

The Cause of the Battle of Cnucha

When Cathar Mor son of Fedlimid Fir Urglais son of Cormac Gelta-gaith was in the kingship of Tara, and Conn the Hundred-Fighter in Kells, in the rigdonna's land, Cathar had a celebrated druid, Nuada son of Achi son of Dathi son of Brocan son of Fintan, of Tuath Dathi in Breg. The druid was soliciting land in Leinster from Cathar; for he knew that it was in Leinster his inheritance would be. Cathar gave him his choice of land. The land the druid chose was Almu in Leinster. She that was wife to Nuada was Almu, daughter of Becan.

A stronghold was built by the druid then in Almu, and alamu (lime) was rubbed to its wall, until it was all white; and perhaps it was from that the name "Almu" was applied to it; of which was said:

*All-white is the stronghold of battle renown
As if it had received the lime of Ireland;
From the alamu which he gave to his house,
Hence it is that "Almu" is applied to Almu.*

Nuada's wife, Almu, begged that her name might be given to the hill; and her request was granted, and it was in it she was to be buried, hence it was said:

*Almu—beautiful was the woman!—
Wife of Nuada the great, son of Achi;
She entreated—the division was just—
That her name should be on the perfect hill.*

Nuada had a distinguished son, named Tadg. Rairiu, daughter of Donn-Duma, was his wife. A celebrated druid also was Tadg. Death came to Nuada; and he left his stronghold, as it was, to his son; and it is Tadg that was druid to Cathar in the place of his father.

Rairiu bore a daughter to Tadg; her name was Muirne of the fair neck. This maiden grew up in great beauty, so that the Sons of the kings and mighty lords of Ireland were wont to be courting her.

Cumall, son of Trenmor, king-warrior of Ireland, was then in the service of Conn, and he, like every other youth, was demanding the maiden. Nuada gave him a refusal, for he knew that it was on account of Cumall he would have to leave Almu. The same woman was mother to Cumall and to Conn's father, to wit, Fedlimid Rechtaide.

Cumall, however, came and took Muirne by force, since she had not been given to him. Tadg went to Conn, told him what Cumall had done, and he began to incite Conn and to reproach him.

Conn dispatched messengers to Cumall, and ordered him to leave Ireland, or to restore Muirne to Tadhg. Cumall said he would not give her up; everything else he would give but not the woman. Conn sent his soldiers, and Urgriu son of Lugaid Corr king of the Luagni, and Daire the Red son of Eochaid, and his son Aed (who was afterwards called Goll) to attack Cumall. Cumall assembled his army against them; and the battle of Cnucha was fought between them, and Cumall was slain along with many of his people.

Cumall fell by Goll son of Morna. Luchet wounded Goll in his eye, so that he destroyed it. And hence it is that the name Goll (the One-eyed) attached to him; whereof was said:

*Aed was the name of Daire's son,
Until Luchet of fame wounded him;
Since the heavy lance wounded him,
Therefore, he has been called Goll.*

Goll killed Luchet. it is because of this battle, moreover, that a hereditary feud existed between the sons of Morna and Finn mac Cumall. Daire had two names, to wit, Morna and Daire.

Muirne went, after that, to Conn; for her father, Tadhg the druid, rejected her and would not let her come to him, because she was pregnant; he ordered his people to burn her. Nevertheless, he dared not compass her destruction against the will of Conn, who, when the girl asked him how she should act, said, "Go to Fiacal son of Conchenn, to Tara Mairci, and let thy delivery be effected there." This was because a sister to Cumall was Fiacal's wife, Dodbail the druidess. Connla, Conn's servant, went with her, to escort her, until she came to Fiacal's house, to Tara Mairci. Muirne was welcomed by Fiacal and his wife and bore a son, to whom the name Demne was given.

Demne stayed at Tara Mairci until he was able to raid all who were his enemies. He then declared war or offered single combat against Tadhg, unless the full eric (fine) for his father be given to him. Tadhg said that he would give him judgment therein, which was that Almu, as it was, should be ceded to him for ever, and Tadhg was to leave it. So it was done. Tadhg abandoned Almu to Demne, afterwards called Finn, and came to Tuath Dathi, to his own hereditary land; and he abode in Cnoc Rein, which is called Tadhg's Tulach to this day. So that hence was said this:

*Finn demands from Tadhg of the towers,
For killing Cumall the great,
Battle, without respite, without delay,
Or that he should obtain single combat.
Because Tadhg was not able to sustain battle
Against the high prince,
He abandoned to him-it was for him enough-
Almu altogether, as it stood.*

Finn went afterwards to Almu, and abode in it. And it is it that was his principal residence whilst he lived. Finn and Goll concluded peace after that; and the eric of his father was given by the Clan Morna to Finn. And they lived peacefully, until a quarrel occurred between them in Tara Luachra, regarding the Slanga-pig, when Banb Simm son of Maelenaig was slain; of which was said:

*Afterwards they made peace-
Finn and Goll of mighty deeds-
Until Banb Sinna was slain
Regarding the pig, in Tara Luaehra.*

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