

Introduction

Famously described by Robin Flower as ‘a pseudo-Ossianic Lay of low and indecent character’¹, and by Seosamh Watson as ‘the most obscene literary piece in pre-modern Irish literature’², *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* is an outstanding example of the final evolution of Fenian literature, the move into parody and burlesque that represents the last gasp of the Fenian Cycle before it descended from its previous place of high literary regard into a mere agglomeration of peasant folk-tales. It is also a good example of the tendency that existed in northern and western Ireland to prioritise the role of the Clan Mórna heroes Conán Maol and his brother Goll at the expense of Fionn mac Cumhaill himself, as Fionn’s own people, Clan Baoiscne, originated from Leinster and Munster, unlike the northern Clan Mórna. Fionn is relegated to a very minor role, only appearing twice in the course of the poem, which is built around the escapades of the perennial buffoon Conán, while Goll arrives at the end to free his brother from his enchantment.

The traditional Fenian themes of magic and the perils of the Otherworld run strongly in the poem, which is a part of the traditional *bruidhean* genre which had become widely popular during the later middle ages.

The purpose of this project is to create an edition of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* based on the Munster recension of the poem that will be both easily accessible and able to serve as the basis for future study in this area.

Laoidh Chab an Dosáin survives in around twenty eighteenth and nineteenth century manuscripts, from areas all across Ireland. In order to avoid overextending the scope of this edition therefore, I have chosen to use only the seven earliest manuscripts that could be identified. I have identified Cambridge Add.6567, NLI G 363 and Villanova Irish Manuscripts 1 as constituting a version because of the close textual similarities between them, and have chosen NLI G 363 as the main MS, due to its being the earliest. Villanova Irish Manuscripts 1, RIA 23 K 18, and NLI G 325 have also been consulted to supply emendations and or better readings where necessary. All three share a similar provenance, coming from the same area of Munster, around North Cork and South Tipperary. It is therefore my hope to be able to

¹ Flower, Robin, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum*, ii, London 1926, p.139

² Watson, Seosamh, ‘Laoi Chab an Dosáin: Background to a late Ossianic Ballad’, *Eighteenth Century Ireland, Iris an Dá Chultúr*, ed. Alan Harrison and Ian Cambell Ross, Vol. 5, Dublin 1990, p. 39

extrapolate a Munster recension of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* from these manuscripts, which could act as a first step towards a deeper investigation of this poem.

Primary Manuscripts

[A] Cambridge Add.6567, pp.3-11. *Scribe*: Pillib Ó Cinnéide, Carrick on Suir, Tipperary³. *Date*: 26th of February 1781. This copy of the poem contains sixty-two quatrains and is glossed in English.

[F] NLI G 363, pp. 68-79. *Scribe*: Ruisdeard Cais, of Tullamaine in Tipperary. *Date*: 15th of April 1778. This copy of the poem contains sixty seven quatrains.

[G] Villanova Irish Manuscripts 1 pp. 189-203. *Scribe*: Seán Gaillighe, from Milltown in the parish of Cooliney, near Charleville. *Date*: between the years 1778 and 1782. Sixty-six quatrains of the text are included in this copy.

There are also two early manuscripts containing *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* from the same area of North Cork as G. Taken together these manuscripts can be considered as further North Cork examples of the South Tipperary/ North Cork recension seen above. MSS C and E contain almost identical copies of the poem, and thus may well come from the same exemplar. MS E omits one quatrain found in C, and adds two more at the end of the poem, consisting of a dialogue between Oisín and St Patrick. Taken together with G these manuscripts sometimes appear to provide a better reading than that found in AF.

[C] RIA 23 K 18 pp. 210-224. *Scribe*: Uilliam Ó hAodha of Cill Bolláin. *Date*: 1823. It contains sixty-seven quatrains of the text.

[E] NLI G 325, pp. 338-345. *Scribe*: Uilliam Ó hAodha. *Date*: 1823. There are sixty-six quatrains in this copy of the poem.

Laoidh Chab an Dosáin is also found in several northern manuscripts. With this in mind, I have also consulted the two earliest northern manuscripts which contain it to produce this edition. The copies of the poem found in these two manuscripts are very

³ Nolan, William *Scríobhaithe Phort Láirge*, in *Waterford History and Society*, Nolan, William and Power, Thomas P., (ed.), Geography Publications, 1992 p.267

similar to each other, and vary widely from the southern manuscripts in many places, such as the increased use made of description of Conán's suffering for comedic purposes.

[B] RIA 23 Q 18 pp. 85-90. *Scribe*: Éadhmonn Ó Shorrochodh of Berries, Athlone. *Date*: 1818. This copy of the poem consists of sixty quatrains.

[D] NLI G 199 pp. 320-330. *Scribe*: Peadar Ó Gealacan. *Date*: 1851. The version of the poem found here is shorter than the others, consisting of only thirty-eight quatrains.

Whilst B and D, have not been used specifically to produce this edition, reference will be made to the forms found in them in the discussion of the manuscript tradition. C and E by contrast, due to their similarity to G have been used to make emendations and editorial decisions on occasion.

Laoidh Chab an Dosáin and the *Bruidhean* tradition

One of the more common sorts of adventure that the *Fianna* undertake is that which revolves around a *Bruidhean* or fairy dwelling. Rather than being mere houses, these dwellings were as full of magic and supernatural danger as were their inhabitants, as can be seen in folklore and Fenian tales throughout Irish history. Indeed, it was rare that anyone entered a fairy dwelling without having some kind of adventure or mishap. After their defeat at the hands of the Gael at the battles of Sleive Mish and Telltown, the Tuatha Dé Danann retreated into their *Bruidheanta* and became known to later generations as the fairies. However, as can be seen from their treatment of those whom they lured unwitting into their dwellings in later stories, they can be said to have retained some antipathy towards those who had dispossessed them of Ireland. *Bruidhean* stories became increasingly popular in Ossianic literature from the later Middle Ages onwards, as Christian propaganda against the idea of a pagan otherworld, staple of stories such as Oisín's visit to Tír na nÓg, grew in strength.⁴ As Ó hÓgáin tells us, by 'post-medieval times they came close to dominating the whole tradition.'⁵

Not every *Bruidhean* was altogether threatening however. The Lay of the Smithy, composed around 1400, which like *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* is set in Céis, and tells of how Fionn received his sword Mac an Luin, depicts this *Bruidhean* as existing almost in a dream, for after the *Fianna* lie down to sleep in the beds that have been provided for them, they awake in Slieve Logher where their adventure started, with no sign of the *Bruidhean* about them, save for the gifts that they received there.⁶ This story contains a few parallels with that of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, in that they are brought to Céis by a smith who runs from them like the wind, but regardless of his speed is caught by one of the *Fianna* just as he enters the *Bruidhean*, and that the *Fianna* receive many gifts from him, as do Conán and Goll from Cab an Dosáin at the end of our story. Both tales are here utilising the ancient Celtic motif of gifts received from the Otherworld.⁷

⁴ Ó hÓgáin, Dáithí, *Fionn mac Cumhaill, Images of a Gaelic Hero*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1988, p. 202

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 202

⁶ Murphy, Gerard, *Duanaire Finn*, Part II, Published for the Irish Texts Society by Simpkin Marshall Ltd, London, 1933, p. 2-16

⁷ Ó hÓgáin, *Fionn mac Cumhaill, Images of a Gaelic Hero*, p. 206

The name Céis can mean either a small harp or a young sow, and since the Céis itself is a cave in County Sligo, it seems that the name refers to the womb-shape of the harp, and thus to the idea of the cave as a womb of the earth. The meaning of young sow could of course be taken to refer either to the fairy woman, or to Conán himself in his female form.

Fionn and his companions often offended the Tuatha Dé Danann in the course of their adventures, and these supernatural foes were not above taking revenge.⁸ One of their most common ploys was to entice the *Fianna* (individually, in small groups, or sometimes even the entirety of them) into the *Bruidehan*, often also employing a beautiful fairy-woman to sweeten the entrapment, and then imprison them within. At other times the *Fianna* would be invited to a feast to be held in the *Bruidehan*, only to find out that the invitation was not quite as friendly as it first seemed. Sometimes, as in *An Bhruidehan Chaorthainn*, they were tormented, while in other stories the fairies would summon their warriors to attack the *Fianna* while they were trapped inside, as in *Bruidehan Eochaidh Bhig Dheirg*.⁹ The story comes to a close with the escape of the *Fianna*, sometimes through their own cunning, but more often with their release by one of their comrades who has remained uncaptured.

This is broadly what happens in *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*; Conán and Diarmaid are invited to a feast by Cab an Dosáin, lord of the *Bruidehan* of Céis, after which Conán is overcome with lust at the sight of the fairy maid, and in punishment for his lustful advances, is tormented in various ways until his brother Goll is dispatched to rescue him. A similar narrative occurs in *Bruidehan Chéise Chorainn* as well, when Fionn and Conán are entrapped by the magic of the lord of Céis' hag-like daughters, who then go on to capture progressively more of the *Fianna* until Goll arrives to free them all and save the day.¹⁰ Since that story is earlier, dating from the thirteenth century,¹¹ this episode may have been added on to the original ballad version of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* under its influence.

It is a staple of the lays of the *Fianna* that after their heroic exertions, and the wounds they sustain in battle, the *Fianna* regularly require years of healing before they are strong enough to return to their adventuring. This is commonly the concluding part of the

⁸ Ó Cadhlaigh, Cormac, M.A, *An Fhiannuidheacht*, Oifig an tSoláthair, Baile Átha Cliath, 1938, p. 83

⁹ Ní Shéaghadha, Nessa, and Ní Mhuirgheasa, Máire, *Trí Bruidhne*, Alec Tom agus a chuid Teo., Baile Átha Cliath, 1941, p. 40-91

¹⁰ *ibid*, p. 3-15

¹¹ Ó hÓgáin, *Fionn mac Cumhaill, Images of a Gaelic Hero*, p. 204

lay, where after the action is finished the audience is informed as to how long it took for the hero to recover his strength. *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* then keeps firmly to this tradition, as we are told in the penultimate stanza that Conán took a year and a day in bed to recover from the events of the lay. Of course, as part of the burlesque and the satire of the tradition that is at the heart of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, Conán is not recovering from wounds received in heroic battle, but from the injuries sustained during the violent rape he received from the fairy-woman, and from the agonies of birth thereafter.

Cab an Dosáin himself is described as a *gruagach*, that is literally, a ‘hairy fellow’, but the word also has the secondary meaning of ‘wizard’ or ‘wight.’ The word is often used in storytelling to denote a being with magic powers that was associated with the Otherworld,¹² and Cab an Dosáin, being lord of the *Bruidhean* of Céis is definitely such a character. *Cab* means mouth, and *Dos* is a tuft of hair, particularly on the chin, which only adds to the image of Cab an Dosáin as a diminutive, hairy goblin like character, an entity well known from folklore, and indeed, somewhat reminiscent of the leprechaun. Cab an Dosáin is first introduced to the tale whilst playing beautiful music on his harp, an image which confirms that the author has taken this character from within the Fenian tradition, as in the tale of the Feast of Sídh Truim, the *Fianna* are visited by a *gruagach* playing beautiful music, who ultimately leads them into danger, in much the same way as Cab an Dosáin entices Conán and Diarmaid into his *Bruidhean* with the promise of a feast, which eventually ends with Conán’s torment.¹³

Humour has been a vital part of the Fenian Tradition since the earliest times, be it St Patrick’s clerics’ fear of the giant-sized Oisín and Caoilte in *Agallamh na Senórach*,¹⁴ or the wonderful image of the *Fianna* shaving Conán’s woolly head-pelt in order to keep themselves in socks. The *Bruidhean* stories are no exception to this rule. Humour is at the heart of most if not all of the *Bruidhean* tales, *An Bhruidhean Chaorthainn*, *Bruidhean Eochaidh Bhig Dheirg*, *Bruidhean Chéise Corainn* and *Feis Tighe Chonáin*, most often personified by Conán, such as when his skin is ripped off from his back and buttocks when his companions are forced to pull him off the chair that he has become stuck to, in the tale

¹² *ibid*, p. 228

¹³ MacNeill, Eoin, *Duanaire Finn*, Part I, Irish Texts Society, Dublin, 1908, p. 61-73

¹⁴ Dooley, Ann and Roe, Harry, *Tales of the Elders of Ireland*, Oxford World Classics, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 1

of *An Bhruidhean Chaorthainn*. Conán is a vital character in two of these, namely *An Bhruidhean Chaorthainn* and *Bruidhean Chéise Corainn*. Indeed, humour is at the soul of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, with the slapstick humour increasing from Conán and Diarmaid's first meeting with Cab an Dosáin to the final image of Conán lying for a year and a day on his bed recovering from the wounds he had sustained. Even the opening stanzas of the poem can be seen as satirical in nature, for, after beginning with the conventional Fenian conceits, namely that the lay is being recounted by Oisín to St Patrick, and that the characters are indulging in the archetypal pastime of the *Fianna*, to wit, hunting, we are told that these paragons of the chase cannot discover any kind of game, not even a hare or badger, try they ever so hard. This opening passage sets the amusing tone for the rest of the lay.

Although it is not just Conán who suffers imprisonment and torment in *Bruidheanta*, still it is usually he who comes out worst from the experience and is made into a laughing-stock. All those captured in *An Bhruidhean Chaorthainn* are stuck to their seats for example, but it is only Conán who is made to seem ridiculous in the end. As usual it is Conán's disagreeable nature that lets him down, in this particular case his gluttony, as he demands to be fed before being released. In what may be seen as a punishment for his greed, the magic potion that was used to release the rest of the *Fianna* runs out when it is Conán's turn, and thus they are forced to rip him from his chair with main strength, leaving the skin of his back, buttocks, and the back of his head attached to the chair and thus earning him his nickname 'the Bald Man.'¹⁵ Whereas the other member of the *Fianna* are largely unharmed by their experiences, Conán has been maimed and made to look ridiculous, all in the pursuit of humour. Even when the other characters are injured in the course of their exploits, they are never made to look foolish or humiliated, whereas this occurs to Conán on a regular basis¹⁶, particularly in *Bruidhean* stories from the late medieval period.

There are several similarities between *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* and *Bruidhean Chéise Corainn*, a Fenian prose tale set in the same *Bruidhean*. Conán is held captive by the daughters of the ruler of the *Bruidhean*, although this time they are hags who seek to kill him, rather than a beautiful maiden who provokes his lust. In *Bruidhean Chéise Corainn* however, the rest of the *Fianna*, along with Fionn himself are captured with Conán, and

¹⁵ Bruford, Alan, *Gaelic Folk Tales and Medieval Romances*, Dublin, 1966, p. 251-3

¹⁶ Mercier, Vivian, *The Irish Comic Tradition*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1962, p. 20

treated in the same way that he is. In both stories it is Goll who comes to the rescue, in this case by slaying the three hags, in much the same way as he slays thousands of the inhabitants in *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*. Rather than making peace with the fairies and levying tribute from them however, in *Bruidhean Chéise Corainn* Goll destroys the whole dwelling and divides the spoils among the Fianna.¹⁷

This is a much more conventionally heroic lay than is *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, with the greatest attention being paid to Goll's battles with the hags, rather than to Conán's sufferings, which indeed are so far in the background here that he shares them with the rest of the Fianna, rather than being a principle character. Goll is presented as being the epitome of heroism in a much clearer way than in *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, where while his heroism is undoubted, it is subordinate to Conán's desire for vengeance on Cab an Dosáin's daughter.

Both stories share the northern focus on Goll as the great hero, to the expense of Fionn, who is relegated to a sub-character in both of them, although Goll does at one point offer to fight the third hag in Fionn's place, since it is not seemly for his position as chief of the Fianna that he should stoop to fighting so unworthy an enemy.

¹⁷ Ní Shéaghadha, and Ní Mhuirgheasa, *Trí Bruidhne*, p. 3-15

The Composition of the Lay

The early seventeenth century saw a tendency to turn away from respect for the traditions inherent in composing Fenian literature, to focus more on humour.¹⁸ Although *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* is arguably the most complete example of this phenomenon, the trend seeming to reach its apogee in the eighteenth century, the first encroachments of burlesque into the Fenian cycle can be seen centuries earlier. In *Eachtra Bhodaigh an Chóta Lachtna*, a sixteenth or seventeenth century story for example, Caoilte, traditionally known as the greatest runner among the Fianna, has his skill denigrated, so that *Bodach an Chóta Lachtna* can run instead, thus providing the story with the humorous incongruousness which is its centre point.¹⁹ *Eachtra Lomnochtáin an tSléibhe Riffe* is another early seventeenth century text which seems, like *Eachtra Bhodaigh an Chóta Lachtna* to have been composed in the Clare-Limerick area. It gives another version of the story of how Conán became bald, as opposed to the tale of how he became stuck to a seat in *An Bruidhean Chaorthainn*²⁰, and had to tear himself off it, leaving a large portion of his skin behind. Here instead Lomnochtán's wife tears the flesh from his head with her claws. As well as being rather more slapstick in nature than the original story, this development in Conán's history would have amused the audience by virtue of being yet another example of his problem with hags. The development of two causes of Conán's baldness is a clear attempt by the authors to appeal to the penchant for farce that was becoming such an important part of Fenian literature. It could also be seen as a reaction by the authors to the contemporary trend towards dramatic inflation in the Fenian oral tradition, in which this motif was in great demand. The substitution of a fleece for Conán's clawed-off skin and hair, as occurs in *Eachtra Lomnochtáin an tSléibhe Riffe*, is found widely in folklore, which also adds that the Fianna used to shear him every year and were therefore well-provided with woollen socks.²¹ Once again, Conán is made into a figure of fun by the tradition, both oral and scribal.

By the end of the century, it was possible to assimilate any type of adventure into the Fenian *genre*, as the reader's entertainment had become the prime consideration. The

¹⁸ Ó hÓgáin, *Fionn mac Cumhaill, Images of a Gaelic Hero*, p. 261

¹⁹ Bruford, Alan, *Gaelic Folk Tales and Medieval Romances*, Dublin, 1966, p. 251-3

²⁰ Mac Piarais, Pádraig, *Bruidhean Chaorthainn, Sgéal Fiannaigheachta*, Connradh na Gaedhilge, Baile Átha Cliath, 1908, pp. 32-3

²¹ Ó hÓgáin, *Fionn mac Cumhaill, Images of a Gaelic Hero*, p. 262

Bruidhean plot had become sublimated to an authorial tendency to introduce plots and motifs at random in search of colour for their tales.²² Writers regularly raided the oral tradition for motifs and plots for their additions to the Fenian cycle, and we can be fairly sure, given the wealth of oral stories which include themes similar to those found in *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, that this is what occurred here.

