

Here begins the Feast of Bricriu, and the Champion's Portion
of Emain Macha and the Ulsterwomen's War of Words, and the
Resourse of the Ulstermen to Cruachain Ai, and the Champion's
Bargain in Emain Macha.

There follows 32 un-numbered pages - I have
added figures for convenience.

S 1 11. ff — S 47 11. 8623 ff.

Then follow numbered pages 1-36

~~S 48~~ 11. 8657 ff — 11. 8856 ff.

then S 68 11. 8883 ff — S 102

There are no notes after p. 17!

other than

p. 24 a chess man is swept along a water course?

p. 26 his swooping feet

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p. 33 as he had sworn to do

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Expect notes pages 1-36 to be delayed.
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\$1 11. 1 ff.

Bricriu Nemthenga held a great feast for Conchobor mac Nessa and all the Ulstermen. He was a whole year preparing for the feast. He built a fine hall to accommodate it. He had it constructed in Dún Rudraige in the likeness of the Branched Red at Emain Macha, but it surpassed all the houses of that time by its materials and workmanship, its beauty and design,* its pillars and frontings, its splendour and costliness, its grace and distinction, its partitions and lintel-work.

*Or 'its coffers and presses'; see note.

\$2 11. 8050 ff.

The house was made in this way: It was on the plan of Tech Midchuarta, with nine compartments from fire to wall and each fronting thirty foot high with ornamental gilding. In the fore part of that house a royal couch was erected for Conchobor and raised above the couches of the whole house. It was set with carbuncles and other precious stones and shone with gold and silver and gems and with the colours of every land so that within it night and day were of equal brightness. Around it were set the twelve couches of the twelve heroes of Ulster. The quality of the workmanship was on a par with the materials that were brought to the construction of the hall. It took a waggon-team to carry each beam and seven of the mighty men of Ulster to fix each ^{joist/plank} rod, and thirty of the chief-craftsmen of Ireland were engaged in building and equipping it.

§3 ll. 8062 ff.

Bricriu also had a balcony made for himself opposite the couches of Conchobor and the heroes. Its ^{signatures?} style and fittings were of great splendour. It had windows of glass set on each side, and one of these windows was placed above his own couch so that he could view the whole house from it; for he knew that the Ulstermen would not permit him to be within the house.

§4 ll. 8069 ff.

When Bricriu had completed building his great hall and his balcony and had equipped them both with quilts and coverings, beds and pillows, and supplied them with meat and drink, so that nothing at all was lacking either of furnishings or provisions for the feast, he went forthwith to Emain to see Conchobor and the men of Ulster.

§5 ll. 8074 ff.

It was on that day that the Ulstermen held an assembly in Emain Macha. He was made welcome and sat by Conchobor's side. He addressed Conchobor and the other Ulstermen: 'Come with me,' he said, 'to partake of a feast that I am giving.' 'I'm agreeable,' said Conchobor, 'if the Ulstermen are.' Fergus mac Róich and the other Ulster nobles then answered saying: 'No, we will not go, for if we go to take part in his feast our dead will outnumber our living after we have been stirred to strife by Bricriu.'

§6 11. 8081 ff.

'It will be still worse for you,' said he, 'what I shall do if you do not come.' 'What will you do ^{about it} then,' asked Conchobor, 'if the Ulstermen do not go with you?' 'I shall ^{will} stir up strife,' said Bricriu, 'between the kings, leaders, warriors and lesser nobles, till they slay one another if they do not come with me to share my feast.' 'We shall not do so to please you,' said Conchobor. 'I shall ^{will} stir up dissension between father and son so that they will kill each other. And if I do not succeed in that, I shall bring about enmity between mother and daughter. And if that does not succeed, I shall ^{will} raise contention between the two breasts of every single Ulsterwoman so that they will beat one against the other until they rot and putrify.' 'We had better go,' said Fergus, 'or it will happen as he says.' 'If you are agreeable then,' said Sencha mac Ailella, 'let a small number of you Ulster nobles get together to discuss the matter.' 'Harm will come of it unless we take counsel about it,' said Conchobor.

§7 11. 8095 ff.

Then the nobles of Ulster all gathered in council. Sencha's advice to them in their deliberations was as follows: 'Well then, since you have no choice but to go with Bricriu, take sureties/hostages ^{concerning it?} from him and set eight swordsmen about him to ensure that he withdraws from the house as soon as he has presented the feast to them. Furbaide Fer Bend, son of Conchobor, brought the reply to Bricriu and told him all that had been decided. 'I am satisfied with this arrangement,' said Bricriu. The Ulstermen then set out from Emain Macha, each host with its king, each troop with its sub-king, and each battalion with its chief. Splendid and beautiful this file has been downloaded from the Irish Texts Society website.

\$8 11. 8106 ff.

Bricriu then began to consider how he would set about sowing dissension among the Ulstermen, now that sureties (hostages) had been taken for his good conduct. When he had finally come to a decision, he went to the company of Lóegaire Buadach son of Connad son of Iliach. 'Well now, Lóegaire Buadach,' said he, 'mighty striker of Brega, ruthless smiter of Mide, flaming red fighter, pride of the heroes of Ulster, why should the champion's portion not be yours always?' 'It shall be mine if I wish it so,' said Lóegaire. 'You will have the sovereignty of the heroes of Ireland if you will but follow my advice.' 'I will indeed,' said Lóegaire.

of Emain

check

fateful

from me

\$9 11. 8115 ff.

'If you win the champion's portion of my house, you will have that of Emain for ever. The champion's portion of my house is worth contesting,' he said, 'for it is not the champion's portion of a fool's house. There is a cauldron filled with pure wine in which three of the warriors of Ulster would fit. There is a seven year old boar: since it was a little pig (piglet) nothing has entered its mouth but gruel and fresh milk in the spring and cream and sweet milk in summer, the kernels of nuts and choice wheat in autumn and beef and broth in winter. There is a ~~stall~~ ^{specially fed (?)} cow which has completed its seven years: since it was a little calf neither heather nor furze has entered its mouth, but only milk and soft young grass [?check on this] and corn. There are five score wheaten cakes baked with honey: twenty-five bushels were used in making those five score cakes, four cakes to each bushel. That then is the

meal skilly

fresh milk

But check LV reading Note that Voss has neg. cap

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champion's portion of my house,' said Bricriu. 'And since you are the best hero among the Ulstermen, it is to you it should be given and it is you I wish to have it. At the end of the day, when the feast has been set up, let your charioteer arise and he will be given the champion's portion.' 'Men will die there if that is not done,' said Lóegaire. Bricriu laughed at that and was well content.

§10 11.8133 ff.

When he was finished inciting Lóegaire Buadach, he took himself off to the company of Conall Cernach. 'Well now, Conall Cernach,' said Bricriu, 'you are the hero of victories and of combats. Great are your triumphs and far surpassing those of the rest of the Ulster warriors. When the Ulstermen enter upon alien territories, you will be found a three days and three nights' journey in front of them at fords and crossings; and when they return, you are again behind them giving them cover so that no enemy can get by you or through you or over you. Why should the champion's portion not be yours always?' And if he duped Lóegaire, then he doubly duped Conall Cernach.

§11 11.8143 ff.

When he had incited Conall Cernach to his satisfaction, he proceeded to the company of Cú Chulaind. 'Well now, Cú Chulainn,' said he, 'battle-victor of Brega, bright-mantled hero of life, favourite of Emain, darling of women and maidens, Cú Chulaind is no misnomer for

you at this time, for you are the protagonist of the Ulstermen, who covers their mighty forays and battles and who upholds the right of every Ulsterman. What all the Ulstermen together fail to achieve, you achieve on your own, and all the men of Ireland acknowledge your courage and valour and exploits as far surpassing theirs. Why should you let the champion's portion go to anyone else of the men of Ireland, since there is no one in Ireland capable of contesting it against you.' 'I swear by all that my people swears,' said Cú Chulaind, 'he will be a man without a head who comes to contest it against me.' With that Bricriu left them and joined his own retinue as if he had not caused any provocation whatsoever.

\$12 11.8157 ff.

They then came to the house and each of them occupied his own couch, king, prince, chief, sub-chief, and cadet. Half of the house was set apart for Conchobor and the heroes of Ulster, the other half for the womenfolk of Ulster in the company of Mugain daughter of Eochaid Feidlech, Conchobor's wife. These are the men who were with Conchobor in the fore-part of the house:

Fergus mac Róich; Celtchar mac Uthechair; Eogan mac Durthacht; and the two sons of the king, namely Fiachra and Fíachaig; Fergna mac Findchoíme; Fergus mac Leiti; Cúscraid Mend Macha mac Conchobair; Sencha mac Ailella; the three sons of Fiacha, namely Rus and Dáre and Imchad; Muinremur mac Geirrgind; Errge Echbél; Amorgene mac Ecit;

Mend mac Salchadae; Dubthach Dóel Ulad; Feradach Find Fechnach;
Fedelmí Chílair Chétaig; Furbaide Fer Bend; Rochad mac Fathemon;
Loegaire Búadach; Conall Cernach; Cú Chulaind; Connad mac Mornaí;
Erc mac Fedelmthe; Illand mac Fergusa; Fintan mac Neill;
Cethernd mac Fintain; Fachtna mac Senchada; Conla Sáeb; Ailill Miltenga;
Bricriu himself, and the pick of the rest of the warriors of Ulster and
of its cadets and poets.

§13 11.8181 ff.

While the feast was being presented (?) to them, their musicians and minstrels provided entertainment for them, and as soon as Bricriu had presented the feast together with its accessories (trimmings) he was ordered to leave the hall on the security of his guarantors. These latter arose then with drawn swords in their hands to expel him from the hall. Bricriu then went out to the balcony with his retinue. When he was passing through the door of the royal hall he called out, 'that champion's portion, as it has been prepared, is not the champion's portion of a fool's house. Whoever you think is the best warrior of Ulster, give it to him.' With that he left them.

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§14 11.8191 ff.

