduction to his dissertation, Quiggin makes a passing observation regarding the distribution of late spellings in TBC-LL which is of major importance to the matter which I wish to discuss here, the date of TBC II. He remarks that standard Middle Irish orthography predominates in the first part of the text and that from then on a later orthography, found sporadically in the first, preponderates.

Die nachfolgende Arbeit bezweckt einen Beitrag in der Richtung zu liefern und will untersuchen, was sich aus den Abweichungen von der gewöhnlichen Orthographie des XII. Jahrhunderts, die sich in der in dem grossen, Book of Leinster genannten Sammelcodex erhaltenen Aufzeichnung der *Táin bó Cualnge* finden, für die gesprochene Sprache um die Mitte des 12. Jahrhunderts nach bestimmter Richtung ergibt. Dieser Text, der in dem Facsimile genannter Handschrift S. 53b-104b steht, ist in mancherlei Hinsicht für diese Frage besonders lehrreich. Einmal liegt die grössere Hälfte desselben auch in der im Anfang des 12. Jahrhunderts geschriebenen Handschrift LU vor (LU 55a-82b = LL 53b-80a) und bietet, da diese Handschrift ziemlich gut die historische Orthographie festhält, oft ein wertvolles Hilfsmittel, um die Formen in LL zu prüfen und festzustellen. Sodann zerfällt der Text in LL selbst, obwohl er durchgängig von demselben Schreiber geschrieben ist, hinsichtlich der

¹ I am indebted to Máire Ní Mhaonaigh for her generous help during the process of preparing this lecture for publication, and for pointing out errors and making numerous suggestions for improvement.

² Edmund Crosby Quiggin, *Die lautliche Geltung der vortonigen Wörter und Silben in der Book of Leinster Version der Táin Bó Cualnge. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde ...* (Greifswald, 1900).

³ R.I. Best, Osborn Bergin, M.A. O'Brien, A. O'Sullivan (eds.), *The Book of Leinster, formerly Leabar na Núachongbála*, 6 volumes (Dublin 1954-83), Vol. II. The abbreviation LL is used for line references to this edition, e.g. LL 15641.

⁴ He argued that their representation in the LL *Táin* reflects change in pronunciation and concludes that they were reduced to schwa (ə) in ordinary speech in the 12th century. This view received little support in subsequent research, for example, Rudolf Thurneysen, *Die irische Helden- und Königsage bis zum siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (Halle, 1921) [henceforth *Heldensage*], Máirín O Daly, 'The verbal system of the LL *Táin*', *Ériu* 14 (1943), 30-139, or in the two editions of TBC-LL: Ernst Windisch (ed. and trans.), *Die altirische Heldensage Táin Bó Cúailnge, nach dem Buch von Leinster, in Text und Übersetzung mit einer Einleitung* (Leipzig, 1905), Cecile O'Rahilly (ed. and trans.), *Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Book of Leinster* (Dublin, 1967); the abbreviations TBC-LL¹ (Windisch) and TBC-LL² (O'Rahilly) are used to refer to these.

Orthographie deutlich in zwei Partien: die erste von S. 55a bis etwa 78 ist im wesentlichen in der gewöhnlichen mittelir. Orthographie geschrieben, während von S. 78 bis Ende (104b) eine Orthographie einsetzt, welche die nur vereinzelt im ersten Teile auftretenden Abweichungen von der gewöhnlichen Orthographie fast zur Regel erhebt.⁵

More recently I have pointed out other differences between the first and second halves, for example in relation to style and diction, which confirm that a significant change takes place in the middle of the text.⁶ Quiggin offered no explanation for this change and most scholars ignored his observation or only referred briefly to it; for example, Windisch, referring to Quiggin's 'werthvollen Schrift', mentions it in his edition of 1905.⁷ In a footnote in *Die irische Helden- und Königsage* (1921) Thurneysen goes a little further, offering a tentative suggestion regarding the increase in what he calls mainly 'graphic' peculiarities. He says it is as if the scribe was trying to use a more regular orthography but then 'gave up the struggle with his exemplar'.⁸ What he means is that a similar concentration of these spelling peculiarities to that found in the second half of TBC-LL might have occurred throughout the exemplar in its entirety, that the LL scribe substituted standard forms in his text up to the midway point, and that from that point on he simply copied faithfully from his source.

The notion that a mid-12th-century scribe would standardize the unconventional orthography of an earlier text might seem implausible, but not if one assumes that standard Middle Irish orthography was still widely used at the end of the 12th century. It may be relevant to note that Thurneysen assigned the Interpolator of the early 12th-century manuscript *Lebor na hUidre* (LU) to the 13th century⁹ and that texts written by that scribe, such as the homily *Scéla Laí Brátha*,¹⁰ reflect no hint of deviation from standard orthography and contain no trace of Early Modern Irish orthography. Nobody has taken up the suggestion that the regular orthography of the first half of TBC-LL might be later than its non-standard spellings, although it appears to be central to Thurneysen's dating of TBC II, which itself has influenced thinking on the chronology of 11th- and 12th-century Irish literature for almost a century.

What appears as a tentative afterthought in Thurneysen's footnote is stated more boldly in the main text of his book, where he comments on the language of TBC II and appears to assume that the unconventional usage in TBC-LL was not just in the scribe's exemplar but also in the text of the author. Referring to the language of TBC II, he says, it is not that of the author's own time but is modelled on the language of the older sagas, with

⁵ Quiggin, *Die lautliche Geltung*, p. 6.

⁶ Uáitéar Mac Gearailt, 'The language of some late Middle Irish texts in the Book of Leinster', *Studia Hibernica* 26 (1991-92), 167-216, at pp. 186 ff.; idem 'Über den Wechsel des narrativen Stils in den *Táin*-Varianten', in Hildegard L.C. Tristram (ed.), *Studien zur Táin Bó Cúailnge* (Tübingen, 1993), pp. 60-99.

⁷ Windisch, *Die altirische Heldensage Táin Bó Cúailnge*, p. lxviii.

⁸ 'Es ist als ob der Schreiber dieser Handschrift bis ca. Seite 78 eine geregeltere Schreibung hätte durchführen wollen, aber dann den Kampf gegen seine Vorlage aufgegeben hätte': *Heldensage*, p. 114, n. 1.

⁹ *Heldensage*, 31.

¹⁰ R.I. Best, Osborn Bergin (eds.), *Lebor na hUidre: Book of the Dun Cow* (Dublin, 1929), pp. 77-81; = LU 2302-2493. Thurneysen rightly allows for the fact that the Interpolator's exemplars were older: '... natürlich sind die Texte, die er benutzt hat, zum Teil weit älter', *Heldensage*, p. 31.

frequent instances of irregular constructions or *Mißformen*.¹¹ He gives no examples, but it seems safe to assume that he meant constructions such as the following, which are cited by Quiggin:

<i>ra bert</i> (verb <i>do-beir</i> , <i>as-beir</i>), LL 10016	for <i>do-bert</i> ‘(s)he gave, brought, put’, <i>at-bert</i> ‘(s)he said’ ¹²
<i>ba luid</i> (verb <i>téit</i>), LL 8103	for <i>ro luid</i> ‘(s)he went’
<i>barrecgaib</i> (verb <i>do-ecmaing</i>), LL 11349	for <i>do-recmaing</i> ¹³
<i>condeochatar</i> (verb <i>do-tét</i>), LL 8796	for <i>do-deochatar</i> ‘they came’
<i>cia confirend</i> (verb <i>feraid</i>), LL 12112	for ? <i>Cia do ferend</i> . ¹⁴

He may also have had such constructions in mind when remarking of the author that in attempting to give his text a more archaic appearance he repeatedly abuses the language.¹⁵

In view of these comments, one could argue that when Thurneysen refers in the footnote on p. 114 of *Heldensage* to the LL scribe’s exemplar and its orthography, he in fact means the text of the author himself. This would mean that he saw TBC-LL as being largely the same as the author’s text, apart, that is, from the standard forms which the LL scribe may have substituted later.

Bearbeiter C

Thurneysen considered the author of TBC II, whom he calls *Bearbeiter C*, to be a figure of considerable importance in Middle Irish literature.¹⁶ We can, he says, piece together an accurate profile of his literary activity: in TBC II he moulded into a unified whole the coarse amalgam (‘*Gemengsel*’) of largely Old Irish material assembled in TBC I by the *Kompilator*, removing all its contradictions and doublets;¹⁷ he adopted the style of later sections of that compilation and took over unchanged a single episode, *Breslech Maige Murthemne*, whose wordy, alliterative style and whose exaggerations appealed to him and

¹¹ ‘Die Sprache ist nicht die seiner Zeit, sondern lehnt sich an die Sagen-Muster an, wobei allerdings oft sonderbare *Mißformen* zu Stande kommen’, *Heldensage*, p. 114.

¹² Cf. *rabert Cú Chulaind ra Láeg mac Riagabra* ‘Cú Chulaind said to Láeg mac Riagabra’, TBC-LL² 4609.

¹³ Quiggin, *Die lautliche Geltung*, pp. 42, 50.

¹⁴ On *ra* for *do-*, *imm*, *fo*, *bol/ba* for *do-*, *con* for *do-* see Uáitéar Mac Gearailt, ‘Verbal particles and preverbs in late Middle Irish texts’, *Ériu* 47 (1996), 153-84, at pp. 161 f., 163 ff., 169 ff.

¹⁵ ‘Im Bestreben altertümlich zu sein, hat er mehrfach die Sprache schlimm mißhandelt’, *Heldensage*, p. 33.

¹⁶ ‘Nach dem *Kompilator* der nächste *Bearbeiter*, von dessen Tätigkeit wir uns ein genaues Bild gestalten können, derjenige, der die *Kompilazion* “das Wegtreiben der Rinder von Cuailnge” nebst den *Interpolationen* in ein einheitliches Werk und in einen Stil umgoß, den er freilich nicht selber schuf, sondern in einigen jungen Teilen der Sage vorgefunden hatte’, *ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁷ *Bearbeiter C*’s first objective is clear, he suggests: ‘Erstens will er aus dem bunten, widerspruchsvollen Mosaik der Fassung I (nebst den *Interpolationen* von Kap. 8) eine Einheit schaffen. Alle *Dublethen* sind beseitigt, die lose eingesprengten Bestandteile fester eingefügt, manche Einzelheiten übersprungen und so ein einheitlicher Verlauf hergestellt. Neue Episoden hat er kaum hinzugedichtet außer einer Einleitung, die, wie oben bemerkt, dem älteren Werke völlig fehlt’, *ibid.*, p. 113. On the *Kompilator* see pp. 24-7.

were the model for his restyling of the entire *Táin*;¹⁸ he composed one new episode, the introductory pillowtalk between Ailill and Medb and the Connacht envoys' mission to Ulster; he went on to write in the same style a new version of another tale, *Mesca Ulad* (MU), and then composed a completely new tale, *Cath Ruis na Ríg* (CRR);¹⁹ he had enormous influence on his contemporaries, for example the 12th-century contributor to the Irish version of the story of Troy, *Togail Troí*; his distinctive style influenced Irish prose down to the 17th century;²⁰ names and motifs borrowed from him for 12th-century Welsh tales show that he was known in Wales.²¹

Thurneysen dated Bearbeiter C's version of TBC to the first quarter of the 12th century.²² He took Áed mac Crimthainn to have been the scribe of the text contained in the Book of Leinster and of the entire manuscript. Like Windisch and Best, he considered the following colophon to suggest this:²³ *Aed mac meic Crimthaind ro scrīb in leborso ra thinōil a llebraib imdaib* 'Áed mac meic Crimthaind wrote this book which he assembled from numerous books'.²⁴ He concluded that Áed compiled the manuscript for the most part in the decade following 1160, the year in which the Annals of Ulster record the death of Find úa Gormáin, bishop of Kildare, who addresses Áed in a letter preserved in the manuscript as [*fer*] *léigind ardrīg Leithi Moga ... [prīm]šenchaid Laigen ar gaes 7 eolas 7 trebaire lebur 7 fessa 7 foglomma* 'the *fer léigind* [lector, man of learning] of the high-king of Leth Moga [the southern half of Ireland] ... chief historian of Leinster as regards acuteness, information, cultivation of books, research and knowledge'.²⁵

The LL Text of TBC II and the Stowe Text of TBC IIB

According to Thurneysen, LL contains the best surviving texts of the works of Bearbeiter

¹⁸ This was his second objective: 'Zweitens hat er die Vorlage stilistisch umgeformt. Auch hier ist sein Bestreben schon dadurch klar, daß der einzige Abschnitt, den er unverändert aufnimmt, §§56-61 ..., ist', *ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁹ 'eine eigene Erzählung, die Schlacht von Ros na Ríg', *ibid.*, p. 33. Cf. also, 'und der jüngere Bearbeiter dieser Sage im Anfang des 12. Jahrhunderts hat diesen Stil auf die ganze lange Erzählung, sowie auf die Sage Mesca Ulad ... ausgedehnt und eine eigene Sage in dieser Darstellungsweise erfunden', *ibid.*, p. 60. Of the LL text of CRR he remarks, 'A bietet einen der wenigen Fälle, wo wir auf den Erfinder (nicht Bearbeiter) einer Sage direkt den Finger legen können. Er ist ohne jeden Zweifel derselbe, den wir als Bearbeiter C der *Táin bó Cuailnge* kennen gelernt haben und den wir in derselben Tätigkeit bei Mesca Ulad kennen lernen werden', *ibid.*, p. 364.

²⁰ 'Er ist von sehr großem Einfluß nicht nur auf seine Zeitgenossen gewesen, wie z.B. der eine der Bearbeiter von Dares Phrygius eine Menge von Ausdrücken ihm entlehnt, sondern fast die ganze Prosa der Folgezeit bis ins 17. Jahrhundert richtet sich, so gut sie's versteht, nach seinem Muster', *ibid.*, p. 33.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33, with a reference to *ZCP* 12 (1918), p. 281.

²² 'Wir können ihn ziemlich sicher ins erste Viertel des 12. Jahrhunderts datieren', *ibid.*, p. 33 (similarly, p. 115); 'Seine Zeit ist einigermaßen dadurch bestimmt, daß das – schon manche Veränderungen zeigende – Buch von Leinster ca. 1160 geschrieben ist', *ibid.*, p. 114; 'der jüngere Bearbeiter dieser Sage im Anfang des 12. Jahrhunderts ...', *ibid.*, p. 60. Note also, in reference to the LL text of CRR: 'Die Erzählung gehört somit ins erste Drittel des 12. Jahrhunderts', *ibid.*, p. 364.

²³ Windisch, *Die altirische Heldensage Táin Bó Cúailnge*, p. 910, n. 2. Best did so 'despite the variety and inequality of the script'; Best *et al.*, *The Book of Leinster*, I, p. xv. For a more recent analysis of the various writing styles in LL and the view that they represent different scribes, including Áed mac Crimthainn, see William O'Sullivan, 'Notes on the scripts and make-up of the Book of Leinster', *Celtica* 7 (1966), 1-31.