Seosamh Watson agrees with Ó hÓgáin on this point, with particular reference to our lay, when he observes that 'the plot itself seems to derive from sources external to the cycle rather than constitute a reworking of elements from older Ossianic sources, a practice not infrequently employed in the cycle in order to produce fresh material.'²³ The motif of a magical sex-change for example, is one with a long pedigree in Irish literature. It is recorded in their respective lives that both Saints Abban and Gerald changed their gender during the course of their ministries,²⁴ and although this occurred of their own free will rather than being a magical punishment as in Conán's case, this does establish a precedent for the major event of the poem. Watson also says that the origins of the plot of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* are to be found in folklore, such as Stith Thompson's type 514, *The Shift of Sex*²⁵, and also in the seventeenth century romantic tale *Mac na Míchomhairle*.²⁶ Watson also argues that *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* is the source of *Mac na Míchomhairle*, which due to the similarities between the eponymous main character's hallucinogenic adventures in the fairy-dwelling in which he takes shelter after finding himself in 'an unknown, unfamiliar country',²⁷ could arguably be described as a prose version of the lay.²⁸ Watson believes that it is possible that the theme of Conán's hallucinogenic misadventures originated in a folktale current at the time, possibly connected with the theme of someone who saw visions whilst staying the night at a fairy rath. This motif also occurs in *Mac na Míchomhairle*, contemporary Aisling poems, and the tale of Barret the Piper.²⁹ The correspondence

²² Ibid, p. 265

²³ Watson, Seosamh, 'Laoi Chab an Dosáin: Background to a late Ossianic Ballad', *Eighteenth Century Ireland, Iris an dá Chultúr*, ed. Alan Harrison and Ian Cambell Ross, Vol. 5, Dublin 1990, p. 38

²⁴ Bray, Dorothy Ann, *A List of Motifs in the Lives of the Early Irish Saints*, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, Helsinki, 1992, p. 106

²⁵ Aarne's Antti and Thompson, Stith, *The Types of the Folktale, a Classification and Biography*, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, Helsinki, 1964, p. 182

²⁶ Ibid, p. 38

²⁷ Watson, Seosamh, *Mac na Míchomhairle*, An Clóchomhar Tta, Baile Átha Cliath, 1979, p. 132

²⁸ Ibid, p. 43

²⁹ Ibid, p. 44

between the two is further heightened by the fact that the earliest (eighteenth century) manuscript versions of *Mac na Míchomhairle* to survive originate from southern Ulster, an area which had much literary contact with north Roscommon, the area where the earliest northern manuscript containing *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* is found. Linguistic evidence from the poem would also suggest that it originated from this area, and this will be discussed in the relevant area. North Connacht is also an area with particular geographical resonance in the poem, as it is the area in which the action takes place. The fact that the earliest manuscripts containing *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* are found in Munster therefore, is eloquent testimony to the poem's appeal and popularity across Ireland. If *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* was, as Watson believed, the source for *Mac na Míchomhairle*, this would necessitate an earlier date of composition for the poem than the dates of the manuscripts, which one would expect considering that it was usual for poems to survive orally for some time, sometimes even for centuries, before they were written down for the first time. It is however possible that earlier manuscripts containing the poem have simply not survived.

Only two attempts are made in *Mac na Míchomhairle* on the fairy-woman's honour, rather than the usual three, and this pattern is echoed in oral versions of the story collected in north Connacht in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³⁰ Gerard Murphy, the first scholar to discuss this discrepancy felt that '[the author] deliberately omitted the third episode on account of its being too uncivilised for the literati,'³¹ which is a reasonable suggestion if we view *Mac na Míchomhairle* as a literary prose version of the lay rather than as being merely inspired by the same folkloric material. Vivien Mercier however felt that the crude ending of the poetic and folktale versions of the story were somewhat out of keeping with the chivalrous and romantic atmosphere that pervades *Mac na Míchomhairle*, thus making their removal necessary for the literary cohesion of the tale.³²

That said, not all of the literati seem to have found the removal of the third episode entirely satisfactory, possibly due to their familiarity with *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, and the folk tales, and a third episode containing a further, non-sexual hallucinogenic interlude was

³⁰ Watson, 'Laoi Chab an Dosáin: Background to a late Ossianic Ballad', *Eighteenth Century Ireland, Iris an Dá Chultúr*, p. 39

³¹ Ó Ceithearnaigh, S., *Siabhradh Sídh na Míochomhairle*, Baile Átha Cliath, 1955, p.xxi

³² Mercier, Vivian, *The Irish Comic Tradition*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1962, p. 20, p.23

soon added to some versions of *Mac na Míchomhairle*.³³ The copy of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* in MS B, which dates from 1818, and is therefore the earliest copy from the north of the country to include the poem, somewhat truncates the third amorous attempt. The stanza describing how Conán returned to his bed but was for a third time unable to sleep, and so returned to make another attempt on the fairy woman's honour is left out. Instead his leap into her bed follows directly after the mauling he receives from the cats, which could lead the reader to consider his rape at the woman's hand as being a continuation of the second attempt, rather than constituting its own. That said, the line describing his screams as the cats maul him, occurs in every copy except the somewhat abridged one in 'D', in which the rape scene follows straight after Conán's first glimpse of the woman. This seems therefore to suggest that we should view the line as the end of the second attempt, regardless of whether or not Conán is mentioned as going to lie down again. This stanza generally indicates the start of the next attempt, rather than the finish of the previous one. This possible confusion over the number of amorous attempts in the first northern manuscript may well have contributed to the decision to leave out the third in *Mac na Míchomhairle*, but it is more likely that the third attempt was left out as being unsuitable for the somewhat higher-minded audience of *Mac na Míchomhairle*, as compared to those who enjoyed *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* precisely for its gleeful vulgarity.

The tale of a man magically frustrated in love was common in Irish humorous prose literature at the time of the composition of the lay,³⁴ examples being found in *Mac na Míchomhairle*, and the story of Barret the Piper, and so it is more than likely that the prose tales are the source of this particular motif, yet the man who imagines that he is giving birth is a motif from folklore.³⁵ The section in which the women of the *Bruidhean* gather to mock Conán in 'celebration' of the birth of his 'child,' and to dress him as befits a new mother appears to be original to *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, as it does not occur in the literary version of the tale, nor so far as I am aware, in the collected folktales.³⁶

By the time *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* was composed, the audience for *Fiannaíocht* had changed vastly from the original medieval one, and as a result the style of the stories had

³³ Watson, 'Laoi Chab an Dosáin: Background to a late Ossianic Ballad', *Eighteenth Century Ireland, Iris an Dá Chultúr*, p. 39

³⁴ Ó hÓgáin, *Fionn mac Cumhaill, Images of a Gaelic Hero*, p. 273

³⁵ Watson, *Mac na Míchomhairle*, pp. 60-74

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 41

changed as well. The old heroic style of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had been replaced, as society changed, with a new less sophisticated, romanticised style, less concerned with character development and more with action. The emphasis now was on long-winded alliterative description of the Fianna and their enemies, and colourful depictions of the slaughter they wreaked in battle, rather than on the growth of any of the characters. This can be clearly seen in the juxtaposition between the complex character oppositions in earlier *Fiannaíocht*, such as the conflict between Fionn and Diarmaid over Gráinne, with the Fianna forced to take sides, and the shallower but more exaggerated personalities found later on. In eighteenth century *Fiannaíocht* such character-led plots are simply absent. This new romantic style also changed as a result of the wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which saw the end of the Gaelic aristocracy, and their harking back to an earlier heroic age. The loss of an aristocratic audience meant that aristocratic themes were now redundant. The audience that took their place was mainly composed of farmers, who while still interested in the romanticised tales also had an appreciation of an earthier peasant humour, which can be seen to be behind the Fenian tradition's eighteenth century descent into farce.³⁷

By the end of the eighteenth century, the possibilities for composing new Fenian material were technically almost limitless, with the well-established series of lays and prose-texts to draw upon for traditional material, and a rich seam of folklore to mine for new material. Ireland's increasing contact with Romantic ideas and foreign influences must also have provided the potential for expanding the cycle with new ideas and motifs. That said, the conventions of the cycle had grown somewhat stale, as too much emphasis was laid on the action, as can be seen in *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, and little or no attention was paid to the personalities or development of the characters. The fact that Conán, rather than any of the other heroes, is the main protagonist in so many of the later tales can be taken as an indication that only he was seen as capable of character development in the tradition's late period.³⁸ Conán however, due to the dominating influence of humour and burlesque that had come into play in the cycle, had been reduced to little more than a buffoon, a far cry from the cantankerous hero of the early period, leaving him too unsuitable for much

³⁷ Murphy, Gerard, *Duanaire Finn*, Part III, Published for the Irish Texts Society by the Educational Company of Ireland Ltd, p. xcvi

³⁸ Ó hÓgáin, *Fionn mac Cumhaill, Images of a Gaelic Hero*, p. 274

creativity. This can clearly be seen from his role in *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, where, although Conán plays his usual lustful, buffoonish role, the author does seem to be operating a policy of ticking all the boxes on the check-list of Conán's character. He is by turns argumentative, offensive to his hosts, gluttonous, dismissive of his friends' council, and lustful to extremes. Amusing as this makes the story, no new ground has been broken here, no attempt to develop Conán beyond his buffoonish straitjacket, unlike in *Feis Tighe Chonáin*, where he is briefly mentioned as playing a leading part in the battle that ends the story.³⁹

Part of the problem was simply the result of the changes in society. The heroic, medieval Ireland of warriors travelling about the country, feasting at noble courts and challenging each other to single combat had long since disappeared. Those scribes operating in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries lived in what was essentially an early modern European society. Being utterly divorced, except by language, from the society that had given birth to the Fenian heroes, and coming, as they were, under ever increasing pressure from a quite different society, the leap of consciousness necessary to effectively invent new characters, motifs and situations for the tradition would have been immense. In the event, it proved too much of a leap for a literature now in terminal decline to achieve.

Since its motifs were unknown in the Fenian cycle before its appearance, it would seem reasonable to argue that the central theme of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* comes from an unknown folktale, or series of tales, relating to the visions seen by someone spending the night at a fairy *ráth*, and that it has been assimilated into the cycle in order to give it a wider appeal to the audience of the time. One theory is that, given the obvious moral message implicit in the story, to wit that forcing oneself on women is wrong, that *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* might have had its origin in a moral tale. Whether its origin was Fenian or not however, the story is full of instantly familiar Fenian themes. Mortal heroes are regularly tempted into *bruidheanta*, there to face otherworldly torments, in the stories of Fionn and his warriors, and *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* is no exception. The Fianna are also regularly rescued by other members of the band, as happens here, and they levy tribute on those they defeat, just as Goll and Conán receive gifts from Cab an Dosáin's people. The well-known, unattractive character of Conán is well on display in the lay, and his friendship with

³⁹ O'Kearney, Nicholas, *Feis Tighe Chonáin*, Transactions of the Ossianic Society for the year 1854, vol. II, Dublin 1855, p. 197

Diarmaid is given full attention, as, true to the literary traditions of the cycle, it is to Diarmaid he turns in his distress, and it is Diarmaid who offers him succour.

The Oral Tradition

The underground nature of Irish literature, and indeed the language itself in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries meant that few among the population could read or write in their mother tongue, leaving the work of passing on the native tales to the scribal class. Despite the difficulties inherent in such an enterprise under such conditions, a thriving manuscript tradition had been kept alive from medieval times, even as far as our period, and as Ó hÓgáin says, 'literate men were accustomed to read aloud both tales and lays to eager listeners.'⁴⁰ Evidence survives from Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man to suggest that Fenian literature was particularly popular in such readings from the seventeenth century.⁴¹ The stories heard in this fashion would have mingled with the other tales and materials that had been read aloud since the Middle Ages, and thus the corpus of *Fiannaíocht* which has been collected from story-tellers in the last two centuries is the result of this tradition of dissemination and admixture of stories.

A strong emphasis, as might be expected as an aid to the memory, is placed upon a few leading characters in the oral tradition, thus allowing for a varied yet fundamentally consistent series of adventures to be developed around these characters.⁴² This contrasts with the stories in the written tradition, which contain many more sub-characters than the oral ones. In the post-medieval written literature, each of the leading members of the *Fianna* were given distinct roles, Conán that of the buffoon, Diarmaid the lover, Fionn the leader and so on, and the folklore does much the same, except that it strengthens these roles by 'making the characterisation wholly subservient to them.'⁴³ New material could therefore remain true to the feel of the tradition by recycling old imagery and ideas. This is clearly shown in *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* when Fionn chews his finger, and thus gains the knowledge of Conán and Diarmaid's plight. This is part of a tradition that stretches back in the cycle to the medieval *Macgnímartha Finn*, thought to date to the ninth century.⁴⁴ As Ó hÓgáin says, this 'was always a central image, always an essential narrative device,'⁴⁵ and so

⁴⁰ Ó hÓgáin, *Fionn mac Cumhaill, Images of a Gaelic Hero*, p. 275

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 275

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 292

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 292

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 275

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 293

it is in *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, as it is only through Fionn's action that Goll is sent to rescue the two main protagonists.

In his *Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts*,⁴⁶ Patrick Kennedy includes a version of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* called *Conán's Delusions in Ceash*, which he claims to be based upon a folk tale. There are some notable differences with the manuscript text, namely that Fionn and the rest of the *Fianna* are also invited to the feast by Cab an Dosáin (a nameless dwarf in this version), and that the beautiful fairy woman is in fact really a hag, a fact discovered by Fionn on chewing his thumb. All the heroes resist her blandishments except for Conán, who jumps onto the chariot she sits on (rather than the mobile bed on legs of the manuscript version). The three amorous episodes occur in much the same fashion as the manuscript tale, although there is one giant cat rather than many of a more normal size, and Conán suffers childbirth until he is rescued by Fionn, but not until his head has turned bald.⁴⁷ There is no mention of Diarmaid's role as his midwife. In an interesting parallel with *An Bhruidean Chaorthainn* Conán is rescued from the enchantment by means of a magic phial, his head having been stuck to the floor by the hair whilst he endured the labour pains. Despite the application of the phial however, Conán's hair is left behind him when he is released.

There is also a related English language folk tale that seems to come from the same source as *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, called *The Misfortunes of Barrett the Piper*, which Kennedy includes in his book.⁴⁸ Although no woman is present in the tale, Barrett has 'bad thoughts' three times during the night whilst staying in what later proves to be a fairy *ráth*, and each time he gets up and suffers a similar misfortune to Conán, including birth pains in the third episode. After making the sign of the Cross on his son's suggestion his pains and his host vanish. Although the more obscene elements have been removed from this folk-version, to the point that there is not even a female character to inspire Barrett's lust, the parallels with *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* are easy to see. The change of language, and the removal of what would most likely have been seen as unsuitable elements by a nineteenth century English-medium audience are merely evidence of the tenacity of the oral tradition, and the endless variety and improvisation which caused it to survive down to our own time.

⁴⁶ Kennedy, Patrick, *Legendary Fictions of the Irish Celts*, London, 1866

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 232-5

⁴⁸ *ibid*, p. 158-60

The Scribes

The Gaelic scribal experience was very diverse throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some produced numerous manuscripts covering a widely disparate range of material, while others concentrated on one particular type of text, such as medical texts or devotional works, and others never (to our knowledge), produced more than one manuscript throughout their careers. One common factor however, is that very few of them made a living from scribing; with notable exceptions such as the famous Cork scribe Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin, the vast majority earned a wage at some other activity, and were thus forced to write in the evening or on Sundays.⁴⁹ They also differed in the activities they undertook: some composed their own material, both in prose and poem form, others collected songs and stories from other people and wrote them down, others copied older or decaying manuscripts so that their contents would not be lost, while still others performed a combination of these roles.

One scribe who worked solely as a copyist, 'a *scriobhneoir Gaedhilge* as he called himself⁵⁰, was Éadhmonn Ó Shorrochodh of County Roscommon, who produced manuscript B. Large parts of B are indeed copied from RIA23Q35, by the scribe Brian Ó Fearghail, although *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* is not among the texts copied, and would seem to have been added by Ó Shorrochodh himself. It is probable that there was a longstanding friendship, or kinship connection between the Ó Shorrochodh and Ó Fearghail families, and the two scribes seem to have lived near each other for a period,⁵¹ which would explain how Ó Shorrochodh came to have Ó Fearghail's manuscript in his possession to be copied. There is also a connection between Ó Shorrochodh and Céis, the setting for *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, which may well provide the reason that led to the scribe adding it to the manuscript. In the seventeenth century a family named Ó hEarchadh lived near the mountain of Céis Chorainn in County Sligo, until they lost their lands as a result of the Cromwellian wars.⁵² Ó Shorrochodh was obviously aware of this connection, and was very interested in Céis and the local area, a fact emphasised by the inclusion of a poem set in Céis in a manuscript not otherwise concerned with the district.

⁴⁹ Ó Conchúr, Breandán, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí 1700-1850*, An Clóchomhar Tta, Baile Átha Cliath, 1982, p. 227

⁵⁰ Mac Enery, Marcus, 'Cows and Calves, Books and Copies', *Éigse VI*, Part II, p. 135

⁵¹ *ibid*, p. 136

⁵² *ibid*, p. 137

As can be inferred from the relationship between Ó Shorrochodh and Ó Fearghail, and from the lives of many others connected with Gaelic scholarship in the period in question, the scribes 'were in contact with each other in different parts of the country.'⁵³

Uilliam Ó hAodha of Cill Bolláin, the scribe of manuscripts C and E lived at the right time to be a member of the team of scribes assembled by the Cork collector and editor of manuscripts John Windele, who is known to have been in contact with one of the patrons of Peadar Ó Gealacan. There is unfortunately no way to be sure that Ó hAodha and Windele were in contact, as none of Ó hAodha's correspondence survives, and we know only a few details of his life. Evidence survives to suggest that Ó hAodha 'moved or frequently met some of his contemporaries'⁵⁴ in County Cork. He was an itinerant teacher, who had a school in Cill Bolláin, the which activity would have given him ample opportunities to travel and make contact with his fellow scribes. This seems particularly likely when we consider that he lived a mere three miles south of Áth an Mhuilinn, which in the first half of the nineteenth century was one of the most prolific areas of scribal activity in the county.⁵⁵

We know even less of Seán Gaillighe, the scribe who wrote manuscript G. He did however work in the same area as Ó hAodha, albeit some forty years earlier, and it is possible that Ó hAodha was familiar with Gaillighe's work, and it is even possible that they met, although we have no evidence for this.

Little is also known of Pillib Ó Cinnéide, the scribe of A, save that he worked in Carrick on Suir, South Tipperary, an area with a very strong literary tradition during the period in question.⁵⁶ In like manner, all that we know of Ruisdeard Cais is that he came from Tullamaine in County Tipperary.

By contrast the life of Peadar Ó Gealacan, the scribe who added *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* to D is well documented. He was employed by Roibeard Mac Ádhaimh of Belfast to travel around Ireland copying and collecting manuscripts, work which would have put him constantly in contact with other scribes, possibly including Uilliam ÓhAodha, considering that their patrons corresponded with each other.