The dispensers arose then to divide the food, and with that Lóegaire Buadach's charioteer, Sedlang mac Ríangabra, stood up and said to the dispensers, 'bring the champion's portion there to Lóegaire Buadach for he is more entitled to it than the rest of the Ulster warriors.' Next Id mac Ríangabra, Conall Cernach's charioteer, got up and spoke in similar terms, and finally Lóeg mac Ríangabra arose and addressed the dispensers in like fashion, 'Give it to Cú Chulainn. ^{then} It is no shame for all the Ulstermen to give it to him, since he is the best fighter among them.' 'It will not happen that way,' said Conall Cernach and Lóegaire Buadach.

§15 11.8200 ff.

The three of them rose up on the floor of the house, ^{take up} put on their shields, and took down their swords. They assailed one another till one half of the hall was as if aglow with fire from [the clashing] of the swords and the edges of the spears, and the other half like a multitude of shining white birds from the chalk of the shields. The house was seized with a great tumult then and the heroes trembled, and Conchobor himself and Fergus mac Róig grew angry seeing the inequity and injustice of two men tackling one, that is Conall Cernach and Lóegaire Buadach against Cú Chulaind. None of the Ulstermen dared mediate between them until Sencha said to Conchobor, 'Separate the men,' for Conchobor was the terrestrial deity the Ulstermen had at that time.

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§16 11.8211 ff.

Conchobor and Fergus came between them and immediately they let their hands drop by their sides. 'Do as I propose,' said Fergus. 'We will,' they said. 'What I propose then is,' said Sencha, 'that the champion's portion be distributed among all the host tonight and that we subsequently submit the matter to the decision of Ailill mac Mágach, for it will be impossible for the Ulstermen to settle this dispute unless it be adjudged in Cruachain. Food and drink was then served to them, the distribution went round the fire among them (?), and they got drunk and were merry.

§17 11.8218 ff.

By this time Bricriu and his lady were in his balcony. From his couch he could see the lay-out of the house and all that was going on within it. He pondered in his mind how he might set about inciting the women as he had done with the men. When he had decided how he would go about it, it so happened that at that precise time Fedelm Noíchríde came out of the hall with fifty other women in her company, having consumed an immoderate amount of liquor. Bricriu saw her as she passed him. 'Glad am I to see you tonight, wife of Lóegaire Buadach, for Fedelm "of the nine hearts" is no misnomer for you on account of your excellence of form and wisdom and lineage. Conchobor, king of Ulster, is your father and Lóegaire Buadach is your husband, and indeed I should not consider it too great an honour for you that none of the women of Ulster should precede you into the Hall of Mead-circuit, but that instead they should all follow in your train. If you go first tonight into the hall, you will enjoy forever sovereignty over all the women of Ulster. This file has been downloaded from the Irish Texts Society website <http://www.irishtextsociety.org/> the house.

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§18 11. 8234 ff.

Then Lendabair came out, who was the daughter of Eógan mac Derthacht and wife of Conall Cernach. Bricriu spoke to her, saying: 'I am glad to see you, Lendabair, for the name Lendabair is no misnomer for you: you are the darling and the loved one of the men of the whole world for your fame and distinction. By as much as your husband surpasses the warriors of the world in valour and handsomeness, so also do you surpass the women of Ulster.' If he had duped Fedelm greatly, then he duped Lendabair twice as much.

§19 11. 8242 ff.

Émer came out then with fifty other women. 'Hail to you,' said Bricriu, 'Émer daughter of Forgoll Manach, and wife of the best man in Ireland. Émer of the Beautiful Hair is no misnomer for you, you for whom the kings and princes of Ireland are in contention. As the sun surpasses the stars of heaven, so do you outshine the women of the whole world in form and shape and lineage, in youth and beauty and dignity, in fame and wisdom and eloquence.' If he had duped the other women, he duped Émer three times as much.

§20 11. 8250 ff.

The three companies of women then came to the same place, three ridges length from the hall, and none of them was aware that the others had been incited by Bricriu. Immediately they turned back ^{homewards} towards the hall.

Even and graceful and stately was their progress over the first ridge; barely did they put one foot before the other. Over the second ridge, however, their gait became more lively and more rapid, and when they came

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to the ridge nearest the house each of them was striving might and main to pass out the other and they raised their tunics up to their buttocks in their effort to get into the house first, for Bricriu had told each of them unknown to the others that she who would enter first would be queen of the whole province. The noise they made struggling to get there ahead of one another was like the noise of fifty chariots approaching. The whole house shook and the warriors sprang to their arms and sought to kill one another.

§21 11. 8264 ff.

'Stop,' said Sencha, 'they are not enemies who have come; it is Bricriu who has made trouble among the women who went outside. I swear by all that my people swear,' he said, 'if the house is not closed against them, our dead will outnumber our living.' With that the doorkeepers closed the door. Émer, daughter of Forgall Manach and wife of Cú Chulaind, came up at full tilt ahead of the other women and put her back to the door, calling on the doorkeeper, before the others arrived. Their husbands inside the house jumped up, each of them making to open the door for his own wife so that she would be the first into the house. 'It's going to be a rough night,' said Conchobor. He struck the silver spike that was in his hand against the bronze pillar of his imdae and the hosts sat down again. 'Stop,' he said, 'the battle that will be fought here will be fought not with arms but with words.' Each woman came in under the protection of her husband and it was then they waged the Ulsterwomen's War of Words.

8283 -

Rolf Borngarten suggests a translation somewhat as follows:

'the kind/quality/shape was based on beauty, so that it is a
pleasing form that is won by me. I am famed for fair form,
[a fame] which has spread among the Fés: of importance.
I have made a sexual union of purity - ...

The Women's War of Words.

Fedelm Noicride, wife of Loegaire Buadach, spoke:

'A noble ~~and honoured~~ womb bore me,
An equally noble lord begot me.
~~my family are of equally high degree.~~

I was born from the body of king and queen
and shaped in the image of beauty,
so that I am esteemed to be pleasing of form;

the beauty of my form has ^{makes} made me famous.

It will ring with its virtues
It is known far and wide (?) among the distinctions of the Irish

that I was born of a noble/honourable birth.

Lóegaire is a red-handed 'Mouse-brown'

who will perform for the land of Ulster

many powerful and triumphant exploits.

He defends the borderlands
He defends the borderlands of neighbouring enemies

without the support of the Ulstermen.

He covers and protects them and wages war for them,

Loegaire is more than all other
~~Loegaire~~ ^{most} illustrious ^{of} heroes
by the number of his victories, which [those of]
the number of his victories, will be beyond every other warrior.

Why should it not be me, Feidelm Findchoem,

splendid of form and ^{wealthy} responsible (?)

who should enter before every other woman

into the joyful Hall of Mead-circuit?'

§23 11. 8300 ff.

Then Lendabair, daughter of Eógan mac Derthacht and wife of Conall Cernach son of Amorgin, spoke out:

turns
for
'It is I who by virtue of my beauty, good sense and bearing
inclines
shall direct (?) my step, *graceful* shapely and lissome,
into the House of Mead-circuit of the kings,
before the women of Ulster.

For it is my dear husband,

Conall triumphant and mighty,

who directs his noble and stately step

to the forefront of deadly (?) conflicts before all others.

Splendidly does he return to me with spoils (triumphs) and heads
✓ brings from the hard-fought battles of the Ulstermen
bringing with him strong shields from the Ulstermen's battles.

raises up position before
He holds every ford so that it is by his consent that *permits passage* he lets pass.

He defends their fords and fights their battles.

is from?
Any slaughtering hero who dares to address Amorgin's illustrious son

makes certain of his own grave and grave-stone;

for it is Conall who for the multitude of his feats

marches ahead of every other warrior.

Why should it not be me, Lendabair,

the son of
an object of admiration for all,

who should enter before every other woman

into the royal hall.'

He who dares to challenge
A's illustrious son is
a battle-hero standing
(who stands) before his
own grave & grave-stone ?

§24 11. 8322 ff.

Then spoke Émer, daughter of Forgoll Manach and wife of Cú Chulainn:

(11) ^{I have established myself} ~~I am accepted~~ as a standard (?) for carriage, beauty, sense, bearing, ^{part} and for sheer vivacity; every fair form is exalted/judged by ^{until}

comparison with me,

^{are attracted by} and men praise (?) my noble eye and countenance.

Never has there been ^{found} beauty or grace or bearing,

never has there been wisdom or honour or chastity,

never has there been loving passion in a noble couch

nor quickness of mind to equal mine.

For it is for me that all the Ulstermen sigh. ^{el ?}

^{people's desire} I am their darling;

clearly if I were to play the wanton

not a woman of them would see much of her husband

between now and tomorrow.

Cú Chulainn is my husband

and he is no ^{weakling} hound of weakness.

A sprinkle of blood upon his spear-shaft, ^{in battle}

^{foam} a foam of blood upon his sword.

Splendidly is his body reddened with blood, ^{his}

wounds upon his beautiful skin,

^{gashes} ~~sears~~ upon his side.

Splendidly does his eye sink (or 'does he bring his eye') back deep

into his head,

?? Splendidly does his jawbone spring (?) forward.

Crimson-red his eyes,

full-red his chariot bearings (wheels),

deep red his chariot rug.

He fights above the ears of horses and the breaths of warriors, ^{ears}

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✓ spear-
he performs the hero's salmon-leap over shield-points (?),

he accomplishes the brown feat, the blind feat and the bird-feat,

he ^{breaks} the water,

he accomplishes the nine man feat,

he smashes bloody combats of battle,

he lays low the mighty troops of the world,

he overthrows the Horror of Adarcna,

he it is who lay in wasting sickness,

he is heroic in his blood-stained ^{dark} collapse (?).

Like women in child-birth

sit all the men of Ulster

except for my husband, Cú Chulaind.

* ?? They are like gore beside that clear brightness, ^{one}

they are filthy and scummy (?),

scummy (?) and unkempt,

rough and rubbishy,

swarthy and coarse,

noisy (?) and vociferous (?) (/ base-born?), ^{of base descent?}

long-lived and bovine.

It is in the guise of cows and oxen and horses

that all the women of Ulster sit there, except for me.

NB * Could it be that C 8360 is not pejorative, but refers to Cú Chulaind: 'He is likened to bright red blood' — (i.e.) do we do with one. Means really sain Caithir

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\$25 11. 8369 ff.