²⁴ Cf. footnote marked * at LL 39896.

²⁵ Best *et al.*, *The Book of Leinster*, I, p. xvi; *Heldensage*, pp. 35-6.

C.²⁶ But he refers to deficiencies in them, saying that the ‘beauty of the script and the age of the manuscript’ are not always matched by a corresponding level of textual accuracy. For this, he says, one should not hold Áed responsible but rather his sources, a remark which ties in with the suggestion that the unconventional usage in TBC-LL was also in the exemplar, and indeed in the author’s own text.²⁷

Whatever about deficiencies in the original text, some of those discernible in TBC-LL are clearly late and may be attributable to the LL scribe.²⁸ In these cases TBC Stowe, a 17th-century text of a modernised version of TBC II, known as TBC Iib, provides a better reading, a fact which shows that it cannot be descended from TBC-LL.²⁹ For example, O’Rahilly recommends reading *airtem*, in line with TBC Stowe 2329, rather than *áirnem*, TBC-LL² 2290. Similarly, the following readings are based on TBC Stowe:

focera Mulchi forsin taulaig ‘Mulchi fell on the hill’, TBC-LL² 1261, TBC Stowe 1303
ní fúair [in frecra] ‘He got not the answer’, TBC-LL² 4013, TBC Stowe 3977
ra airg[set] ‘they pillaged’, TBC-LL² 1146, TBC Stowe 1183.³⁰

TBC Stowe and TBC-LL correspond closely in many sections of the story. Although the moderniser changed much, his version is in those sections a faithful representation of the Middle Irish text from which it and TBC-LL are descended.³¹ Comparison of TBC Stowe and TBC-LL shows how the moderniser worked, for instance replacing archaic words, particularly verbal forms. But sometimes he retains old constructions, for example the s-flexion of the old compound verb *con-midethar*, *conmessed*:

Ni airge and conmessed a áes ..., TBC-LL² 726
 ‘You do not find there one that could equal his age ...’

Ni fuigi ann fer conmesedh a ais, TBC Stowe 751.

His text also shares with TBC-LL less unusual but nonetheless old forms which would also have been obsolete in the period to which Thurneysen and O’Rahilly assign it, the 15th century. These may be seen, like *conmessed*, as survivals from the common source and,

²⁶ ‘Es enthält unter anderem die beste, zum Teil einzige Überlieferung der Werke des in Kap. 11 besprochenen Sagenbearbeiters’, *Heldensage*, p. 36. Cf. also his remark, *ibid.*, p. 113, that TBC II is best preserved in LL and, with significant changes, in the later version of the *Táin*, TBC III. Cf. Max Nettlau, ‘The fragment of the *Tain Bó Cuailnge* in Ms. Egerton 93’, *Revue Celtique* 14 (1893), 254-66, *Revue Celtique* 15 (1894), 62-78, 198-208.

²⁷ ‘Freilich ist oft bemerkt worden, daß der Schönheit der Schrift und dem Alter der Handschrift die Güte der Textüberlieferung nicht immer entspricht; doch muß man dafür weniger Áed selber als seine Quellen verantwortlich machen. Außerdem ist die Handschrift jetzt durch Ausfall mancher Blätter lückenhaft’, *Heldensage*, p. 36.

²⁸ Thurneysen appears to acknowledge this when referring to ‘das – schon manche Veränderungen zeigende – Buch von Leinster’, *ibid.*, p. 114.

²⁹ Cecile O’Rahilly (ed.), *The Stowe Version of Táin Bó Cuailnge* (Dublin, 1962).

³⁰ For ‘*Is fír ám, uile annaide*, TBC-LL² 4033 Cecile O’Rahilly appears to favour reading ‘*As fíor emh*’, *ar Ullta uile a n-ainfecht*, TBC Stowe 3992. She prefers *Laoch oircnech*, TBC Stowe 4211, to *Láech órainech*, TBC-LL² 4435. For *barróega*, TBC-LL² 3770, she recommends reading *do-rat*, TBC Stowe 3690, etc.

³¹ Note Thurneysen’s reference to ‘einer LL unabhängigen, aber ihm sehr nahestehenden Handschrift’, *Heldensage*, p. 115.

probably, the archetype:³²

donarfás, TBC Stowe 264, *domarfás*, TBC Stowe 4258, *Tarthedar*, TBC Stowe 587, *Do-rocair*, TBC Stowe 1820, *forsa mboi*, TBC Stowe 1825, [*ro raid ...*] *ara ndicsedh*, TBC Stowe 1760 etc.

If Thurneysen is correct in attributing the *Mißformen* in TBC-LL to the author of TBC II, they would also have to have been in the common source of TBC-LL and TBC Stowe. One would also expect some to survive in the latter. However, we only find constructions with the apparently non-historical pretonic verbal particle *con*, a feature referred to briefly by Quiggin.³³ Compare:

consealgatar, TBC Stowe 293 : *conselgatar*, TBC-LL² 287 : *selgatar*, TBC I 121
Concicra, TBC Stowe 435 : *concicher*, TBC-LL² 422
congairdis, TBC Stowe 2295 : *congáiritis*, TBC-LL² 2257.

Forms of this kind could in fact have been in the common source. O’Rahilly notes two instances in the version of *Breslech Maige Murthemne* found in TBC-LL, which is almost precisely the same as the version found in the LU text of TBC.³⁴ The latter is in the hand of the original LU scribe referred to by Best as M, and identified by him as Máel Muire mac Céilechair, who died in 1106.³⁵ The underlying common source containing these two instances of pretonic *con* could very well have been in existence in the 11th century:

contescfad (*gáirid*), TBC I 2235, TBC-LL² 2252n.³⁶
congáirtis (*tescaid*), TBC I 2240, *congáirtis*, TBC-LL² 2257.³⁷

Would the absence of all other TBC-LL *Mißformen* in TBC Stowe mean that the moderniser removed or replaced them? If it does, one would have to conclude that his treatment of such forms was more consistent than that of conventional old forms like *conmessed*. One could say that he identified them as a distinct type of form and systematically eliminated them, thereby correcting the common source of three hundred years earlier. Examples include the following:

conscomarc, TBC-LL² 76 *fiafraigheas*, TBC Stowe 81
conscodarc, TBC-LL² 142 *Ro fhiarfaigh*, TBC Stowe 149
Laigis, TBC-LL² 2369 *cuiris*, TBC Stowe 2405
rabert, TBC-LL² 2636 *it-bert*, TBC Stowe 2633

³² For a similar suggestion in relation to CRR, the LL version of which Thurneysen considered to be an original tale (see below), and on the relationship of the LL and Edinburgh texts of the Middle Irish recension of *Mesca Ulad*, see Uáitéar Mac Gearailt, ‘The Edinburgh text of *Mesca Ulad*’, *Ériu* 37 (1986), 133-80, at p. 133 f. On the TBC IIb manuscripts, see *Heldensage*, p. 115 f., TBC Stowe, pp. xlvii-liv, pp. xxix-xxx.

³³ Quiggin, *Die lautliche Geltung*, p. 37 f. For an attempt to explain such forms see Mac Gearailt, ‘Verbal particles and preverbs’, pp. 153-84, at pp. 169-74.

³⁴ Cf. in particular TBC-LL² 2121-368, TBC I 2072-364.

³⁵ John O’Donovan (ed. and trans.), *Annala Rioghachta Eireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616*, 7 vols. (Dublin 1848-5), s.a.; Best and Bergin, *Lebor na Huidre*, p. ix f.

³⁶ This may not be an instance of *con*. The editors of the Diplomatic Edition read *co tescfad*, LL 9670; cf. LU 6432.

³⁷ = LL 9695; cf. *congairtis*, LU 6437.

<i>faítti</i> , TBC-LL ² 2095	<i>faoidis</i> , TBC Stowe, 2133
<i>basrópart</i> , TBC-LL ² 2097, 2099, 2115	<i>Ro iondsaigh, ro fhobair, Ro iondsaig</i> , TBC Stowe 2135, -37, -53
<i>marímat</i> , TBC-LL ² 2442	<i>at-berit</i> , TBC Stowe 2442
<i>bosróthi</i> , TBC-LL ² 2469	<i>Telcis</i> , TBC Stowe 2460
<i>bad fiadnaissi</i> , TBC-LL ² 2462	<i>ina fiadnaise</i> , TBC Stowe 2454
<i>arrecaim</i> , TBC-LL ² 3	<i>co dtarla</i> , TBC Stowe 3
<i>dorécaim</i> , TBC-LL ² 105	<i>co dtarla</i> , TBC Stowe 114
<i>ra théigsetar</i> , TBC-LL ² 3808	<i>tangatar</i> , TBC Stowe 3722
<i>barasféad</i> , TBC-LL ² 3645	<i>do taisbenadh</i> , TBC Stowe 3552
<i>Confóchta</i> , TBC-LL ² 315	<i>Ro fiarfaigh</i> , TBC Stowe 323
<i>airm condricfaitis</i> , TBC-LL ² 3826	<i>áit i ccomraicfidis</i> , TBC Stowe 3779
<i>amgéna</i> , TBC-LL ² 449	<i>do-genair-si</i> , TBC Stowe 465.

He would thus have treated these forms in precisely the same manner as Thurneysen suggests they were treated by the LL scribe, except that he would have been much more thorough, eliminating not just those unusual forms but also the late orthography which is closely associated with them, for example spellings like *bar* ‘on’, for *for*; *ba* ‘under’, for *fo*; *ra* ‘against’, for *fri*; *badesta* ‘now’, for *fodechtsa*; *badéin* ‘himself etc.’, for *fadéin* etc.³⁸ Given the rarity of such forms in his text, there are grounds for doubting that the *Mißformen* in TBC-LL were in the common source at all or that they originated in the author’s text.

Thurneysen and the Date of TBC II

What made Thurneysen think that such forms went back to the author of TBC II? For a likely answer we may go to an additional remark by Quiggin regarding the non-standard orthography in the later part of the LL *Táin*, namely that it is also found in the LL text of *Cath Ruis na Ríg*, CRR-LL:

Weil ganz dieselbe Orthographie wie im 2. Teile sich noch in dem gewissermassen die Fortsetzung bildenden Sagentext *Cath Ruis na Rig*, wie er LL 171a-178a steht, vorfindet, habe ich diesen mehrfach in die Untersuchung mit hineinbezogen.³⁹

Thurneysen’s conclusion that CRR and TBC II were composed by Bearbeiter C may have been prompted in the first place by this observation. At any rate, it seems likely that his conviction in this regard led him to the conclusion that the non-standard usage (*Mißformen*) in both tales must have originated in the text of the common author himself, and to the suggestion that the standard usage in the first half of TBC-LL was therefore later and was probably attributable to the LL scribe. As regards the identity and *floruit* of the common author, he could conclude – although he does not say so – that he was not Áed mac Crimthainn, for the man described by bishop Finn as ‘the *fer léigind* of the high-king of Leth Moga’ and ‘the chief historian of Leinster as regards acuteness, information, cultivation of books, research and knowledge’ would hardly have begun suddenly to use

³⁸ On this late orthography see Mac Gearailt, ‘The language of some late Middle Irish texts’, pp. 167-216, at pp. 172-86; idem, ‘The relationship of Recensions II and III of the *Táin*’, in J.P. Mallory, G. Stockman (eds.), *Ulidia: Proceedings of the First International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales* (Belfast, 1994), pp. 55-70; idem, ‘Verbal particles and preverbs’, pp. 153-84, at p. 158 f.

³⁹ Quiggin, *Die lautliche Geltung*, p. 7.

late non-standard orthography and unorthodox verbal constructions halfway through his own composition.

The common author, Bearbeiter C, would thus have to be earlier than 1160 and the *Miðformen* which Thurneysen attributed to him would become a key criterion in dating his work. If one assumes that by *Miðformen* Thurneysen meant non-standard forms like *ra bert* for *do-bert* or *at-bert*, *ba luid* for *ro luid*, *barrecgaib* for *do-recmaing* etc., which occur throughout TBC-LL, and in particularly large numbers in the second half of the text, he would have observed that there is nothing similar in texts which he himself assigned to the 11th century, including *Breslech Maige Murthemne*, which forms part of TBC-LL and which Thurneysen believed Bearbeiter C took over unchanged from the mid-11th-century Kompilator's predominantly Old Irish *Táin*-compilation (TBC I), using its style as the model for his new version of the tale, TBC II.⁴⁰ In attempting to date TBC II, he would thus have assumed that it is later than *Breslech* and the Kompilator because of Bearbeiter C's *Miðformen*. These forms, preserved in large numbers in TBC-LL, would be unlikely to have occurred in the early 11th-century archetype of *Breslech*, although, as already remarked, the common source of the TBC-LL and TBC-LU versions contained at least one instance of the pretonic verbal particle *con*. That text also contained a small number of verbs with late, non-standard representations of preverbs of the kind found in TBC-LL as a whole. Thurneysen appears not to have taken these into consideration, but one imagines that if he had he would have classified them as *Miðformen*:

<i>fogníth</i> TBC I 2236, TBC-LL ² 2253	for	<i>do-gníth</i>
<i>imthescad</i> TBC I 2237, TBC-LL ² 2254	for	? <i>no thescad</i> ⁴¹
<i>Ro chress</i> TBC I 2242, <i>Ro chres</i> TBC-LL ² 2259	for	<i>Fo-cress</i> .

As regards the date of TBC II, the question would arise, how much time could reasonably be expected to have elapsed between the composition of *Breslech* and the rest of the tale with all its distinctive *Miðformen*. In assigning it to the first quarter or third of the 12th century, Thurneysen allowed for an interval of a full century. This would mean that its descendant, TBC-LL, might have been written by Áed mac Crimthainn as few as 25 years later, while the common source it shared with TBC-Stowe would have been written in the intervening period, possibly soon after the archetype was composed. It would not be unreasonable to imagine that that common source was a quite faithful copy of the very recently composed archetype, and since it was also very close to TBC-LL, as Thurneysen believed,⁴² one could imagine there being hardly any appreciable difference between the latter and Bearbeiter C's original, apart from the effects of possible attempts by the LL scribe to standardize the first half of the text.⁴³

Thus, Thurneysen assigned the *Miðformen* in TBC-LL to the first quarter of the 12th century. This dating seems reasonable, but usage of this kind, being probably attributable

⁴⁰ For other texts assigned by him to the 11th century see *Heldensage*, p. 668.

⁴¹ The corresponding three forms in TBC Stowe are *do-ghní* (2291), *no teascadh* (2291), *Ro cuireadh* (2297).

⁴² Despite referring to the 'many changes' it reflects, *Heldensage*, p. 114.

