

THE BIRTH OF MONGAN

Fiachna Lurga, the father of Mongan, was sole king of the province. He had a friend in Scotland, to wit, Aedan, the son of Gabran. A message went from him to Aedan. A message went from Aedan asking him to come to his aid. He was in warfare against the Saxons. A terrible warrior was brought by them to accomplish the death of Aedan in the battle. Then Fiachna went across, leaving his queen at home.

While the hosts were fighting in Scotland, a noble-looking man came to his wife in his stronghold in Rathmore of Moylinny. At the time he went, there were not many in the stronghold. The stranger asked the woman to arrange a place of meeting. The woman said there were not in the world possessions or treasures, for which she would do anything to disgrace her husband's honor. He asked her whether she would do it to save her husband's life. She said that if she were to see him in danger and difficulty, she would help him with all that lay in her might. He said she should do it then, "for thy husband is in great danger. A terrible man has been brought against him, and he will die by his hand. If we, thou and I, make love, thou wilt bear a son thereof. That son will be famous; he will be Mongan. I shall go to the battle which will be fought to-morrow at the third hour, so that I shall save Fiachna, and I shall vanquish the warrior before the eyes of the men of Scotland. And I shall tell thy husband our adventures, and that it is thou that hast sent me to his help."

It was done thus. When army was drawn up against army, the boats saw a noble-looking man before the army of Aedan and Fiachna. He went towards Fiachna in particular, and told him the conversation with his wife the day before, and that he had promised to come to his help at that hour. Thereupon he went before the army towards the other, and vanquished the warriors, so that Aedan and Fiachna won the battle.

And Fiachna returned to his country, and the woman was pregnant and bore a son, even Mongan son of Fiachna. And he thanked his wife for what she had done for him, and she confessed all her adventures. So that this Mongan is a son of Manannan mac Lir, though he is called Mongan son of Fiachna. For when the stranger went from her in the morning he left a quatrain with Mongan's mother, saying:

I go home,
The pale pure morning draws near:
Manannan son of Lir
Is the name of him who came to thee.

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