⁵³ McCarthy, C.J.F., 'Scríobhaithe Chille Bolláin,' *Charleville and District Historical Journal*, No. 5, 1990, p. 40

⁵⁴ McCarthy, 'Scríobhaithe Chille Bolláin,' *Charleville and District Historical Journal*, p. 45

⁵⁵ Ó Conchúr, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí 1700-1850*, p. 204

⁵⁶ Nolan, William and Power, Thomas P., (ed.), *Scríobhaithe Phort Láirge*, in *Waterford History and Society*, p.267

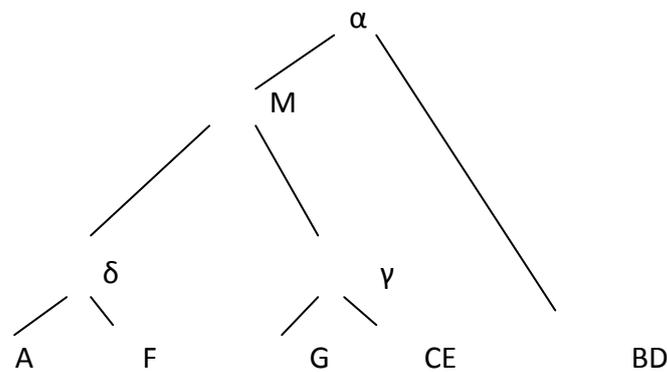
The Manuscript Tradition of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*

There is much linguistic and textual evidence (see below) for the idea that *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* originates from the South Ulster- North Connacht area. It was not unusual for such a poem to have existed purely orally for a time, sometimes as often as a few centuries, before it was written down. This would have given enough time for the poem to have been passed orally around the country, spreading out from its putative area of origin in South Ulster-North Connacht to all parts of Ireland. This would account for the fact that at least one copy of the poem has been found in manuscript form in every county in Munster, and in texts from Dublin, Louth and Meath⁵⁷, and of course it is likely that there are lost copies of the poem. The scribes were also frequently in touch with each other, with many travelling around the country collecting songs and stories, and so it is likely that the poem would have been disseminated thus. Dublin was also a great hub of scribal activity, and once the poem had reached the city it would most likely have soon spread from there around the country. It would also not necessarily have been written down first in its area of origin. Scribes from other areas would usually have written it down in their own dialect, rather than keeping slavishly to the original, and doubtless the version they heard, having passed from mouth to mouth for an indeterminate length of time, would be much altered from the original. Change is also likely to have occurred as a result of editorial scribal work. Thus we can reconcile the fact that the earliest known manuscript to contain *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* originates from North Cork, and contains examples of both South Ulster Irish and the local East Munster Dialect. A similar version to the North Cork one (CEG) was present in Tipperary at roughly the same time (AF), and a linguistically dissimilar but stylistically similar version was likewise present in Roscommon (B).

Manuscripts A and F are identical as regards the form of the poem, with the only differences between them being minor textual variations, usually as regards spelling rather than varying in regards to the word used. Manuscript G is somewhat different however, as it contains seven quatrains not found in AF, and omits three which they do contain. Linguistic variation is once again fairly minor. Each of the seven quatrains contained in G and not found in AF are also included in CE, and C adds a further two, at the end of the poem,

⁵⁷ Watson, 'Laoi Chab an Dosáin: Background to a late Ossianic Ballad', *Eighteenth Century Ireland, Iris an Dá Chultúr*, p. 37

which are unique to that manuscript. Apart from these two final quatrains, CEG are almost exactly the same. Manuscript B by contrast, although having the bulk of the poem in common with the other manuscripts, includes a long section detailing Conán’s travails at the hands of the fairy woman, which is not found in ACEFG, but which is echoed to a degree in D, despite the constraints of space in that manuscript. B and D contain numerous examples of South Ulster-North Connacht dialect, whereas the others are full of East Munster words and spellings, which leads to a lot of linguistic variation between these two manuscripts and the others purely on dialectical grounds, although purely stylistic variations are also common. (Note the common description of Cab an Dosáin in BD as *an gruagach beag is deise gléas*, as compared to *ba lugha méid* in ACEFG). The relationship of the manuscripts can therefore be illustrated as follows:



The relationships between the various scribes are key to the understanding of the relationships between the manuscripts. A and F were both composed in Tipperary within a few years of each other, and given that the typical Irish scribe of the period was in contact with several of his fellows, and regularly exchanged manuscripts with them, or made copies for them, the similarities between the two are easy to understand. G was written in North Cork during the same period, not too far from the Tipperary border, and thus it is possible that these three scribes all knew each other, and perhaps had access to the poem from the same source, which would explain the similarities. C and E were written by Uilliam Ó hAodha who was also from North Cork, and are copies of G. B was written some forty years after AFG, which along with the northern focus on Conán may go a long way towards explaining the differences between it and the earlier manuscripts. D was written in much

the same area as B thirty years later, and is broadly similar to B as regards the structure of the poem, although the language used in D is somewhat different.

The Cork manuscripts of Uilliam Ó hAodha

Manuscripts C and E were written by Uilliam Ó hAodha in the same year, 1823, and as might be expected, the copies of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* they contain are very similar. They are also very similar to G, which was written in much the same area of North Cork forty years before them. It seems likely that Ó hAodha knew of Gaillighe, the scribe of G, and it is entirely possible that he had seen manuscript G itself, since his copies of the poem are in such accord with Gaillighe's. As with G, C and E are very similar to A and F, although there are some differences, which are mostly shared with G. The first of these is the quatrain Cab an Dosáin speaks in praise of Diarmaid and Conán, which has perhaps been included in order to give a reason for the invitation which he gives them:

11. Do labhair sé do láthair.
“ Is sibh is áille dá bhfaca fós,
I ngleo, i gcath, in ár
Is in imirt lúthlámhach gan móid.”

He spoke then/ Ye are the most beautiful I have yet seen
/ In strife, in battle, in slaughter/ And in swift handed play without oaths.

This description of the beauty of Conán in battle is rather incongruously at odds with the usual portrayal of him at this stage of the tradition as a coward, and seems to echo the earlier characterisation of Conán as a brave if ruthless and fractious warrior.

Conán's unpleasant demeanour is emphasised slightly more strongly in quatrain 19 of CE than it is in the other manuscripts. The generally occurring *béas do bhí ag Conán* is replaced by Ó hAodha with the stronger *Do bhí béas nár mhaith ag Conán*, which minor difference that it does go to show how Conán was viewed, and adds somewhat to the view that Conán in many ways deserved his sufferings at the hands of the fairy woman. This difference also occurs in G. Quatrain 31 does not occur in CE, nor in G.

After Conán's experience at the hands of the cats, CE insert another quatrain, in which true to his character as Conán's friend, Diarmaid warns him against making another attempt on the fairy woman's honour, lest he suffer worse mutilation than he has already. This quatrain also occurs in G.

40. Is annsin do labhair Diarmaid.
"A Chonáin Mhaoil fá mheirgeach dreach,
Má éirgheann tú an treas uair
Nár bheirir aon chluas leat tar ais."

And then spake Diarmaid/ O Conán Maol of freckled countenance
/ If you arise the third time/ May you not bring any ear back with you.

Manuscripts C and E, and also Gaillighe's G seem to take the view that Conán gets what he deserves from the fairy woman, and that it is his own recklessness and lust which got him into the situation. Witness the quatrain where Diarmaid warns him of the disastrous consequences of his third rape-attempt, and also this quatrain found only in the Cork manuscripts, in which the woman makes it clear that Conán must suffer all that other women have suffered (implicitly at his hands), thus striking a somewhat moralistic tone at odds with the obscene farce which characterises the rest of the poem.

48. "Is gairid duit sin d'fhagháil uainn,
Nó go ngrádhfaimíd do chroidhe
Is go gcaithfear amach trí ráithe,
Mar is gnáthach leis gach mnaoi."

You'll get that quickly from us/ Until we love your heart
/ And until three seasons will be spent / As is normal for every woman.

The woman speaks to Conán in another verse unique to the Cork manuscripts, in which she makes reference to Conán's cowardice, a common theme in the lays:

53. Is annsin do labhair an ríogain,

“A Chonáin Mhaoil nár luadhadh san ngaisgeadh,
Dá mbeadh id fhochair seacht gcatha na bhFiann
Ní shaorfaid tú faoi mhaidinn.”

And then the queen spoke/ O Conán Maol unmentioned in valour
/ If the seven battalions of the Fianna were near you/ They wouldn't free you by
morning.

CE and G contain a quatrain in which the inhabitants of the *bruidhean* set out to make peace with Goll, on seeing him slaughter their compatriots:

68. An uair do chonarcadar lucht na bruighne
An gaisgidheach líomhtha ag teacht fána ndéin,
Do chroithnigheadar a n-óg is a gcríonna
Is d'éirigh amach fána dhéin.

When the inhabitants of the *bruidhean* saw/ The excellent hero coming towards
them /They assembled their old and their aged/ And went out to meet him.

There are also two quatrains which deal with the agreement between Goll and the fairies:

72. Do labhair leis uaisle na bruighne
Is do fuair umhal ó gach n-aon,
Is d'inneadar dó trí shuairceas
Gach díth dár éirigh do Chonán Maol.

The nobles of the *bruidhean* spoke to him/ And he received homage from each
/And they told him jestingly/ All that happened to Conán Maol.

75. Do fuair Goll mórán dualgáis,
Is Conán uasal tar gach n-aon.
Is d'fhágadar slán ag sluaightibh
Chab an Dosáin ón gCéis.

Goll received many rewards/ And noble Conán over all
/And they bade farewell to the hosts/ Of Cab an Dosáin from Keash.

C alone of all the manuscripts ends the tale with two stanzas of conversation between Oisín and St Patrick, in order to complete the common Fenian conceit that the lays were related by Oisín to the saint after the death of the rest of the Fianna, a trope alluded to at the start of the poem:

78. P. “Lig feasda dod leamh-bhriathra,
A Oisín bhaoith gan chéill,
Is gur mór an peaca do-ghní tú
Aithris gníomhartha Chonáin Mhaoil.”

Desist from your insipid words/ O silly senseless Oisín
/ great is the sin which you commit/ repeating the deeds of Conán Maol.

79. O. “Ar pheaca ar bith ní smaoinighim,
‘s is cuma liom cad a ghnéid,
Acht aithriseod féin go binn duit
An sgeimhleadh fuaramair ó inghean Ríogh Gréag.”

I do not think on any sin/ And I care not what they do
/ But I will recite for you sweetly/ The torturing we got from the King of Greece’s
daughter.

Manuscripts C and E are indirect copies of the earlier G. Their composition is separated by forty years, which tells us that manuscript G was in circulation from its composition between 1778 and 1782 until at least 1823 when the others were compiled. Gaillighe himself was still alive in 1808, so it is quite possible that he and Ó hAodha met. The fact that Ó hAodha included *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* in two manuscripts in one year shows just how popular it was as a story, as it was obviously in great demand. The fact that the vast majority of the story is unchanged in these manuscripts is also testament to the popularity of the poem, as if it were less popular, scribe would have fewer copies to use in compiling their

own version, which naturally lead to greater variation between the copies as they would be forced to fill in any gaps in the story from memory, rather than being able to rely on a wealth of written examples.

Editorial Method

The primary and secondary manuscripts are written in a pre-standard orthography, with all the attendant problems of spelling. I have attempted to strike a balance between standardising the spellings of words from the manuscripts, and maintaining as far as possible the pre-standard orthography of the period in which they were written. In this I have taken the spellings in Dineen's dictionary as a guide. Glide vowels have been inserted silently where necessary. Word-division and punctuation are editorial. Plene forms have been used to expand abbreviated forms silently.

Editorial procedure for the body of the text

- i. Various forms of the preposition *faoi* occur, including *faoi* itself, albeit with a radically non-standard spelling. These have in all cases been silently replaced with the modern standard, and I have avoided making any alterations to the morphology of the text.
- ii. The verbal particle *do*, which occurs frequently in the manuscripts before verbs in the past and conditional tenses has been left, as has the preposition *do* when it occurs before a verbal noun, rather than being replaced with the particle *a*.
- iii. *Sínte fada* have been added in unambiguous cases (e.g *feasóg* > *féasóg*)
- iv. In the case of the preposition *i*, *a* > *i*, has been adopted throughout.
- v. The standard spelling of the *urú* mutation has been used in place of the doubled consonant where it occurs (e.g *san cCéis* > *san gCéis*).
- vi. *Sc, st, sp* where occurring have been changed to *sg, sd, sb* (e.g *C7b, scátha* > *sgátha*).
- vii. Dialectical spellings have for the most part been standardised in the body of the text, but recorded in the apparatus to reflect the wide geographical spread of the manuscripts. *Casadh* (28c) for example, is written *A casag*, *F casach* and *GC casadh*.
- ix. *Eu* for *éa* occurs in some manuscripts, notably B, but *éa* is adopted as the standard form in the body of the text.
- x. In some manuscripts, particularly G and A, Latin *et* for Irish *agus* occurs, and has been replaced here with *agus*, or γ as required by the metre.
- xi. *Sin* and *seo* have in all cases been replaced by *san* and *so*.
- xii. Where expansions have been made, they are indicated in the apparatus by italics.

xiii. The radical form of the preposition *ar* has in all cases been spelt *ar*, rather than *air* as occurs in the manuscripts.

xiv. Unstressed –io- has been replaced with –ea-.

xv. Unstressed –us has been replaced with –as, except in the case of *agus*.

xvi. *ann a* has been replaced by *ina*. Note also ion(n)a > ina.

xvii. Doubled consonants have been replaced by single consonants wherever this is in accordance with Dineen’s orthography (e.g liomm > liom).

xviii. Expansions have been made silently in the body of the poem, but are recorded in italics in the footnotes.

xix. In the case of ‘consonant and ^ˆ’, the word has been expanded silently to whichever form is required by context. *ḃ* for instance will be expanded to ‘ba’, ‘badh’ etc as required.

xx. In manuscript F, ‘^ˆ’ commonly occurs without a letter below it. This has been silently emended.

xxi. The verbal noun *éirighe* and (*do*) *éirigh* are homophones in the dialect of the manuscripts. The third singular form *deirghe* which occurs regularly in the manuscripts will therefore be normalised to *d’éirigh*.

xxii. A regularly uses the lenited form of *dá*, and this has been silently emended to *dá* throughout.

xxiii. *Den* and *don* are used interchangeably in the manuscripts. In this edition they have been emended silently to whichever is correct in each circumstance.

xxiv. F consistently uses the form *Dasain* for *Dosáin*. This has been in all cases silently emended to *Dosáin*.

The following may also be noted, as regards manuscript abbreviations:

ᄡ has been expanded to ‘ar’, and ᄢ in the same way to ‘air’.

ṁ has been expanded to ‘nn’, and ṡ to ‘raig’.

From analysis of the text it seems that ‘v’ can represent either ‘u’ or ‘a’, and so has been expanded to whichever of them is required according to Dineen’s orthography.

J has been expanded to ‘ir’.

ᶑ^u has been expanded to ‘Gur’,

ṑ has been expanded to ‘féin’, and ṑ to ‘don’.

ṛ has been expanded to 'acht'.

m̃ has been expanded to 'mhic', and the symbols ċ and ȳ to 'la' and 'rr' respectively.

Rhyme

The rhyme scheme of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* is a very rough *ógláchas* based on *rannaigheacht mhór*, which is frequently garbled as a result of the oral transmission of the poem before it was written down. The metre features internal rhyme between lines *ab* and *cd* of a quatrain, although internal rhyme within individual lines also occurs (70d). There is also usually final rhyme between line *bd*, although as with the other forms of rhyme which occur, this often breaks down. There are usually roughly seven syllables to a line.

The provenance of the poem

There are several rhymes in the poem which provide evidence for its origins. *Abhainn* for instance is rhymed with both *móin* and *anonn* (29bd), which precludes any pronunciation but an Ulster one. In the same way *huair* and *mhór* (36ab) are rhymed. Another common occurrence is the pronunciation of *ao* as *i:*, which gives us the rhyming pair *thaobh* and *mnaoi* (41cd). *Iarraidh* and *íochtar* are also placed together in final rhyme (44bd), which tells us that final *-a(i)dh* is here being pronounced as a schwa. *Roinnt* and *dhroim* also rhyme (47bd), as **/ri:Nt'/** and **/yri:m/** respectively, giving a West Connacht pronunciation. *Sgéal* and *lae* rhyme, thus precluding the pronunciation **/s'ciəl./** Eclipsis occurs after the prepositional article, rather than lenition which would be characteristic of Ulster. In 49bd, the final rhyme between *críonna* and *mnaoi* works best if *mnaoi* is pronounced as **/mri:/**. Put together this evidence is enough to prove that the poem cannot have originated in Munster, regardless of the provenance of the earliest manuscripts to contain it. In fact the evidence points towards a Connacht origin for the poem, as these features are mostly indicative of Connacht Irish. The commonly occurring rhyme of *Maol* with *féin*, or indeed with any other one-syllable word containing the vowel **e:** can be explained with reference to Brian Ó Curnáin's study of the Irish of Iorras Aithneach, where he notes that *Conán Maol* is frequently pronounced **/kuna:n me:l/** in that area.⁵⁸

A perhaps significant fact is that *teach* is the word used for house in every copy of the poem, regardless of the provenance of the manuscript, rather than the Munster *tig*. Had

⁵⁸ Ó Curnáin, Brian, *The Irish of Iorras Aithneach County Galway*, vol. 3, School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2007, p.1846

the poem originated in Munster we might expect *tig* to occur, although it is perhaps likely that *teach* is here being preferred to *tig* as representing a more literary form. Another non-Munster form we find occurring is the *rachad* (28d), rather than *raghad*. This would support the idea that the poem's origin is northern, as *raghad* was a common Munster form, even in the literary register.

A clear focus on the characters Conán, and therefore by extension Diarmaid, and Goll can be seen in *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*. Conán obviously is the main character in the lay, around whom nine tenths of the action revolves, and Diarmaid is present in his usual role as Conán's aider and abetter in distress. What is interesting however is the almost total absence of Fionn from the story. Although part of the original hunting group at the start of the poem, Fionn leaves with the rest of those who abandon Conán and Diarmaid on the hill, and only re-enters the tale towards the end when he chews his finger in an effort to discover what had become of his missing men. On discovering the strait they were in, he does not come himself to their rescue, but sends Goll; this is significant. Fionn was associated with the south and east of the country, Goll with the north and west, and thus Fionn was seen as the most important character in Munster and Leinster, whilst Goll was pre-eminent in Ulster and Connacht. The antagonism between their families therefore found an echo in how they were portrayed by scribes from different areas. Those from the south-eastern portion of Ireland tended to stick to the traditional view of Fionn as the heroic warrior, whilst in the north-west this role was often taken by Goll, with Fionn frequently reduced to little more than a sub-character, and often portrayed in a very negative light. Although he is not portrayed negatively here, the fact that it is not Fionn but Goll who goes to the rescue of Conán and Diarmaid would suggest that this is just such an occasion, where Goll, not Fionn is seen as the pre-eminent warrior by the author of the tale. This would be an indication that Watson is correct in his hypothesis of a northern origin for *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*, regardless of the provenance of the earliest manuscript to contain it, for surely were it by origin a southern tale, Fionn, not Goll would be allotted the hero's part.

Perhaps the most significant proof of the northern origin of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* however is the location of the poem's action. The *Céis* itself is a cave in Sligo, and thus while it might be expected for scribes from North Connacht-South Ulster to set Fenian adventures

in localities close for them, it is a much greater stretch of the imagination that Munstermen would have set their stories in quite such a different part of Ireland.