⁴³ These would have been among the 'many changes' referred to by Thurneysen.

to a small number of individuals and having few parallels otherwise, would normally be difficult to date accurately. Conventional dating criteria, such as the use of compound verbs, *t-* and reduplicated preterite forms, the relative sentence, infixed pronouns and so on, were apparently not taken into consideration by him, although they might be expected to offer good prospects of establishing a date, for they and their use in writing underwent significant change between the early 11th and early 12th centuries. One would expect such change to be reflected in Bearbeiter C's original text of TBC II, that is one would expect a linguistic contrast between *Breslech* and the rest of the text. This contrast should also be reflected in TBC-LL, whose version of *Breslech*, as already noted, is almost precisely the same as that found in TBC-LU, which means that in the TBC-LL *Breslech* we have a very accurate reflection of a common source in existence before 1106, when the LU scribe Máel Muire died,⁴⁴ and, accordingly, of the version contained in Bearbeiter C's own text. If Thurneysen realised that the TBC-LL *Breslech* was thus a very faithful representation of the version copied by Bearbeiter C for his original text of TBC II, then it would not have been unreasonable for him to think that TBC-LL in its entirety was an accurate reflection of the archetype.

The fact that *Mißformen* are found in all sections of what he considered to be Bearbeiter C's own original composition, the LL version of CRR, would have encouraged Thurneysen in the belief that such forms were also found throughout the archetype of TBC II, and that the standard usage in the first half of the LL text was due to the scribe of that manuscript, Áed mac Crimthainn. Of course, in that case Áed's usage in the first half of the text would largely reflect that of the mid-12th century, in which case the remnants of Bearbeiter C's *Mißformen*, on the one hand, and Áed's contribution, on the other, should make that half thoroughly 12th-century in language and contrast sharply with *Breslech*.⁴⁵

However, Windisch does not note such a contrast.⁴⁶ Nor do O Daly and O'Rahilly refer to significant differences between *Breslech* and the rest of the text as regards conventional dating criteria such as those listed above.⁴⁷ In her detailed account of the verbal system, O Daly, like most other scholars, accepted Thurneysen's views on Bearbeiter C, and his authorship of TBC II and CRR, and found no compelling reason to propose an alternative date to that suggested by him.⁴⁸ Thus the principal consideration for her, as for Thurneysen, in dating TBC II appears to have been the TBC-LL

⁴⁴ If we accept Ó Concheanainn's view that the LU scribe known as M was not Máel Muire and that the latter was in fact the Interpolator, the common source could be earlier: Tomás Ó Concheanainn, 'The reviser of Leabhar na hUidhre', *Éigse* 15 (1974), 277-88.

⁴⁵ A qualification that could be included here is that Áed's contribution represents a standard form of Middle Irish that cannot be dated precisely and that could be assigned to the 11th century just as easily as to the 12th. But there is no evidence to suggest that a fixed literary standard existed in Middle Irish that authors were determined to preserve, such as that adhered to by professional hereditary poets of the Early Modern period (1200-1600). On this see Uáitéar Mac Gearailt, 'Zur literarischen Sprache des 11. Jahrhunderts', in Rolf Ködderitzsch, Arndt Wigger, Stefan Zimmer (eds.), *Akten des Zweiten Deutschen Keltologen-Symposiums. Bonn, 2-4. April 1997* (Tübingen, 1999), pp. 105-20, at pp. 115-20.

⁴⁶ Windisch, *Die altirische Heldensage Táin Bó Cúalnge*.

⁴⁷ O Daly, 'The verbal system of the LL Táin'; O'Rahilly, *Táin Bó Cúalnge from the Book of Leinster*.

⁴⁸ O Daly, 'The verbal system of the LL Táin', pp. 137-9.

Mißformen, that is non-standard orthography and unorthodox representations of pretonic preverbs and particles, which they agreed pointed to the first quarter of the 12th century.

This suggests that this non-standard usage constitutes the only significant difference between *Breslech* and the rest of TBC-LL. But we have already had reason to doubt whether it was in the author's text, in view of the fact that TBC Stowe has very few traces of the distinctive orthography and verbal forms found in TBC-LL, and the possibility that the common source of TBC Stowe and TBC-LL might therefore not have contained such usage. If one begins to imagine TBC-LL without such usage and disregards the suggestion that standard usage in the first half is due to scribal intervention, one envisages a text which is largely homogeneous in orthography and language and looks something like *Breslech*. The contrast between the latter episode and the rest of the text, as regards conventional dating criteria of the kind listed above, would be less significant. Dates of composition separating the two sections of the text by a century would not be justified and a date of composition closer to that proposed by Thurneysen for *Breslech*, the early 11th century, might seem reasonable. We therefore need to consider further whether Thurneysen's TBC-LL *Mißformen* go back to the earliest stages of transmission of TBC II.

The Common Authorship of TBC II and CRR, and the Date and Origin of CRR-LL

The suggestion that those unorthodox forms in TBC-LL were in the original text of TBC II is probably based on Thurneysen's conviction that that text and CRR are by the same author. For detailed evidence of the common authorship of TBC II, CRR, and the Middle Irish version of *Mesca Ulad* (MU II), all of which are found in LL, he refers the reader to the dissertation of his student Áine de Paor (Annie Power), which she completed before World War I. Some time after the appearance of *Heldensage* in 1921 de Paor published a paper on the subject that appears to be based on that dissertation.⁴⁹ In this she first examines TBC I and TBC-LL, comparing their versions of three episodes of the story. She notes a number of distinctive characteristics in TBC-LL, for example fondness for detail and description, and for logical formality, a tendency to give reasons, to account for facts, to 'classify' things in groups of three, to repeat verbatim whole passages, and so on.⁵⁰ The structure and style of passages is improved, she suggests, and the portrayal of Medb and Fergus is changed significantly. She also compares TBC-LL with MU II and CRR-LL and finds similarities pointing to common authorship, for example in wording, phrases, and descriptions, in the use of triadic combinations and narrative sequences, and in the portrayal of Medb.⁵¹

⁴⁹ I have not yet been able to see the dissertation.

⁵⁰ Áine de Paor, 'The common authorship of some Book of Leinster texts', *Ériu* 9 (1923), 118-146, at pp. 122; 124; 145; 119; 129; 126-8. The volume in question may not have appeared until 1924, however the article was written some years earlier. *Heldensage* is not referred to but earlier publications by Thurneysen are, namely *Zu irischen Handschriften und Litteraturdenkmälern* II (1912) (at p. 118) and 'Die Überlieferung der Táin Bó Cúailnge', *ZCP* 9 (1913), 418-43 (at p. 146). It seems therefore that her article is based largely on her dissertation. However the author does take the same position as Thurneysen – in *Heldensage* – on the question of the relationship of CRR-LL to the later version, on which see below.

⁵¹ de Paor, 'Common authorship', pp. 132-43; 118, 136, 145; 144.

Already in 1905, Windisch had noted some parallels between TBC-LL and MU-LL.⁵² In *Zu irischen Handschriften und Litteraturdenkmälern II* (1912), Thurneysen had asked if such similarities might be due to common authorship or simply reflect a similar taste or approach in two different authors.⁵³ By the time *Heldensage* appeared he seemed to be certain that those two compositions and CRR were by the same author. Any doubts he may have had about the matter may therefore have been removed by his student's dissertation, to which he refers the reader.⁵⁴

However, verbal correspondences and similarities in diction between compositions belonging to the same literary category should not surprise us, especially when one of them represents an impressive literary achievement. In the case of CRR we also have to consider the differences. These come to light in the first place when we compare the LL version, of which no other text exists or is known to have existed, with another found in 17th- and 18th-century manuscripts.⁵⁵ Both versions tell how Conchobor, king of Ulster, defeated Cairpre Nia Fer, king of Tara, in the battle of Ross na Ríg, in revenge for his part in the destruction inflicted on Ulster during the *Táin*. But there are significant differences between them, which led Hogan, in his edition of 1892, to believe that the later one could not be descended from CRR-LL.⁵⁶ Although unaware of the later texts, Zimmer had already suggested as much in 'Keltische Beiträge I' (1888), referring in a partial analysis of the LL text to an older underlying version of the tale. Thurneysen ignored this view and attributed differences between the two versions to the later author, who, he said, based his version on CRR-LL, which was the original version of the tale, composed by Bearbeiter C. My own research, published in various papers, supports Hogan and Zimmer and shows that the tale already existed when CRR-LL was composed, that a common source underlies both versions, that the later version is a faithful if not perfect reflection of that source, and that CRR-LL diverges significantly from it.⁵⁷

⁵² Windisch, *Die altirische Heldensage Táin Bó Cúalnge*, p. 789.

⁵³ 'Ob beide LL-Texte denselben Redaktor haben, oder ob es sich nur um den gleichen Geschmack zweier Zeitgenossen handelt, würde wohl eine genaue Untersuchung der Diktion bestimmen lassen', *Zu irischen Handschriften und Litteraturdenkmälern. Zweite Serie*. Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philol.-hist. Klasse, N.F. Vol. 14. No. 2. (Berlin, 1912), p. 12, n. 1.

⁵⁴ 'Den Nachweis der Identität gibt im Einzelnen eine Dissertation von Fräulein Annie Power, die kurz vor dem Kriege bei der philosophischen Fakultät Bonn eingereicht wurde, aber noch nicht veröffentlicht ist', *Heldensage*, p. 33, n. 1.

⁵⁵ Edmund Hogan (ed. and trans.), *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn with Preface, Translation and Indices*, Todd Lecture Series 4 (Dublin, 1892). He edited and translated CRR-LL (pp. 2-59) and the 18th-century text (e.g. in British Library, Egerton 106; pp. 60-107). In the meantime, a text bearing similarities to the latter but with some significant differences, has come to light in the mid-17th-century Irish MS, National Library of Scotland, 72.2.9.

⁵⁶ 'from what *is* and what is *not* in the later version, it is clear that it cannot be derived from the *LL*. story', Hogan, *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn*, p. xx. Later he lists the 'Remains of the *LL*. Text in the Modern Version' (p. xxviii) and 'Grammatical Remains of a Middle Irish Version different from the *LL*. Version' (p. xxix).

⁵⁷ Uáitéar Mac Gearailt, 'Zum Irischen des 12. Jahrhunderts', *ZCP* 43 (1989), 11-52; idem, 'Cath Ruis na Ríg and twelfth-century literary and oral tradition', *ZCP* 44 (1991), 128-53; idem, 'The Edinburgh text of *Mesca Ulad*', *Ériu* 37 (1986), 133-80; idem, 'Die Gedichte in *Cath Ruis na Ríg*', in E. Poppe (ed.), *Akten des 3. Deutschen Keltologensymposiums Marburg, März 2001* (Münster, 2004), pp. 211-26; idem, 'Scéal Chath Rois na Ríogh: tuilleadh faoi na foinsí', in Breandán Ó Conaire (ed.), *Aistí ag Iompar Scéil: In Ómós*

The divergences mainly concern the roles of the principal characters. The most important relates to the portrayal of the Ulster warrior Conall Cernach as the veritable leader of Ulster and a great ruler of foreign kingdoms.⁵⁸ In the opening section of both versions Conchobor sends envoys to summon Scandinavian allies for the battle, but only in CRR-LL are they also sent to Conall. He is in fact the first ally to be named in that version and the only one the Ulster envoys meet. When they tell him about the *Táin*, he declares that if he had been in Ulster at the time, the cattle-raid would not have been carried out without due punishment. Thus, having given him a prominent role in this episode, CRR-LL now has Conall implying that the king of Ulster has done a bad job and that he himself would have done better.⁵⁹ Conall then assembles a vast Scandinavian fleet and sets sail for Ulster, but, as Zimmer noted, he is absent from the festivities prepared by Conchobor at Dún Delga.⁶⁰ His absence from the action in Ulster is brought about by having his fleet split into three parts by a storm and sea-monsters in the Straits of Moyle,⁶¹ so that a section led by Scandinavians is welcomed at Dún Delga by Conchobor – as in the later texts – while Conall arrives at a different location.

But Conall re-enters the story later, at the precise point where he makes his first entrance in the later texts.⁶² In both versions he rushes to the battlefield to defend the king, whose shield, the Óchaín, has signalled his distress. But in the later texts he fails a test of courage by declining Conchobor's request to take command.⁶³ In CRR-LL by contrast he is portrayed as the veritable hero: the sight of his countenance (*gnúis*) as he approached the battlefield causes warriors to halt their flight, for they are sure there will be no retreat from the place where that face is seen; on the other hand, the king retreats and puts the battle under Conall's protection; in response the latter declares that it is a disgrace for the king of a province to be seen in retreat;⁶⁴ he then draws his great sword, and its sound inspires the warriors to return to their battle positions with renewed courage. Later, after he has helped Ulster to victory, the king himself, Conchobor, declares that if Conall had not been present at Ross na Ríg Ulster would have been defeated. He thus more or less supports Conall's own claim at the beginning of the text that the *Táin* would not have been carried out without due punishment if he had been in Ulster at the time.⁶⁵

do Shéamus P. Ó Mórdha (Dublin, 2004), pp. 211-39; idem, 'Leaganacha de *Cath Ruis na Ríg*: an deilbhíocht idir 1100 agus 1650', in Pádraig Breatnach, Caoimhín Breatnach, Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail (eds.), *Léann Lámhscríbhinní Lóbháin / The Louvain Manuscript Heritage* (Dublin, 2007), pp. 168-97.

⁵⁸ The kingdoms named are the territories of Lewis (Western Isles), Orkney, Caithness, Scythia, Dacia, Gothia, and Northmannia. He is also said to be travelling the English Channel and the Mediterranean, and pillaging the roads of the Saxons; LL 22740; Hogan, *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn*, p. 10.

⁵⁹ LL 22737 ff.; Hogan, *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn*, p. 10.

⁶⁰ '... dass bis zum schluss ... diese nordischen bundesgenossen und hilfstruppen vollkommen vergessen sind': Heinrich Zimmer, 'Keltische Beiträge I', *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Alterthum und Deutsche Literatur* 32 (1888), 196-334, at p. 228. He edited and translated this part of the text (LL 22737-22848; Hogan, *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn*, pp. 10-20).

⁶¹ *Sruthair na Maile Chind Tiri*: LL 22785; Hogan, *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn*, p. 12.

⁶² LL 23101; Hogan, *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn*, p. 42.

⁶³ Hogan, *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn*, p. 90.

⁶⁴ LL 23116; Hogan, *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn*, p. 44.

⁶⁵ LL 23256; Hogan, *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn*, p. 56.

