

# **The Second Battle of Mag Tuired (Moytura)**

**Cath Maíge Tuired**

**by unknown Author**

**Published:**



## **Version A**

### **The edition used in this version:**

1. Cath Maige Tuired: *The Second Battle of Mag Tuired*. Elizabeth A. Gray (ed), First edition [One volume. 141 pp. Introduction 1-23, Text 24-72, Translation 25-73, Notes 74-114, Index to Notes 115f., Index of Persons 117-137, Index of Places 138-141.]

Irish Texts Society Kildare (1982). Irish Texts Society [Cumann na Sgríbhneann Gaedhilge], No. LII

The present text represents pages 91-125 of the volume (i.e. odd pages 25-73 of the volume). All editorial introduction, translation, notes and indexes have been omitted.

The Túatha Dé Danann were in the northern islands of the world, studying occult lore and sorcery, druidic arts and witchcraft and magical skill, until they surpassed the sages of the pagan arts.

They studied occult lore and secret knowledge and diabolic arts in four cities: Falias, Gorias, Murias, and Findias.

From Falias was brought the Stone of Fál which was located in Tara. It used to cry out beneath every king that would take Ireland.

From Gorias was brought the spear which Lug had. No battle was ever sustained against it, or against the man who held it in his hand.

From Findias was brought the sword of Núadu. No one ever escaped from it once it was drawn from its deadly sheath, and no one could resist it.

From Murias was brought the Dagda's cauldron. No company ever went away from it unsatisfied.

There were four wizards in those four cities. Morfesa was in Falias; Esras was in Gorias; Uiscias was in Findias; Semias was in Murias. Those are the four poets from whom the Túatha Dé learned occult lore and secret knowledge.

The Túatha Dé then made an alliance with the Fomoir, and Balor the grandson of Nét gave his daughter Ethne to Cian the son of Dían Cécht. And she bore the glorious child, Lug.

The Túatha Dé came with a great fleet to Ireland to take it by force from the Fir Bolg. Upon reaching the territory of Corcu Belgatan (which is Conmaicne Mara today), they at once burned their boats so that they would not think of fleeing to them. The smoke and the mist which came from the ships filled the land and the air which was near them. For that reason it has been thought that they arrived in clouds of mist.

The battle of Mag Tuired was fought between them and the Fir Bolg. The Fir Bolg were defeated, and 100,000 of them were killed including the king, Eochaid mac Eirc.

Núadu's hand was cut off in that battle—Sreng mac Sengainn struck it from him. So with Crédne the brazier helping him, Dian Cécht the physician put on him a silver hand that moved as well as any other hand.

Now the Túatha Dé Danann lost many men in the battle, including Edleo mac Allai, and Ernmas, and Fiacha, and Tuirill Bicroo.

Then those of the Fir Bolg who escaped from the battle fled to the Fomoir, and they settled in Arran and in Islay and in Man and in Rathlin.

There was contention regarding the sovereignty of the men of Ireland between the Túatha Dé and their wives, since Núadu was not eligible for kingship after his hand had been cut off. They said that it would be appropriate for them to give the kingship to Bres the son of Elatha, to their own adopted son, and that giving him the kingship would knit the Fomorians' alliance with them, since his father Elatha mac Delbaith was king of the Fomoir.

Now the conception of Bres came about in this way.

One day one of their women, Ériu the daughter of Delbáeth, was looking at the sea and the land from the house of Máeth Scéni; and she saw the sea as perfectly calm as if it were a level board. After that, while she was there, she saw something: a vessel of silver appeared to her on the sea. Its size seemed

great to her, but its shape did not appear clearly to her; and the current of the sea carried it to the land.

Then she saw that it was a man of fairest appearance. He had golden-yellow hair down to his shoulders, and a cloak with bands of gold thread around it. His shirt had embroidery of gold thread. On his breast was a brooch of gold with the lustre of a precious stone in it. Two shining silver spears and in them two smooth riveted shafts of bronze. Five circlets of gold around his neck. A gold-hilted sword with inlayings of silver and studs of gold.