A note on the presentation of the edition

The Tipperary (MSS AF) and North Cork (MSS CEG) recensions of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* differ as regards ten quatrains which are found in the North Cork recension, but not in that of Tipperary. In an effort to present a combined edition of the two, those quatrains found in North Cork but not in Tipperary will be indicated by brackets. Where the versions share a quatrain, but differ substantially as to its contents, the most appropriate reading will be chosen upon consultation of the linguistic and metrical evidence in the quatrains. Where this occurs it will be mentioned in the notes. A silently emended version of the Roscommon recension of the poem has been presented in the appendix for comparative purposes, and is discussed there. Manuscript abbreviations have been expanded silently, and spelling has where necessary been adjusted in line with Dineen's orthography.

Laoidh Chab an Dosáin

1. Lá dá rabhamairne⁵⁹ Fiannaibh Fáil
Ár gcuid coileán ⁊ sinn⁶⁰ féin,
Is é áit a ndeachamar an lá sin
A Phádraig, ag seilg ar an gCéis.

One day we, the Fianna of Ireland,/ Our puppies and ourselves, /
It is the place we went that day/ O Patrick, hunting on the Céis.

2. Do chaitheamar trí oídhche ⁊ trí lá
Ár gcoileán ⁊ ár bhFéinn,⁶¹
Níor casadh⁶² linn fiú an mhíolbhuidhe ná an bhruic
Ar fud na gnoc sin go léir.

We spent three days and three nights,/ Our puppies and our Fian-band, /
We did not meet even the hare or the badger/ Across all those hills.

3. “Dar mo láimh duit”⁶³ ar Conán,
“Is⁶⁴ mór an mí-ádh⁶⁵ so inár ndéidh.⁶⁶
Is muna bhfaighead féin cineál an aráin,
Go dtuitfidh⁶⁷ géaráin⁶⁸ mo ghéill.”

“By my hand” said Conán,/ “This misfortune that follows us is great,/
If I don’t get some bread/ The teeth of my jaw will fall.”

4. Is ansin do labhair Fionn,⁶⁹
“A Chonáin gidh mí-ádh atá i mo dhéidh⁷⁰,
Ní fhacamair⁷¹ tú⁷² aríamh a bhráthair⁷³

⁵⁹ rabhamairne] raibhamairne AG, ramuirna F.

⁶⁰ sinn] is ár ccuid G, sin F.

⁶¹ ár gcoileán is ár bhFéinn] air gcuid coin is sinn feinn A, ár gcuid coiléadhan is ár bhFéinn G.

⁶² casadh] casach F, casag A.

⁶³ duit] a Dhíarmuid A.

⁶⁴ is] gur A, gidh gur G.

⁶⁵ mí-ádh] mhuidheadh G, miodhabhadh F.

⁶⁶ ndéidh] ndéig G, ndiaidh F.

⁶⁷ dtuitfidh] go dtuitid A, go ttitudh F, tuitfead G.

⁶⁸ géaráin] géuráin A, gearáin F.

⁶⁹ is...Fionn] dar mo bhriathar ort ar Fionn A, dar mo láimh ort a Chonáin air Fionn G.

⁷⁰ a... dhéidh] go mba ghnáthach an mí-ádh a lom do ghéill A, gidh miodhabhadh atá mo dhiaidh F.

⁷¹ fhacamair] fheacamair G, fhacamarna F, fhacamuirna A.

⁷² tú] thú A.

⁷³ bhráthair] Chonáin A, in aon áit G.

Ná tarraingeofá⁷⁴ dainid⁷⁵ ar an bhFéinn.”

“By my hand Conán” said Fionn,/ “Though misfortune is following me,/ We never saw you at any time o brother/ That you wouldn’t draw grief onto the Fian- band.”

5. Is annsin do ghluaiseamair⁷⁶ Fiannaibh⁷⁷ Fáil,
Ár gcuid coileán is ár bhFéinn,
Is níor fhágamar inár ndiaidh an lá sin
Acht Diarmaid ⁊ Conán ar an gCéis.

And then we the Fianna of Ireland moved on,/ Our puppies and our warriors./ We didn’t leave anyone behind us that day,/ But Diarmaid and Conán at the Céis.

6. “Mo⁷⁸ thruagh duit⁷⁹ a Dhiarmaid” ar Conán,
Ná⁸⁰ fágthar sinn i dTeamhair féin
Mar a bhfaighfeása eineach⁸¹ maith ó mhná,⁸²
Is do bheadh⁸³ fuighleach cláir⁸⁴ ag an bhFear Maol.

“It’s a pity Diarmaid” said Conán,/ That we’re not left in Tara itself,/ Where you would get good hospitality from women,/ And the Bald Man would have the table’s leavings.”

7. Is annsin do chonaiceamar chughainn⁸⁵ anuas
An gruagach beag⁸⁶ ba lugha méid,
Ar⁸⁷ marcaidheacht ar asal fiadháin,⁸⁸
Is níor lugha an beitheach⁸⁹ ná é féin.

⁷⁴ tarraingeofá] tarraineófa A, tarrainfa G, taruingeofa F.

⁷⁵ dainid] dónthach A, acharin F, daithnid G.

⁷⁶ ghluaiseamair] ghluaisamuirna F.

⁷⁷ fiannaibh] fian F.

⁷⁸ mo] is G.

⁷⁹ duit] ort A, G has:... is trua a Dhiarmaid G.

⁸⁰ ná] nách G.

⁸¹ eineach] uinneach A, ionneach G, ionach F.

⁸² ó mhná] ón mnáibh F.

⁸³ do bheadh] bheith FA.

⁸⁴ cláir] an chláir F.

⁸⁵ chughainn] chúghainn G, chugain F.

⁸⁶ an gruagach beag] an ghruagach bheag A, an gruagach beḡ F.

⁸⁷ ar] ag G.

⁸⁸ fiadháin] fhioghan F.

⁸⁹ beitheach] biathach A, beathádhach G, beithach F.

And then we saw coming up to us/ The little goblin of smallest size,/
Riding on a wild ass,/ And the beast was no smaller than himself.

- 8. Do bhí birréad⁹⁰ don ór cheardach⁹¹ air,
Ag déanamh sgáith dá bhaithis léith,
Is fairsinge chlóca⁹² den⁹³ tsróill⁹⁴ bhán⁹⁵
Aige⁹⁶ dá fholchadh⁹⁷ go léir.⁹⁸

There was a cap of crafted gold on him/ Shading his grey forehead,/
And a broad cloak of white satin/ Covering all of him.

- 9. Do bhí cláirseach chaoin shéamhsantúil⁹⁹ aige,
Ag seinm sdreancáin¹⁰⁰ ar théadaibh.¹⁰¹
Is é ag teacht¹⁰² chughainn san¹⁰³ láthair,
Is magadh¹⁰⁴ an gháire ina bhéal.¹⁰⁵

He had a gentle [...] harp/ Playing tunes on strings./
And he coming towards us then and there/ With a mocking laugh on his mouth.

- 10. Féasóg¹⁰⁶ fhada bhláith
Ag folchadh¹⁰⁷ lár a chléibh.¹⁰⁸
Is ní mó ná fad¹⁰⁹ mo láimhe¹¹⁰
Do¹¹¹ bhí idir¹¹² a tharr 7 an¹¹³ féar.

⁹⁰ birréad] b(h)oréud A, biorréad G, biorread F.

⁹¹ cheardach] cheárideach G, ceárda A, cheard F.

⁹² chlóca] chlogad G.

⁹³ den] dho F.

⁹⁴ tsróill] thsroll F.

⁹⁵ **8bd** These two lines belong to quatrain 9 in MS A.

⁹⁶ Aige] om. A.

⁹⁷ fholchadh] fhollachadh AF, imdhídhean G.

⁹⁸ léir] le chéile A.

⁹⁹ shéamhsantúil] shéamhsánta G, seaṁsanta F, shéamhsánta A.

¹⁰⁰ sdreanncáin] streancain F.

¹⁰¹ **9bd** These two lines belong to quatrain 8 in MS A.

¹⁰² teacht] tacht F.

¹⁰³ san] ar an A, fán G.

¹⁰⁴ magadh] gutha G.

¹⁰⁵ is... bhéal] is ní maga an gháire ion beul sin F.

¹⁰⁶ féasóg] fhíghsoig F.

¹⁰⁷ ag folchadh] aig dhá fholacha A, aige dha follachadh F, folacha G.

¹⁰⁸ chléibh] cleibhe A.

¹⁰⁹ fad] faid A.

¹¹⁰ láimhe] lámha G, fad láibh F, mo láimh A.

¹¹¹ do] om. AF.

¹¹² idir] roimh F.

A long smooth beard/ Covering the middle of his breast,
And no more than the length of my hand/ Was there between his belly and the
grass.

11. (Do labhair sé do láthair.

“ Is sibh is áille dá bhfaca fós,
I ngleo, i gcath, in ár¹¹⁴
Is in imirt lúthlámhach gan móid¹¹⁵.”)

(He spoke then,/ “Ye are the most beautiful I have yet seen,
In strife, in battle, in slaughter/ And in swift handed play without oaths.”)

12. “Do-bheirim¹¹⁶ cuireadh duit a Chonáin,¹¹⁷
Is a mhic Uí Dhuibhne¹¹⁸ fá¹¹⁹ mhaith méin.
Mar a¹²⁰ bhfaighfidh¹²¹ sibh¹²² biadh ⁊ deoch bhur sáith
In mo dhúnán¹²³ beag féin.”

“I bring you an invitation Conán,/ And Son of Uí Dhuibhne of fair countenance,
Where you shall receive your fill of food and drink/ In my own small little fort.”

13. “Ó¹²⁴ míle fáilte romhat¹²⁵ ar Conán,
A ghruagaigh¹²⁶ bhig is lugha méid,
Is d’aithin¹²⁷ mé ar do chlóca triopallach¹²⁸ bláith¹²⁹
Gur bruite teith an bothán atá thar th’éis.¹³⁰

“A thousand welcomes to you” said Conán,/ “O little goblin of smallest size./

¹¹³ ⁊ an] san F.

¹¹⁴ ár] ardacht C, ardhair E, nárdhacht G

¹¹⁵ móid] mhóid G

¹¹⁶ do] om. A.

¹¹⁷ Chonáin] air sé *add.* A, chonan F.

¹¹⁸ Dhuibhne] Dhuibhinn A, Dhuibhnáin G, Dhamhna F.

¹¹⁹ fá] ba G.

¹²⁰ mar a] muna F.

¹²¹ bhfaighfidh] bhfagh F, bhfagadh G, bhfaigh A.

¹²² sibh] suibh F.

¹²³ dhúnán] bhothán G.

¹²⁴ ó] céud A.

¹²⁵ romhat] reomhat F, reómhad AG.

¹²⁶ ghruagaigh] ghruaga A, ghruagaig G, ghruagadh F.

¹²⁷ d’aithin] dhathuin F.

¹²⁸ triopallach] truithuil A, tratháil G, tripelach F.

¹²⁹ bláith] brághadh AG, blaith F.

¹³⁰ gur...théis] gur bruite teith an botháin b’athain bhí tair héis A, gur bruthnudh an botháin do bhí thar th’éis G

I recognised from your fine tidy cloak/ That the dwelling that is behind you is boiled and hot.”

14. “Dar¹³¹ mo láimh duit a Chonáin,
Gibé bothán atá thar m’éis,¹³²
Ná faighfidh¹³³ tusa greim ann go lá
Muna mbeir¹³⁴ ar an urlár¹³⁵ chomh luath liom féin.”

“By my hand” he said, “O Conán,/ Whatever dwelling is behind me/
You won’t get a bite there till morning,/ If you are not on the floor as swiftly as myself.”

15. Is annsin do labhair Conán,
“A ghruagaigh¹³⁶ bhig is lugha méid,
Aithris¹³⁷ dom t’ainm an feadh bheir ar fáil
Ar eagla go rachfá ar seachrán¹³⁸ ar fud¹³⁹ an fhéir.”

And then spake Conán,/ “O little goblin of smallest size,
Tell me your name while you’re at hand,/ For fear you’d get lost throughout the grass.”

16. Is annsin do labhair¹⁴⁰ an gruagach,¹⁴¹
Ná déan m’imdheargadh¹⁴² faoi mo mhéid.¹⁴³
Is má théighmse uait ar fán,¹⁴⁴
Glaigh¹⁴⁵ ar Chab an Dosáin ón gCéis.”

Then the goblin spoke,/ “Do not reproach me for my size,
And if I go astray from you/ Call on Cab an Dosáin from the Céis.”

¹³¹ dar... Chonáin] “bheirim mo bhriathar” ar an gruagach A.

¹³² m’éis] mheis F.

¹³³ ná faighfidh] ní bhfághadh G, bhfáigh A, na faigh F.

¹³⁴ mbeir] mbeith tu F.

¹³⁵ urlár] ar fágail G.

¹³⁶ ghruagaigh] ghruagaig G, ghruagadh F.

¹³⁷ aithris] aithuiris F.

¹³⁸ seachrán] seachrain F, ar fán A.

¹³⁹ ar fud] ar fuid G, air f(h)uid A.

¹⁴⁰ labhair] labhúir F.

¹⁴¹ gruagach] ghruagach A, gruagadh F.

¹⁴² déan m’imdheargadh] déin mé iomdheargadh A, dein iomdeargha F.

¹⁴³ **16b** In AF this line begins A Chonáin, but in line with CEG this has been omitted in the version here in order to present the best reading.

¹⁴⁴ fán] faghán A, fagháin G.

¹⁴⁵ glaigh] glaoghaig G, glaog F.

17. Is annsin do phreab an gruagach
Go mear luath¹⁴⁶ ar a stéid,
Is dá fheabhas¹⁴⁷ deifir¹⁴⁸ dá ndearnaidh¹⁴⁹
Do rug Conán air a dul san gCéis.

Then leapt the goblin/ Swiftly nimbly on his steed,/
And for all the excellent speed he made/ Conán caught him going into the Céis.

18. “Do-bheirim¹⁵⁰ mo bhriathar”¹⁵¹ ar Conán,¹⁵²
“A ghruagaigh¹⁵³ bhig is lugha méid.
Ná¹⁵⁴ fágfair amach mo dhá lámh
Go bhfeicead¹⁵⁵ toirt mo sháith ar an méis”

“I give my word” said Conán,/ “O little goblin of smallest size,/”
You will not get out of my two hands/“Till I see sufficient mass on the platter.”

19. Is annsin do leagadh¹⁵⁶ chughainn bórd,
Is éadaighe¹⁵⁷ comh-gheala¹⁵⁸ go léir.¹⁵⁹
Is dá dtigidís Fiannaibh Fódhla,¹⁶⁰
Do gheobhaidís¹⁶¹ cóir¹⁶² ann san gCéis.

Then a table was laid for us,/ And clothes all resplendently bright./
And if the Fianna of Ireland would come,/ They would get proper treatment there in
the Céis.

¹⁴⁶ luath] luach A.

¹⁴⁷ fheabhas] fhóuis F.

¹⁴⁸ deifir] deithfir F, lan triall G.

¹⁴⁹ ndearnaidh] ndearnaig A, ndearnadh G.

¹⁵⁰ do] *om.* A.

¹⁵¹ do-bheirim... bhriathar] dar mo lámh duit G.

¹⁵² ar Conán] ráite Chonáin A.

¹⁵³ ghruagaigh] ghruaga F, ghrúaga A, ghruagaig G.

¹⁵⁴ ná] nách G.

¹⁵⁵ bhfeicead] bhfeicfuir A, bhfacead G.

¹⁵⁶ leagadh] leagaimh A.

¹⁵⁷ éadaighe] éadach F.

¹⁵⁸ comh-gheala] cómh-gheal A, cómhgheač. G, coimhgheal F.

¹⁵⁹ **19cd** *D replaces these lines with* dá mbeidís cruinn ann fir na Fódhla/ do gheobhadh go leor le n-ith go léir.

¹⁶⁰ fódhla] Fáil F.

¹⁶¹ gheobhaidís] gheabhaidís GA, ghabhadaois F.

¹⁶² cóir] cóir a sáith AF, cóir ghlan G.

20. Béas¹⁶³ do bhí ag Conán¹⁶⁴
 In aon áit dár¹⁶⁵ ghabh¹⁶⁶ aríamh,¹⁶⁷
 Níor mhian leis a bheith sáthach¹⁶⁸
 An feadh do bheadh¹⁶⁹ pioc ar an gclár ina dhiaidh.¹⁷⁰

Conán had a custom,/ In any place he ever went:/
 He didn't wish to be full,/ As long as there would be a bite on the table after him.

21. D'ith¹⁷¹ Conán a sháth
 Is Diarmaid¹⁷² gearr do bhí lena thaobh.
 Is dá fheabhas¹⁷³ deifir dá ndearnaidh,¹⁷⁴
¹⁷⁵Do bhí seacht n-arán¹⁷⁶ agus feoil ina ndéidh.¹⁷⁷

Conán ate his fill,/ And young Diarmaid who was at his side,/
 And whatever rush they made,/ There were seven loaves and meat left after them.

22. “Do-bheirim mo bhriathar ráidhte” ar Conán,¹⁷⁸
 “Gur bhriseas¹⁷⁹ mo gheasa anocht¹⁸⁰ san gCéis.
 Go¹⁸¹ bhfuil biadh agam do m’aimhdheoin¹⁸² ar an gclár,
 Is gur chuir mé¹⁸³ mo tharr as gléas.”¹⁸⁴

“I give my spoken word” said Conán,/ “That I broke my taboos tonight in the Céis,/

That I have food despite myself on the table,/ And I put my belly out of operation.”

¹⁶³ béas...Conán] do bhí béas nár mhaith ag Conán G.

¹⁶⁴ **20** *This quatrain does not occur in BD.*

¹⁶⁵ dár... aríamh] ionnar ghaibh aríamh A.

¹⁶⁶ ghabh] ghaibh AF.

¹⁶⁷ aríamh] riabh F, aríamh A, ríamh G.

¹⁶⁸ sáthach] sáthach A.

¹⁶⁹ do bheadh] bhiadh A, bheith F.

¹⁷⁰ dhiaidh] dá éis G, dhiag A.

¹⁷¹ d'ith] do ith G.

¹⁷² Diarmaid] *G has the line as follows:* Diarmaid déidbhán ba mhaith méinn.

¹⁷³ fheabhas] fhuais F.

¹⁷⁴ ndearnaidh] *cont.* le luas láimhe is le faobhar déad ACEFG. and

¹⁷⁵ do] *The phrase* le feabhas na mná friotáile *proceeds this in ACEFG.*

¹⁷⁶ n-arán] narain F.

¹⁷⁷ ndéidh] ndéig A dhéig G, ndiaig F.

¹⁷⁸ ar Conán] Chonáin A.

¹⁷⁹ bhriseas] bhriosis F.

¹⁸⁰ anocht] anois A.

¹⁸¹ go... biadh] 's go bhfuil bía A.

¹⁸² aimhdheoin] ionndhoin F.

¹⁸³ chuir mé] chuireas A, chuiris F.