Comparison of the two versions shows that the story already existed in the 12th century, as Hogan believed, and as Zimmer had earlier suggested. It also brings to light obvious flaws in the work of the author of CRR-LL. The long section concerning Conall's Scandinavian fleet, which has no parallel in the later texts and most of which, as Zimmer observed, has no bearing on the rest of the tale, creates an obvious structural imbalance. There is nothing like Conall's criticism of the king in the later texts, which probably preserve the episode in its original form. In that version the king turns with the same request – to take command – to each of his champions, including Conall, and one by one they all refuse except Cú Chulainn. He thus stands out, as the last champion in such a sequence might be expected to do, and goes on to change the course of the battle in favour of Ulster and to cause the defeat of Tara by killing its king, Cairpre Nia Fer, in single combat. He also appears in the last section of the same sequence in CRR-LL, and he kills the king of Tara, but the effect of the many changes introduced by the author to enhance Conall's status in the story, of which his criticism of Conchobor is but one, is that the hero, Cú Chulainn, appears to be playing second fiddle.

Given the makeshift nature of the LL version of CRR, it seems unlikely that an earlier text existed and that if it did it can hardly have been much earlier. CRR-LL may therefore have been composed by the LL scribe.⁶⁶ If so, he would have had good reason to depart from the existing story and change Conall Cernach's role, being at work on a manuscript in or near the territory of the Laígisi, a Leinster people who claimed descent from Conall in their genealogies.⁶⁷

As already noted, both versions tell largely the same story, but the later one has no trace of CRR-LL's flattering treatment of Conall at the expense of Conchobor and Cú Chulainn. Nor does it contain its narrative flaws, its irregular, non-historical verbal constructions, or its late orthography, all of which may be attributed to the author of the LL version. What it shares with the latter, for instance the basic storyline, characters, poems, diction, and similarly worded phrases at parallel points in the story,⁶⁸ may be taken to reflect the Middle Irish forerunner, from which the author of the LL version departed in order to pursue his own particular goals.

TBC II and CRR-LL are clearly different kinds of composition. One is a new version of an Old Irish tale whose spirit and sense the author endeavours to preserve in full. The other is a new version of a more recently composed tale, in which the author sets out to change the portrayal of a particular character and in the process creates numerous inconsistencies and irregularities. Similarities between the two tales, such as those mentioned by Thurneysen and de Paor, may be put down to the influence of TBC II, which for six or seven centuries was regarded as the definitive version of the *Táin*.

⁶⁶ Áed mac Crimthainn, according to O'Sullivan, 'Notes on the scripts and make-up of the Book of Leinster'; see the collation table after p. 30.

⁶⁷ *Laegsech Cendmor mac Conaill Cernaig. Is uad atat Laigsi* 'Laegsech Cendmór son of Conall Cernach. The Laígisi are descended from him', LL 40904. The Laígisi are referred to as *cenél Conaill Chernaig* 'the people of, i.e. descended from, Conall Cernach', LL 39715.

⁶⁸ Mac Gearailt, 'Leaganacha de *Cath Ruis na Ríg*', pp. 168-93; idem, 'Die Gedichte in *Cath Ruis na Ríg*'; idem, 'Scéal *Chath Rois na Ríogh*', pp. 211-18.

If TBC II and CRR-LL were composed by separate authors, distinctive non-standard orthography and verbal forms which Quiggin pointed out, including the following which are found in TBC- and CRR-LL, are less likely to have been in the archetype of TBC II:

<i>barrecgaib</i>	for <i>dorecmaing</i> ‘happened’ ⁶⁹
<i>faítti</i>	for <i>faídid</i> ‘(s)he sends’ ⁷⁰
<i>ra théigsetar</i>	for <i>do-lotar/ táncatar</i> ‘came, went’/ <i>?ra éigsetar</i> ‘roared’ ⁷¹
<i>bar</i>	for <i>for</i> ‘on’, ‘inquit’
<i>ra</i>	for <i>fri</i> ‘against’. ⁷²

It is likely that such forms arose in TBC II during transmission. As for the features shared by TBC-LL and CRR-LL, they may reflect the influence of a text of TBC II very similar in language and date to TBC-LL, or the use of such forms in a particular school or region in the 12th century.

As the small number traceable to the common source of the TBC-LU and TBC-LL versions of *Breslech* indicates, non-standard spellings and unconventional pretonic preverbs and verbal particles of the kind under discussion here were already appearing in manuscripts in the later 11th century. However, the distinctive forms found in all episodes of TBC-LL other than *Breslech*, and in CRR-LL, for example *barrecgaib* ‘happened’ and *bar* ‘on’, are not found in LU or Rawlinson B 502 – another manuscript of the first third of the 12th century. They are likely therefore to be later.

If CRR-LL was composed by its scribe, or even if it is a copy of a slightly earlier text, it may be assigned to the mid-12th century. Its unusual orthography and non-historical verbal forms may also be dated to that period. TBC-LL and its late non-standard usage, including distinctive pseudo-archaisms like *faítti* ‘sends’ and *ra théigsetar* ‘came/ went’, which are also found in CRR-LL, may also be assigned to that period. If such forms are what Thurneysen meant by *Mißformen*, the date he assigns to them is likely therefore to be too early.

TBC II was earlier than TBC- or CRR-LL and in its original form it is unlikely to have contained *Mißformen*, that is, in all probability its author did not use such forms. Bearing in mind also that the common source of TBC-Stowe and TBC-LL probably did not contain such forms, we may assume that the mixed usage in TBC-LL arose at a late stage of textual transmission and that in its more conventional usage and older regular forms we see a reflection of the language of the earliest stage of transmission, rather than the effects of standardizing on the part of the LL scribe. We must therefore distinguish between the late forms and conventional older usage, for instance in the first half of the text, in which we see remnants of the language of an earlier stage of transmission.

⁶⁹ CRR-LL: *barécaim*, LL 23214 etc. TBC-LL: *barrecaibsium*, LL 9957 etc.

⁷⁰ On this form see Mac Gearailt, ‘The language of some late Middle Irish texts’, p. 196 f., idem, ‘Leaganacha de *Cath Ruis na Ríg*’, p. 178 f.

⁷¹ Mac Gearailt, ‘The language of some late Middle Irish texts’, p. 191.

⁷² Quiggin, *Die lautliche Geltung*, pp. 22, 31.

Separating late and early forms, we see an earlier text of TBC II. Comparing the rest of TBC-LL with *Breslech*, which Thurneysen assigned to the early 11th century, it should be possible to date TBC II on a firmer basis and to see if it might have been composed as early as *Breslech*.

The greater part of the TBC-LU and TBC-LL version of *Breslech*, reflecting a common source earlier than 1106, has none of the obviously unconventional forms found in all other episodes of TBC-LL.⁷³ If there was no significant difference in language between it and the early text of TBC II which can be postulated on the basis of the older usage in the rest of TBC-LL, the date of composition of both should be similar. It is to the older usage in TBC-LL therefore that we must turn our attention when attempting to date TBC II, taking Thurneysen's date for *Breslech* as a guide, that is the early 11th century.

The Language and Date of CRR-LL

Let us therefore consider the linguistic features of these three texts, CRR-LL, for which we have proposed a date around 1160, *Breslech*, for which we have Thurneysen's date, the early 11th century, and the rest of TBC II.

The most important feature of the language of CRR-LL is its unorthodox forms.⁷⁴ Some, as already seen, are also found in TBC-LL but they are otherwise unknown or rare.⁷⁵ There is no evidence in the later texts to suggest that anything similar occurred in the original version of CRR. These forms belong therefore to the period in which TBC- and CRR-LL were written, the middle to late 12th century.

It may be sufficient here to comment on three examples of similar meaning. Given the evidently arbitrary nature of their initial pretonic syllables, *cond-* and *bat-*, it is not surprising that the very similar forms *condnoathatar* and *batnoath[at]ar*, both meaning 'they told, made known', are otherwise unattested. However they are clearly related to the verb *nóid* 'makes known, spreads the fame of, celebrates'.⁷⁶ The form *barridnachtatar-som* appears also to be intended to mean 'they told'. It matches Old Irish *do-rindnachtatar*, perfect pl. 3 of *do-indnaig* 'bestows', which is not otherwise known to have the meaning 'tells'.⁷⁷ All three forms appear therefore to have the same meaning as the form commonly used in 12th-century texts, *ro innisetar*, preterite pl. 3 of the Middle Irish simple verb *innisid* 'tells', which the author also uses:

⁷³ According to O'Sullivan, these pages are by the finest of the LL hands, F, possibly Finn úa Gormáin himself but more likely to be his scribe: 'Notes on the scripts and make-up of the Book of Leinster', pp. 1-31, at p. 6 f. Once T, the principal scribe of TBC-LL, takes up the pen again, on p. 79a, 'the clumsier style resumes' (ibid., p. 6) and much greater concentrations of late orthography and unusual verbal forms than are found in the first half of the text begin to appear. Cf. Mac Gearailt, 'The language of some late Middle Irish texts', pp. 169-79; idem, 'Verbal particles and preverbs', p. 157.

⁷⁴ On the language of CRR-LL see Mac Gearailt, 'Zum Irischen des 12. Jahrhunderts'.

⁷⁵ On closely related forms in Recension III of TBC, see Mac Gearailt, 'The relationship of Recensions II and III of the Táin'.

⁷⁶ DIL, s.v.

⁷⁷ On pretonic verbal *con/ ba/ bo/ fo/ fa/ im* and *do/ bar* in late Middle Irish texts see Mac Gearailt, 'Verbal particles and preverbs', pp. 166-80.

& *condnoathatar dano na scela ro batar accu do Chonall*, LL 22758

‘and they told Conall the news they had’

& *batnoathar dóib na scélasain*, LL 22935

‘and they told them those tidings’

Is and dano barridnachtatarsom dósum Táin Bó Cualnge do breith ..., LL 22761

‘And it was then they told him that the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* had been carried out ...’

ro innisetarsom dó na comasain, LL 22911

‘they made known those terms to him’.

Other apparently pseudo-archaic forms used by him include the following:

ra tholathar (do) (verb *tolnathir*), LL 22629, 22633, 22639

ni forulngither (do) (verb *fo-loing*), LL 23007

nir brulngither (do), LL 23174, *nir borulngither (do)*, LL 23192

ní ... barroebalangair (do) (verb *do-ling*), LL 23008

nach farroeblangatar (do) (verb *for-ling/ do-ling*), LL 22858

Nad orgenamarni (verb *do-gní*), LL 22891

barroebri (verb *for-brissi/ brissid*), LL 22654

bognítha (verb *do-gní*), LL 23037

bachotasum (verb *ad-cota*), LL 23238

comterbtis (verb?), LL 23277

comnattacht (verb *ad-teich/ con-dieig*), LL 23237

confaítti (verb *faídid*), LL 22773,

faítte (verb *faídid*), LL 22768

ros bae (verb *báid/ benaid*⁷⁸), LL 23270

rodas cloe (verb *cloid*), LL 23269

robretha (verb *do-beir*), LL 22768

dobrethasum (verb *do-beir*), LL 23238

rabert (verb *do-beir*), LL 23169

docuas (verb *ad-fét*), LL 22888

rocuas (verb *ad-fét*), LL 22871⁷⁹

selais (verb ?*sligid*), LL 23132 etc.

In using these alternatives to forms in normal use, the mid-12th-century author of CRR-LL was hoping to give his composition an archaic appearance, as Thurneysen says of the person who introduced *Mißformen* into TBC II.⁸⁰ Had he known an old construction actually meaning ‘they told’, such as Old Irish *ad-cuaid/ ad-cuaidetar*, perfect of *ad-fét* ‘tells, relates’, he would probably not have adapted the verbs *nóid* and *do-indnaig* to create three pseudo-archaisms meaning ‘they told’. That he did so gives an indication of his knowledge of older verbs like *nóid* and *do-indnaig*, and of his awareness of how they could be adapted.

He uses regular old forms of other verbs which were no longer in normal use. In one particular passage, for example, he uses the preterite sg. and pl. 3 of two different verbs

⁷⁸ Taken as preterite sg. 3 of *benaid*, DIL, s.v. But *ae* for *í* is very unusual.

⁷⁹ Cf. *atchúas* (verb *ad-fét*) *dóib na comadasain* ‘those terms were told to them’, LL 22907, with sg. pass. *atchúas* and pl. subject (*comada*). This might be taken to suggest that the pl. passive, which would almost certainly have disappeared in speech by 1200, was in decline.

⁸⁰ *Heldensage*, p. 33.

meaning ‘rose’: i) the older *t*-formation of the compound verb *at-reig* ‘rises’, 3 sg. *at-raacht* and 3 pl. *at-raachtatar*; ii) 3 sg. *ra érig* and 3 pl. *ra érgitar*, from *éirgid*, the Middle Irish simple verb which developed from the prototonic stem of *at-reig*. This is the important passage relating how Conall’s fleet was divided into three by a storm, causing him to land far from Dún Delga and the welcoming festivities arranged by Conchobor. It is entirely his own and it had no parallel in the existing tale. He would probably have felt that it was particularly important to have a few old forms in this passage. However, he begins with *ra érgitar*, which would have corresponded closely with the form he used in speech – although he might have said *do érgitar/ érigetar* rather than *ra érgitar*, that is, using the verbal particle *do*, which had emerged as the sole particle with affirmative forms of the preterite, the imperfect indicative and subjunctive, and the secondary future.⁸¹ He then uses *ra érig* and *atraacht* in separate sentences with the same subject, *anfud* ‘storm’, and then *atraachtatar*. It may be assumed that he would not have used these old forms in speech, any more than he would pseudo-archaic forms like *condnoathatar* and *barridnachtatar*.⁸²

Ra ergitar tra in tromchoblach, LL 22782

‘So the great sea-going heavy fleet set out/ rose’

atraachtatar a róin 7 a rossail ... dóib-sium, LL 22786

‘its seals and walruses ... rose to meet/ attack them’

atraacht glassanfud in mara ... dóib, LL 22786

‘a fierce storm of the sea ... rose to meet/ overtook them’

Is é tressi inn anfaid ra érig dóib, LL 22788

‘The storm that overtook them was so strong’

Like *atraacht/ atraachtatar*, the following features are likely not to have been in the spoken language in the mid-12th century and thus to have been used by the author to give his text a literary veneer:

ferais (verb *feraid*), LL 22759⁸³

déchais (verb *déchaid*), LL 23142

dercais (verb *dercaid*), LL 23142

fégais (verb *fégaid*), LL 23148

cunnis (verb *cuinnigid*), LL 23207 etc.⁸⁴

for *ro/do fēr*

for *ro/do déch*

for *ro/do derc*

for *ro/do fég*

for *ro/ do chuinnig* etc.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Likewise, he would have said *do innisetar*, rather than *ro innisetar*. Cf. Mac Gearailt, ‘Verbal particles and preverbs’, p. 156.

⁸² Otherwise he uses *ra érig* and *ra érgitar* twice (*Ro érig immorro Conchobor mochtrath arnabarach* ‘Now Conchobor got up early the next day’, LL 22843, *ro ergitar iar tain rannair fri raind accu* ‘Then carvers [leg. *rannaireda*] got up to serve them’, LL 22837) and *atraacht* once (*atraacht Sencha mac Ailella* ‘Sencha mac Ailella rose’, LL 23223).