Then, as their warrior's moon arose on hearing the women's talk, the men who were in the house, that is Lóegaire and Conall, broke one of the house-posts of the royal hall facing them, and that was the way their wives came into the house to them. Cú Chulainn on the other hand raised up the house opposite his couch so that the stars of heaven were visible from under the wall, and that was the way his wife entered as well as fifty women accompanying the other two and fifty with his own wife, this in order that she should not stand equal to the other women since he was not equal to the rest. After that Cú Chulainn let the house drop so that seven man-lengths of the wall went into the ground and it shook the whole enclosure, toppling Bricriu's balcony to the ground and letting Bricriu himself and his queen fall into the dung in the middle of the court among the hounds. ^{'He's done for!'} 'Save us!', said Bricriu getting up ^{quickly} sharply, 'enemies have attacked the fort.' He made a circuit of the royal hall and saw how his ^{house} hall had been tilted so that it lay all askew. He beat his hands and then went into the house and there was not one of the Ulster~~men~~ who could have recognized him so filthy was he; it was by his speech they recognized him.

\$26 11. 8385 ff.

Then from the middle of the house Bricriu spoke to them: 'It is my misfortune, men of Ulster, that I ever prepared a feast for you.'

17

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My house means more to me than all my other possessions. It is geis for you, therefore, to drink or to eat or to sleep until you leave my house as you found ^{it} on your arrival.' All the Ulster heroes inside arose and gave the house a shove, but they did not raise it even so much that the wind could pass between it and the ground. That posed a quandary for the Ulstermen. 'The only suggestion I can offer you,' said Sencha, 'is that you should beg of him who left it crooked to set it straight again.'

§27 ll. 8392 ff.

The Ulstermen then told Cú Chulainn to straighten the house, and Bricriu said: 'Oh king of the heroes of Ireland, if you do not set it straight and even, there is no one else in the world who will do so.' The Ulstermen all begged him to resolve the difficulty. Cú Chulainn got up then so that those attending the feast should not be deprived of their food and drink. He gave a push to try to lift the house, but failed. With that he became distorted so that there was a drop of blood at the root of every single hair and he drew his hair into his head till all that could be seen was a close-cropped, black-stubbed crown, and, spinning like a mill-stone (?), he stretched himself till there was room for a warrior's foot between every two of his ribs.

§28 11. 8401 ff.

Then his people of (magic) power and his guardian spirits^(?) came to him, and he raised the house and restored it to its former level. After that they were able to enjoy the feast in peace, the kings and lords on one side with far-famed Conchobor, glorious king of the Ulaid, and the women on the other: Mugain Aitenc[h]aithrech daughter of Eochaid Feidlech and wife of Conchobor mac Nesa; Fedelm Noíc[h]rothach daughter of Conchobor, so called because she could assume nine shapes, each of them more beautiful than the other; Fedelm Foltchain, another daughter of Conchobor's, and wife of Lóegaire Buadach; Find Bec, daughter of Eochaid and wife of Cethern son of Fintan; Bríg Brethach wife of Celtchar mac Uithichar; Findige, daughter of Eochaid and wife of Eogan mac Durthacht; Findchaem, daughter of Cathbad and wife of Amargin Iargiunach; Derborcaill wife of Lugaid Ríab nDerg son of the Three Finnemna; Émer Foltchain, daughter of Forcall Manach and wife of Cú Chulainn mac Sualdaim; Lendabair, daughter of Eogan mac Durthacht and wife of Conall Cernach; Niab, daughter of Celtchar mac Uithechair and wife of Cormac Conn Longas son of Conchobor. It would be impossible to ^{recount and} recount all the noble women who were there besides.

§29 11. 8418 ff.

torrunt
The house erupted into a babble of words with the women again vaunting
their husbands and themselves until Conall and Lóegaire and Cú Chulainn
were about to come to blows. *again* Sencha mac Ailella arose and shook the
Wand of Sencha and the Ulstermen gave heed to him, and he spoke these
words to restrain the women:

I call you to order, wives of the Ulster heroes,
beautiful and splendid and far-famed,
let there be an end to your contentious words,
let the faces of warriors be not blanched
in fierce combats
through the valour of their deeds,
for it is through the fault of women
that men's shields will be shattered,
heroes in conflicts,
a mighty contention of champions,
a contest of heroic fury;
not meant *in situations* *full of*
for it is part of their instinct and improvidence
that they are wont to instigate what they cannot resolve
and seek what they cannot obtain.
I call you to order, wives of heroes,
beautiful and splendid.

§30 11. 8439 ff.

I have upheld him with my beauty and good sense
Émer then spoke in answer to him: 'I am in the right, Sencha, for I am
the wife of *a* the handsome hero *he* who took/held precedence for good looks and
good sense ever since his training was completed(?) without defect, so as
to include the feat over *Working Translation* *mastered* *the*
Cuar's *cat's paw* *champion's* feat, the cat-feat, the crimson bending of the noble chariot-
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fighter, the feat of the gae bolga, the feat of nimbleness, the breaking
with a sword(?), the warrior's cry, the wheel-feat, the edge-feat, the
mounting upon a spear and the straightening out of his body ~~on each of~~
them.

Of old I think,
None will be found

match
to equal Cú Chulainn

in age, growth and greatness,

in voice, wisdom and lineage,

in speech and personality,

in boldness and spirit and valour,

in fury and prowess and vehemence,

in stalking and sureness of aim,

in swiftness and ~~boldness~~, *impetuousness*

in killing game with the feat of nine men.

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§31 1l. 8455 ff.

'What you say is true, woman,' said Conall Cernach, 'so let that crafty lad come here so that we can get to grips.' 'No,' said Cú Chulainn, 'I am weary and shattered today; until I have had a chance to eat and to sleep I shall not fight.' It was true what he said, for that was the day he had met with the Grey of Macha beside Linn Léith in Sliab Fuait. When it came out of the lake, he had come up upon it unawares and put his arms around its neck. Then the struggle began between them and they circled the land of Ireland in that way, until that night Cú Chulainn came to Emain Macha with his horse finally broken. It was in similar fashion that he got the Black of Sainglenn from Loch Duib Sainglenn.

§32 1l. 8464 ff.

Cú Chulainn then spoke these words: 'Today the Liath and I have traversed the great regions of Ireland: Brega of Meath, Muireasc, Muirtheimne, Macha, Mag Medba, Currech, Cleitech, Cerna, Lia, Line, Locharna, Fea, Femen, Fergna, Urros Domnand, Ros Roigne, ^{like than any feat} ~~Anm~~ Eó, To sleep is now the best feat of all, and to eat is dearer to me than everything else. I swear to the god to whom my people swear, ^{or 'if I had'} / when I have had my fill of sleep and food it will be but fun and diversion for me to join in single combat.'

§33 11. 8471 ff.

Again it came about that they quarrelled over the champion's portion. Conchobor and the other Ulster nobles intervened between them until a decision might be reached concerning them. 'Go,' said Conchobor, 'to the man who will undertake to mediate between you, in other words to Cú Roí mac Dáiri.' And he spoke these words:

Invoke the aid of the man
who adjudicates for all,
the son of resolute Dáire
the noble champion Cú Roí
who practises true testimony *false judgement*
if there be recourse to falsehood; *or 'if he necessary is oppose falsehood'*
a fair and righteous man,
a noble magnanimous man,
a hospitaller in hospitality,
a hero in daring,
a high-king in eminence;
Wh. he will deliver a just judgement upon you.
~~if you invoke the champion's good offices.~~
It is a performance befitting a champion that he will require.

§34 11. 8488 ff.

'I agree to that,' said Cú Chulainn. 'I am willing,' said Lóegaire. 'Let's go then', said Conall Cernach. 'Let your horses be got ready and your chariot harnessed, Conall,' said Cú Chulainn. 'So I will,' said Conall. 'One thing for sure,' said Cú Chulainn, 'everyone *clumsy* is well aware how stupid your horses are, how sluggish your pace and your outfit, how ponderously your chariot moves, with each of its two great chariot wheels raising up a dyke so that every road your chariot travels remains for a year's length a clear track for the young warriors of Ulster.'

§35 11. 8495 ff.

'You hear that, Lóegaire?' said Conall. 'Indeed I do,' said Lóegaire,
'but do not insult me, do not shame me:

I am swift over fords and crossings,
outstripping the heroes of Ulster
to face a storm of conflict.

*if my emended
transl. in notes*

is no trouble to me
It does not bother me

to have the position of senior warrior in the forefront (of battle)
to be out in front before a king (before an aged-man?);

I am used to driving my chariot

out ^{ahead} in front of champions and chariot-fighters and lone charioteers
in rough and difficult places,

(but not the form)

in forests and in borderlands,

where no lone chariot-fighter — *(this is not literal translation)*

is wont to travel after me.'

[It is a Loegaire of the Ulster of the time of the Ulster Cycle, who is the speaker, representing a warrior who is to have a fight with the speaker, who is the king, and the speaker is the king.]

§36 11. 8507 ff.

With that Loegaire had his chariot yoked and leaped aboard. He
travelled over Mag Dá Gabul, over Berna na Foraire, over Áth Carpait
Fergus, over Áth na Mórrigna, to Cáerthann Clúana Dá Dam, into Clithar
Fidbaide, into Commur Cetharsliged, past Dún Delca, and across Mag Slicech
westwards into the uplands of Brega. A thick, dark, impenetrable mist
came upon him so that he could not find his way any further. 'We shall
wait here,' said Loegaire to his charioteer, 'until the mist clears.'
He alighted from the chariot and his gilly put the horses into the meadow
that lay nearby.

§37 11.8515 ff.

While he was there, the gilly saw a giant figure coming towards him.

His looks were far from beautiful: he was broad-headed, thick-mouthed ^{lipped}

^{bulge} and boss-eyed; ^{bowed} bristle-faced, ugly and wrinkled; bushy-browed,

hideous and repulsive; he was strong and forceful and violent; he

~~was arrogant and busy/vigorous and snorting~~
~~puffed and snorted with arrogance and vigour;~~ he was big-loined,

strong-limbed and implacable; he was rough and earthy and uncouth.

His head was black and close-cropped. He had a greyish-brown cloak

about him and a tunic that reached to the ^{rounding} swelling of his rump and on ^{so will as that}

his feet filthy tattered old clouts. Over his shoulder he had a

massive cudgel as big as the shaft of a mill-wheel.