¹⁸⁴ **22** *This quatrain does not occur in CEG.*

23. “Do¹⁸⁵-bheirim mo bhriathar” ar Conán,
 “Ó tá mé sáthach bídh ⁊ dighe,
 Is¹⁸⁶ gur mhaith a chodlóinn¹⁸⁷ anois go lá
 Dá bhfaighfinn¹⁸⁸ aon ruathar amháin ar mhnaoi.”

“I give my spoken word” said Conán,/ “Since I am sated with food and drink,/ And it’s well I would sleep now till day,/ If I would get one foray on a woman.”

24. Is annsin do labhair Diarmaid,
 “A Chonáin déan¹⁸⁹ iomchar¹⁹⁰ caoin,
 Ná cuir aon chor díot go lá,
 Is é áit inar tharla tú anocht san tsídhe.”¹⁹¹

And then spoke Diarmaid,/ “Conán behave yourself,/ Don’t stir till day./ It’s a fairy-dwelling into which you’ve happened tonight.”

25. “Do-bheirim¹⁹² mo bhriathar,” ar¹⁹³ Conán,¹⁹⁴
 “Go bhfuilim¹⁹⁵ sáthach bídh ⁊ dighe,
 Is¹⁹⁶ dá bhfaighfinn bean le teangbháil ann go lá
 Gur¹⁹⁷ sílim gurbh fhearr ná bheith faoin dtír”.¹⁹⁸

“I give my word” said Conán,/ “That I am sated with food and drink,/ If I could find a woman to spend the whole night with,/ I think it would be better than being in the country.”

26. Is annsin do gléasadh¹⁹⁹ leaba ard,
 Nó²⁰⁰ gur luigh Diarmaid is Conán síos.
 Is ar fhéachaint²⁰¹ thart²⁰² dóibh faoin urlár,

¹⁸⁵ do] *om.* A.

¹⁸⁶ Is] *om.* F.

¹⁸⁷ chodlóinn] chodalainn G.

¹⁸⁸ bhfaighfinn] bhfaghainn G, bhfaighainn A, fhaighuin F.

¹⁸⁹ déan] déin AG, dein F.

¹⁹⁰ iomchar] iompchar G, iompchar A, iompchear F.

¹⁹¹ san tsídhe] san tsoighe F.

¹⁹² do-bheirim] bheirim A.

¹⁹³ ar] do ra F.

¹⁹⁴ ar Conán] ráidhte Chonáin A.

¹⁹⁵ go bhfuilim] ó tá mé A.

¹⁹⁶ Is] *om.* A.

¹⁹⁷ gur...fhearr] go síghliom go mbFéarr A, go síghlim go mféarr F.

¹⁹⁸ faoin dtír] fán tíor A, san tír G, faoi an ttír F.

¹⁹⁹ gléasadh] cóirigeadh G, gleasach F, *in A the line is: do gleusag dhúinn leab*

²⁰⁰ Nó] *om.* A.

Do chonnacadar²⁰³ lorán²⁰⁴ breágh de mhnaoi.

Then a high bed was made,/ And Diarmaid and Conán lay down./
And upon looking about on the floor/ They saw a ‘fine filly’ of a woman.

27. Do bhí ceithre cosa faoin leaba²⁰⁵ ard
Is í ag imtheacht ar roithleáin²⁰⁶ sídhe.
An tráth²⁰⁷ bhualtí preab innte in aon ard,²⁰⁸
Do shiubhalfadh²⁰⁹ an t-urlár thart fo thrí.²¹⁰

There were four legs beneath the high bed,/ Going about in a magical whirlwind./
When it would be kicked anywhere,/ It would circle the floor three times.

28. “Do-bherim²¹¹ mo bhriathar ráidhte”²¹² ar Conán,²¹³
“A bhean bhreágh úd ar an leaba chaol,²¹⁴
Atá ag imtheacht uait féin ar an urlár,
Go rachad dod thiomáint seal²¹⁵ don oídhche.”²¹⁶

“I give my spoken word” said Conán,/ “O beautiful woman on the slender bed/
Going about the floor,/ That I will go to drive you part of the night.”

29. Is annsin d’éirigh²¹⁷ Conán,
Is ní fada amach do chuaidh sé
An uair do casadh²¹⁸ leis coill²¹⁹ ᵿ móin,
Is an abhainn ba mhó a bhí faoin ngréin.

²⁰¹ fhéachaint] fhéachainn G.

²⁰² thart] thort F.

²⁰³ chonnacadar] chonacadar A, do (chon)arcadar F, chonarcadar G.

²⁰⁴ lorán] loráin A, loghrán G, laran F.

²⁰⁵ leaba] labuigh F.

²⁰⁶ roithleáin] ruithleainn A, roithleán G, raothlean F.

²⁰⁷ tráth] tan G.

²⁰⁸ in aon ard] an áoncheárd A.

²⁰⁹ shiubhalfadh] tsiúbhloch A, tsíobhloch G, shíleach F.

²¹⁰ thart fo thrí] thort fá thrí A, tort fo thrí G, thort fe thrí F.

²¹¹ do-bheirim] dar A.

²¹² ráidhte] do rá F.

²¹³ ar Conán] Chonáin A.

²¹⁴ chaol] chaoíl A, chaoil G.

²¹⁵ seal] sealađ F.

²¹⁶ oídhche] oidh F.

²¹⁷ d’éirigh] d’éirghe AG, deirghe F.

²¹⁸ casadh] casag A, casach F.

²¹⁹ coill] cóill A.

And then Conán arose,/ And it's not far that he went/
When he met with a wood and a turf-bog,/ And the greatest river under the sun.

30. Do²²⁰ bhí sail anonn ar an abhainn,
Is do rinn dá leath di²²¹ trína lár.
Do thuit Conán sa duibheagán²²² síos
γ do dhúisigh sé an bhruidhean lena gháir.

There was a willow beam over the river,/ And he made two halves of it through its
middle./ Conán fell down into the abyss,/ And he woke the dwelling with his cry.

31. Is annsin d'éirigh muinntir²²³ na Céise,
Faoi thuairim²²⁴ Chonáin Mhaoil.
γ créad an chaoi²²⁵ ina bhfaighfidís²²⁶ é
Acht²²⁷ é go léir sa gcorcán²²⁸ thíos.²²⁹

And then the folk of the Céis arose/ And went towards Conán Maol,/
And how was it that they found him,/ But all down in a cauldron.

32. ²³⁰Is a chosa go léir i bpota an tearra,²³¹
²³²Iad sgriosda dóite mar a bheadh²³³ ar bhior.
An uair do chonaic²³⁴ Cab an Dosáin é,
Is bharr a snaig²³⁵ bhuaile é agus a chruth.

And his legs all in the tarring pot,/ Ruined and burnt as if he were on a skewer./
When Cab an Dosáin saw him/ He calmed his condition and the hiccoughs that
seized him.

²²⁰ do] *om.* A.

²²¹ di] dhith A, dhí F.

²²² duibheagán] dícán A, duibcheann F, duibhgán G.

²²³ muinntir] maóintuir A.

²²⁴ thuairim... Mhaoil] thúairaim Conáin A, faoi thuairim Conan Mhaol san *amm* sin F.

²²⁵ créad an chaoi] cre an caoi F.

²²⁶ bhfaighfidís] bhfuair sé G.

²²⁷ acht... thíos] ach an tsail faoi mar bhéim AF.

²²⁸ gcorcán] ccorchán G.

²²⁹ thíos] síos G.

²³⁰ **32** *This quatrain occurs only in F.*

²³¹ tearra] anartha A, na thártha F.

²³² **32bcd** *These lines are omitted in A.*

²³³ bheadh] bheith F.

²³⁴ chonaic] chonarc F.

²³⁵ barr a snaig] bocht a snogh F.

33. Is annsin do labhair Cab an Dosáin,
 “Fan a Chonáin in do²³⁶ leaba féin.
 Ná²³⁷ déan²³⁸ níos²³⁹ mó áirneáin²⁴⁰,
 Nó²⁴¹ beidh²⁴² tú damaisteach²⁴³ anocht san gCéis.

Then spoke Cab an Dosáin,/ “Stay Conán in your own bed./
 Don’t make any more visiting/ Or you will be damaged tonight in the Céis.”

34. Is annsin do luigh Conán síos,²⁴⁴
 Is níor²⁴⁵ tháinig²⁴⁶ tar²⁴⁷ a shúil néal,
 An uair do chonaic²⁴⁸ an dara hamharc ar an mnaoi
 Is í²⁴⁹ ar leaba chaoil rena²⁵⁰ thaobh.

Then Conán lay down,/ And sleep didn’t come over his eye,/
 When he saw his second view of the woman/ On a slender bed beside him.

35. ²⁵¹“Do bheirim mo bhriathar ráidhte” ar²⁵² Conán,
 “Gidh²⁵³ gur bocht gach gnímh²⁵⁴ dár ghabh²⁵⁵ mé,
 An uair chím an dara hamharc ar an mnaoi
 Ní shuaimhnighim²⁵⁶ mo chroídhe go dteangabhad²⁵⁷ léi.

“I give my spoken word” said Conán,/ “Though every deed I accomplished is poor,/

²³⁶ in do] ad F.

²³⁷ ná...áirneáin] nó má théighir ag áirneáin G.

²³⁸ déan] déin A, dein F.

²³⁹ níos] niso F.

²⁴⁰ áirneáin] dhon áirneáin A.

²⁴¹ nó] nú F.

²⁴² beidh] bíadh A, beith F.

²⁴³ damaisteach] deamaisteamhuil A.

²⁴⁴ síos] arís A.

²⁴⁵ níor] ní A.

²⁴⁶ tháinig] thana F.

²⁴⁷ tar] thar F.

²⁴⁸ chonaic] chonarc A, chonnarc F.

²⁴⁹ í] aoí A.

²⁵⁰ rena] lena A.

²⁵¹ **35** An additional quatrain is added after **34** in ACE.

²⁵² ar] a ra F, om. A.

²⁵³ gidh...mé] gidh gur loisgiog mo chosa ó chianaibh A, gidh gur loisgeadh mo chosa roimhe so aréir G.

²⁵⁴ gnímh] gniobh F, gníomh G, gníomh A.

²⁵⁵ ghabh] ghaibh AFG.

²⁵⁶ ní shuaimhnighim] ní shuaimhníghm G, nach suaimhnionn A, nígh shuaimhnuin F.

²⁵⁷ dteangabhad] tteangmhóid A, tteangmhad G, tteannbhí F.

When I get a second glimpse of the woman,/ I will not rest my heart till I couple with her.”

36. Is annsin d’éirigh Conán an tara²⁵⁸ huair,
 ʔ ní fada do chuaidh sé amach
 An uair do casadh²⁵⁹ leis coill²⁶⁰ ró-mhór²⁶¹
 ʔ d’éirigh aisti²⁶² timgheoin²⁶³ chat.

Then Conán arose the second time,/ And it’s not far he went out/
 When he was met with an enormous wood/ And a fearful uproar of cats arose out
 from it.

37. Do bhain na cait²⁶⁴ greim as Conán,²⁶⁵
 As a shlinneáin²⁶⁶ ʔ as cnáimh a ghéill.
 ʔ níor chuala tú aríamh ní²⁶⁷ ba chráidhte,
 Ná²⁶⁸ mar do bhí gairm na ngártha ag an bhFear²⁶⁹ Maol.

The cats took a bite out of Conán,/ From his shoulder-blades and from his jawbone./
 You never heard anything more tormented/ Than the crying calls of the Bald Man.

38. “A²⁷⁰ Dhiarmaid a dhearbhráthair” ar Conán,²⁷¹
 Is a chomrádaigh²⁷² atá dom ghar,²⁷³
 Éirigh id²⁷⁴ shuidhe am shábháil.²⁷⁵
 Is mé²⁷⁶ creimthe gearrtha ag Clann²⁷⁷ Cat.

²⁵⁸ tara] dara AG.

²⁵⁹ casadh] casag A, casach F.

²⁶⁰ coill] coille A.

²⁶¹ ró-mhór] et móinn A.

²⁶² aisti] asta A, aiste G, aisde F.

²⁶³ timgheoin] timgheoinn A, tím gheóin F.

²⁶⁴ cait] cuit AF.

²⁶⁵ as Conán] as a shleangháin A, as a laithmhais F.

²⁶⁶ shlinneáin] leathmhair A, shlionnain F shlinnán G .

²⁶⁷ ní... chráidhte] achta ñ gartha A, om. F.

²⁶⁸ ná... gártha] acht na garrte F.

²⁶⁹ bhfear] fhear F.

²⁷⁰ a...Conán] annsan do labhair Conán go cásmhar G.

²⁷¹ **38a** *In the Cork manuscripts CEG this line is* ansin do labhair Conán go cásmhar.

²⁷² chomrádaigh] bhráthair G.

²⁷³ dom ghar] le m’ais A.

²⁷⁴ id] do F.

²⁷⁵ shábháil] *in G the line is:* is déan mé a shábháil.

²⁷⁶ is mé] tá mé A, atáim G.

²⁷⁷ clann] clana A, clannaibh G.

“O Diarmaid brother” said Conán,/ “and companion who is near to me,/ Get up and save me,/ I am gnawed and cut by the clan of the cats.”

39. Is annsin d’éirigh Diarmaid de thruslóg
As an gcadogha²⁷⁸ is do thug²⁷⁹ léim.
Is cá bhfaighfeadh sé an sdróinnse ach ina shuidhe ar bórd
Is puisín óg ag lighe a bhéil.

Then Diarmaid arose with a hop,/ From the blanket and gave a leap./
And where did he find the good-for-nothing but sitting on a table,/ With a young kitten licking his mouth.

40. (Is annsin do labhair Diarmaid.
“A Chonáin Mhaoil fá mheirgeach²⁸⁰ dreach,
Má éirgheann tú an treas uair
Nár bheirir aon chluas leat tar ais.”)

(And then Diarmaid said,/ “O Conán Maol of angry countenance,/ If you arise the third time/ May you not bring any ear back with you.”)

41. Is²⁸¹ annsin do luigh Conán aríst,²⁸²
Is níor tháinig²⁸³ thar²⁸⁴ a shúil néal²⁸⁵
An uair²⁸⁶ chonaire sé²⁸⁷ an treas²⁸⁸ amharc ar an mnaoi,
Is í²⁸⁹ ar a leaba chaol lena thaobh.

And then Conán lay down again,/ And sleep didn’t come over his eye,/ When he saw his third view of the woman/ On her slender bed beside him.

42. ²⁹⁰“Dar mo bhriathar” ar Conán,
“Gidh gur gráin dom mo sgéal

²⁷⁸ gcadogha] ccúdach G.

²⁷⁹ thug] rug AG, thuig F.

²⁸⁰ mheirgeach] meirgeach C.

²⁸¹ is] om. A.

²⁸² aríst] arís AG.

²⁸³ níor tháinig] nior thana F.

²⁸⁴ thar] tar AG.

²⁸⁵ néal] neill F.

²⁸⁶ uair] núair A.

²⁸⁷ sé] om. F.

²⁸⁸ treas] trais F.

²⁸⁹ í] uígħ A.

²⁹⁰ **42** This stanza only occurs in F.

Is ná fada fuaimnis annso go lá
Muna dtigidh liom sáith²⁹¹ a thabhairt don mhnaoi.”

“By my word” said Conán,/ “Though my tale is a reproach to me,/

May it not be long that we resound here till daybreak/
If I can’t give a thrust to the woman.”

43. Is annsin d’éirigh Conán de phléisg,
Is²⁹² chuaigh de léim²⁹³ ar an leaba chaol.
²⁹⁴Do dhruid léi²⁹⁵ go dlúth,²⁹⁶
Amhail²⁹⁷ leis clúdadh²⁹⁸ do chur²⁹⁹ ar an mnaoi.

And then Conán leapt with a bang,/ And went with a leap onto the narrow bed./
He approached close to her/ So as to put a covering on the woman.

44. ³⁰⁰Is annsin do labhair an bhean³⁰¹
“Aon duine do níonn³⁰² áirneán gan iarraidh,³⁰³
Is é geasa atá san teach seo
Gurab é féin a³⁰⁴ bheas³⁰⁵ in íochtar.”

And then the woman spoke,/ “Anyone who would make an unrequested visit,/

It is an injunction in this house/ That it is himself will be underneath.”

45. Is annsin do chuir Conán a lámh³⁰⁶ ar a bhrollach,
Is fuair³⁰⁷ aige féin dá chíoch.³⁰⁸
An tráth smaoin³⁰⁹ ar a bhall bhásta,³¹⁰

²⁹¹ sáith] sádh F.

²⁹² is... chaol] ‘s ar an leab̃ chaoil do chúaidh de léim A.

²⁹³ léim] leam F.

²⁹⁴ **43b** In CEG the line is is é go dubhach ina chroidhe.

²⁹⁵ léi] léit̃ A.

²⁹⁶ dlúth] dlúit̃ A.

²⁹⁷ amhail] do bháill A, abhail G, a bail F.

²⁹⁸ clúdadh] cluid A, cluda F.

²⁹⁹ do chur] de chuir A, chuir F.

³⁰⁰ **44** This quatrain is not found in BD.

³⁰¹ bhean] agus dubhairt add. A.

³⁰² níonn] ndhéan A, dhéinadh G, naoin F.

³⁰³ iarraidh] iarraig̃ A, iarradh F.

³⁰⁴ a] om. A,

³⁰⁵ bheas] bhíos AG, bheis F.

³⁰⁶ lámh] láimh AF.

³⁰⁷ fuair] do fuair F.

³⁰⁸ chíoch] chiodhinn F.

Is pit³¹¹ d'fhás aige mar mhnaoi.

Then Conán put his hand on his chest,/ And found that he had two breasts./
When he thought of his penis/ He grew a vulva like a woman.

46. ³¹²Do leagadh é do láthair,
Is do chuaidh sí suas ar Chonán Maol.
Is dob fhearr leis a bheith báidhte,
Ná an fásghadh fuair ón mnaoi.

He was knocked to the ground,/ And she went up on Conán Maol./
And he would have preferred to be drowned/ Than the squeezing he got from the
woman.

47. ³¹³“Do-bheirim mo bhriathar ráidhte” ar Conán,³¹⁴
Dá mba liom ór an domhain gan³¹⁵ roinnt,³¹⁶
Go dtiubhrainn³¹⁷ ort³¹⁸ é idir do dhá láimh,³¹⁹
Ach aon tionúr a thabhairt dom dhroim.

“I give my spoken word” said Conán,/ “If all the gold of the world without division
were mine,/ I’d give it to you between your two hands,/ Did you give but one rest
to my back.”

48. (“Is gairid duit sin d’fhagháil uainn,
Nó go ngrádhfaimíd do chroidhe
Is go gcaithfear³²⁰ amach trí ráithe,
Mar is gnáthach leis³²¹ gach mnaoi.”)

(“You’ll get that soon from us/ As we love your heart,/
And until three seasons will be spent,/ As is normal for every woman.”)

³⁰⁹ smaoin] smáoiñ A, smuain G, smaoina F.

³¹⁰ bhásta] baistúighe A, baistígh F, bhástadh G.