⁸³ *s*-preterite sg. 3 ending *-ais*. This survives in Early Modern Irish, mostly as *-as*, e.g. *gabhas*, but *ro/do ghabh* etc. is the normal form and it and *ghabh* are still used in present-day Irish. Cf. Mac Gearailt, ‘Leaganacha de *Cath Ruis na Ríg*’, pp. 182-4.

⁸⁴ Mac Gearailt, ‘Zum Irischen des 12. Jahrhunderts’, p. 47 f.; idem, ‘Leaganacha de *Cath Ruis na Ríg*’, p. 183.

⁸⁵ Similarly, *Ro érig* (*éirgid*), LL 22843, *ro gab* (*gaibid*), LL 22941, 22997, 23018, 23085, 23088, 23176, 23188 etc., *ro ráid* (*ráidid*), LL 23046, *ra chroth*, *ra chertaig*, *ra boc*, *ra bertaig* (*crothaid* etc.), LL 23217 etc.; Mac Gearailt, ‘Zum Irischen des 12. Jahrhunderts’, p. 47 f.

<i>dobert/ dobretha</i> (verb <i>do-beir</i>), LL 23220, 23237 ⁸⁶	for <i>tuc/do thuc</i>
<i>ro iarfach[t]</i> (verb <i>íarmi-foich</i>), LL 22820	for <i>ro/do iarfaig</i>
<i>co topacht</i> (verb <i>do-boing</i>), LL 23185	for <i>?ro/do ben</i> (verb <i>benaid</i>) ⁸⁷
<i>ro mebaid/ na cor memaid</i> (verb <i>maidid</i>), LL 22826, 23095 ⁸⁸	for <i>ro/do maid/ cor maid</i> ⁸⁹
<i>mebais</i> (verb <i>maidid</i>) LL 22714 ⁹⁰	for <i>maidfid</i>
<i>Mebais</i> (verb <i>maidid</i>) LL 22897	for <i>ro/do maid</i>
<i>ro lingestar</i> (verb <i>lingid</i>), LL 23010 ⁹¹	for <i>ro/do ling</i>
<i>ro lenestar</i> (verb <i>lenaíd</i>), LL 23225	for <i>ro/do len</i>
<i>ro sceastar</i> (verb <i>sceíd</i>), LL 22827	for <i>ro/do sceith</i>
<i>ra dercastar</i> (verb <i>dercaíd</i>), LL 23138	for <i>ro/do derc</i>
<i>tucastar</i> (verb <i>do-beir</i>), LL 23175	for <i>tuc/do thuc</i>
<i>ro thuairgestar</i> (verb <i>túairgid</i>), LL 23196	for <i>ro/do thúairg</i>
<i>ro geisestarside</i> (verb <i>géisid</i>), LL 23197	for <i>ro/do géis</i>
<i>Ro gabtha</i> (verb <i>gaibid</i>), LL 22889 ⁹²	for <i>ro/do gabait</i>
<i>tuctha</i> (verb <i>do-beir</i>), LL 22651	for <i>tucait</i>
<i>ro faitte</i> (verb <i>faíd</i>), LL 22887	for <i>ro/do faíd</i>
<i>ro slemunchirtha</i> (verb <i>círaíd</i>), LL 22990	for <i>ro/do slemunchírait</i>
<i>ra minglanta</i> (verb <i>glanaíd</i>), LL 22991 etc.	for <i>ro/do mínglanait</i> . ⁹³

Being a man of learning, the author of CRR-LL would have known literary usage from the many texts with which he was familiar, including TBC II. He would also have found such usage in texts of the existing tale, as textual correspondences such as the following between his text and those of the 17th- and 18th-century show:

dáig damriachtatar cethri ollchóiceda hErend, LL 22650
 ‘for the four great provinces of Ériu came to me’
óir domruachtatar ceithre hollchoigidh Ereann.⁹⁴

He would recognize forms like *da-m-riachtatar* as marks of a literary style. Where he had a choice between such forms and those which were used in speech he chose the former. However, his knowledge of old forms was limited. Comparable texts from an earlier

⁸⁶ *t*-preterite forms.

⁸⁷ *Benaid* would have had some of the meanings and uses of *do-boing* and its preterite form *topacht*, which in the mid-12th century were probably long obsolete.

⁸⁸ Reduplicated preterite.

⁸⁹ Cf. TBC-LL: *da maid*, LL 12308, *goro maidset*, LL 10776, *ro maid*, LL 11324.

⁹⁰ Two instances of *mebais*, as i) (Old Irish) *s*-future sg. 3 and ii) (Middle Irish) preterite sg. 3, for Old Irish *memaíd* or late Middle Irish *ro/do maid*; the latter usage was preserved throughout the Early Modern period.

⁹¹ *s*-preterite sg. 3 deponent ending *-astar*.

⁹² Old preterite passive plural ending *-tha/-the*.

⁹³ Cf. *ra loscít* (*loiscid*), LL 22653, 22863, *ro hellamaigit* (*ellamaigid*), LL 22771, *ra glinnigit* (*glinnigid*), LL 22771, *ro gabait* (*gaibid*), LL 22833, 22868, *ro hindlit* (*indlid*), LL 22833, 22868, *rucaít* (*beirid*), LL 22834, *tucait* (*do-beir*), LL 22834, *ra curit* (*cuirid*), LL 22840, *darónait* (*do-gní*), LL 22776, *doronait*, LL 22990, *ro canait* (*canaid*), LL 22842, 22992, *ra slaidit* (*slaidid*), LL 23093.

⁹⁴ National Library of Scotland, MS 72.2.9, 1r; Hogan, *Cath Ruis na Ríg* for Bóinn, p. 60. For other textual correspondences between the two versions see Mac Gearailt, ‘Leaganacha de *Cath Ruis na Ríg*’, pp. 176-91.

period have older forms which he might have used had he known them or had they come to mind, for example *geguin* and *gáet*, reduplicated preterite sg. 3 and pass. sg. of *gonaid* ‘wounds, kills’, and *do-rochair* and *do-rochratar*, preterite sg. and pl. 3 of *do-tuit* ‘falls’.

The most striking literary form in CRR-LL is Old and Early Middle Irish (*immar*) *bíth*, LL 23248, preterite pass. sg. of *benaid*. Unlike *atraacht* and the other literary forms in the text, *bíth* and preterite sg. and pl. 3 *bí* and *béotar* are very rare in 12th-century texts. In CRR-LL, *bíth* occurs in a poem which is not found in the later version of the tale and which the author of CRR-LL is likely not to have composed himself. In an earlier prose passage he uses the later weak inflection, which of course he would also have used in speech, in preterite pl. 3 *ro benatar* (LL 23109). This confirms that *bíth* was a literary form in his time and that the preterite pass. sg. form in normal use in the mid-12th century would have been *ro/do benad*.

An author who uses three different forms of the latest and simplest form of the infixed pronoun in close proximity to refer to the same person is unlikely to have been familiar with an old form like *bíth* as a literary form:

... *cid donrat samlaid ...? ... in nech ros ail 7 ros n-irthócaib*, LL 22640
 ‘... what made him thus ...? ... the one who reared him and raised him’.

There is no such uncertainty or inconsistency in his use of the other kind of pronoun at his disposal, the new independent pronoun. This established itself in speech in the 12th century and rendered the infixed pronoun obsolete; nevertheless, the latter was still used as a literary archaism even in the 17th century, as an instance in Mathghamhain Ó hÍfearnáin’s poem *Ceist! Cia do cheinneóchadh dán?* ‘A question! Who would buy a poem?’ shows: *is cás rom loisg* ‘a case which has tormented me’.⁹⁵ As object, for example *Co rucatar leo é* ‘and they brought him with them’ (LL 23187), or as subject, with the copula, the passive, and the active verb, for example *corbdar comardda comchuidi iat* ‘so that they were even and in line’ (LL 23169), *tucait iat* ‘they were brought’ (LL 22834), *dogebad sib* ‘you would get’ (LL 23182), he undoubtedly knew the independent pronoun best. If so, in speech he might have said ... *cid dorat(?) samlaid é ... in nech do ail (é) 7 do irthócaib é*, rather than ... *cid donrat ...*

Inconsistent use of older features such as the infixed pronoun and recourse to otherwise unattested forms like *condnoathatar* and *barridnachtatar* show that the author’s productive knowledge of literary forms which are widely used in 11th-century texts was limited. Other mid-12th-century writers may have had a greater knowledge of such usage, but the evidence of the work of contemporary poets such as Gilla Mo Dutu úa Casaide and Gilla na Náem úa Duinn does not support this suggestion. The fact therefore that a scribe of the Book of Leinster, Áed mac Crimthainn, described as the *fer léigind* of the high-king of the southern half of Ireland and chief historian of Leinster, might use such

⁹⁵ Osborn Bergin, *Irish Bardic Poetry*, ed. David Greene and Fergus Kelly (Dublin, 1970), p. 146.

forms in a new composition, or even copy them, is an important indicator regarding literary usage in the mid-12th century.⁹⁶

As a new composition which we can date with some confidence to the mid-12th century, a period of significant change in the use and form of the literary language, CRR-LL is therefore interesting and valuable, in that it gives us some insight into how the author juggled literary and spoken forms, and created his own constructions in order to maintain a veneer of literary respectability which he felt was required. It gives a clearer idea than most texts of what the author probably said in normal speech, and it brings us close to the end of literary Middle Irish and to the beginnings of Early Modern Irish, in which forms like *atraacht* and features such as the infixed pronoun would survive as fossils or slip completely into disuse.

The Language, Date and Origin of Breslech Maige Murthemne

When we turn to *Breslech Maige Murthemne*, which Thurneysen believed was composed in the early 11th century, we expect a quite different linguistic profile. As already said, the common source of the TBC-LU and TBC-LL version is likely to have been an 11th-century text. As the extant texts testify, it contained a few instances of late spellings, for example,

ba thétaib for *fa fo thétaib* ‘with (lit. ‘under’) strings’.⁹⁷

It also contained a few verbs with late forms of preverbs and verbal particles, which shows that there was variation in the representation of these already before 1100:

cona bil aithgéir ... contescfad finna i n-igid srotha ..., TBC-LL² 2252⁹⁸
 ‘with its very sharp ... rim ... which would cut a hair against a stream ...’
is cumma congáiritis de bánanaig ..., TBC-LL² 2257
 ‘there used to cry from it alike goblins ...’⁹⁹

Inbaid fogníth in t-óclách fáeborchless di ..., TBC-LL² 2253
 ‘When the warrior did the “edge-feat” with it ...’
is cumma imthescad dia scíath ..., TBC-LL² 2254
 ‘he would cut alike with his shield ...’

Ro chres a cheltar chomga tharis, TBC-LL² 2259
 ‘There was cast over him his protective dress of raiment’.

I have argued elsewhere that *fo-* and *im-* can represent the Old Irish preverb *do-* and that they reflect the pronunciation /ðə/, rather than /ə/, as Quiggin suggested.¹⁰⁰ The late

⁹⁶ O’Sullivan, ‘Notes on the scripts and make-up of the Book of Leinster’; see collation tables following p. 30.

⁹⁷ TBC-LL² 2234, TBC I 2217.

⁹⁸ But, as noted earlier, this may not be an instance of *con*. Perhaps read as the conjunction *co n-*; *co tescfad*. Cf. Mac Gearailt, ‘Verbal particles and preverbs’, p. 169 f.

⁹⁹ Cf. *congebethar (gaibid)*, TBC-LL² 2221n., TBC I 2204; *con cuirend*; TBC-LL² 2347n., read as *co cuirend*, LL 9670, *co curend*; TBC I 2344.

¹⁰⁰ Mac Gearailt, ‘Verbal particles and preverbs’, p. 163 f.

spelling *bo-/ba-* suggests that the preposition *fo* and the homophonous preverb *fo-*, which survived in writing only after 1000-1050, were pronounced /və/, while *for* and *for-*, spelt *bar* in TBC- and CRR-LL, were pronounced /vər/. The preposition *fo* merged with the preposition *imm* in certain meanings and uses, so that it, and later *bo/ba* (= /və /), are written for *imm*. By the mid-12th century the verbal particle *do* had taken over from *ro* in the preterite and from older *no* in the imperfect indicative, imperfect subjunctive, and secondary future. It may have been pronounced with lenited *d-*, that is with an initial dental fricative (= /ð/), particularly in relative position, although the preverb *do-* written as *fo-* (e.g. *fogníth*, TBC-LL² 2253) and as *ba-* (e.g. *barridnachtatarsum*, LL 22761, for *do-ridnachtatarsum*) would point to lenition in all cases. Its use in relative position may have caused it to spread to the present and future as a relative particle, for example present 3 sg. */ðə/thescann ‘which cuts’. There might be resistance to it in writing, possibly because already in the 11th century when it began to take the place of *ro* and *no* in speech it was considered to be inferior to them.¹⁰¹ It might also have been seen as giving rise to confusion, particularly after its lenited form became identified with *fo/fo-*, but possibly also because it was associated with a development which had not been encountered in the written language before, namely its use in relative position in the present and future. The use of the pretonic particle *con* in relative position, for example in *congáiritis*, may have arisen as an attempt to disguise *do* (/ðə/), the result being a construction that looked similar to deuterotonic forms of old compound verbs with the preverb *con-*, which may in fact have been used only rarely in the written language after 1000. Thus, the relative *con*-form just cited may represent /ðə/gáirtis. Similarly, *imthescad* above, in which *im* is likely to have been considered to be equivalent to *fo* (/və/), may represent /ðə/thescad, and *marímat* ‘say, mention’, TBC-LL² 2442, may represent /ðə/rímat etc.

Thus, while these forms may not have been commonly used outside texts like TBC, they may nevertheless reflect real developments in the language. Instances of what O’Rahilly refers to as ‘relative *con-*’ (TBC-LL² 2221n, 2347n etc.), such as present 3 sg. *Confírend* (*feraid*), may therefore represent the leniting particle *do* /ðə/. The choice of *con* as a scribal disguise for *do* /ðə/ in relative position may reflect the influence of relative constructions expressing genitive and dative relation, of the kind found in 17th-century sources, with the preposition *oc* and the nasalizing relative particle *a n-* (*oca n-*, ‘*ca n-*’),¹⁰² or constructions with the conjunction *co n-*. Leniting *do* (written *con-* etc.) would suggest that already in the 11th century there was a distinction in speech between leniting relative clauses expressing nominative and accusative relation and nasalizing clauses expressing

¹⁰¹ *Ro* frequently replaces the preverb *do*. Cf. *Ro chres* (*fo-ceird*), TBC-LL² 2259, for *fo-cress*, the form used earlier in the text: *focress a phupall do Ailill* ‘Ailill’s tent was pitched for him’ (298); note also the late forms *rabertatar* (*do-bertatar*), TBC-LL² 2494, *rabretha* (*do-bretha*), TBC-LL² 2402.