§38 11. 8522 ff.

'Whose are these horses, gilly?' he said, gazing fiercely at him.

'Loegaire Buadach's,' the gilly replied. 'Indeed! It's a fine fellow who owns them.' And as he said this he raised his club to the gilly and gave him a blow [that shook him] from ear to ankle.

The gilly cried out and Loegaire came ^{up} to him. 'Why are you mis-
handling this man?' he asked. 'For damaging the meadow,' the giant answered. 'In that case I shall answer for it,' said Loegaire, and they grapple with each other. But Loegaire soon took to flight and made his way to Emain Macha leaving his horses and gilly and arms behind him.

* 'rushed'? — name of fun?

§39 11. 8530 ff.

It was not long then till Conall Cernach followed the same route and came to the spot where the magic mist had appeared to Loegaire. Now the same dark and dismal cloud appeared to Conall Cernach so that he could not distinguish heaven and earth. Conall alighted and his gilly unyoked the horses ~~into~~ the same meadow. It was not long then till he saw the same giant figure coming towards him. The giant asked him whose servant he was. 'I am Conall Cernach's servant,' he said. 'A fine man indeed,' said the giant, lifting his hand and giving him a blow (that shook him) from ear to ankle. The gilly yelled and Conall came to investigate. They came to grips, but the giant had the better of the encounter. Conall fled just as Loegaire had done, leaving his arms and charioteer and horses, and made his way to Emain.

§40 11. 8541 ff.

Presently Cú Chulainn came the same road and arrived at the same place and the same dark mist overtook him as had overtaken the others before him. He alighted and Láeg brought the horses into the meadow. It was not long until he saw the same man coming towards him. The giant asked him whose servant he was. 'I am the servant of Cú Chulainn,' he said. 'A fine man indeed,' said the giant, dealing him a blow with the club. Laeg yelled and Cú Chulainn came to investigate. They came to grips and battered each other. The giant was overcome and had to hand over the horses and the charioteer, and Cú Chulainn brought his companions' horses and ^{charioteers} ~~gear~~ and arms with him and when he arrived at Emain Macha with his spoils he returned them to their owners.'

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§41 11. 8551 ff.

'The champion's portion is yours,' said Bricriu, [and turning to the others:] 'It is clear from your deeds that you are in no way worthy to vie with him.' ^{That will not be the case} 'That's not so,' they answered, 'for we know that one of his friends among the supernatural people came to inflict magic and shame upon us in regard to the champion's portion, and for that reason we will not relinquish our claim to it.' The men of Ulster with Conchobar and Fergus failed to bring about a settlement between them, and the only alternative was to send them to Cú Roí mac Dáiri or to Ailill and Medb in Cruachain Ai.

§42 11. 8559 ff.

The ~~nobles~~ ^{men} of Ulster then gathered together to take counsel about the vying pride and arrogance of those three heroes, and the decision they came to was ^{that their nobles and Conchobar should go with them [i.e. the heroes]} to ~~accompany~~ them to the court of Ailill mac Mágach and Medb at Cruachain Ai to seek a solution to their difficulty about the Champion's Portion and the quarrel of the women. Splendid and beautiful and stately was the march of the Ulstermen to Cruachain. Meanwhile Cú Chulainn remained behind the host entertaining the women of Ulster: he performed tricks with nine balls and nine darts and nine knives so that none of them ^{in the great hall?} knocked against the other.

§43 11. 8567 ff.

Lóeg mac Ríangabra, his charioteer, went to speak to Cú Chulainn where he was performing his feats and said to him: 'You miserable wretch, your valour and prowess are at an end and you have lost the Champion's Portion; the Ulstermen have long ~~since gone to~~ Crúachain.' 'I didn't even notice that, Lóeg. Get the chariot yoked for me then,' he said. Loeg then yoked the chariot and they set off on the journey. By that time the rest of the Ulstermen had reached Mag mBreg. But so speedily did Cú Chulainn travel from Dún Rudraige with the charioteer egging him on and so powerfully did the Grey of Macha and the Black of Sainglenn propel the chariot across the length of the province of Ulster and over Slíab Fúait and Mag mBreg that it was one of the three chariots which first reached Cruachain Ai.

the third chariot ??

§44 11. 8578 ff.

Such was the vigour and turbulence with which the Ulster heroes approached Crúachain with Conchobar and the other kings that the place was seized by a great convulsion so that the weapons fell from the walls to the ground and it swept up all the men within the enclosure till they were like reeds against a current. Medb said, 'since I took possession of Crúachain never until today have I heard thunder without clouds. With that Findabair, Ailill and Medb's daughter, went into the balcony over the entrance to the fort. 'I see a chariot-warrior coming into the green, mother,' she said. 'Describe him,' said Medb, 'his form, apparel and bearing, the appearance of his charioteer, the colour of his horses and the style of his chariot.'

highly

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§45 ll. 8590 ff.

'Yes, I see the two horses that are in the chariot,' said Findabair,
'two fiery dappled greys, alike in colour and shape and excellence,
alike in power and speed and agility, both with ears pricked and head
high, mettlesome and exotic, sinuous and slim-mouthed, with flowing
mane and broad forehead and flecked with colour, slender in the flank
and broad in the back, with mane and tail curled they career violently
forward.

A finely wrought chariot of stout wood,
two black, firm (?) wheels,
two fine interwoven reins,
shafts hard and straight as a sword,
a distinctive, securely fitted frame,
an embossed yoke of solid silver,
two bright-yellow plaited reins;
a man with long fair curling hair in the chariot,
his hair in tresses and of three colours,
brown next to his skin,
blood-red in the middle,
and like a diadem of yellow gold the outer covering, *hair will cover them*
they form three circles around his head,
each of them arranged neatly beside the other;
he wears a beautiful purple cloak
with five circlets on it of silvery gold;
an ornamented shield fit to withstand blows
with a bright rim of white gold;
a five-pronged spear blazes brightly in his fist,
a swarming (?) of wild birds

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above the body of his chariot.

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§46 11. 8605 ff.

'I recognise that man from his description,' said Medb.

Royal champion,
victorious ruler,
vessel of Bodb,
destructive fury,
avenging flame,
countenance of a hero,
bearing of a champion,
heart of a dragon,
sharp-wounding valorous hero (?) who will cut us to pieces,
Loegaire, the fearsome Luchdonn with the red hand,
as the swinging stroke with sharp edge
shaves the leek to the ground.

'I swear what my people swears,' said Medb, 'if it be in the wrath and
fury of battle that Lóegaire Buadach comes to us that, just as leeks are
cut to the ground by the sharp-edged knife, equally swift will be the
slaughter he will wreak on all of us gathered here in Crúachain, unless
measures are taken to guard against his anger and vigour and fury and
satisfaction given to him to appease his hostility.'

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'I see a second chariot coming into the ^{green}, mother,' said the girl,
'and its approach is no less splendid.' 'Describe it,' said Medb.
'One of the two horses I see in the chariot,' she said, 'is brown with
a white head, robust and speedy, prancing and mettlesome, broad of hoof
and of chest; it strikes powerful and triumphant strokes over fords and
estuaries, over homesteads and open land (?), over plains and valleys,
driving in pursuit of victory - you can follow (?) its course from the
flight of the hovering birds; my eloquent speech cannot describe its
powerful (?), sweeping progress. The other horse is chestnut, with
broad forehead and heavy curling mane, broad in the back and slender in
the flank, wild, solid, powerful and aggressive. He makes for the land
between the open plains with its thickets and tangled places, and he
experiences no difficulty in this tree-covered land, as if driving over
open roads.*

A finely wrought chariot of stout wood,
two bright wheels of bronze,
a white pole covered with silver,
a high creaking frame,
a yoke embossed with heavy interlacing,
two bright-yellow plaited reins,
a man with long fair curling hair in the chariot,
his complexion half-red and half-white,
a white well-washed scarf,
a blue cloak with a brown-purple tinge,
a dark shield with yellow boss,
its rim of serrated bronze,
a fiery red glow
on his brightly blazing fist,

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a swarming (?) of wild birds

above the red-brown frame of his chariot.

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11. 8642-53, rough translation:

The ^{grumbling}roaring of a lion,
the fury of a lynx,
magnificent stone (=hero) of cutting (=slaying?),
[diadem] ^{chez A'neaire}supreme among works of art,
who wages stern battle,
head to head (=head on),
deed for deed,
^{fray}combat for ^{fray}combat.

It is certain that he will slay us;

(it will be no slaughter of speckled fish against crimson gravel)

when/if the son of Findchóem

is roused to fury against us.

[However, the prose gloss on this in ll. 8654-6 misses entirely the litotes in the rather effective image of l. 8651. The writer turns the contrast in the verse into a banal statement; what I am not sure of is whether he does this deliberately or whether he has simply missed the point. With the word mine he interprets l. 8651 as exaggerating the minuteness and comprehensiveness of the slaughter to be wreaked by Cú Chulainn (ignoring in the process the neg. ní before sladar). He misses the point in the phrase for ganim deing, and is thus led to substitute lecc dergáin. The question one asks oneself is: by what kind of scribe/redactor were these glossarial passages written and at what stage of the text's transmission.]

I swear that which my people swear that it will be like the slaughter of speckled fish with iron flails on a bright red rock the thoroughness of the massacre that Cú Chulainn will inflict on us if he be roused to fury.

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This is evidently a figurative phrase meaning more or less "It will not be child's play", whereas author of following prose gloss interprets it literally, so that in order to get good sense he must omit the negative.

11. 8657 ff.

'I see also another chariot coming into the plain.' 'Describe it to us,' said Medb, etc. 'I see,' said the girl, 'one of the two horses that are drawing the chariot. A grey horse, ^{broad haunched,} fierce, swift, mettlesome/prancing, vigorous, leaping like a lynx (?), long-maned, mighty, thundering, resounding, with arching mane and head raised high, broad-chested. The strong, ? and solid sod lights up under its hard/strong, fourfold (?) hoof. It overtakes a flock of splendid, speedy birds. It races along the track. It leaps away from them* (outpaces them?) a breath's length. Sparks of blazing red fire shine from its bridle-bitted maw (from the maw of muzzle-head).