³¹¹ pit] pis G.

³¹² **46** This quatrain is only found in CEG.

³¹³ **47** This quatrain is not found in F.

³¹⁴ ar Conán] Chonáin A, ar ra Conan F.

³¹⁵ gan] go A.

³¹⁶ roinnt] ráidhnt A, roínt G.

³¹⁷ dtiubhrainn] dtabharainn G, dthíobhrainn A.

³¹⁸ ort] dhuit A, duit G.

³¹⁹ láimh] láimñ A.

³²⁰ gcaithfear] gcathair EG

³²¹ leis] le G

49. Níor³²² chualaidh tú aríamh³²³ dúrluigheacht³²⁴ adhmaid,³²⁵
Nó mar a bhrisfidhe³²⁶ taobhán³²⁷ críonna,³²⁸
Ba shamhailt dó³²⁹ sin a chnámha
Mar do bhí dá theangbháil ag an mnaoi.

You never heard a chopping of wood,/ Or like an aged rafter would break./
That was how his bones were for him/ As he was being coupled with by the woman.

50. “Do-bheirim mo bhriathar ráidhte” ar Conán,³³⁰
Gur bean earráideach thú atá le holc.
Is nach ní ceart atá tú a sháthadh³³¹ ionnam,
Acht liagán³³² sráide atá ag dul im chorp.”

“I give my spoken word” said Conán,/ “That you are a vicious woman who is evil./
And it’s not a rightful thing that you are thrusting in me,/
But that it’s a milestone that is going in my body.”

51. ³³³“A Chonáin³³⁴ Mhaoil na mallacht,”
“Fág³³⁵ mo leaba de léim.³³⁶
Is de réir mar³³⁷ do fuairise³³⁸ teangbháil,³³⁹
Is ceart³⁴⁰ duit lorán³⁴¹ do³⁴² bheith agad ag éirighe lae.

“O Conán Maol of the curses,/ Leave my bed with a leap./
According to how you were treated/ It is right for you to bear a child come morning.”

³²² Níor] nigh F.

³²³ aríamh] ríabh G, riabh F, a ríamh A.

³²⁴ dúrluigheacht] de úrluigheacht A, duirluigheacht F.

³²⁵ adhmaid] om. G, áidhmuid A, aighm^d F.

³²⁶ bhrisfidhe] bhriseach G, bhriose F.

³²⁷ taobhán] táobháin A, taobhain F.

³²⁸ críonna] críonn A, chríona G, críon F.

³²⁹ dó] leis A.

³³⁰ ar Conán] Chonáin A, ar ra Conan F.

³³¹ sháthadh] shádh F.

³³² liagán] liaghain F, liágáin A.

³³³ **51** This quatrain is not found in CEG.

³³⁴ a Chonáin] a Chonan F.

³³⁵ fág] fáig A, faig F.

³³⁶ de léim] dho léam F.

³³⁷ mar] m̄ar F.

³³⁸ fuairise] fúairuis A, fuair tú G.

³³⁹ teangbháil] do theangbháil A.

³⁴⁰ ceart] cart F.

³⁴¹ lorán] loráin A, lóghrán G, laran F.

³⁴² do] a AF.

52. (Dá mba áil leat fanamhaint³⁴³ id láthair,
Is luigh go sámh id leabaidh síos,
Ní rachadh³⁴⁴ an bhean úd ar do chnámha,
Is mór go mb'fhearr ná bheith mar taoi.)

("Had you wished to remain in your place,/ And lie down peacefully in your bed,/ That woman wouldn't go on your bones,/ And better that than to be as you are.")

53. (Is annsin do labhair an ríogain,
"A Chonáin Mhaoil nár luadhadh³⁴⁵ sa ngaisgeadh,
Dá mbeadh id fhochair seacht gcatha na bhFiann
Ní shaorfaid tú faoi mhaidinn."³⁴⁶)

(Then the Queen spoke,/ "O Conán Maol unmentioned in valour,/ If the seven battalions of the Fianna were along with you/ They would not free you by morning.")

54. Is annsin d'éirigh Conán de phléisg
³⁴⁷Agus do chuaidh go dtí³⁴⁸ Diarmaid.³⁴⁹
"Ó³⁵⁰ a Dhuardmaid nach³⁵¹ ainnis mo sgéal,
Adeir sí go mbeidh³⁵² lorán³⁵³ agam ag éirighe lae."³⁵⁴

And then Conán arose swiftly,/ And went to Diarmaid./
"O Diarmaid isn't my situation miserable/ She says I will have a child by morning."

55. "Do chuir sí mo ghabhal³⁵⁵ as áit³⁵⁶ go bráthach,
Is ní thiochfaidh³⁵⁷ mo chnámha³⁵⁸ ina gceart³⁵⁹ féin.

³⁴³ fanamhaint] fuireach G.

³⁴⁴ rachadh] rachach G.

³⁴⁵ luadhadh] luaghag G.

³⁴⁶ mhaidinn] mhaidion G, mhaidean C.

³⁴⁷ **54b** In CEG this line reads agus d'fhág aice féin an leaba.

³⁴⁸ go dtí] g'nuig A, go dtíghidh F.

³⁴⁹ Diarmaid] go tréith add. A.

³⁵⁰ ó] om. AG.

³⁵¹ nach... sgéal] a dhíanghrádh 's thlaith 'sus cráidhte mo sgéal A.

³⁵² mbeidh] mbeith F.

³⁵³ lorán] laran F.

³⁵⁴ **54d** In G this line reads is mise teangbhálach anocht go daingeadhan.

³⁵⁵ ghabhal] ghauabhall F, ghábhall A, ghobhal G.

³⁵⁶ áit] a ionad féin G.

³⁵⁷ thiochfaidh] thugfadh A.

³⁵⁸ chnámha] chnámhna A.

³⁵⁹ gceart] ccruith A.

Ní is³⁶⁰ measa liom dá³⁶¹ ndearnaidh,³⁶²
Gur³⁶³ rinn sí bean den Fhear Maol.”³⁶⁴

“She has put my crotch out of shape forever,/ And my bones will not come into their proper shape./ The worst thing of all she did,/ She has made a woman of the Bald Man.”

56. “Nach maire do théighinn³⁶⁵ ag áirneáin,
Is ná fanainn³⁶⁶ i m’árus féin.³⁶⁷
Ó³⁶⁸ a Dhiarmaid creidim gur fíor ráidhte na mná,³⁶⁹
Tá tosach³⁷⁰ na bhfásghadh orm anois féin.

“O alas that I went visiting/ And wouldn’t stay in my own place./
Oh Diarmaid I believe that it’s true what the woman said,/
The start of the labour pains is coming on me now.”

57. “Mo dhá leis agus mo dhá leathmhais,³⁷¹
Mo dhá dhubhán³⁷² is mo dhá bhléin,
Ó³⁷³ a Dhiarmaid muna bhfaighir mo tharrtháil
Tuitfidh a thón³⁷⁴ as an bhFear Maol.”

“My two hips and my two buttocks,/ My two kidneys and my two groins./
O Diarmaid if my salvation is not found,/ His arse will fall out of the Bald Man.”

58. “Mo dhá leis agus mo dhá ghlún,³⁷⁵
Ní fhuil³⁷⁶ orlach díom³⁷⁷ gan péin³⁷⁸.”

³⁶⁰ ní is] ní bhus A.

³⁶¹ dá] na F.

³⁶² ndearnaidh] ndhéarnuis A, ndearnaig G, ndearnuig F.

³⁶³ gur...Maol] adeir sí go mbeidh páiste agam ag éirghe láo A, adeir do bheadh páiste agam ag éirghe lae G.

³⁶⁴ **55d** *In G this line reads* tuitidh a shuidheachán as an bhFear Maol.

³⁶⁵ théighinn] théighion A.

³⁶⁶ fanainn] fanann A, fanuin F.

³⁶⁷ **56ab** *In G these lines read* A Dhiarmaid is olc an táirneáin/ is dob fhearr fuireach am árus féin.

³⁶⁸ ó] om. A.

³⁶⁹ ráidhte na mná] go fíor a ráite G, gur fíor raigha na mnea F.

³⁷⁰ tosach] toiseach A.

³⁷¹ leathmhais] gheolmhach G.

³⁷² dhubhán] dhuibhlain F.

³⁷³ ó] om. A.

³⁷⁴ thón] thrioscáin A, sagain F.

³⁷⁵ ghlún] leath-thíar G, gheólmhúc A.

³⁷⁶ ní fhuil] ní bhfuil A, nígh bhfuil F.

³⁷⁷ díom] dhíom A, diom F.

³⁷⁸ gan péin] saor ó phéin AG.

Ó a Dhiarmaid muna³⁷⁹ bhfaighir m'fhóirhint,
Sin deireadh leis an bhFear Maol.”

“My two hips and my two knees,/ There isn't an inch of me without pain./
Diarmaid if I my salvation is not found/ That's the end of the Bald Man.”

59. “A Dhiarmaid a dhearbhráthair,
Is³⁸⁰ a chomrádaigh³⁸¹ atá dom ghar,³⁸²
Éirigh ded shuidhe³⁸³ ᵝ féach réadhchnáib³⁸⁴
In aon áit den³⁸⁵ teach.”

“O Diarmaid, brother,/ And companion who is near to me,/
Get up and look for a smooth hemp rope/ Anywhere in the house.”

60. “A Dhiarmaid déan³⁸⁶ deithneas,³⁸⁷
A dhian-dhearbhráthair ná bí i bhfad.
Is tabhair domhsa³⁸⁸ congnamh³⁸⁹ tarrtháile,³⁹⁰
Atá ceann an loráin³⁹¹ seo ag teacht amach.”

“Oh Diarmaid make haste,/ Dearest brother don't be long./
And give me pulling help,/ This child's head is coming out.”

61. Is annsin d'éirigh Diarmaid is fuair réadhchnáib,³⁹²
Is do bhuail³⁹³ ar³⁹⁴ tarraingeáil³⁹⁵ go mear géar.³⁹⁶
Is níor³⁹⁷ chualaidh tú aríamh torc dá chur chun báis
Mar do bhí gairm na ngartha ag an bhFear Maol.

³⁷⁹ muna] m̄ar a F.

³⁸⁰ ᵝ] om. A.

³⁸¹ chomrádaigh] comraduigh F, chomráda AG.

³⁸² ghar] lem ais A.

³⁸³ shuidhe] tsuighe F.

³⁸⁴ réadhchnáib] réud chnáibh A, readh chna(...) F.

³⁸⁵ den] sa A, san G.

³⁸⁶ déan] deinsa F.

³⁸⁷ deithneas] dithinis F.

³⁸⁸ domhsa] dhamhsa F.

³⁸⁹ congnamh] cóngamh A, congnaibh F.

³⁹⁰ tarrtháile] thártháladh A, tarrthalċ F.

³⁹¹ loráin] laran F.

³⁹² réadhchnáib] réadhchnáibhe A, re(...) F.

³⁹³ do bhuail] do chromm F.

³⁹⁴ ar] om. A.

³⁹⁵ tarraingeáil] táirtháil A tairneal F.

³⁹⁶ géar] géur A, om. F.

³⁹⁷ níor] ní A, nígh F.

Then Diarmaid got a smooth hemp rope/ And started pulling quickly, nimbly./
And you never heard a boar being put to death/ Like the call of the Bald Man's cries.

62. Is annsin d'éirigh an gruagach,
Is an conlán³⁹⁸ uasal do bhí san gCéis.
Is créad³⁹⁹ é an chaoi ina⁴⁰⁰ bhfaighfidís Diarmaid⁴⁰¹
Acht⁴⁰² ag tarraingt⁴⁰³ a mhagarla as Conán⁴⁰⁴ Maol.

And then the goblin arose,/ And the noble crowd that was in the Céis./
And how was it that they found Diarmaid/ But pulling his testicle out of Conán Maol.

63. Is annsin do labhair an bhantracht⁴⁰⁵ cheolmhar
Go fonóideach⁴⁰⁶ faoin sgéal.
ᵿ d'fhiafraigheadar⁴⁰⁷ do Chonán Mac Mórna⁴⁰⁸
Créad⁴⁰⁹ an trioblóid do bhain dó aréir.⁴¹⁰

Then spoke the sprightly female company,/ Mockingly about the tale./
And they enquired of Conán mac Mórna,/ What was the trouble that afflicted him
last night?

64. "Má tháinig⁴¹¹ Conán uasal chughainn ar cuaird,
Is gur⁴¹² rug sé againn mac,
Ní fiúntach⁴¹³ dúinn⁴¹⁴ a ligeann⁴¹⁵ uainn⁴¹⁶
Gan crios, clúdadh⁴¹⁷ ᵿ brat."

³⁹⁸ conlán] ccómhlann G, chomhlain F, ccómhlán A.

³⁹⁹ créad] cre F.

⁴⁰⁰ ina] dá AF

⁴⁰¹ Diarmaid] ᵿ a réadhchnáib aige *add.* AG.

⁴⁰² acht] 's é A.

⁴⁰³ tarraingt] tarraint F.

⁴⁰⁴ as Conán] as an bhFear F.

⁴⁰⁵ bhantracht] bheanntrecht F.

⁴⁰⁶ fonóideach] fonódach A, finodach F.

⁴⁰⁷ d'fhiafraigheadar] dhfiosradar AG, d'Fiorfaoidar F.

⁴⁰⁸ mac mórna] mhic mhóirne AG, mhac mórna F.

⁴⁰⁹ créad] cre F.

⁴¹⁰ aréir] a raor F.

⁴¹¹ tháinig] thána F.

⁴¹² gur] go G.

⁴¹³ fiúntach] fionntach G, fiongheach F.

⁴¹⁴ dúinn] duing F.

⁴¹⁵ a ligeann] é léigion A, leigean G, leigion F.

⁴¹⁶ uainn] uaing F.

⁴¹⁷ clúdadh] clúda A, cluada F.

“If noble Conán came to us on a visit,/ And he bore for us a son,/ It is not worthy of us to let him leave us/ Without belt, covering or mantle.”

65. Annsin⁴¹⁸ do⁴¹⁹ ghabhadar ar bheith ag⁴²⁰ tochras⁴²¹ snáith,⁴²²
Is ní fhuil⁴²³ aon tsnáth⁴²⁴ dá leigfidís⁴²⁵ thart⁴²⁶
Ná d’éireochadh⁴²⁷ snaidhm ar cheann Chonáin,⁴²⁸
Is le gach snaidhm d’éireochadh⁴²⁹ cnap.

And then they went winding thread,/ And its with no thread that they let past/
That a knot didn’t rise up on Conán’s head,/ And with every knot would rise a lump.

66. Nó gur chogainn Fionn a mhéar
Is gur⁴³⁰ bhfuair fios gach sgéil⁴³¹ amach.
Mara⁴³² bhfóirfeadh⁴³³ Goll ar an dithis,⁴³⁴
Go rabhadar⁴³⁵ faoi dhraoidheacht san teach.

Until Fionn chewed his finger,/ And discovered the knowledge of every tale./
Unless it is how Goll were to save the two,/ They would be under enchantment in
the house.

67. Mar do mhúchfaighe⁴³⁶ teine⁴³⁷ le tréan tuille,
Nó mar a d’éireochadh⁴³⁸ ceo le gaoth⁴³⁹ thréan
An uair do tharraing⁴⁴⁰ Goll a chladheamh líomhtha

⁴¹⁸ annsin] ‘s ann sin A.

⁴¹⁹ do] om.A.

⁴²⁰ ag] om. F.

⁴²¹ tochras] tochrais FG, tochrui A.

⁴²² snáith] tnáth G.

⁴²³ ní fhuil] ní bhfuil A.

⁴²⁴ tsnáth] tshnáith A, tsnaitha F.

⁴²⁵ leigfidís] leigíonn F, leigidís A.

⁴²⁶ thart] thort AFG.

⁴²⁷ d’éireochadh] eirghióch G, heirghioch F, héirghióch A.

⁴²⁸ chonáin] chonan F, ann A.

⁴²⁹ d’éireochadh] deirgheach G, déirghióch A, dheirghioch F.

⁴³⁰ gur] go F.

⁴³¹ sgéil] sgéul A, sgeul F, sgél G.

⁴³² mara] muna A, muña F.

⁴³³ bhfóirfeadh] bhfóireach F.

⁴³⁴ dithis] dís A, ndias G, ttír F.

⁴³⁵ rabhadar] mbeidís A.

⁴³⁶ mhúchfaighe] mhúchfhach A.

⁴³⁷ teine] teinne A, tinne F.

⁴³⁸ d’éireochadh] deirgheach G, dheirghioch F, d’éirgeóch A.

⁴³⁹ gaoth] gaoith tréin A.

⁴⁴⁰ tharraing] tharrain A.

Do mharbh⁴⁴¹ míle ar gach taobh.

As a fire would be quenched by the strength of a wave,/ Or as a fog would rise with a strong wind./ The hour Goll drew his polished sword,/ He slew a thousand on every side.

68. (An uair do chonarcadar⁴⁴² lucht na bruighne
An gaisgidheach líomhtha ag teacht faoina ndéin⁴⁴³,
Do chruinnigheadar a n-óg is a gcríonna
Agus d'éirigh amach faoina dhéin⁴⁴⁴.)

(When the inhabitants of the *bruidhean* saw/ The excellent hero coming for them,/ They assembled their old and their aged/ And went out to meet him.)

69. ⁴⁴⁵Tar éis an tuisleach⁴⁴⁶ do rinn Goll
Ar an méid do bhí ann den tsídhe,⁴⁴⁷
Go ndeachaigh⁴⁴⁸ isteach insan gCéis
Mar do bhí a dhearbhráthair ann ina luigh.

After the failure that Goll made/ Of all of the fairies that were there,/ He went into the Céis/ Since his brother was lying there.

70. ⁴⁴⁹An tan do chonaic⁴⁵⁰ Conán é,
Is d'athain gurb⁴⁵¹ é Goll do bhí ann,
Do tháinig chuige féin aríst
Is d'imigh⁴⁵² an phéin as a dhroim.⁴⁵³

When Conán saw him,/And recognised that it was Goll who was there,/ He came to himself again,/And the pain went from his back.

⁴⁴¹ mharbh] mhairbh G, mharaibh F.

⁴⁴² chonarcadar] choncadar G, conarcadh E

⁴⁴³ ag...ndéin] ag déanamh an áir G

⁴⁴⁴ dhéin] ndéin E

⁴⁴⁵ **69** This quatrain is found only in F.

⁴⁴⁶ tuisleach] teirlioch F.

⁴⁴⁷ den tsídhe] don tsaoidh F.

⁴⁴⁸ ndeachaigh] neacha F.

⁴⁴⁹ **70** This quatrain is found only in F.

⁴⁵⁰ chonaic] chonaic F.

⁴⁵¹ gurb] gur ab F.

⁴⁵² d'imigh] dimig F.

⁴⁵³ dhroim] dhroim F.