¹⁰² Compare the following relative sentences expressing genitive relation, cited by McManus from 17th-century texts: *an tí ag nach bí Dia táithe réna anam* ‘the person who does not have God joined to his soul’; *an tí ’gá mbíodh an singin ‘Tau’ ’na éadan* ‘the person who was wont to have the sign “Tau” on his forehead’. Relative sentences expressing dative relation: *ón muicidhe aga raibhe i gcoimhéad aige* ‘from the pigherd by whom he was being minded’; *bíd mórán do dhaoinibh agá mbí eagla na péine ifreannda amháin orra* ‘there are many people who only fear the torment of hell’: Damian McManus, ‘An Nua-Ghaeilge Chlasaiceach’, in Kim McCone *et al.* (eds.), *Stair na Gaeilge in Ómós do Pádraig Ó Fiannachta* (Maynooth, 1994), pp. 335-445, at p. 424 f.

genitive and dative relation. It is therefore possible that a present relative construction with leniting /ðə/ (* /ðə/ *thescann*, * /ðə/ *firend*) emerged at that time as an alternative to the older relative form (*t(h)escas*) in the dialect spoken in the region where texts containing *con/ fo/ im* for *do* were written, for example in the part of Leinster corresponding with modern County Laois. In instances in which *con* + verb is introduced by *cindas* ‘how?’ or by the copula with a following adjective (*is ferda* ‘bravely, in a manly fashion’) lenition is not marked. In those cases the particle may therefore represent a nasalizing effect on the verbal stem. If so, the form intended may well be the conjunction *co n-*,¹⁰³ and we may have to do with nasalization paralleling that described by Thurneysen in relative clauses, in which ‘the antecedent designates the manner ... of the content of the relative clause’ and in which ‘a neuter adjective used in periphrasis with the copula defines the modality of the following clause’.¹⁰⁴

<i>Cia confirend</i> (verb <i>feraid</i>) ‘Who gives battle ...’, TBC-LL ² 4621n. ¹⁰⁵	for ? <i>do ferand</i>
<i>Cindas confaegat</i> (verb <i>fichid/figid</i>) ‘How do they fight?’, TBC-LL ² 4622	for ? <i>co fe gat</i>
(<i>Is ferda</i>) <i>confegat</i> (<i>fichid/figid</i>), TBC-LL ² 4623	for ? <i>co fe gat</i>
(<i>Cinnas</i>) <i>confegar</i> (<i>fichid/figid</i>), TBC-LL ² 4671	for ? <i>co fe gar</i>
(<i>Is ferda</i>) <i>confegar</i> (<i>fichid/figid</i>), TBC-LL ² 4672	for ? <i>co fe gar</i>
<i>contirfe</i> (verb <i>fo-fera</i>) ‘it will cause’, TBC-LL ² 3028	for <i>fo tir fe</i> ¹⁰⁶
<i>con-deochatar</i> (verb <i>do-tét</i>) ‘they came’, TBC-LL ² 1249	for <i>do-deochatar</i>
<i>conscomarc</i> (verb <i>imm-comairc</i>) ‘she asked, requested’, TBC-LL ² 76	for <i>mus-comairc</i> ¹⁰⁷
<i>fogníth</i> (verb <i>do-gní</i>) ‘he used do’, TBC-LL ² 2253	for <i>do-gníth</i>
<i>fogní</i> (<i>do-gní</i>) ‘he does’, TBC-LL ² 3925, 3930	for <i>do-gní</i>
<i>bogní</i> (<i>do-gní</i>) ‘does’, TBC-LL ² 3927	for <i>do-gní</i>
<i>amgéna</i> (<i>do-gní</i>) ‘will you do’, TBC-LL ² 449	for <i>do-géna</i>
<i>babeir</i> (verb <i>do-beir</i>) ‘gives’, LL 32594 ¹⁰⁸	for <i>do-beir</i>
<i>Laigis</i> (verb <i>fo-luigi</i>) ‘she hid’, TBC-LL ² 2369	for <i>fo-laig</i> ¹⁰⁹

Other late features which may have been in the common source of the TBC-LU and the TBC-LL version of *Breslech* include the 3 pl. independent pronoun *íat* ‘them’ in *connárbo léir do neoch issin dúnud íat* ‘so that they were not visible to anyone in the

¹⁰³ Note also *Cinnas concoméirget*, TBC-LL² 4644, *cinnas condricfam*, TBC-LL² 2970. Cf. Mac Gearailt, ‘Verbal particles and preverbs’, pp. 174-80.

¹⁰⁴ Rudolf Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish* (Dublin, 1949), §498. Note the examples he cites: *sechi chruth dond-rón* ‘whatever be the manner in which I may be able to do it’, Wb. 5^b18, and *arndip maith n-airlethar a muntir* ‘so that he may well order his household’ or ‘that it may be good how he orders [his household]’, Wb. 28^b32.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. (*cia*) *conlinfadar* ‘will dare’, TBC-LL² 4782.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. O’Rahilly’s footnote to the text. Cf. *is cumma imthescad ? is cumma congáiritis ?*, TBC-LL² 2254, 2257 (= *is cumma co tescad ? is cumma co ngáiritis ??*), *Is cumma congonad ... congonand*, LL 11056, 11064 (TBC) (= *co ngonad ... co ngonand?*). Similarly *is cumma imthescad*, TBC-LL² 2254, for *is cumma co tescad* etc.

¹⁰⁷ Probably for *mus-comarc* ‘asks’; cf. *conscondarc*, TBC-LL² 142. *Mus-comairc* [vəs-] *Cormac* ‘Cormac asked’: Michael Byrnes (ed. and trans.), ‘An edition of *Esnada Tige Buchet* from MS Rawlinson B. 502’, in Dan M. Wiley (ed.), *Essays on the Early Irish King-tales* (Dublin, 2008), pp. 91-103, at p. 100.

¹⁰⁸ *Is maith in chomairle babeir Nestoir dúib ar Agmemnón (Togail Troí)*.

¹⁰⁹ *Laigis* appears to reflect a false analysis of the old compound *fo-laig* as preterite of a simple verb, i.e. as *fo laig* = *do laig*, i.e. /ðə/laig. On this see Mac Gearailt, ‘Verbal particles and preverbs’, p. 172.

camp', TBC-LL² 2225, which is not in TBC-LU (TBC I 2209), and infix pronoun 3 sg. masc. *-d-* in a main clause, in *7 rod gonat* 'and they wound him' (*gonaid*), TBC-LL² 2174; TBC-LU also has this but reads late *s*-preterite *7 rod gonsat* 'and they wounded him' (TBC I 2152) – probably the better reading – which is for Old Irish reduplicated preterite *ra ngegnatar*. Note on the other hand the independent pronoun in TBC-LU's *feib nachas faiced hé* 'as if no one could see him' (TBC I 2098), for which the common source is likely to have had the old infix pronoun in the TBC-LL version, *feib nacha n-aicced* (TBC-LL² 2147). The common source also had later forms of numerals, for example *teóra catha*, TBC-LL² 2169, TBC I 2147, with feminine *teóra* for masculine *trí*.¹¹⁰ Like pretonic *con*, and *fo-* and *im-* for the preverb *do-*, the independent pronoun *íat* would not be likely to occur in an early 11th-century text of *Breslech*, but the infix pronoun *-d-*, which is found in the 10th-century poem *Saltair na Rann*,¹¹¹ might be that early, and also *gonsat*, for older *gegnatar*, which would only be used rarely after 1000.

The following features, mostly verbs, point more surely to the early 11th century as the time when *Breslech* was composed and they may have influenced Thurneysen's dating:

INTERNAL RO

co farggaib (fo-ácaib) 'so that he left', TBC-LL² 2317,¹¹² similarly TBC I 2311, for later *coro fácaib/coró fáca (fácbaid)*

Dosrimchell (do-immchella) 'he went around them', TBC-LL² 2317, TBC I 2310, for later *ro/do thimchell (timchellaid)*

dorochair (do-tuit) 'he fell', TBC-LL² 2324, TBC I 2318, *dorochratar (do-tuit)* 'they fell', TBC-LL² 2192, TBC I 2174, for later *ro/do thuit (tuitid)*, *ro/do thuitetar*

REDUPLICATED AND T-PRETERITE

Sesceing (sceinnid) 'sprang out', TBC-LL² 2275, TBC I 2258, for later *ro sceinn*¹¹³
geguin (gonaid), TBC-LL² 2409, similarly TBC I 2396, for later *ro gon*¹¹⁴

co n-erbaltatar (at-baill) 'fell dead', TBC-LL² 2135, TBC I 2086

co n-ebairt 'so that he said', TBC I 2392

PRETERITE PASSIVE

Srengtha (srengaid) 'were stretched', TBC-LL² 2270, TBC I 2253, for later *ro srengait*

ro rimthé (rímid) 'have been counted', TBC-LL² 2325, TBC I 2319, for later *ro rímit*

Atchessa (ad-cí) 'were seen', TBC-LL² 2283, TBC I 2265; cf. *facessa*, TBC-LL² 4153

tárfás (do-adbat), TBC-LL² 2341, TBC I 2339 etc.

S-SUBJUNCTIVES

acht ro sesed (saidid) 'would have stayed', TBC-LL² 2288, TBC I 2270

¹¹⁰ Likewise *teóra láa*, TBC-LL² 2157, *teóra lá*, TBC I 2136, and *trí aidche*, TBC-LL² 2182, *trí aidchi*, TBC I 2161. Cf. Liam Breatnach, 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge', in McCone, *Stair na Gaeilge*, pp. 221-333, at p. 261.

¹¹¹ Whitley Stokes (ed.), *Saltair na Rann. A Collection of Early Middle-Irish Poems. Edited from Ms. Rawl. B 502 in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1883) [henceforth SR]. Breatnach cites *rod mberb*, SR 2846, *rod bī*, SR 3049 etc.: 'An Mheán-Ghaeilge', p. 266.

¹¹² Preterite *ro* is infix between the preverb and the stem in old compound verbs like *fo-ácaib* 'leaves', but is placed before the stem of the simple verb that replaced the compound in early Middle Irish, on the model of existing old simple verbs.

¹¹³ Compare CRR-LL's later *s*-preterite of *sceinnid*, i.e. *sceinnis*, LL 22762.

¹¹⁴ In fact this is p. 79 of LL, where scribe T has taken up the pen again, that is the section referred to as *Carpat Serda*, TBC-LL² 2438; compare the TBC-LU title of this episode: *In Carpat Serda 7 in Breslech Mór Maige Murthemne inso*, TBC I 2072.

dánas tarsed (do-airicc) ‘could have reached’, TBC-LL² 2274, similarly TBC I 2257
dá rísad (ro-icc) ‘would have reached’, TBC-LL² 2287, TBC I 2270

DEPONENTS

ardatuigethar (ar-tuigethar/ for-tuigethar) ‘covers them’, TBC-LL² 2275, TBC I 2343
tarassair (do-airissedar) ‘stopped’, TBC-LL² 2301, TBC I 2293 etc.

COMPOUND VERBS

focheird ‘casts’, TBC-LL² 2224, TBC I 2208,¹¹⁵ for later *cuirid* etc.
frisócbat (fris-ócaib) ‘climb up’, TBC I 2367,¹¹⁶ for later *tócbaid* etc.
fordringtís (for-dring) ‘climbed on’, TBC I 2367¹¹⁷
dofánic (do-icc) ‘came’, TBC-LL² 2128, TBC I 2079, for *tánic*
dorroeblaiṅ (do-ling) ‘sprang, jumped’, TBC-LL² 2296,¹¹⁸ for later *do ling*
Follaig (fo-luigi), TBC I 2368¹¹⁹
Imslaic (imm-sloic), TBC-LL² 2273, TBC I 2256

MISCELLANEOUS EARLY FEATURES

The stressed form of the possessive pronoun sg. 3, *aí*, in *cach n-aí ... díb* ‘each of them’, TBC-LL² 2356, TBC I 2352;¹²⁰
the equative form of the adjective without the preposition *fri*, as in late Middle Irish, *comba méitithir moltcracand ...* ‘as wide as a ram’s skin’, TBC-LL² 2280, similarly TBC I 2262, *comba ... remithir áirnem n-ócláig ... sithithir seólchrand prímluṅgi* ‘... as thick as a hero’s fist ... as long as the mast of a ship’, TBC-LL² 2290, TBC I 2272;
the dative pl. adjective with the old ending *-ib*, *cona erraib iarnaidib*, *cona fáebraib tanaidib* ‘with its iron points, its thin edges’, TBC-LL² 2296, TBC I 2280;
the phrase *is ed mod*, in *iss ed mod dánas tarsed fiadchorr ... is ed mod dá rísad ubull díb dochum talman* ‘a wild crane could hardly have reached it ... scarcely one apple would have reached the ground’, TBC-LL² 2274, 2287, TBC I 2256, 2270;
Old Irish *it é ...* rather than late Middle Irish *is íat ...*, *It é in so síis a n-anmand-side* ‘Here follow their names’, TBC-LL² 2325, TBC I 2319.

This brief survey of the language of *Breslech* shows that it is older than CRR-LL. Old verbal forms occur more frequently and with greater consistency than in the latter. Interchangeable variant forms reflecting different stages in the development of the language are less frequent. Pseudo-archaic or artificial verbal constructions of the kind seen in CRR-LL are not found. It seems clear on linguistic grounds that this section of TBC II might have been composed in the 11th century. This is also suggested by the fact that the common source of the TBC-LU and TBC-LL version can be assigned to the period before the death of the LU scribe Máel Muire, in 1106. It may, as Thurneysen believed, be as early as the first quarter of the 11th century, but for the moment it seems safer to assign it to the middle of that century.

¹¹⁵ Cf. also *cé focheirded-som*, TBC-LL² 2226, TBC I 2210, *focherdditis*, TBC-LL² 2239, similarly TBC I 2222.

¹¹⁶ Not in TBC-LL, which is quite different; cf. TBC-LL² 2371. But note *forthócbat* ‘raise’ (*for-tócaib*) in the poem which follows, TBC-LL² 2293, for which TBC-LL reads *dofócrat*, TBC I 2384.

¹¹⁷ Not in TBC-LL, which is quite different; cf. TBC-LL² 2371.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *doreblaing*, TBC I 2279. Note also CRR-LL’s probably pseudo-archaic *ní hed barroeblaingair dosom*, LL 23008.

¹¹⁹ Cf. *Laigis*, TBC-LL² 2369.

¹²⁰ Thurneysen, *Grammar of Old Irish*, §443.