*i.e. the birds

11. 8665 ff.

'The second horse is jet-black, hard-headed, compact (sturdy?), slendered-limbed, broad-hoofed(?), impetuous (vehement?), swift-running, ^Lbraided, broad-backed, strong-haunched, mighty, spirited, vehement, powerful in stride and in onset, long-maned, curly-maned, long-tailed. Swiftly it drives about after conflict (with/as the) driving* of horses through the land (?).

[*Fig. etym.?)

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It gallops over grasslands (valleys?); it scatters destruction(?); it sweeps like a wind across plains and valleys. A smooth-finished chariot with ringed metal banding, two yellow iron wheels; a pole with a band of white bronze (?); a strong curving frame of bronze; a yoke embossed with solid gold; two plaited reins, strong and yellow.'

11. 8673 ff.

'A valiant dark-haired man in the chariot who is the most handsome of the men of Ireland. He wears a beautiful, well-cut, purple cloak. A golden inlaid brooch above his white breast at its opening, striking against it with vigorous movements. Eight red dragon-stones in the middle of his two eyes. His two cheeks blue-white and blood-red (Contribb. G 138: 'veined with blue and blood-red' (?)). He emits sparks of fiery breath. He performs the hero's salmon-leap, the feat of a champion of nine men [or 'the feat of nine champions'] above the chariot-fighter of a single chariot.'

11. 8679 ff

'It is indeed a drop before a shower,' (said she). 'We recognize that man from his description,' said Medb.

Grinding-stone of the sea,
 Fury of a whale,
 A fragment of glowing fire,
 Destructive, formidable (?) wave,
 Boiling fury of a mighty monster,
 Glorious noble breaking of a great battle,
 He smashes, despite the unequal ^{members} members of the enemy,
 A great smashing of wicked (?) treachery.*
 Vehemence of a bear,
 The slaughter of hundreds.*
 He is exalted (?) in poetry (?)
 Dead for deed, [or 'Feat upon feat']
 Head to head, [or 'Head upon head']
 Sing fittingly
 The conquering, courageous hero,
 [Who is] like unto Cú Chulainn -
 he will grind us as the mill [grinds] the good malt.'

[*or <brátha
 'Doom' etc.]

[cf. 8645?]

*[Or possible, translating the two lines together: 'He wreaks slaughter upon hundreds of chariots']

ll. 869~~8~~ ff.

[cf. LV 5558]

'I swear to (by) what my people swear,' said Medb, 'if Cú Chulainn approaches us in anger, as a ten-paddled mill grinds very hard malt, so will that man by himself grind us into mould and gravel, even though the men of the whole province were with us in Cruachain, unless precautions are taken against his fury and aggression.'

'And how do they approach now?' said Medb. 'Arm to arm,' said the girl, 'flank to flank, tunic to tunic, shoulder to shoulder, shield to shield, wheel to wheel, wood to wood, chariot to chariot, thus do they all approach, dear mother.'

Onrush of splendid steeds,
Clamorous smashing of battle-ranks,
Mighty storm of fury, [Mighty tempestuous sea]
Great fame among foreign peoples (??), [Great fame against great fames]
It causes the earth to tremble. [It sets the ground to tremble]
Strongly and mightily do they tread it .

'Fair naked women to meet them,' said Medb. 'Bright, bared breasts and a company of willing, marriageable women. Let the ramparts be left open, and the outer embankments gaping wide. Vats of cold water. Beds made ready. An abundance of clean food. Excellent, palatable and intoxicating drink. Sustenance for a

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company of warriors. Welcome to the troop which approaches.
It may be after all (as here's hoping) that we will not be slain
despite appearances.

11. 8718 ff.

Then Medb came out by the gateway of the enclosure into the fore-area. She had with her thrice fifty girls and three vats of cold water for the three warriors who had come before the host to assuage their ardour. They were given the choice then whether a separate house should be allotted to each of them or a single house for the three of them. 'A separate house for each,' said Cú Chulaind. They were then brought into houses furnished with beds of great splendour and with them those that they preferred of the thrice fifty girls, and Findabair was brought by Cú Chulaind in preference to all the others into the chamber/private apartment in which he was installed. All the Ulstermen arrived after that and Ailill and Medb went with their whole household to welcome them. 'We are pleased,' replied Sencha mac Ailella.

The Ulstermen came into the fort and the royal house is left to them as described: seven circular compartments and seven between fire and wall, with frontings of house and carvings

of red yew. Three bronze slats in the roof (?) of the house, which was of oak with a covering of shingles. It had twelve windows fitted with glass. Ailill and Medb's couch in the middle of the house. It had silver frontings around it and strips of bronze, and by the fronting facing Ailill there was a silver rod that would reach the mid-timbers of the house with which to check constantly members of the household. The arms of the men of Ulster encircled the royal house from one door to the other, and their musicians played for them while the guests were being provided for. Such was the spaciousness of the house that it had room for most of the warriors of the whole province in the entourage of Conchobor. Conchobor and Fergus mac Róich were in Ailill's cubicle as well as nine of the Ulster heroes. They were then given great feasts and they continued there for three days and three nights.

11. 8744 ff.

After that Ailill was invited by Conchobor and the Ulstermen [to inform him] of the purpose of their journey. Sencha recounts the problem about which they had come: namely 'the pride of the three heroes in their contention for the 'champion's portion' and the pride of the women seeking precedence in the feasts, for

they would not submit themselves to judgement anywhere except by you.' With that Ailill fell silent and was uneasy in his mind. 'It should not have been I who was given the problem dispute of the warriors unless it is done so through ill-will.' 'There is no one who will resolve the matter better than you.' 'I should like some time to consider it then,' said Ailill. 'We have need of our warriors, however,' said Sencha, 'for they are worth many cowards.' 'I am sure that three days and nights will be sufficient for that,' said Ailill. 'That is not an excessive delay,' said Sencha. The Ulstermen took their leave then. They were satisfied, and they bestowed their blessing on Ailill and Medb and their curse on Bricrin since it was he who brought about their discension. They set out for home then, leaving Loegaire and Conall and Cú Chulainn to be adjudged by Ailill. And they were each given a meal sufficient for a hundred men every night.

They were given their meal that evening and three cats were released against them from the Cave of Cruachan, that is to say, three magic beasts. Conall and Loegaire take refuge on the rafters of the houses, leaving their food to the animals, and they remain crouched (?) thus until the next day. Cú Chulainn did not flee from his place in face of the beast that came at him, but whenever it stretched its neck towards the food, Cú Chulainn struck it a blow on the head with his sword which glanced off it as if off a rock. It would draw back then. So it was

that Cú Chulainn neither ate nor slept till morning. The cats vanished when morning came. And that is how the three warriors were found the next day. 'Does the contest with the animals not suffice to adjudicate between you?' said Ailill. 'No,' said Conall and Loegaire, 'It is not against animals we fight, but against men.'

11. 8773 ff.

Ailill retired to his apartment and leaned his back against the ['against its' - referring to airecal?] wall. He was uneasy in his mind and deeply perplexed about the problem with which he was saddled, and he did not sleep and did not eat for three days and three nights. And then Medb said to him: 'You are acting like a weakling. If you do not give a judgement, I will.' 'It's difficult for me to adjudicate between them,' said Ailill; 'it is a pity of him to whom it has been referred.' 'There is no difficulty,' said Medb, 'for there is as much disparity between Loegaire and Conall Cernach as between bronze and findruine, and as much between Conall Cernach and Cú Chulainn as between findruine and red/shining gold.'

Then, after Medb had pondered her counsel, Loegaire Buadach was summoned to her (/by her), and she said to him: 'Welcome,

Loegaire Buadach. It is fitting that the champion's portion be given to you. I assign to you from this time forth the sovereignty of the warriors of Ireland, and the champion's portion, and a cup of bronze with a bird of findruine on its base. Take it with you in preference to all others as a token of judgement. And let no one else see it in your possession until you exhibit it in the Branched Red of Conchobor at the end of the day. When the champion's portion is brought in amongst you, it is then you may show your cup in the presence of all the nobles of Ulster. The champion's portion will then be yours and none of the rest of the warriors of Ulster will contest it with you, for what you will carry with you will be a token of bestowal. The cup is given to Loegaire Buadach filled with excellent (/undiluted?) wine, and he drinks its contents at a single draught on the floor of the royal house. 'You have there the feast of a champion,' said Medb. 'May you enjoy it until you be a hundred years at the forefront of (or 'before') all the warriors of Ulster.'

11. 8796 ff.

Loegaire then takes his leave and Conall Cernach is likewise summoned to Medb in the royal house:

'Welcome, Conall Cernach,' said Medb. 'It is fitting that the

champion's portion be given to you, etc, and a cup of findruine with a bird of gold on its base, etc. It is then given to Conall full of wine etc.

Conall Cernach then takes his leave and Cú Chulainn is sent for. 'Come to speak with the king and queen,' said the messenger. Cú Chulainn at the time was playing 'chess' with Lóeg mac Ríangabra, his own charioteer. 'This is to make sport of me,' said he, 'see if you can trick some other fool.' With that he hurls one of the chessmen at the messenger and it pierces the centre of his brain. And the messenger went thence straight to his death-spot, falling between Ailill and Medb. 'For sure,' said Medb, 'Cú Chulainn will slay us if he be roused to fury.' With that she gets up and goes to Cú Chulainn and puts her arms around his neck. 'Try that trick on someone else,' said Cú Chulainn. 'O illustrious son of Ulster, flame of the warriors of Ireland, we do not seek to trick you,' said Medb. 'Though the pick of Ireland's heroes were to come, it is to you we would give the prize in preference to them, for the men of Ireland acknowledge your superiority as regards fame and valour and prowess, distinction and youth and glory.

Cú Chulainn arises then and goes with Medb to the royal house, and Ailill welcomes him heartily. He is given a cup of red gold full of choice wine with a bird wrought from precious stone on its base. He is also given dragon-stones ^(?) as big as his two eyes in preference to everyone else. 'Here is the feast of a champion

for you,' said Medb. 'May you enjoy it until you be a hundred years at the forefront of (or 'before') all the warriors of Ulster. 'Moreover, it is also our judgement,' said Ailill and Medb, 'since you are not to be compared to the Ulster warriors, neither should your wife be compared to theirs. It is but right, we believe, that she should always precede all the women of Ulster when entering the feast-hall.' Cú Chulainn then drinks at a single draught all the contents of the cup and takes his leave of the king and queen and all the household. He goes after his companions.