71. ⁴⁵⁴“Goirim⁴⁵⁵ thú”⁴⁵⁶ ar Conán,
 Is tú mo dhearbhráthair is ní⁴⁵⁷ bréag.
 Is tabhair domhsa⁴⁵⁸ greim leath-láimhe⁴⁵⁹
 Ar an mnaoi theangmháil⁴⁶⁰ mé san gcnoc aréir.”⁴⁶¹

“I salute you” said Conán,/ “You are my brother and it’s no lie./
 And give me a grip of one hand/ On the woman who took me in the hill last night.”

72. (Do labhair leis uaisle na bruighne
 ȝ do fuair umhal ó gach n-aon,
 ȝ d’innseadar dó trí⁴⁶² shuairceas
 Gach díth dár éirigh⁴⁶³ do Chonán Maol.)

(The nobles of the *bruidhean* spoke to him,/ And he received homage from each./
 And they told him jestingly/ All the harm that happened to Conán Maol.)

73. ⁴⁶⁴“Dar⁴⁶⁵ mo bhriathar ráidhte” ar⁴⁶⁶ Cab an Dosáin,
 “Nach as anachain⁴⁶⁷ do rinneadh⁴⁶⁸ é,
 Acht mar do bhí Conán aríamh bearránach,⁴⁶⁹
 Do bhíodar⁴⁷⁰ ag cur starráin air san gCéis.

“By my spoken word” said Cab an Dosáin,/ It was not done by accident./
 And as Conán was ever vexatious,/ They were obstructing him in the Céis.”

74. Breitheamhnas do rinneadh⁴⁷¹ do Chonán⁴⁷² Mac Mórna,
 Léine⁴⁷³ sróill in aghaidh⁴⁷⁴ gach lae,

⁴⁵⁴ **71** This quatrain only occurs in AF.

⁴⁵⁵ goirim] goirm A, guirim F.

⁴⁵⁶ thú] tú F.

⁴⁵⁷ is ní] gan A.

⁴⁵⁸ domhsa] damhsa F, dhámhsa A.

⁴⁵⁹ leath-láimhe] leath-láimh A, laithlaimh F.

⁴⁶⁰ theangmháil] do theangabháil A, theangbháil F.

⁴⁶¹ aréir] a ráor A.

⁴⁶² trí] tre CG

⁴⁶³ éirigh] éirighe C, bhain G

⁴⁶⁴ **73** This quatrain only occurs in AF.

⁴⁶⁵ dar] bheirim A, do bheirim F.

⁴⁶⁶ ar] om. A, a ráite F.

⁴⁶⁷ anachain] anachinn A, anachan F.

⁴⁶⁸ rinneadh] rina F.

⁴⁶⁹ bearránach] bioránach A, biorranach F.

⁴⁷⁰ bhíodar] bhádar A, bhídar F.

⁴⁷¹ rinneadh] rinne AF.

⁴⁷² Chonán... Mórna] Chonáin mh̄c Móir̄n̄ A.

Is gan níos⁴⁷⁵ mó damáiste do dhéanamh
Do Chab an Dosáin ón⁴⁷⁶ gCéis.

A judgement was made for Conán mac Mórna:/ A silk shirt every day,/ /
And not to do any more damage/ To Cab an Dosáin from the Céis.

75. (Do fuair Goll mórán dualgais,
Is Conán uasal tar gach n-aon.
Is d'fhágadar⁴⁷⁷ slán ag sluaighte⁴⁷⁸
Chab an Dosáin ón gCéis.

(Goll received much in reward,/ And noble Conán over more than anyone else./ /
And they bade farewell to the hosts/ Of Cab an Dosáin from the Céis.)

76. Lá agus bliadhain do Chonán ina luighe
Ar leaba⁴⁷⁹ nár corruigheadh⁴⁸⁰ dena⁴⁸¹ thaobh.
⁴⁸²I bhfochair a shioghain⁴⁸³ a bheith ina dhiaidh,⁴⁸⁴
Is an iomad péine do bhí ann ina bhléin.

A year and a day was Conán lying/ On a bed that was not moved from his side,/ /
Along with his testicles to be behind him,/ And the abundance of pain which was in
his groin.

77. Sin aguinne⁴⁸⁵ a dhearbhráithre⁴⁸⁶ is crosdacht orainn⁴⁸⁷
⁴⁸⁸Do bhain do Chonáin⁴⁸⁹ a measg Tuatha Dé.
Sin laoidh aguibh⁴⁹⁰ ar Chab an Dosáin,⁴⁹¹

⁴⁷³ léine] leinne A, leinne F.

⁴⁷⁴ in aghaidh] nághadh A, naigheadh F.

⁴⁷⁵ níos] a ní bhus A, ani(?)so F.

⁴⁷⁶ ón] ann san F.

⁴⁷⁷ d'fhágadar] d'fhágbhadar CEG

⁴⁷⁸ sluaighte] sluaighaibh CE, sluaigaibh G

⁴⁷⁹ leaba] leabaidh chlé A.

⁴⁸⁰ corruigheadh] chorradh F, chorraig A.

⁴⁸¹ dena] do aon A, dhon a F.

⁴⁸² **76c** *This line reads a theinngios et péinn a bhléinn in A.*

⁴⁸³ shioghain] shiogain F.

⁴⁸⁴ dhiaidh] ndhioith F.

⁴⁸⁵ aguinne] aguibh G, agamhse F.

⁴⁸⁶ dhearbhráithre] bhráithre G.

⁴⁸⁷ **77a** *In A this line is sin aguibh dríocht et crosdacht airneáin.*

⁴⁸⁸ **77b** *The word Danann in G has been removed here as it is superfluous to the metrical scheme.*

⁴⁸⁹ Chonáin] Chonainn mh̄c móirna A.

⁴⁹⁰ aguibh] agad A.

Is⁴⁹² breith⁴⁹³ chloinne Chonáin san gCéis.

There we have it brothers, it is perversity upon us,/ That which happened to Conán
amongst the Tuatha Dé Danann./ There's a lay for you on Cab an Dosáin,/
And Conán's child-bearing in the Céis.

78. **P.**(“Lig⁴⁹⁴ feasda dod leamh-bhriathra,
A Oisín bhaoith gan chéill,
Is gur mór an peaca do-ghní tú
Aithris gníomhartha Chonáin Mhaoil.”)

P. (“Desist from your insipid words/ O silly senseless Oisín./
Great is the sin which you commit,/ Repeating the deeds of Conán Maol.”)

79. **O.**(“Ar pheaca ar bith ní smaoinighim,
Is is cuma liom cad a ghnéid,
Acht aithriseod féin go binn duit
An sgéimhleadh fuaramair ó inghean Ríogh Gréag.”)

O. (“I do not think on any sin,/ And I care not what they do./
But I will recite for you sweetly/ The terror we got from the King of Greece's
daughter.”)

⁴⁹¹ dosáin] dasáinn A, dasáin G, dasain F.

⁴⁹² Is] agus ar A.

⁴⁹³ breith] bhreith A.

⁴⁹⁴ lig] léig C

Notes

1c BD have *chaitheamar/ chaith sinn* rather than *a ndeachamar* as occurs in the other manuscripts.

1ac There is *ógláchas* final rhyme between these two lines: *lá sin: Fáil*.

2a The northern manuscripts BD have the Fianna spending nine days and nights on the hill of Céis, rather than three. (See verse two in the appendix).

4 In manuscripts BD Fionn and the rest of the Fianna leave without Fionn speaking, while in ACE quatrain **5** Fionn's departure is omitted. In G Fionn is not specifically mentioned as being present at this point at all.

4b The manuscript form *ndiaig* has been emended here to *ndéidh* in order to restore final rhyme between lines bd.

6 In BD, this speech by Conán takes the form of a dialogue of three quatrains between him and Diarmaid, with lines from Fionn's speech in **4** given to Diarmaid.

6b In F, *féin* is spelt *shéin*, indicating a northern pronunciation.

7a In F *chughainn* is spelt *chugain*, indicating that the Munster pronunciation **/xu:iN'/** is not here intended.

7b In A the word *gruagach* is always feminine, whereas it is masculine in the other manuscripts.

7c In manuscript F *fiadhán* is spelt *fhioghain*, with the lenition perhaps indicating that the form is dative.

7d Northern manuscripts BD replace *ba lughadh méid* with *ba deise gléas*, and Cab an Dosáin himself is referred to as *an grugach álainn*.

8a The variant readings of *birréad* presented in the apparatus criticus would seem to suggest that the r is intended to be broad, giving a possible phonetic spelling of *biorraed*.

8b The term *baitheas*, meaning the crown of the head is here used, which is found only in Connacht. *Éadan* is the term used in Munster.⁴⁹⁵

8-10 These verses describing Cab an Dosáin are found in all manuscripts, although the precise order of the lines varies. CEG add the couplet *do bhí druinn thiar ar a shlinneán/ is é ag canaid faoi an bhFéinn*, which is not found in the manuscripts from outside Cork.

⁴⁹⁵ Wagner, Heinrich, *Linguistic Atlas and Survey of Irish Dialects*, vol 1., Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1958, p. 117

9a The word *séamhsantúil* presents difficulties. *Santúil* does not occur in Dineen's dictionary, leaving the correct meaning a mystery.

11c *Sibh* is written *suibh* in F, an example of a West Muskerry phenomenon, although it is also encountered in Iveragh⁴⁹⁶. The variant readings for *ár* in this line present a problem. The variant in E is most likely *ár*, but those of C and D would suggest a word such as *áracht*, which does not occur in the dictionary.

13c Two of the variant readings for *triopallach* suggest that another word is intended, but I cannot discover a likely one.

16a *Labhair* is written *labhúir* in F, suggesting the pronunciation /Lo:r'/ or /Laʊər/

16b This reading has been chosen on the strength of greater representation in the manuscripts.

16c In F, *fheabhas* is written *fhóuis*, suggesting the Waterford pronunciation /fəʊs/⁴⁹⁷.

19d *Cóir* alone in line with the reading of CE has been preferred here, as representing the best reading in line with the rhyme of the –ó- corresponding to the –ó- in *Fódhla*.

21cd The sections omitted have been removed from these lines, in order to keep the rhyme scheme and rhythm intact, as they were felt to have corrupted it.

22bd F regularly spells –(e)as as –is, as can be seen from the variant readings in these lines.

23 In the northern manuscripts BD this quatrain is substantially different:

22. *"Is anois ó tá mé súthach sáimh,
Is nach bhfuil easbaigh orm faoin spéir,
Dob fhéarr liom maitheas Rígh na Fódhla
Go bhfaighfinn aon ruathair amháin ar mhnaoi."*

23a The word *ráidhte* occurs in AG, but has been omitted here in accordance with F, as this fits the rhythm of the poem better.

24 There is no mention of the bed being made in D, but Diarmaid and Conán still go to lie down. It is Diarmaid who first sights the fairy-woman in BD.

24b It should be noted that all three main manuscripts spell *déan* with a slenderised final **n** in this line.

⁴⁹⁶ Ó Cuív, Brian, *The Irish of West Muskerry, County Cork*, The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1944, p. 59

⁴⁹⁷ Breathnach, Risteard B., *The Irish of Ring, County Waterford*, The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1947, p. 24

25d The idiom *faoin dtír* is not found in Dineen's dictionary, and so I have here translated it as if it were *faoin tuath*.

26d The variant given in F for *lorán* is *laran*, which is a misspelling of *larán*, the original form of the word.

27c A's reading, *in áoncheárd*, would also give the meaning 'anywhere/ in any point,' with the Connacht word *ceárd* for point/direction.

27d In AFG *thart* is spelled *thort*, giving the Déise and Central/ West Cork pronunciation.⁴⁹⁸

28d The form given here is *rachad*, which given the Munster provenance of the manuscripts used to create this version of the poem we would expect to encounter as *raghad*.

29 It is at this point in D that Conán jumps into the fairy woman's bed. The first two amorous attempts do not feature at all.

31 *Muintir na Céise* has been preferred here to *Cab an Dosáin* as according better with line **30d**, although (*Cab an*) *Dosáin* would rhyme with *Conáin*.

31d In BCEG Conán is found in a tar pot, rather than on the willow plank, while A contains both images.

33c The variant reading of *níos* in F, that is *niso*, is a variant of the form commonly found in Northern manuscripts.

33d In F *nó* is spelt *nú*, a pronunciation found throughout Munster and Connacht.

34d *Í* is spelt *aoi* in A, to emphasise the pronunciation /*is i:*/ rather than /*ji:*/.

35b A inserts an additional line before **b**, "*gidh gur loisgiog mo chosa ó chianaibh*, to make a five-line stanza. This line also occurs as **b** in EG. This quatrain is not found in BD.

36d In B this line reads *is na cait ba mhó faoi an spéir*. The word *timgheoin* does not occur in the dictionary, and is a compound of *tim-* meaning 'to tremble from terror' and *geoin* meaning 'a shout or cry.'

37d MSS AF add *do bhí ag na cait fhiagháin* 7 before *ag an bhFear Maol*. The reading given, in line with CEG, has been preferred as preserving the rhythm of the poem and as making more sense. The phrase *gairm na ngártha* would appear to be a rhetorical expression, using two near synonyms to increase its effect.

⁴⁹⁸ Wagner, *Linguistic Atlas and Survey of Irish Dialects*, vol 1., 1958, p. 179

39b The word *cadogh* is recorded by Dineen as occurring in the dialects of Donegal and Monaghan. It also occurs in *Stair Éamuinn Uí Chléire* from Roscommon, and in Jonathon Swift's examples of Irish conversation from the Midlands.

42 I was not able to locate the form *is gráin dom*, however the use of the preposition *do* with *gráin* usually indicates the object of the hatred or reproach, and thus the translation has been made accordingly.

42d *Sáith* has two meanings, giving the possible translations of 'a thrust to the woman' or 'a bit of what satisfies to the woman.'

44c *Teach* is not a Munster spoken form, yet it is used in all copies of the poem which were written in Munster, meaning that it might well have survived as a literary form there. *Geas* means an injunction or a taboo that must not be broken.

45b The form *ciodhinn* given for *cíoch* in F is most likely the West Munster form *cín* as recorded in Dineen.

45c The term *ball bhásta*, or 'waist member' does not occur in Dineen, and would seem to be a term for the penis. It occurs in all the manuscripts.

46bd *Maol* is here rhymed with *mnaoi*, meaning that the vowel can only be realised as /i:/, in sharp contrast to its normal realisation as /e:/ in the poem.

47b The spelling *ráidhnt* found in A is clearly dialectical, indicating the pronunciation /raiN't'/

47, 49-50 These three quatrains appear in various different orders and with occasional differing lines in all manuscripts:

BD: *Níor chuala tusa torc dá chur 'un báis,*
 An orlach ceartha ríamh dá mhéad.
 Ba chosumhla dó sin nó cnámharnach
 Do bhí ag an mnaoi fhiadháin is ag an bhFear Maol.

Manuscript A places quatrain **47** after **49** and **50**, but the lines used are the same as those in the version presented in the edited text. Manuscript F does not contain quatrain **47**, but the lines used in **49** and **50** are the same as those in A and the edited version. Manuscript G has **49** first, then **47**, and finally **48**. Line **49a** is slightly shorter in G, with *adhmaid* being omitted, but otherwise the quatrains are linguistically similar to those presented in the edited version. I have chosen to arrange these three quatrains in the above order as it seems to me that this provides the best reading of the poem, and makes the best narrative sense.

50c The word *ceart* can also mean a ‘fleshworm’; possibly here used as a term for the penis?

50d A *liagán* is an obelisk or stone, and so a *liagán sráide* would appear to be a milestone, presumably phallic in shape.

51b F consistently spells both *do* and *de* as *dho*.

52 This quatrain is in the northern manuscripts BD.

53d The future form *ní shaorfaid* which occurs in CEG would seem from the context to be a mistake, as the conditional form *ní shaorfaidís* would be more suitable.

54-8 In B this section describing Conán’s pain and what the woman has inflicted on him runs to nine quatrains, whilst in D there are three, which considering the abridged nature of that copy of the poem is still quite a lot. These quatrains will be discussed in more detail in the relevant appendix.

56d *Anois féin* is here used to mean ‘right now.’

59c According to Dineen, *cnáib* is pronounced *cnáibh* in Corca Dhuibhne.

60a The term *deithneas*, meaning ‘haste’ is only found in points 1-16 of the *Linguistic Atlas and Survey of Irish Dialects*, covering the areas of East Munster, South Tipperary, and West Cork; it is not found further west than point 12, Coomhola in West Cork.

62 The episode where Diarmaid pulls Conán’s testicles out of his body is not found in B.

62c *Is a réadhchnáib aige* in AF has been omitted from the end of this line in accordance with the reading of CEG, as the phrase is redundant and metrically superfluous.

63 This quatrain is not found in B.

64-5 This passage is not found in BD.

64c In F the words *dúinn* and *uainn* are spelled *duing* and *uaing* respectively, showing the East Munster realisation of final *nn* as /ŋ’/.

65cd The variant readings of *d’éireochadh* in these two lines would seem to suggest a past habitual form.

66 This quatrain does not occur in D.

67 This quatrain does not occur in D.

69a The form *tuisleach* here should be in the genitive, giving *tuislighe*, but there is nothing in the manuscript variants to indicate that a genitive is ever intended.

70d The form *péin* here seems likely to be a hypercorrection of *pian*, by a scribe perhaps aware that in his dialect there was a tendency to break the *e:* vowel, and desirous to write a perceived literary form.

74 This quatrain occurs only in ABF, while in D it is Conán who offers the fairy woman goods in exchange for his release.

74b The original reading of *in aghaidh* was *a nigheadh*, which accords more with the variant readings. This however left the problem of the genitive *lae*, which would have necessity have been taken as a fossilised genitive of time had this reading been kept. However, I felt that *a nigheadh* could be seen as a very corrupt rendering of *in aghaidh*, which would be followed by the genitive, and so this reading has been preferred.

76 Conán's year and a day recovering from his rape are mentioned only in ABF.

77ab B *do thrialladar go Teamhair na sonn/ ag imirt is ag ól is ag pronnadh séid* D *Do chuaidhmíd go Teamhair le bróid/ ag imirt is ag ól is ag pronnadh séid.*

79d The mention of the terror the Fianna suffered at the hands of the King of Greece's daughter is a reference to another Fenian adventure, presumably another example of the Fianna being trapped somewhere and tortured. I have been unable to identify precisely which one however.

Appendix

Laoidh Chab an Dosáin in Meath/Roscommon (B)

1. Lá dá rabhairme Fiannaibh Fáil⁴⁹⁹
Ár gcuid coileán 7 sinn féin,
Is é thart⁵⁰⁰ air chaitheamair an lá sin a Phádraig
Ag cur seilg san gCéis.
2. Seall naoi n-oídhche 7 naoi lá
Do chaith ár gcuid coileán con 7 sinn féin,
Gan fiú an mhíolbhuidhe⁵⁰¹ ná an bhruic
Níor ruaigeamair fán gcnoc go léir.
3. Ansin a ghluaiseamair 7 Fionn,
Is a rabhamair ann dár bhFéinn.
Is Níor fhágamair aon neach ar ndóigh⁵⁰²
An lá sin ach Diarmaid & Conán Maol.
4. “Dar an lámh seo orm a Dhiarmaid,” do ráitios Conán,
Is truagh gan sinn araon i dTeamhair féin⁵⁰³,
Mar bhfaighfeadh tusa einneach⁵⁰⁴ maith ó mhná
Is do bheadh fuigheallach chlár ag an bhFear Maol.
5. “Do-bheirim mo bhriathar” ráitios Conán,
Go bhfuil an mí-ádh liom i mo dhóigh,
Is mar bhfaigh mé ní beag do chineál an aráin
Do thuitigh a bhfuil de ghearáin as mo dhéad.
6. Ansin a labhras⁵⁰⁵ Diarmaid Ó Duibhne,
“Ba ghnách⁵⁰⁶ ar mí-ádh liom i do dhóigh,
Is ní raibh tú in aon áit aríamh go fóill⁵⁰⁷
Nach dtarraingeochadh tú donán⁵⁰⁸ ar an bhFéinn.”