Thurneysen does not explain how he arrived at his date. As already seen, he assigned TBC I to the mid-11th century and argued that the author of TBC II, Bearbeiter C, took *Breslech* from that compilation. The main concern of the compiler of TBC I, the Kompilator, was to preserve the Old Irish *Táin*.¹²¹ His work was largely compilatory in nature, and it seems unlikely that in the course of this work he would have thought of supplementing the Old Irish material with a new Middle Irish episode composed by himself.¹²² *Breslech* being therefore an earlier composition (early 11th century), TBC I could be assigned to a slightly later period (mid-11th century), and TBC II, for which Bearbeiter C borrowed *Breslech* from TBC I, would be later still. We have seen however that there is no compelling evidence to support a date for TBC II in the early 12th century, as proposed by Thurneysen on the basis of the *Mißformen* in TBC-LL. It may be significantly earlier, possibly as early as *Breslech*, which Thurneysen assigned to the early 11th century but which may date from the middle of the century. If so, TBC II may have been the version of TBC for which *Breslech* was composed or borrowed in the first place, rather than TBC I.

The Language and Date of TBC II

Let us now consider the language of TBC II to see if indeed it might have been composed in the 11th century. Regarding the contrast observed by Quiggin between the first and second halves of TBC-LL, I have argued that that text reflects different strata in the transmission of TBC II and that the later orthography, language, and style of the second half represents significant modernisation in the mid- to late 12th century.¹²³ We may take here a single example, the use of the equative. In the second half we find this used with *fri*, as in later Middle Irish, and in the first without, as in Old and Early Middle Irish:

Second half:

métithir ri cend meic mís, TBC-LL² 3232

‘as big as the head of a month-old child’

métithir ra fomóir ná ra fer mara, TBC-LL² 3319

‘as big as a *fomóir* or pirate’

ba binnithir lim ra fogor, TBC-LL² 4339

‘sweeter I thought than the sound’

Sithithir ri cruimmthir meóir míled, TBC-LL² 4507

‘as long as a warrior’s finger’

métithir ra stúaig nimi i n-aeór, TBC-LL² 4776

‘as big as a rainbow in the air’¹²⁴

First half:

métithir ... óen na prímsliab, TBC-LL² 1579

¹²¹ On the Kompilator see *Heldensage*, pp. 24-7.

¹²² The process of composing the bulk of the old text he assembled, which involved conditions and challenges particular to the time of the original author (for instance in relation to compositional matters), and a special creative energy, was approximately two centuries earlier, if we accept Thurneysen’s date for TBC I, the mid-11th century.

¹²³ On this and on the ways in which the first and second halves differ, in orthography, morphology, and style, see Mac Gearailt, ‘The language of some late Middle Irish texts’, pp. 186-90.

¹²⁴ Cf. *ba métithir slíab* (verse), TBC-LL² 3582, *remithir fer*, TBC-LL² 4436, which reflect older usage and an earlier stratum of textual transmission.

‘as big as one of the greatest mountains’
métithir ... óen na prímbili, TBC-LL² 1581
 ‘as great as [the foliage of] one of the tall trees’
méitithir muldorn míled, TBC-LL² 2269
 ‘as big as a warrior’s fist’
mé[í]ithir cend meic mís, TBC-LL² 2271
 ‘as big as the head of a month-old child’
métithir moltracand, TBC-LL² 2280
 ‘as large as the skin of a three-year-old sheep’
remithir áirnem n-ócláig, TBC-LL² 2290
 ‘as thick as a hero’s whetstone’
Airdithir remithir tailcithir tressithir sithithir seólchrand prímluñgi, TBC-LL² 2290
 ‘As high, as thick, as strong, as powerful and as long as the mast of a great ship’.

TBC-LL represents therefore the usage of different contributors, not that of a single person, as Thurneysen supposed, or someone, as O Daly suggested, who used archaisms on the one hand and unorthodox, artificial constructions on the other, reflecting dialectal usage.¹²⁵ The use of *fri* with the equative may be assigned to a later period, perhaps the mid-12th century. The older equative without *fri* may be taken to reflect usage at an earlier stage of transmission. Removing *fri* from the equative phrases in the second half will probably bring us close to the earlier stage reflected in instances without the preposition, in the first half.

Similarly, emending non-standard verbal contractions in line with conventional usage should restore the underlying forms. For example:

<i>barraffind</i> (verb <i>do-seinn</i>) ‘which hunted’, TBC-LL ² 4181	< <i>doraffaind</i>
<i>bacóistís</i> (verb <i>téit</i>) ‘they could have gone’ TBC-LL ² 1368	< <i>docoístis</i>
<i>Forréccacha</i> (verb <i>do-éccai</i>) ‘she looked’, TBC-LL ² 197	< <i>doréccacha</i> ¹²⁶
<i>baluid</i> (verb <i>téit/ do-tét</i>) ‘he came’, TBC-LL ² 540	< <i>(do-)luid</i>
<i>focera</i> (verb <i>do-tuit</i>) ‘he fell’, TBC-LL ² 1261	< <i>docer</i>
<i>Forairngertsa</i> (verb <i>do-airngir</i>) ‘I foretold’, TBC-LL ² 536	< <i>dorairngertsa</i>
<i>fognúthi</i> (verb <i>do-gní</i>) ‘that was played’, TBC-LL ² 834	< <i>dognúthi</i>
<i>fogníd</i> (verb <i>do-gní</i>) ‘she used to do’, TBC-LL ² 582	< <i>dogníd</i> ¹²⁷
<i>forecmangaid</i> (verb <i>do-ecmaing</i>) ‘there met’, TBC-LL ² 1767	< <i>dorecmangaid</i> ¹²⁸
<i>Forecmaing</i> (verb <i>do-ecmaing</i>) ‘it landed’, TBC-LL ² 1781	< <i>dorecmaing</i>
<i>Fochuridar</i> (verb <i>do-cuirethar</i>) ‘it landed’, TBC-LL ² 1814	< <i>docuirethar</i>
<i>condeochatar</i> (verb <i>do-tét</i>) ‘they came’, TBC-LL ² 1249	< <i>dodeochatar</i>
<i>connebdatar</i> (verb <i>maidid</i>) ‘had been broken’, TBC-LL ² 1260 ¹²⁹	< <i>ro memdatar</i>
<i>concuredsom</i> (verb <i>cuirid</i>) ‘he would throw’, TBC-LL ² 841	< <i>no chuired</i> ¹³⁰
<i>congebed</i> (relative; verb <i>gaibid</i>) ‘he would catch’, TBC-LL ² 766	< <i>no gebed</i> ¹³¹
<i>congeibed</i> (verb <i>gaibid</i>) ‘he would catch’, TBC-LL ² 835	< <i>no geibed</i>

¹²⁵ O Daly, ‘The verbal system of the LL *Táin*’; see, for example, p. 139.

¹²⁶ Cf. *forréccaig* (*do-éccai*) ‘he scanned’, TBC-LL² 4183 < *dorrécaig*.

¹²⁷ *dogníd* ‘he used to do’, TBC-LL² 1839; cf. *fogní ... bogní ... fogní-seom* (*do-gní*) ‘he makes’, TBC-LL² 3925, (*cid*) *amgéna* ‘what will you do’, TBC-LL² 449.

¹²⁸ Or *dorecmaing*; cf. TBC-LL² 1772.

¹²⁹ Cf. *dámbad forro connebsad* (*maidid*) ‘if it were they who were overcome’, TBC-LL² 4690.

¹³⁰ Cf. *no chuired* (*cuirid*), TBC-LL² 837.

¹³¹ Cf. *no gebed ... no geibed ... no geibed* (*gaibid*), TBC-LL² 765.

<i>congabad</i> (verb <i>gaibid</i>) ‘which covered’, TBC-LL ² 2237	< <i>no gabad</i>
<i>congabsa</i> (relative; verb <i>gaibid</i>) ‘that I took’, TBC-LL ² 988	< <i>ro gabus-sa</i>
<i>congabais</i> (relative; verb <i>gaibid</i>) ‘that you took’, TBC-LL ² 987	< <i>ro gabais</i>
<i>congab</i> (relative; verb <i>gaibid</i>) ‘that he took’, TBC-LL ² 985	< <i>ro gab</i>
<i>condránic</i> (relative; verb <i>ro-icc</i>) ‘went, came’, TBC-LL ² 891, 1244	< <i>ránic</i> ¹³²
<i>contirfe</i> (verb <i>fo-fera</i>) ‘it will cause’, TBC-LL ² 3028	< <i>fotirfe</i>
<i>concichre</i> (verb <i>fo-ceird</i>) ‘he will cast’, TBC-LL ² 4456	< <i>focichre</i> ¹³³
<i>lilis</i> (verb <i>lenaid</i>) ‘he followed’, TBC-LL ² 1757	< <i>lil</i>
<i>dothuc</i> (verb <i>do-beir</i>) ‘he gave’, TBC-LL ² 1749	< <i>douc, tuc</i>
<i>Laigis</i> (verb <i>fo-luigi</i>) ‘she hid’, TBC-LL ² 2369	< <i>fo-llaig</i> .

Similarly, forms such as *barrecaib* (*do-ecmaing*) ‘met, happened’ and *atfócht/ imfacht/ confóchta* (*íarmi-foich*) ‘asked, requested’ appear to be later, while the corresponding standard old forms, *dorecmaing*, *Ro iarfacht* etc., which are also found in TBC-LL, reflect an early stage of transmission, as do old forms like *ro ort*, *-immart*, *memaíd*, *-éirsed*, while the corresponding late forms *ra airg*, *ra immir*, *da maid*, and *-éirged* represent a late stage:

<i>barrecaib</i> (verb <i>do-ecmaing</i>) ‘met, happened’, TBC-LL ² 3930	for <i>dorecmaing</i> ¹³⁴
<i>confóchta/ imfacht/ atfócht</i> (verb <i>íarmi-foich</i>) ‘sought, requested’ ¹³⁵	for <i>Ro iarfacht</i>
<i>ra airg</i> (verb <i>oirgid</i>) ‘ravaged, pillaged’, TBC-LL ² 1793	for <i>ro ort</i> ¹³⁶
<i>ra immir</i> (verb <i>imm-beir</i>) ‘took advantage of’, TBC-LL ² 4878	for <i>-immart</i> ¹³⁷
<i>da maid</i> (verb <i>maidid</i>) ‘fled’, TBC-LL ² 4816,	for <i>ro memaíd</i> ¹³⁸
(<i>mad da n-éirged</i> (verb <i>at-reig/ éirgid</i>) ‘if he rose’, TBC-LL ² 2838	for <i>go n-éirsed</i> ¹³⁹
<i>ritacaemnaccair</i> (verb <i>do-ecmaing</i>) ‘he was’, TBC-LL ² 3996, similarly 4301	for <i>atacaemnaccair</i> . ¹⁴⁰

¹³² *ránic*, TBC Stowe 923, 1281.

¹³³ Cf. *Congeltat ... Fogeltat* ‘cropped ... cropped’, TBC-LL² 445.

¹³⁴ CRR-LL: *barécaim*, LL 23214, similarly 23101, 23101, 23113; TBC-LL: *barrecaibsium*, LL 9957, similarly 11349, 11484; *arrecaim*, TBC-LL² 3, *dorécaim*, TBC-LL² 105, *dorecmaing*, TBC-LL² 1772. Cf. Mac Gearailt, ‘The language of some late Middle Irish texts’, p. 191, idem, ‘Verbal particles and preverbs’, p. 164, n. 57.

¹³⁵ Cf. TBC-LL² 315, 1539, 4240. The verb is followed by the object *scéla* ‘tidings’ and the preposition *de* ‘of, from’, referring to the person from whom tidings are sought (*atfócht/ imfacht/ confóchta scéla de x*), or by the object *fiss* ‘information’ (*ra iarfacht fiss 7 fástini de*, TBC-LL² 176). In such cases the appropriate literal translation would be ‘requested, sought’. More frequently there is no object and the meaning is ‘asked’, e.g. *ra iarfacht Ailill do Fergus* ‘Ailill asked Fergus’, TBC-LL² 691. Compare *Conscodarc Medb scéla díb* (*imm-comaire*), TBC-LL² 142, but *conscomarc Meidb de*, TBC-LL² 76.

¹³⁶ Cf. *Ra airgsem* ‘we laid waste’, TBC-LL² 3523, *ra airg[set]*, TBC-LL² 1146. Cf. *goro ort* ‘and killed’, TBC-LL² 1276, *coros ort*, TBC-LL² 1274.

¹³⁷ *co ndasrimmartatar* ‘they urged them on’, TBC-LL² 1798, *Ram immart* ‘have hemmed me in’, TBC-LL² 3391, *condanimmart* ‘forced them’, TBC-LL² 4726.

¹³⁸ *Coro maid* ‘they were victorious’, TBC-LL² 4725. Cf. *goro memaíd ... goro memaíd* ‘broke ... broke out’, TBC-LL² 3334, 3336, *ro mebtatar* ‘they broke’, TBC-LL² 1227, *connebdatar* ‘had been broken’, TBC-LL² 1260.

¹³⁹ ‘he recovered’, TBC-LL² 3850.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *atamchomnaic* (*do-ecmaing*) ‘I am’, TBC-LL² 201, similarly, TBC-LL² 203, *atatchomnaic* ‘you are’, TBC-LL² 52.