11. 8829 ff.

'My counsel is,' said Medb to Ailill, 'to keep these three warriors with us again today and submit them to still further tests.'

'Do as you wish yourself,' said Ailill. The men are detained and brought to Cruachain and their horses unyoked. Their choice of food was given to them for their horses. Conall and Loegaire asked that theirs be given the best two-year fodder grass, while Cú Chulainn chose barley grain for his. They slept there that night. The women are apportioned among them. Findabair was brought, together with fifty other girls, into Cú Chulainn's dwelling, Sadb Sulbair, another daughter of Ailill and Medb, was brought with fifty other girls to Conall Cernach, and Conchend daughter

of Cet mac Magach was brought with fifty other girls to Loegaire Buadach. Moreover, Medb herself was wont to visit the house where Cú Chulainn was. They slept there that night.

Next morning they got up early and came into the house where the youths were performing the wheel-feet. Loegaire took hold of the wheel and threw it in the air till it reached half up the wall of the house. The youths laughed and cheered him. They were mocking him, but he thought it was a shout of applause. Conall then took the wheel, up off the ground. He threw it as high as the ridge-pole of the royal house. The youths raised a shout at that, and Conall thought it was a shout of praise and triumph, but in fact it was a shout of mockery. And now Cú Chulainn took the wheel and it was in mid-air he caught it. He threw it aloft till it cast the ridge-pole from the house, and the wheel went a man's length into the ground outside the enclosure. The youths raise a shout of praise and triumph for Cú Chulainn. However, Cú Chulainn thought they were shouting in derision and ridicule.

— change
in view of
vll.
him?

11. 8856 ff.

Cú Chulainn then came to the womenfolk and got their thrice fifty needles from them. These he tossed up one after the other so that each needle lodged in the eye of the other until they

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thus formed a line. He then returned to the women and gave each her own needle back into her hand. The young men praised Cú Chulainn for that, and they [the three heroes] took leave of the king and queen and the rest of the household.

'Go,' said Medb, 'to the house of my foster-father and foster-mother, namely Ercoil and Garmna, and get your entertainment there tonight.' They went on their way after taking part in the horse-racing at the Fair of Cruachain, where Cú Chulainn carried off the victory three times. They came to the house of Garmna and Ercoil and were made welcome. 'For what purpose have you come?' asked Ercoil. 'To be adjudged by you,' they answered. 'Go to the house of Sáméra,' said he, 'and he will give judgement concerning you.' They went there and witnesses were dispatched with them. They were welcomed by Sáméra, whose daughter fell in love with Cú Chulainn. They told Sáméra they had come to him to submit themselves to his judgement and he sent them in turn to the demon women of the glen.

Loegaire went first, but left his arms and clothing with them. Likewise Conall went and left his spears with them, but brought his heroic weapon, in other words his sword, away with him. On the third night Cú Chulainn went. The demons shrieked at him and they fought together. His spear was smashed, his shield broken, and his clothing torn to tatters, and the demons were thrashing and overpowering him. 'Well, Cú Chulainn,' said Láeg, 'you wretched coward, you purblind weakling, gone are your courage and valour when even sprites can hammer you.'

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is referred to the souls of his feet?
 Cú Chulainn became enraged with the phantoms and he cut and
 smashed them until the glen was filled with their blood. He
 took with him the weapons of his companions as spoil and returned
 to the house of Sáméra, where they then were.

\$68 11. 8883 ff.

Sáméra bade him welcome, and said:

'It is not proper to divide the champion's portion
 Of a succulent roasted cow
 And a pig fattened
 Through liquor [brewed from] bushels of grain
 Fit/Sufficient to intoxicate as much as fifty people.

He is a hound/hero with a riven shield,
 He is the carnivorous raven of conquest, ['He is the raven of triumphant
 carnage']
 He is a boar mighty in strength ['He is a boar mighty in sustaining
 [combat] ' Contribb.]
 He saps/subdues the might of dark enemies
 Like fire through tinder (or 'through a souterrain'),
 He is the work-hound (i.e. watch-dog) of noble Emain,
 He is the darling of high-born/arrogant women,
 He is a blast of death in pitched battle.
 While it is not [yet] adjudicated
 It is clear to (reaches) any eyes (?)
 [He levies tribute] from the enemies/Frisians whom he opposes,

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Be it (?) the Longobards that he banishes (?)
 He is a charioteer over gaps (?),
 He is the gory death of pitched battle,
 He is the brilliant distinction (fame) of his kindred,
 Why should there be equality between him
 And Loégaire, of the battle ranks of heroes,
 Or Conall of far-travelled fame?
 Why should the illustrious, soft-haired (?) Emer
 Not proceed into the joyous House of Mead-circuit
 In the train of the mighty champion
 Before the women of the noble Ulaíd?
 Wherefore my considered opinion is
 That it is not right that the champion's portion be divided.

'My decision for you is then that the champion's portion be awarded
 to Cú Chulainn and his wife given precedence over the women of Ulster
 and that his weapons should hang above everyone else's except
 Conchobor's.'

\$69 11. 8919 ff.

After that they went to the house of Ercoil and he bade them
 welcome. They slept there that night. Ercoil challenged them to
 combat against himself and his horse. Loegaire and his horse went
 against them, but Ercoil's gelding killed Loegaire's horse. Loegaire

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himself was mastered by Ercoil and took flight from him. He made his way to Emain through Ess Ruaid and reported that his comrades had been killed by Ercoil. Conall likewise fled from him after his horse had been killed by Ercoil's gelding. The way he came to Emain was across Snám Ráthaind. Conall's gilly, Ráthand, was drowned there in the river, which is why the place has been called Snám Ráthaind ever since.

\$70 11. 8928 ff

The Grey of Macha, however, killed Ercoil's horse, and Cú Chulainn tied Ercoil himself behind his chariot and brought him thus to Emain Macha. Buan, Sáméra's daughter, then set out in pursuit of the three chariots. She recognized the track of Cú Chulainn's chariot ('wheel'), for wherever the track was narrow it would tear out the walls/banks and widen them and would leap over the gaps. So it was that the girl, emulating him, leapt a fearful leap in the wake of his chariot and struck her forehead against a rock, killing herself. Hence the place is named Ūaig Búana. When Conall and Cú Chulainn arrived at Emain, they found the Ulaid there 'keening' them, for they were certain that they had been killed following Loegaire's report about them. They then related their adventures to Conchobor and the rest of ^{the} Ulster nobles. The chariot-fighters and the rest of the heroes were reproaching Loegaire for the false report of slaughter that he had given about his comrades, and it was then Cathbad spoke as follows:

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§71 11. 8941 ff.

'A shameful counsel

Of the slaughter of champions,

By the fortified settlement of black churls;

A conflict of champions with the slandering

Of the heroes of mighty Ulster.

It were better had Loegaire not gone

To contend for the right to the 'champion's portion'

Judging from the mischievousness of his false reporting,

It is Cú Chulainn they confirm as meriting it.

He took the splendid spoils of the formidable Ercoil

The powerful, battle-greedy hero is bound

Behind the tail of his chariot.

They do not cancel his mighty deeds

His great feats of killing give him entitlement.

He is a valiant, impetuous hero;

He is a champion handsome and victorious in battle;

He is a battler triumphant in the fight;

He is the destruction of numerous hosts

He is an accomplished hospitaller

He is a valiant chieftain eager for the fight

And for that reason I consider

That for him to share the champion's portion

Would be a shameful counsel.'

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§72 11. 8964 ff.

The warriors ceased from their talk and discussion and it was time for them to eat and to entertain themselves. It was Sualdaim mac Roig, Cú Chulainn's own father, who entertained the Ulstermen that night. The Áradach, Conchobor's vat, was filled for them. Their food was brought into their presence and the carvers/dispensers came to distribute it, but to begin with they set the champion's portion aside from the division. 'Why do you not give the champion's portion there to some one or other of the heroes, for those three have surely not come back from the king of Cruachain without some special token that the champion's portion is to be conferred on one of them.

§73 11. 8973 ff.

Loegaire arose then and held aloft the bronze cup with the bird of silver on its base. 'The champion's portion belongs to me,' he said, 'and let no one contest it with me.' 'It does not,' said Conall Cernach; 'the tokens we brought back are not alike. Whereas you brought a cup of bronze, I brought a cup of findruine. It is obvious from the disparity between them that the champion's portion belongs to me.' 'It belongs to neither of you,' said Cú Chulainn, getting up to speak: 'You have got no token that will gain the champion's portion for you, but the king and queen to whom you had recourse did not wish to offend you and thereby worsen the

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situation (?). Their esteem (?) for you is no greater than what you have brought from them. The champion's portion will be mine, since I am the one who brought a token distinct from the others.'

§74 11. 8983 ff

He then raised up the cup of red gold with the bird of precious stone on its base and the dragon-stones as big as his two eyes so that Conchobor mac Nessa and all the nobles of Ulster could see it. 'It is I then who is entitled to the champion's portion if justice is done by me.' 'We are all agreed that the champion's portion is your's by the verdict of Ailill and Medb,' said Conchobor and Fergus and the rest of the Ulster nobles. 'I swear to the god to whom my people swears,' said Loegaire and said Conall, 'that the cup you got was not got for nothing. You gave all the treasures and riches in your possession to Ailill and Medb for it so that your boasting would not be turned against you and the champion's portion given to another in preference to you.' 'I swear to the god to whom my people swear,' said Conall, 'the judgement that has been delivered will not stand and the champion's portion will not be yours.' They all sprang at one another with naked swords. Conchobor and Fergus then came between them and immediately they dropped their hands and sheathed their swords. 'Stop,' said Sencha, 'and do as I bid you.' 'We will,' they said. 'Go,' he said, 'to Buide mac Báin at his ford and he will adjudge between you.'

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§75 ll. 8998 ff.