⁴⁹⁹ fáil] pfáill B.

⁵⁰⁰ is é thart] ag so D.

⁵⁰¹ mhíolbhuidhe] mhiodhallbhuidhe B.

⁵⁰² ar ndóigh] inár ndiaigh D.

⁵⁰³ féin] héin B, shéimh D.

⁵⁰⁴ einneach] ionnach B, cuireadh D.

⁵⁰⁵ labhras] leaibhrios B.

⁵⁰⁶ ghnách] gach B.

⁵⁰⁷ fóill] fodhail B.

7. Is ní fada go bhfacamair chugainn⁵⁰⁹ le fána
An gruagach álainn ba deise gléas,
Ag marcaidheacht ar asal beag beag fiadháin,
Is níor lúgh a bheithidheach ná é féin.

8. Do bhí a chlogad don ór cheardach
Ag déanamh sgáith dá bhathais léith.
A chlóca den tsróill bhán,
Is é dá fholach síos go léir.

9. Do bhí féasóg liath bhláthmhar
Fós go lár a chléibh,
Is ní mó ná fad mo láimhe
Do bhí idir a tharr is an féar.

10. Do bhí a chláirseach chiúin chomhsanach
Ag seinm sdreanncáin dha go séimh.
Is ar theacht aguinn i láthair,
Do bhí faoighde an gháire ina bhéal.

11. “Cuireadh do-bheirim a Chonáin,
Is do Dhiarmaid Ó Duibhne is fearr méin,
Go bhfaighfidh sibh bhur sáth bídh ⁊ dighe go lá
I mo dhúnáinín beag féin.

12. “Míle fáilte romhad,” ráitios Conán,
“A ghruagaigh bhig léith is fearr gléas,
Isgo n-aithnighim⁵¹⁰ ar do chlócaín mion⁵¹¹ bláith
Gur mhaith an áit atá i do dhiaigh.”

13. “Dar an lámh seo duitse a Chonáin,
Cibé árus atá i mo dhóigh,
Ní bhfaighfidh tusa greim ná deoch go lá
Ach mar bheidh tú ar an urlár chomh luath liom féin.”

14. “Nár achannaigh ort,” aráitios Conán,
“A ghruagaigh bhig léith is deise gléas

⁵⁰⁸ donán] míth-ghreann D.

⁵⁰⁹ chugainn] aguinn B.

⁵¹⁰ n-aithnighim] ndainthím B.

⁵¹¹ mion] mighain B.

T'ainm do thabhairt dom ar fhad is beidh tú i láthair,
Ar eagla go rachfá amúgh as an bhféar.”

15. “Nár achannaigh ort a Chonáin,
Ná himdhearg mise fá mo mhéad.
Is má théighim ort ar seachrán,
Lorg Cab an Dosáin ón gCéis.”
16. Ansin do ghluais an gruagach
Go mear luaibhneach⁵¹² ar a stéid,
Ach dá fheabhas deifir dá ndearnaigh Cab an Dosáin
D’fhastaigh Conán é a dul isteach san gCéis.
17. “Dar an lámh seo ort a ghruagaigh bhig,
Atá tú i gclip aguinne anois gan bhréig.
Is má fhaighfidh tú mo dhá lámh go brách
Go bhfeicfidh mé toirt mo sháith a dul ar an méis.
18. Ansin do leagadh chugainn bórd,
Is na h-éadaighe comh-gheal go léir.
Dá dtigidís isteach Fianna⁵¹³ Fódhla
Go bhfaighfidís fóirthinn eillic san gCéis.
19. Dá fheabhas deifir do ndearnaigh Conán,
Le luasg láimhe is le faobhar ar maith déid,
Le feabhas mhná Chab an Dosáin,
Do bhí seacht n-aráin gan ithe ar an mhéis.
20. “Do-bheirim mo bhriathar,” a ráitios Conán,
“Gur bhris mé geasa anocht san gCéis,
Gur fhág⁵¹⁴ mé fuigheall bí ṡ dighe ar an gcláir,
Cidh chuir mé mo tharr as gléas.”
21. “Is anois ó tá mé súthach sáimh⁵¹⁵,
Is nach bhfuil easbaigh orm faoin spéir⁵¹⁶,
Dob fhearr liom maitheas Rígh⁵¹⁷ na Fódhla

⁵¹² go mear luaibhneach] le luas na gaoithe D.

⁵¹³ Fianna] fir na D.

⁵¹⁴ fhág] fhaigh B.

⁵¹⁵ sáimh] sáthach D.

⁵¹⁶ spéir] ngrén D.

Go bhfaighfinn aon ruathair amháin ar mhnaoi.”

22. Ansin a labhras⁵¹⁸ Diarmaid Ó Duibhne,
“A Chonáin iompar tú féin go caoin.
Ná cur aon chur díot go lá,
Is é áit ar tharlaigh tú anocht sa bhruidhean.”
23. Is ansin a gléasadh leabaidh dóibh,
Nó gur luigh Diarmaid is Conán síos.
Ar fhéachaint dá dtug sé ar an urlár,
Do chí sé an lorán breágh de mhnaoi.
24. Do bhí ceithre cosa faoin leabaidh dóibh,
Is í ag imeacht ar roithleáin sídhe.
An tráth bhuailfidhe cic uirthi ar aon cheard
Do chuaigh sí an t-urlár thart fo thrí.
25. “Do-bheirim mo bhriathar,” a raitios Conán,
“A bhean álainn atá ann an leabaidh chaoil,
Ag imeacht uait féin ar an urlár,
Go rachaigh mise do do ghéagáil dreas don oídhche.”
26. Ansin a d’éirigh Conán,
Is ní fada amach do chuaigh sé amach
An uair do casadh leis coill ᵱ móin,
Is an claisgionnaigh ba mhó faoin spéir.
27. Do bhí sail anonn ar an gclais.
Do rinn dá leith ina lár;
Do thuit Conán insan doimhneadas⁵¹⁹ síos
Is do dhúisigh sé an bhruidhean lena gháir.
28. Is ansin a d’éirigh muinntir na Céise
Faoi thuarim Chonáin Mhaoil,
Is é áit ina bhfaighfidís é ina sheasamh
I gcoireán anraith is a chosa sgoltaigh go léir.

⁵¹⁷ Rígh] om. B.

⁵¹⁸ labhras] leabhrios B.

⁵¹⁹ doimhneadas] doighniodios B.

29. Ansin a labhair Cab an Dosáin,
“Fansa fre do chompánach féin.
Ná déan níos mó d’áirneán,
Nó beidh tú damáisteach anocht san gCéis.”
30. Ansin a d’éirigh Conán Maol,
Is ní fada amach do chuaigh sé
An uair do casadh leis coill ᵱ móin,
Is na cait ba mhó faoin spéir.
31. Do bhain cat greis as a leathmhair,
As a mhúineál is a chnámh ghéil.
Níor chuala tú aríamh ach na gartha
Do bhí ag na cait fhiadháin is ag an bhFear Maol.
32. Ansin do chuaigh Conán
Do léim annsa leabaidh chaoil.
Do shín sé síos leis an mbanríoghain óg,
Is dob áill leis a chluas do chur ar an mnaoi.
33. Ansin do chuir Conán a lámh ina bhrollach,
Is é fuair aige dá chíoch.
Do chuir lámh eile i gcoinne a bhall bhásta.⁵²⁰
Is einneach⁵²¹ a fuair aige mar mhnaoi.
34. Níor chuala tusa torc dá chur ‘un báis,
An orlach ceartha ríamh dá mhéad.
Ba chosumhla dó sin nó cnámharnach
Do bhí ag an mnaoi fhiadháin is ag an bhFear Maol.
35. “An gcluin tú mise a bhean fhiagháin,
Ós bean tú tá ríamh le h-olc.
Ní nidh cóir atá tú dhéanamh,
Is liagán sráide dol i mi chorp.”
36. Ansin do labhras⁵²² an bhean fhiadháin,
“Fág amach mo leaba do léim.
Is do réir mar fuair tú an teangbháil,

⁵²⁰ bhásta] baiste B.

⁵²¹ einneach] lonnach B, ionnach D.

⁵²² labhras] leaibhrios B.

Beidh lorán páiste agud ag éirighe lae.”

37. Ansin do thánaig ar ais,
“A Dhiarmaid is ainnis mo sgéal,
An uair do shiubhail mé faill ar an mnaoi fhiadháin
Is é duine teangbhálach anocht mé féin.”
38. Is amhlaidh a d’éirigh ag déanamh áirneáin,
Is níor fhan frena chompánach beag féin.
“Is ní is measa liom ná mo bhás,
Go mbeidh lorán páiste agam ag éirighe lae.”
39. “A Dhiarmaid,” do ráite Conán,
“Is barr mo sgéal agus mo ghníomh,
Is nach bhfuair aon duine aríamh teangbháil
Mar fuair mise aréir ón mnaoi.
40. “Ó tá mo chnámha briste breoite⁵²³,
Is ní thiochfaidh mo ghabhal⁵²⁴ ina áit féin.
Is a Dhiarmaid muna bhfaigh mé fosaint fóirhint⁵²⁵
Tuitfidh mo thóin asam go léir.”
41. “Is ubhall⁵²⁶ mo leise is mo dhá leathmhas,
Mo dhá dhubháin agus mo bhléin.
Creidim gur fíor ráite na mná fiadháine,
Tá tosach na bhfásghadh orm anois féin.”
42. “A Dhiarmaid ba mhór an gearáin,
Ins gach aird ar an bhFear Maol.
Ach déanaigh bhur ngaisgeadh dom easbhaidh go brách,
Tiochfaidh mo bhás is ard do bhéic.”
43. “A Dhiarmaid,” do ráite Conán,
“is barr an cás ina bhfuil mé,
Níl alt in mo chorp nach bhfuil ag gíoscán,
Is ní fios agam cén ball díom is mó atá i bpéin.”

⁵²³ breoite] breoithigh B

⁵²⁴ ghabhal] ghoball B

⁵²⁵ fóirhint] foraint B

⁵²⁶ ubhall] adhall B

44. “Anois a Chonáin,” a ráite Diarmaid,
“In⁵²⁷ mo chomhairle ba bheag do spéis,
Is dá ligfeadh do do chuid airneáin
Do bheadh anocht agad malairt⁵²⁸ sgéil.”
45. “A Dhiarmaid,” a ráitios Conán,
“Leag do lámh anseo ar mo bhléin.
Is mór atá sé agad ⁊ ag ár dtasamh
Ó theas an pháiste seo ag an bhFear Maol.”
46. “A chuainteoir dhighlis ⁊ a chomrádaigh,
Ceangail mo tharr go cruaidh le téad.
A bhfuil ó mo chliathán síos,
Beidh sé ar an urláir amuigh go léir.”
47. “A Dhiarmaid,” do ráite Conán,
“Féach a bhfaighfeadh réadh chnáibe insa teach
Ná go dtiubharfadh⁵²⁹ domhsa⁵³⁰ cúnamh tarrtháile,
Atá ceann an loráin ag gabháil⁵³¹ amach.
48. Ansin do fuair Diarmaid réadh chnáibe,
Is do shaoil sé an lorán do tharraingt ar an saoghal.
Níor chuala tú aríamh torc dá chur ‘un báis
Ba mhó gartha ná an Fear Maol.
49. “A Dhiarmaid a chompánaigh,” arsa Conán,
Ba mhór do cháil aríamh ar mhéad do neirt.
Ach chím anois gur leag do lámh,
Ó nach bhféadann tú an lorán do thabhairt amach.”
50. Le gach tarraingt dá dtugfadh Diarmaid
Ar an lorán le neart a ghéig,
Is iongadh nach gcuirfeadh sé an bhruidhean ar ait
Le méad na ngartha do bhí ag an bhFear Maol.

⁵²⁷ in] ann B

⁵²⁸ malairt] mallart B

⁵²⁹ dtiubharfadh] dteobhthadh B.

⁵³⁰ domhsa] dhúasadh B.

⁵³¹ gabháil] geamhail B.

51. Ansin a d'éirigh Cab an Dosáin,
Is an tiolán dá raibh insan gCéis.
Do fuaireadh Diarmaid is a réadh chnáibe
Ag tarraingt síthean an Fhir Mhaoil.
52. Ansin do labhras⁵³² Cab an Dosáin,
“Leigeadh do Chonán go soimhneach réidh.
Ná corraigh aon chur daoibh arís go lá,
Ná bheir fiodsa brádhla dá bhfuil insan gCéis.”
53. Ansin do labhras⁵³³ an bhanríoghain óg,
Do bhí lán do bhród is do phléid.
D’fheistigh sí do Chonán Mac Mórna
Go dé an chlann óg sin do rug sé aréir.
54. “Cibé clann óg do rug mé aréir,
Is tusa fé do rinne é.
Is tú féin údar gach uilc
Inghíon Chab an Dosáin ón gCéis.”
55. Ansin do chogainn Fionn ar a ordóg,
Is do fuair aisti fios gach sgéil.
Mar bhfóirfeadh Goll ar an dithis
Go raibh siad faoi dhraoidheacht choice insan gCéis.
56. Ach mar d'éireochadh ceo le gaoth mhór,
Nó mhúchfaidhe teine le tuille tréan,
An uair a tharraing Goll a lann líomhtha
Do mhaigh an draoidheacht dá raibh insan gCéis.
57. “Míle fáilte romhad,” a ráite Conán,
“Is tú mo dhearbhráthair⁵³⁴ anois gan bhréig.
Ach faigh domhsa greim mo dhá lámh
Ar an mnaoi theangbháil aréir san gCéis.”
58. Ach b'éigean dósan léine sróill
Do ghealladh do Chonán do nigheadh gach lae,

⁵³² [labhras] leaibhrios B.

⁵³³ [labhras] leaibhrios B.

⁵³⁴ [dhearbhráthair] dhriotháir B.

Sin 7 domhach lán d'ór,
Ach sgaradh le inghíon Chab an Dosáin roinneach réadh.

59. Lá 7 bliadhain do bhí Conán
Ina luigh ar a leabaidh shéimh;
Riaghantaigh ar a tharr in airde,
Ag cnasamh a shíthean 7 a bhléin.

60. Do thrialladar go Teamhair na sonn,
Ag imirt 7 ag ól 7 ag bronnadh séad.
Sin duitse a Phádraig tuairisg Chab an Dosáin,
Is breith chloinne Chonáin Mhaoil.

The two manuscripts whose provenance can be traced to the South Ulster/ North Connacht region, B and D, have the bulk of the poem in common with the others, although there are variations. A lot is left out of D, including the first two amorous attempts on the fairy woman, and the hallucinations that follow them. The first two attempts are found in B, but the third is truncated somewhat, with the passage where Conán returns to his bed after the second attempt being omitted entirely, as is the passage where Diarmaid discovers the kitten licking his companion's face, meaning that the second and third of his hallucinations flow into each other. The early image of Conán chasing Cab an Dosáin into the *bruidhean* in order to ensure that he received the food he had been promised also occurs in BD, although the language used is substantially different to that of the Munster manuscripts.

As has been mentioned before, greater attention was paid to Goll and Conán than to Fionn in northern and westerly areas, these being the territory of Clan Mórna, and this bias is clearly seen in B, although due to the shorter version of the poem presented it is not so clear in D. B contains several quatrains not found in the other manuscripts which add yet more detail to Conán's sufferings at the hands of the fairy woman, evidence of both the desire to hear more of the doings of Conán, and of precisely how far the Fenian Tradition had descended into farce by this time. These quatrains focus on Conán's reaction to his rape and on Diarmaid's actions as his midwife as he suffers the agonies of birth; both images are ripe for parody. Conán's quarrelsome nature is also well displayed in B, as Conán taunts Diarmaid with accusations of weakness, even as Diarmaid is labouring to pull his 'child' out.

It must be said however, that although more attention is paid to Conán's sufferings in B and D, the Munster manuscripts make more mention of Goll as the saviour of the day than the northern ones.

In line **63d** of the edited version of the poem, Conán is mockingly asked what befell him during the night. In manuscript B he responds as follows:

“Cibé clann óg do rug mé aréir
Is tusa do rinne é,
Is tú féin ughdar gach uilc
Inghean Chab an Dosáin ón gCéis.”

Whatever child I bore last night/ it is yourself that did it/
You are the author of every ill/ daughter of Cab an Dosáin from Céis.

His response in D is slightly different:

“Cibé clann óg do rug mé aréir
Is tusa féin is cionntach é.
Is muna bhfaigh mé leigheas ó mo ghalar,
Beidh tóin tinn agam le mo ré.”

Whatever child I bore last night/ It is you who is responsible for it/
And if I don't get a cure for my affliction/ I will have a sore arse for the rest of my life.

These two manuscripts epitomise the social change that had come over the audience for Ossianic literature by the end of the eighteenth century. The farmers had replaced the old educated classes as the primary audience, and their literary tastes were decidedly earthier than those of their predecessors. This earthiness can be seen most easily in the detail with which Conán's sufferings are described here, an earthiness which would certainly not have appealed to the old bardic class who had preferred the old Fenian stories of heroic derring-do.

The clear emphasis on the character of Conán is also important, as it is this northern focus on him and his brother which places Conán at the centre of the story and gives the

hero's part to Goll rather than Fionn, a plot-device which remains the same even in those copies of the poem which were written down in Munster, an area whose scribes might well have been expected to give greater prominence to the southern Fionn than is ever given in *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin*.

Quatrain **56** of the Roscommon/Meath recension of the poem would appear to be a better exemplar for the original form of the quatrain than the corresponding part of the edited version, as the rhyme between *tréan* and *gCéis* is better than that between *thréan* and *taobh* in the edited version. There is also alliteration between *lann* and *líomhtha* which is not present in the Tipperary/North Cork version.

As regards an extrapolation of the original structure of the poem, MS B is in accordance with the others as to the order in which the events of *Laoidh Chab an Dosáin* unfold. The Fianna are hunting unsuccessfully at Céis when they encounter Cab an Dosáin. He invites them to a feast at his home, whereupon Conán taunts him about his diminutive stature. Conán then chases the *gruagach* into the *bruidhean* where a feast is set, after which he and Diarmaid retire to bed. They soon see the fairy maiden, and the hallucinogenic episodes occur, culminating in Conán's rape and the birth of his 'child;' Goll then arrives to rescue them. This correspondence between all of the manuscripts means that we can be fairly sure that this was the original format of the poem.

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