Non-historical (*dia*) *condrísam* ‘if we meet’, TBC-LL² 1243, *conarnic* ‘touched, went’ etc. (TBC-LL² 891n., 1245n., 947,¹⁴¹ 1785n.), *condrístais* (TBC-LL² 1255n.) etc. appear to be late substitutes for (*dia*) *comairsem* (*con-ricc*), *co comarnic* (*ro-icc* etc.), *co rístais* (*ro-icc*; ?*co comarsitis* [*con-ricc*]) etc., and to be due to scribal misinterpretation of the original forms or, in view of the corresponding forms in TBC Stowe, to pseudo-archaization.¹⁴²

Restored forms like *doraffaind*, *docoístis*, *dorécacha*, conventionally spelt old forms like *Ro iarfacht*, and old variants like *ro ort* and *memaid*, all represent a language profile similar to that of *Breslech*. They therefore point to a date of composition for the rest of TBC II in the 11th century. In addition, there are many instances of old verbal constructions spelt in accordance with standard Middle Irish orthography – the dominant orthography in TBC-LL – which fit in with what we have seen in *Breslech* and which therefore also point to a date of composition in the 11th century, that is preterites of compound verbs with internal *ro-*, *t-*preterites, reduplicated preterites, old preterite passives, *s-*subjunctives and *-futures*, old compound verbs:

co tormalt (verb *do-meil*) ‘he ate’, TBC-LL² 527
go toracht (verb *do-roich*) ‘it closed over (it)’, TBC-LL² 1074¹⁴³

co n-ebailt (verb *at-bailt*) ‘died’, TBC-LL² 1387
ní érracht-saide (verb *at-reig*) ‘did not rise’, TBC-LL² 527
doridnacht (verb *do-indnaig*) ‘who gave it’, TBC-LL² 2110
In n-ébairt (verb *as-beir*) ‘did he make known (say)?’, TBC-LL² 1541
ní ebairt ‘he did not invite (say)’, TBC-LL² 123, 124

ro geguin (verb *gonaid*) ‘has wounded’, TBC-LL² 2062
co comarnecgatar (verb *con-ricc*) ‘and they met’, TBC-LL² 3710
dorochratar (verb *do-tuit*) ‘they fell’, TBC-LL² 3819
dorochair ‘he fell’, TBC-LL² 888

ra gáet (verb *gonaid*) ‘has been wounded’, TBC-LL² 4026
focress (verb *fo-ceird*) ‘was pitched’, TBC-LL² 298

dofáithaisiu (verb *do-tuit*) ‘you will fall’, TBC-LL² 3766
dofáeth ‘he will fall’, TBC-LL² 1243
gia dofáitheste-su ‘that you should fall’, TBC-LL² 3684
atré (verb *at-reig*) ‘he grows’, TBC-LL² 845
atrésat ‘they will increase’, TBC-LL² 846
nít ainset (verb *aingid*) ‘they will not save you’, TBC-LL² 4716
mad dia comairsem (verb *con-ricc*) ‘if we meet’ TBC-LL² 2759
co n-érsat (verb *at-reig*) ‘until they recover’, TBC-LL² 650
go n-eirsed ‘until he recovered’, TBC-LL² 3850
acht meni dlessad (verb *dligid*) ‘unless he was due/ owed’, TBC-LL² 2594
connessed (verb *con-midethar*) ‘that it could equal’, TBC-LL² 729

¹⁴¹ *co rainic*, TBC Stowe 979. On these forms see Mac Gearailt, ‘Verbal particles and preverbs’, p. 177 f.

¹⁴² For the TBC Stowe readings corresponding to (*dia*) *condrísam* etc. see the notes in TBC-LL² on the forms referred to above.

¹⁴³ *domreuciscse* ‘who advised me’, TBC-LL² 957, *dotrecoisc* ‘has advised you’, TBC-LL² 932, *darrecoisc* ‘who advised him’, TBC-LL² 953 appear to be back-formations based on *tecoiscid* (< *do-inchoisc*); see DIL, s.v. *tecoiscid*.

rofessed (verb *ro-fitir*) ‘one who should know’, TBC-LL² 1543
Dia fessaind-se ‘Had I known’, TBC-LL² 1823
co festais ‘that they might know’, TBC-LL² 55
dús in tairsimmís (verb *do-airicc*) ‘to see can we overtake’, TBC-LL² 556

Atraig (verb *at-reig*) ‘he rises’, TBC-LL² 1733
Atragat ‘They rise’, TBC-LL² 130
dofánic (verb *do-icc*) ‘which came’, TBC-LL² 1737
dofánatar ‘they came’, TBC-LL² 1737
focheird (verb *fo-ceird*) ‘casts’, TBC-LL² 1734, 1743 etc.
fócerddetar ‘they cast’, TBC-LL² 4873
imsaí-sium (verb *imm-soí*) ‘he attacks (*fo*)’, TBC-LL² 788.

The following features point to the early 11th century as the date of composition of TBC II: a single instance of the nasalising relative pronoun, *ní h’opair chóir dombiurt-sa fort-su* ‘it was not a labour befitting you that I imposed on you’, TBC-LL² 1236;¹⁴⁴ an instance of the old genitive sg. fem. form of the article, (*céimmi*) *inna* (*hechraide*) ‘the pace of the horses’, TBC-LL² 1171;¹⁴⁵ the old neut. *n*-stem dat. sg. (*fán*) *congraimmim(sin)*, TBC-LL² 3683;¹⁴⁶ nasalisation following an old neuter in *leth ñgliad*, TBC-LL² 4431, *cend n-imresna*, TBC-LL² 4492, *coñgraimm n-écside*, TBC-LL² 3735.

One cannot attribute such features, or old verbal forms like *co comarnecgatar*, TBC-LL² 3710, to the LL scribe, as Thurneysen suggested. The poems of contemporary poets such as Gilla Mo Dutu úa Casaide, for example *Ádam oenathair na ndoene* (written in 1147),¹⁴⁷ and Gilla na Náem úa Duinn (*obit.* 1160), principally *Cúiced Lagen na lecht ríge*,¹⁴⁸ give no indication that such usage was known in the first half of the 12th century.¹⁴⁹ It is therefore unlikely that a 12th-author would use such features. It is also unlikely that the person using them would have recourse to non-standard forms like *barreccaib*, *atfócht*, *faítti* (= *faídid*), *ra bert*, *condnoathatar*, or late orthographical features such as *ra* for *fri*, *bar* for *for*, *ba* for *fo* etc. As already remarked, the latter features occur in very high concentrations in CRR-LL, which we have had reason to assign to the mid-12th century. Instances in TBC-LL of the same features may therefore, as noted earlier, be assigned to that period also and be seen as part of a stage in the transmission of TBC II close in date to LL and CRR-LL.

Conclusion

The language profile of the earliest stages of TBC II which is reflected in the older features listed above points to a date of composition for TBC II about a century before

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Ruairí Ó hUiginn, ‘The Old Irish nasalizing relative clause’, *Ériu* 37 (1986), 33-87, at p. 70. He noted only two instances in *Saltair na Rann* (10th century): p. 74.

¹⁴⁵ Breatnach notes an instance of this in *Saltair na Rann* (l. 5908); ‘An Mheán-Ghaeilge’, p. 259. There are numerous instances in *Fís Adomnáin*: LU 1938-2301. Note dative pl. *fosnaib túathaib*, TBC-LL² 878.

¹⁴⁶ This is very rare after *Saltair na Rann*; cf. Breatnach, ‘An Mheán-Ghaeilge’, p. 249.

¹⁴⁷ LL 16428-17396.

¹⁴⁸ LL 4176-4426.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Uáitéar Mac Gearailt, ‘Die Sprache der mittellirischen Dichtung als Grundlage für die Chronologie der mittellirischen Literatur’, in Karin Stüber (ed.), *Akten des 5. Deutschen Keltologensymposiums, Zürich, September 2009* (forthcoming).

CRR-LL was composed. It is noteworthy however that all instances of the preterite pass. pl. in *Breslech* have the Old/ Early Middle Irish ending *-tha/ -the*, while all 15 in the introductory story of Medb and Ailill's pillowtalk and the Connacht envoys' mission to Ulster have the Middle Irish ending *-it*. A factor to be considered in relation to such variation is that some sections of the text are based directly on older, probably Old Irish, material and will therefore tend to be more conservative, and also to inherit older forms, while others, such as the opening section, are new Middle Irish compositions with no old forerunner.¹⁵⁰ It is also possible that some of the latter episodes were composed later, for example *Comrád cind chercaille* ('The Pillowtalk') and, possibly, *Comrac Fir Diad* ('The Encounter with Fer Diad').¹⁵¹

Among the episodes based on an old text like TBC I are those concerning the assembling of the Connacht army, the prophecy of the *banfile* Feidelm, and the army's journey to Ulster, TBC-LL² 147-441; Cú Chulainn's tryst, his withe, and his forked pole, TBC-LL² 441-737; his boyhood deeds (*macgnímrada*), TBC-LL² 738-1217; the death of Etarcumal and Nath Crantail, TBC-LL² 1565-755 etc. Comparison of parallel episodes of TBC-LL with TBC I shows that while the author of TBC II followed the older text closely his version is a completely new composition with its own independent verbal system and its own distinctive style and narrative method. The differences between his text and TBC I suggest, among other things, that one of the reasons he composed TBC II was to provide a new version of the old tale in language that his contemporaries could understand. If we follow him in sections of his work in which we can be relatively sure he had an older text before him that was similar to TBC I, we can see that he frequently encountered difficulty with his source. Old Irish verbal forms in TBC I, which are likely to have been in his source, are frequently omitted along with the sentence in which they occur. Thus it appears that he did not have a knowledge of 9th-century Irish comparable to the knowledge of 11th-century Irish that his 15th-century moderniser had.

Thurneysen's date for TBC II is linked to a number of assumptions that are not supported by evidence: that the late forms in TBC-LL were in the author's text; that TBC II and the LL version of CRR are by the same author; that the LL version of CRR is the original version of that tale; that *Breslech* is an early 11th-century composition and that the author of TBC II took it from TBC I; that the latter was compiled in the mid-11th century. Although he does not say so, it is clear that Thurneysen also assumed that the distinctive late usage in both TBC- and CRR-LL is derived from the archetype. This was almost certainly the basis on which he concluded that both compositions were written by the same author and on which he accepted without question the evidence for this presented by his student, de Paor. The original basis for this assumption was undoubtedly Quiggin's observation that the second half of TBC-LL and all of CRR-LL contain similar orthography and distinctive verbal forms. But if TBC-LL's late orthography and verbal forms were in the author's text they would also have been in the common source of TBC-LL and TBC-Stowe, and the latter provides little evidence to suggest this, although it frequently preserves readings from the common source and

¹⁵⁰ On the differences between 5 sections of TBC-LL see Mac Gearailt, 'The language of some late Middle Irish texts'.

¹⁵¹ TBC-LL² 1-146 (including the account of the Connacht envoys' mission to Ulster), 2606-3596.

conventional forms like *conmessed*.

The more conservative orthography and usage in the first half of TBC-LL, to which Quiggin drew attention, would also have to be explained. Thurneysen attributed this, as already noted, to revision carried out by the LL scribe, Áed mac Crimthainn, 30 years or more after Bearbeiter C composed the text. Here Thurneysen shows his dependence on Quiggin, for while the first half of TBC-LL is indeed more conservative than the second, it also contains many late spellings and non-historical verbal forms, for example *conscomarc* (*imm-comairc*), TBC-LL² 76, *conscodarc* (*imm-comairc*), TBC-LL² 142, *arrecaim* (*do-ecmaing*), TBC-LL² 3, *dorécaim* (*do-ecmaing*), TBC-LL² 105, *atféta* (*ad-fét*), TBC-LL² 740, *fogab* (*gaibid*), TBC-LL² 760, *congebed* (*gaibid*), TBC-LL² 766, *confíged* (*fichid*), TBC-LL² 1195, *focera* (*do-tuit*), TBC-LL² 1261, (*dia*) *condrísam* (*con-ricc*), TBC-LL² 1243, *condránic* (*ro-icc*), TBC-LL² 1244, *conarnic* (*ro-ricc*), TBC-LL² 1245 etc. In view of these forms one wonders what precisely Thurneysen imagined the LL scribe did by way of standardizing his exemplar, and why he did not standardize all non-standard forms. Their frequency and the presence of numerous non-standard spellings such as *fo-* for *do-* (*focera* [*do-tuit*]) and *fo* for *do* (*fogab* [*gaibid*]), alongside numerous conventional forms and spellings, suggests that there was in fact no revision. Since both halves contain large numbers of non-standard spellings and non-historical verbal forms, the difference between them observed by Quiggin may be described as follows: the first half represents a stratum of transmission in which earlier non-standard spellings such as *fo-/fo* for *do-/do* were found alongside standard old spellings (*do-*, *do*, *fri*, *for* etc.);¹⁵² the second half represents a later, probably mid-12th-century, stratum in which later spellings such as *bo-/ba-*, for *do-*, and *bar(r)*, for *do-r-*, are predominant,¹⁵³ in which the earlier non-standard spelling *fo-/fo* etc. is rare, and in which conventional old spellings from an earlier stratum are much less frequent.

Thurneysen's belief in the common authorship of TBC II and CRR-LL led him to ignore the approach which we may presume he adopted in dating *Breslech Maige Murthemne*, that is to identify the older linguistic features as a guide to the date of composition. Instead he assumed that the text could be dated exclusively on the basis of *Míßformen* in a late text, TBC-LL. If he had dated *Breslech* on the same basis, that is on the basis of its late non-standard forms (*congáirtis*, *imthescad*, *fogníth* etc.), he would have had to assign it too to the first quarter or third of the 12th century. Taking account of the older linguistic features in the rest of TBC-LL, one sees that a date closer to that for the latter episode is not unreasonable.

TBC II was the version of the *Táin* with which most scribes and scholars engaged actively from its earliest stages. The non-standard orthography and unorthodox verbal constructions in TBC-LL probably reflect the distinctive usage of a particular 12th-

¹⁵² Cf. the following, all in the first half: *Forrécacha* (*do-éccai*), TBC-LL² 197, *Forairngertsa* (*do-airngir*), TBC-LL² 536, *fogníthi* (*do-gní*), TBC-LL² 834, *fogníd* (*do-gní*), TBC-LL² 582, *forecmangaid* (*do-ecmaing*), TBC-LL² 1767, *Forecmaing* (*do-ecmaing*), TBC-LL² 1781, *Fochuridar* (*do-cuirethar*), TBC-LL² 1814.

¹⁵³ *Barróisc*, LL 10006, 10015, *barroega*, LL 10578, *barrairngertsa*, LL 10319, *bacheirdset* LL 10556, *bacheird*, LL 10709, *bacear*, LL 10898, *barasfenad*, LL 11085; similarly *badesin* '(him-/her-)self', *passim*, *badesta* 'now', *passim* (for *fadessin*, *fodessin*, *fodechtsa*, *fodesta* [first half]).

century school or milieu, in which the tale was copied and modernised. It probably represents the influence of pronunciation, as Quiggin assumed, possibly as a result of the practice of reading aloud, by one scribe to another as they shared the task of copying. Alongside this usage one finds remnants of the language of earlier scribes and scholars, including the author, to whom, for example, one might attribute the oldest features. The latter may point to *ca.* 1050 as the date of composition, but features such as the nasalizing relative clause may point to an earlier date, around 1000, and the existence of an earlier textual stratum of TBC II which was developed stylistically at later stages in transmission.

For almost a century Thurneysen's date for TBC II has been accepted without question and has been used as a guide in dating other Middle Irish texts, even though he based it on assumptions for which he cited not a single form as supporting evidence. The mixed nature of the language of the extant texts makes TBC II one of the most difficult to date precisely, and many questions remain before it can be dated with certainty, for instance regarding the non-historical forms found throughout the LL text and the kind of text in circulation a century before the latter was written. Belief in a date which was not supported by evidence has been a hindrance rather than a help and has contributed in no small measure to the view that Middle Irish texts are almost impossible to date. Questioning that date may stimulate renewed interest in dating Middle Irish texts. Further research, for example on the work of 11th- and 12th-century poets whose floruits are known, may increase our understanding of how the literary language evolved in those centuries, and bring us closer to a satisfactory relative chronology of Middle Irish literature.

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