The three warriors then went to the house of Buide mac Báin and told him of their errand and of the quarrel about which they had come. 'Has the matter not been considered and decided for you by Ailill and Medb in Cruachain Aí?' said Buide. 'It has indeed,' said Cú Chulainn, 'but these fellows just will not accept it.' 'Indeed we will not accept it,' the others said, 'for the judgement that has been delivered to us is no judgement.' 'It is not easy for another to adjudge you then, when you did not abide by Medb and Ailill's decision, but I know someone who will venture it, namely Uath mac Imomain at his lough. Take yourselves off to him and he will decide between you.' Uath mac Imomain was possessed of great magic. He used to transform himself into any shape he pleased and perform magic practices and kindred arts. He was the wizard (sirite) from whom Belach Muini in tSiriti ('The Pass of the Wizard's Grove') gets its name. He was called in sirite 'the wizard' because of the frequency with which he changed shapes.

§76 ll. 9010 ff.

They came then to Uath at his lough, bringing with them a witness from Buide. They told Uath why they had come to him. He told them that he would undertake to adjudicate between them provided they would abide by his decision. 'We will,' they promised. He bound them by a solemn pledge. 'I have a covenant to offer you,'

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said he, 'and whoever of you fulfils it, it is he who will win the champion's portion.' 'What kind of a contract is it,' they asked. 'I have an axe,' he said, 'which I shall give into the hands of one of you, and he shall cut off my head today and I will cut off his tomorrow.'

§77 11. 9017 ff.

But Conall and Loegaire said that they would not accept that covenant, for they had no power to stay alive after being beheaded, while he had, and consequently they rejected it - though other books state that they did make a bargain with him, in other words that Loegaire was to cut off his head the first day, but that he reneged on him [when his own turn came], and that Conall did likewise. - Cú Chulainn said that he would make a covenant with him if he were awarded the champion's portion. And Conall and Loegaire said that they let him have it if he accepted Uath's wager. Cú Chulainn pledged them not to contest the champion's portion if he carried^{out} the pact with Uath, and they similarly pledged him to carry it out. Uath placed his head upon the stone* for Cú Chulainn, who gave him a blow with his own axe and cut off his head. He then went off from them into the lough with his axe and with his head on his breast.

*i.e. after putting spells on the edge of the axe [H]

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§78 11. 9030 ff.

On the next day he returned and Cú Chulainn stretched himself out for him on the stone. He drew the axe across his neck with the blunt edge forward. 'Arise, Cú Chulainn,' said Úath, 'to you goes the sovereignty of the warriors of Ireland and the champion's portion without contest. The three warriors went to Emain then, but the others did not yield to the decision given in favour of Cú Chulainn, and the same dispute continued about the champion's portion. The counsel of the men of Ireland was to send them to Cú Roí for judgement, and they accepted that.

§79 11. 9037 ff.

The next morning the three heroes came to the fort of Cú Roí. They unyoked their chariots at the entrance to the fort and went into the royal house. Bláthnat daughter of Mend and wife of Cú Roí mac Dáiri made them warmly welcome. Cú Roí was not at home to receive them that night, but he was aware that they would come and counselled his wife on how to attend to them until such time as he would return from the expedition on which he had gone eastwards into the lands of the Scythians.

For Cú Roí never reddened his sword in Ireland from the time he took up arms when seven years of age until he met his death, nor did the food of Ireland pass his lips for as long as he lived: his arrogance, fame and importance, his fury and strength and vigour were

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such that they could not be contained within Ireland. Meanwhile, the woman saw to their needs as regards bathing and washing and the provision of intoxicating liquors and luxurious beds, so that they were well content.

\$80 11. 9050 ff.

When it was time to go to bed, the woman told them that each man was to take his night guarding the fort until Cú Roí should return, and, she added, 'Cú Roí's instructions were that you were to take turns guarding it in the order of seniority.' Moreover, in whatever corner of the world Cú Roí should find himself, he would chant a spell upon his fort so that it revolved as swiftly as a mill-stone and its entrance could never be found after sunset.

\$81 11. 9056 ff.

Loegaire Buadach took the watch the first night, since he was the eldest of the three. He remained at the look-out post until the night's end, when he saw a phantom approaching from the west as far as his eye could see out over the ocean. The phantom appeared huge and ugly and horrible to him, for it seemed to him that his figure reached to the very sky and he could see the shimmer of the sea between his

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legs. As he came, he had his hands full of stripped oak-trees, each of which would have been a load for a yoked team of six beasts, and not one trunk had been dealt a second blow, but each had been cut with a single sword-stroke. He threw a little branch at Loegaire, but he let it go past him. He varied his cast ^{repeated?} (?) two or three times, but did not reach Loegaire's shield nor his person. Then Loegaire threw a spear at him, but did not hit him.

§82 11. 9068 ff.

The phantom stretched out his arm towards Loegaire. Such was its length that it reached across the three ridges that lay between them as they pelted each other and finally seized him in his grasp. Though Loegaire was big and imposing, he fitted like a year-old child into the clutch of his opponent, who then ground him between his two palms as a chess-man is swept along a watercourse (?). When he was half-dead from this treatment, the giant tossed him over the fort, so that he landed in the dunghill at the entrance to the royal house, though the gate to the fort had not been opened. The other men and the occupants of the fort thought that he had leaped over the rampart from without leaving the responsibility to his companions.

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§83 11. 9079 ff.

There they remained until the end of day and the time of the night-watch, at which time Conall went on duty, since he was older than Cú Chulainn. Everything happened exactly as it had happened to Loegaire the first night. Then on the third night Cú Chulainn took over the sentry-post. That was the night the three Greys of Sescend Óairbeoil, the three Búagelltaig of Brega and the three sons of Dornmar Ceóil had arranged to meet and together plunder the fort. It was also the night on which, it was prophesied, the monster that was in the lake near by the fort would devour all that lived in the locality, both men and beasts.

§84 11. 9088ff.

While he kept watch, Cú Chulainn had many evil forebodings. When midnight came, he heard a noise approaching. 'Hallo, hallo,' he called, 'who is there? If they are friends, let them not stir/make a commotion; if foes, let them take themselves off.' Then they raise a mighty clamour/shout against him, whereupon Cú Chulainn leaped at them, so that the nine of them fell to the ground dead. He placed/threw the heads in the sentry-post. Scarcely had he seated himself when another nine challenged him. He killed the three nines in similar manner, making one cairn of them, heads and accoutrements.

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§85 11. 9097 ff.

When he had remained until the latter part of the night and was tired and weary and depressed, he heard the rising of the lake on high as if it were the booming of a stormy sea. Tired as he was, his ardour would not suffer him not to go to investigate the great noise he heard. He then saw the monster heaving itself up, and it seemed to him that there were thirty cubits of it above the lake. It raised itself up into the air, sprang towards the fort, and opened its mouth so that one of the royal dwellings could have gone into its gullet.

§ 86 11. 9105 ff.

Then he called to mind his *swooping* (?) feat, and he sprang aloft, and he was as swift as a whirling wheel (?) around the monster.. He closed his two hands around its neck, stretched his arm until he reached into its gullet, tore out its heart and cast it from him on the ground. The monster fell from the air and landed heavily on the ground. Cú Chulaind then plied his sword on it till he hacked it to pieces, and he took the head with him to the sentry-post where he put it with the rest of the heads.

§87 11. 9112 ff.

While he was there, sore and miserable, at the break of dawn, he saw the giant approaching him from the west across the sea ... and so on. 'This will be a bad night,' said he. 'It will be worse for you, you villain,' said Cú Chulainn. Then the giant threw one of the branches at Cú Chulainn, who let it go past him. He varied his cast two or three times, but he did not reach Cú Chulainn's shield or his person. Cú Chulainn then hurled his spear at the giant, but did not hit him. The giant stretched out his arm towards Cú Chulainn to seize him in his grasp as he had seized the other men. Cú Chulainn executed the hero's salmon leap at that point and called to mind his swooping feat, with his naked sword over its head. And he was as swift as a 'hare' circling around the monster in mid-air, till he was like a whirling gyre [lit. 'mill-wheel']. 'Life for life, Cú Chulainn,' said he. 'Give me three boons then,' Cú Chulainn answered. 'You will get them,' said the other, 'if you utter them in one breath.' 'The sovereignty of the warriors of Ireland to be mine from this time on, the champion's portion ~~without contention~~ mine without contention, and my wife to have precedence over the rest of the women of Ulster.' 'You will have that forthwith,' he said. Then the person who was speaking to Cú Chulainn disappeared, he knew not where.

§88 11. 9129 ff.

He then dwelt in his mind upon the leap that his companions had leaped over the fort, and their leap seemed large and long and lofty;

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for he thought that it was by leaping that the heroes had gone over it. He twice attempted to leap it, but failed. 'Woe is he who has endured the trouble that I have endured so far for the sake of the champion's portion,' he said, 'and that it should not elude me through my failure to make the leap the others made. While he pondered thus, he performed this thoughtless* feat: He would spring backwards in mid-air the length of a cast from the fort, and from the spot in which he stopped he would then spring back through the air till his forehead would come in contact with the fort. At one time he would leap aloft so that all that was within the fort was visible to him, while at another he would sink up to his knees in the earth by dint of his vehemence and his violence, and yet another time he would not remove the dew from the tip of the grass through the sheer buoyancy of his spirit, his agility/ flexibility of mind, and his heroic vigour, and by the force of the exhilaration and passion by which he was overcome. Finally he strode in over the rampart and alighted in the middle of the fort at the entrance to the royal house. His two footprints are still on the flag on the floor of the fort where the doorway of the royal house stood. He then went into the house and heaved a sigh.

*Cf. perhaps the episode in Gereint where Peredur is attacked by Arthur's men, but, wholly preoccupied as he is with the thought of his loved one, overthrows them one by one without ever awaking from his reverie.

§89 1l. 9148 ff.

