

II. A Story from which it is inferred that Mongán was Find mac Cumail, and the cause of the death of Fothad Airgdech.

1

Mongán was in Rathmore of Moylinny in his kingship. To him went Forgoll the poet. Through him many a married [5] couple was complaining to Mongán. 2 Every night the poet would recite a story to Mongán. So great was his lore that they were thus from Halloween to May-day. He had gifts and food from Mongán.

One day Mongán asked his poet what was the death of [10] Fothad Airgdech. Forgoll said he was slain at Duffry in Leinster. 3' Mongán said it was false. The poet said he would satirise him with his lampoons, and he would satirise his father and his mother and his grandfather, and he would sing (spells) upon their waters, so that fish should not be caught in their [15] river-mouths. He would sing upon their woods, so that they should not give fruit, upon their plains, so that they should be barren for ever of any produce. Mongán promised him his will of precious things as far as (the value of) seven handmaids, or twice seven handmaids, or three times seven. At last he offers [20] him one-third, or one-half of his land, or his whole land; at last (anything) save only his own liberty with (that of) his wife Breóthigernd, unless he were redeemed before the end of three days. The poet refused all except as regards the woman. For the sake of his honour Mongán consented. Thereat the [25]

woman was sorrowful. The tear was not taken from her cheek. Mongán told her not to be sorrowful, help would certainly come to them.

So it came to the third day. The poet began to enforce his [5] bond. Mongán told him to wait till evening. He and his wife were in their bower. The woman weeps as her surrender drew near and she saw no help. Mongán said: 'Be not sorrowful, woman. He who is even now coming to our help, I hear his feet in the Labrinne.' 1

[10] They wait a while. Again the woman wept. 'Weep not, woman ' He who is now coming to our help, I hear his feet in the Máin.' 2

Thus they were waiting between every two watches of the day. She would weep, he would still say: 'Weep not, woman, [15] He who is now coming to our help, I hear his feet in the Laune, in Lough Leane, 3 in the Morning-star River between the Úi Fidgente and the Arada, 4 in the Suir on Moy-Fevin 5 in

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[paragraph continues] Munster, in the Echair, 1 in the Barrow, in the Liffey, 2 in the Boyne, in the Dee, 3 in the Tuarthesc, 4 in Carlingford Lough, in the Nid, 5 in the Newry river, in the Larne Water in front of Rathmore.'

When night came to them, Mongán was, on his couch in his palace, and his wife at his right hand, and she sorrowful. The [5] poet was summoning them by their sureties and their bonds. While they were there, a man is announced approaching the rath from the south. His cloak was in a fold around him, and in his hand a headless spear-shaft that was not very small. By that shaft he leapt across the three ramparts, so that he was in [10] the middle of the garth, thence into the middle of the palace, thence between Mongán and the wall at his pillow. The poet was in the back of the house behind the king. The question is argued in the house before the warrior that had come. 'What is the matter here?' said he. 'I and the poet yonder,' said [15] Mongán, 'have made a wager about the death of Fothad Airgdech. He said it was at Duffry in Leinster. I said that was false.' The warrior said the poet was wrong. 'It will be . . .,' said Forgoll, '. . .' 6 'That were not good,' said the warrior. 'It shall be proved. 'We were with thee, with Find,' said the [20] warrior. 'Hush!' said Mongán, 'that is not fair.' 'We were with Find, then,' said he. 'We came from Scotland. We met with Fothad Airgdech here yonder on the Larne river. There we fought a battle. I made a cast at him, so that it passed

through him and went into the earth beyond him and left its iron head in the earth. This here is the shaft that was in that spear. The bare stone from which I made that cast will be found, and the iron head will be found in the earth, and the [5] tomb of Fothad Airgdech will be found a little to the east of it. A stone chest is about him there in the earth. There, upon the chest, are his two bracelets of silver, and his two arm-rings, and his neck-torque of silver. And by his tomb there is a stone pillar. And on the end of the pillar that is in the earth [10] there is Ogam. This is what it says: "This is Eochaid Airgdech. Cáilte slew me in an encounter against Find."

They went with the warrior. Everything was found thus. It was Cáilte, Find's foster-son, that had come to them. Mongán, however, was Find, though he would not let it be told.

Footnotes

49:1 Fothad Airgdech, also called Oendé, was one of the three Fothads, brothers, who reigned together over Ireland for one year (A.D. 284): see LL. 24 a, 29, 190 b, 10.

49:2 Forgoll seems to have been an overbearing and exacting *fili* of the type of Athirne and Dallán Forgaill.

49:3 In the barony of Scarawalsh, co. Wexford. Forgoll's statement perhaps rests on a confusion of this Leinster Dubthar with another Dubthar in Dál Aráide, mentioned in *Silva Gadelica*, i. p. 118, 30.

50:1 According to Hennessy (Jubainville, *Le Cycle Mythologique*, p. 339) the river Caragh, which flows into Dingle Bay, co. Kerry. O'Donovan, who gives a wrong nominative, Labhrann instead of Labrainne (F.M., A.M., 3751), supposed it to be the Cashen in the north of co. Kerry; but that would not suit. Cf. *tomaidm Fleisce 7 Mane 7 Labrainne*, LL. 17 b, 45.

50:2 This must be the name of some small stream between the Caragh and the Laune. It cannot be the Maine, the Irish name of which is Maing, gen. Mainge. If Máin stands for an older Móin, we have

here the Irish equivalent of the Gaulish Moinos, the German Main.

50:3 The great Lake of Killarney.

50:4 'The Ui-Fidhgeinte and the Aradha were seated in the present county of Limerick, and their territories were divided from each other by the river Maigge and the stream now called the Morning-star River.' O'Don. F. M., A.D. 666, note. Samáir has been corrupted into Camáir, now Camhaoir, which means 'daybreak.' Hence the English name.

50:5 A plain in the present barony of Iffa and Offa East, south of Slievenaman, co. Tipperary.

51:1 Not identified. It should be in co. Kilkenny. One would expect the Nore to have been mentioned, which Cálite had to cross. Perhaps Echuir is an old name for the Nore.

51:2 Ruirthech, for *ro-rethech*, 'the strong running,' an old name for the Liffey. Badly spelt Ruirech by O'Reilly.

51:3 Níth, now the Dee in the bar. of Ardee, co. Louth. Cf. the river-name Nith in Dumfries.

51:4 Not identified. Perhaps the Glyde or Fane in co. Louth.

51:5 Not identified. Some river or stream in co. Down. Cf. Nid-nari, the name of a Pictish tribe in Galloway (Bede, *Vit. Cuthb.* c. xi.), and the Greek river-name Neda.

51:6 I cannot translate this passage.

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