Then Bláthnat, daughter of Mend and wife of Cú Roí, spoke out.
 'Clearly that is not a sigh of shame, but a sigh of victory and achievement. Indeed the daughter of the king of the Isle of the Men of Fálga knew well all the travail that had befallen Cú Chulainn that night. It was not long then till they saw Cú Roí coming towards them into the house bringing with him the weapons of the three nines whom Cú Chulainn had slain as well as their heads and that of the monster. He threw the heads from his chest on to the floor of the house, saying:
 'The fellow whose trophies all these are for one night is a lad fit to keep watch over a king's keep for ever. The champion's portion which you came to dispute belongs in all truth to Cú Chulainn before the warriors of Ireland. While there may be someone braver, there is none can claim as many triumphs as he. The verdict that Cú Roí pronounced for them was that Cú Chulainn should have the champion's portion and heroic primacy among all the Irish and that his wife should have precedence over all the women of Ulster on entering the feast-hall, and he gave him seven cumals of gold and silver in recognition of the exploit he had performed in a single night.

§90 1l. 9163 ff.

They then bade farewell to Cú Roí and the three of them came to Emain Macha before the end of the day. When the time came to divide and

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serve out, the servers removed the champion's portion with its complement of liquor before the division and kept it on one side. 'I am sure,' said Dubthach Dóeltenga, 'that you will raise no contention tonight about the champion's portion, since the man you had recourse to has ventured to give judgement for you.' With that the other heroes spoke out against Cú Chulainn, saying that the champion's portion had not been given to one of them more than another. For as soon as they arrived at Emain Macha, they conceded to Cú Chulainn nothing of the judgement that Cú Roí had delivered to them. Cú Chulainn then declared that he had no great desire to contend for the champion's portion, for its profit to the person to whom it was awarded was no greater than its loss. From then on the champion's portion was not apportioned until the Champion's Bargain was arranged in Emain Macha.

§91 11. 9176 ff.

This is the Champion's Bargain

Once when the Ulain were in Emain Macha recovering from the exertions of the assembly and the games, Conchobor and Fergus mac Róig and the rest of the nobles of Ulster came in from the playing field and seated themselves there in the Branch-Red, the hall of Conchobor. Neither Cú Chulainn nor Conall Cernach nor Loegaire Buadach was there that night, but most of the other Ulster heroes were present. While they were there seated late in evening near the end of the day, they saw a huge and fearsomely ugly churl coming towards them into the house.

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It seemed to them that none of the Ulster heroes would reach even half his height. Hideous and dreadful was his appearance. He had on an old hide next his skin and over that a shabby grey cloak, and on his head he had a great bushy tree the size of a winter-fold that would shelter thirty calves. His (eyes) blazing yellow eyes, each of them standing out from his head as large as a cauldron to fit a full-grown ox. Each of his fingers was as thick as another man's arm. In his left hand was a stock that would have been a burden for twenty ox-teams, in his right an axe into which had gone thrice fifty lumps of molten metal. It would have taken a plough-team to move its handle, and so sharp was it that it would sever a hair brushed against it by the wind.

§92 11. 9193 ff.

He came in this get-up and stood by the (forked) beam near the fire. 'Do you find the hall too small for you, that you find nowhere else but beside the (forked) beam, or is it perhaps that you want to compete with the light-bearers, except that in that case you would be more like to set the house on fire than to give light to the household.' Indeed if this were to be my function, perhaps you will concede (it will be conceded), however big I am, that [big and all as I am, that my height will be moderated so that] the whole household would have equal illumination and that the house would not be burned.

\$93 11. 9201

'But that is not my normal function; I have others as well. Moreover, this is why I have come here,' said he: 'neither in Ireland, nor in Britain, nor in Europe, nor in Africa, nor in Asia as far as Greece and Scythia, and as far as the Orkneys, the Pillars of Hercules, the Tower of Bregon, and the Isles of Gades have I found a man who would keep his word with me in this matter. But now since you Ulstermen have surpassed the hosts of all those lands in fearsomeness and prowess and valour, in nobility and pride and dignity, in truth and generosity and distinction, let one of your number be found who will answer the guest that has brought me here.'

\$94 11. 9209 ff.

'It is surely not right,' said Fergus mac Róich, 'that the honour of the province should be lost because there was not one of them to uphold it, and it could be, moreover, that death would be no nearer to him than to you yourself.' 'Well, I am not seeking to avoid it,' he answered. 'Let us hear what your quest is then,' said Fergus. 'If I am guaranteed fair play, I'll tell it.' 'It is but right that fair play be granted,' said Sencha mac Ailella, 'and it is not fair play that a great host of friends and allies should attack a lone stranger in their midst. Moreover, I feel sure, however it may have been hitherto, that you will find someone here who is a match for you.' 'I exclude Conchobor on account of his kingship and Fergus mac Róig on account of his like status, but, these two apart, let he who is able come forward so that I may cut off his head tonight and he mine tomorrow night.'

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§95 (Ed. MSS.)

'It is certain now,' said Dubthach, 'that there is no one who is worth... a warrior after these two' [Thurneysen: 'dass ausser jenen zweien keiner hier den Namen eines Kriegers verdient']. 'There will be now,' said Munremar mac Gerrcind, and with that he sprang into the middle ['on to the floor', ^{Meyer}] of the house. Such was the power of this Munremar that he had the strength of a hundred warriors and in each of his two arms was the strength of a hundred first-born calves(?) 'Come along, fellow, so that I can cut off your head tonight and you cut mine tomorrow night,' said Munremar. 'If that was what I wanted, I could get it anywhere,' said the churl. 'Let us do as we decided, that I remove your head tonight and you remove mine tomorrow night in return.' 'I swear by the oath my people swears, (clearly) you have no wish to die if the arrangement is that the man you kill tonight should avenge it on you tomorrow. You are the only one who has, if indeed you have, the power to be killed every night and to avenge it on the morrow.' 'Then I shall carry out the counsel on which you are all agreed and which you think so wonderful [or 'strange as it may seem to you'],' said the churl. He pledged the other to fair play, and that he should take about fulfilling his tryst on the morrow.

§96

With that Munremar took the axe out of the churl's hand. There were seven feet between the two edges (?) of the axe. The churl placed his neck across the block. Munremar delivered a blow of the axe across his neck and it went through to the block [lit. 'and the block came up to meet it'], cutting off the head so that it came to rest near the base of the fork-beam and the house ^{Working Translation} was full of his blood. He arose then and

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gathered his head and his axe to his chest, and it was thus he departed
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from the house with streams of blood coming from his neck, so that it filled the Branched-Red on all sides. Great was their consternation at the wonder of the prodigy that had been revealed to them. 'I swear by the oath my people swears,' said Dubthach Doeltenga, 'if the fellow comes tomorrow after having been killed tonight, he will not leave a man alive in Ulster.' The churl returned the following night, but Munremar evaded him, and he began to press his contract: 'It is not right for Munremar not to fulfil his bargain with me.'

§97

However, Lóegaire was there that night. 'Which of the warriors who contest the champion's portion,' said he, 'will fulfil a bargain with me tonight? Where is Lóegaire Buadach?' 'Here,' said Lóegaire. He pledged him in the same way, but Lóegaire did not turn up. He came again on the following day and likewise pledged Conall Cernach, but he did not come as he had sworn. ^{to do}

§98

He came again on the fourth night, and he was fierce and furious. All the women of Ulster had come that night to view the strange wonder that had come into the Branched-Red. Cú Chulainn also was there that night. Then the churl began to pour scorn on them. 'Your valour and your prowess have deserted you, men of Ulster,' he said. 'Great is your warriors' eagerness for the champion's portion, but you are not fit to contend for it. Where is that twisted distorted wretch they call Cú Chulainn, till we see whether his word is better than that of the others.'

'I do not desire a bargain with you at all,' said Cú Chulainn.

'That's likely enough, you insignificant insect, [for] you are greatly afraid of dying.' At that Cú Chulainn leaps at him. He struck him a blow with the axe so that his head flew against the ridge-pole of the Branched-Red and shook the whole house. Cú Chulainn caught the head again and gave it a blow with the axe, smashing it to pieces. He left it at that.

§99

On the next day the Ulstermen were watching Cú Chulainn to see whether he would make to avoid the churl as the other heroes had done. And when they saw Cú Chulainn waiting for the fellow, great despondency took hold of them, and it would have been fitting had they sung his dirge. They felt certain that his life would last only until the churl arrived. Then, driven by shame, Cú Chulainn said to Conchobar*: 'By my shield and by my sword, I shall not go until my promise to the churl has been fulfilled; for death awaits me, and I would rather have death with honour.'

*In the text it is Cú Chulainn who speaks to Conchobar, but the context seems to require otherwise.

§100

While they were still there at the close of the day they saw the churl coming towards them. 'Where is Cú Chulainn?', he asked. 'Here I am,' said Cú Chulainn. 'You are quiet of speech, tonight, you little wretch. Greatly do you fear death, but however much you fear it, you cannot avoid what you have undertaken. After that Cú Chulainn came to him and stretched his neck across the block, but such was the size of the

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block that his neck reached only half-way. 'Stretch out your neck, you wretch,' said the churl. 'You are tormenting me,' answered Cú Chulainn. 'Kill me quickly; I did not torment you last night. I swear, however, that if you persist in tormenting me, I shall make myself as long as a crane above you.' 'I cannot cut you down,' said the churl, 'what with the size of the block and the shortness of your neck and body.'

§101

Then Cú Chulainn stretched out his neck (?) so that a grown man's foot would have fitted between any two of his ribs, and he stretched his neck till it extended over the other side of the block. The churl raised up his axe till it reached the roof-tree of the house. The noise/din of the old hide that he had about him, and the noise of the axe, and the force of his two arms raised aloft were like the loud boom/soughing of a wood in a night of storm. It came down again till it
 against his neck - with its blunt side foremost - while all the nobles of Ulster looked on.

§102

'Arise, Cú Chulainn! It is usual for the warriors of Ulster or Ireland to be of a mind (to desire) to vie with you in valour, bravery or truthfulness. The sovereignty of the warriors of Ulster to you from this time forth, and the champion's portion without contest, and precedence to your wife always over the women of Ulster in the house of feasting; and furthermore,' he said, 'whoever contests it with you from now on, I swear what my people swear, the length of his life will be...
 after that. And it was Cú Roí mac Dáiri who had come in that guise to fulfil the promise he had given to Cú Chulainn. From that time forth the champion's portion was not contested against Cú Chulainn.'

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It is from these events then that the Champion's Portion of Emain continues to be told, and the Ulsterwomen's War of Words and the Champion's Bargain in Emain Macha and the Recourse of the Ulstermen to Cruachain Ai.

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