The man said to her, „Shall I have an hour of lovemaking with you?“ „I certainly have not made a tryst with you,“ she said. „Come without the trysting!“ said he.

Then they stretched themselves out together. The woman wept when the man got up again. „Why are you crying?“ he asked. „I have two things that I should lament,“ said the woman, „separating from you, however we have met. The young men of the Túatha Dé Danann have been entreating me in vain—and you possess me as you do.“

„Your anxiety about those two things will be removed,“ he said. He drew his gold ring from his middle finger and put it into her hand, and told her that she should not part with it, either by sale or by gift, except to someone whose finger it would fit.

„Another matter troubles me,“ said the woman, „that I do not know who has come to me.“

„You will not remain ignorant of that,“ he said. „Elatha mac Delbaith, king of the Fomoir, has come to you. You will bear a son as a result of our meeting, and let no name be given to him but Eochu Bres (that is, Eochu the Beautiful), because every beautiful thing that is seen in Ireland—both plain and fortress, ale and candle, woman and man and horse—will be judged in relation to that boy, so that people will then say of it, ‘It is a Bres.’“

Then the man went back again, and the woman returned to her home, and the famous conception was given to her.

Then she gave birth to the boy, and the name Eochu Bres was given to him as Elatha had said. A week after the woman’s lying-in was completed, the boy had two weeks’ growth; and he maintained that increase for seven years, until he had reached the growth of fourteen years.

As a result of that contention which took place among the Túatha Dé, the sovereignty of Ireland was given to that youth; and he gave seven guarantors from the warriors of Ireland (his maternal kinsmen) for his restitution of the sovereignty if his own misdeeds should give cause. Then his mother gave him land, and he had a fortress built on the land, Dún mBrese. And it was the Dagda who built that fortress.

But after Bres had assumed the sovereignty, three Fomorian kings (Indech mac Dé Domnann, Elatha mac Delbaith, and Tethra) imposed their tribute upon Ireland—and there was not a smoke from a house in Ireland which was not under their tribute. In addition, the warriors of Ireland were reduced to serving him: Ogma beneath a bundle of firewood and the Dagda as a rampart-builder, and he constructed the earthwork around Bres’s fort.

Now the Dagda was unhappy at the work, and in the house he used to meet an idle blind man named Cridenbél, whose mouth grew out of his chest. Cridenbél considered his own meal small and the Dagda’s large, so he said, „Dagda, for the sake of your honor let the three best bits of your serving be

given to me!" and the Dagda used to give them to him every night. But the satirist's bits were large: each bit was the size of a good pig. Furthermore those three bits were a third of the Dagda's serving. The Dagda's appearance was the worse for that.

Then one day the Dagda was in the trench and he saw the Mac Óc coming toward him. „Greetings to you, Dagda!" said the Mac Óc. „And to you," said the Dagda. „What makes you look so bad?" he asked. „I have good cause," he said. „Every night Cridenbél the satirist demands from me the three best bits of my serving."

„I have advice for you," said the Mac Óc. He puts his hand into his purse, and takes from it three coins of gold, and gives them to him.

„Put," he said, „these three gold coins into the three bits for Cridenbél in the evening. Then these will be the best on your dish, and the gold will stick in his belly so that he will die of it; and Bres's judgement afterwards will not be right. Men will say to the king, 'The Dagda has killed Cridenbél with a deadly herb which he gave him.' Then the king will order you to be killed, and you will say to him, 'What you say, king of the warriors of the Féni, is not a prince's truth. For he kept importuning me since I began my work, saying to me, Give me the three best bits of your serving, Dagda. My housekeeping is bad tonight. Indeed, I would have died from that, had not the three gold coins which I found today helped me. I put them into my serving. Then I gave it to Cridenbél, because the gold was the best thing that was before me. So the gold is now in Cridenbél, and he died of it.' " „It is clear," said the king. „Let the satirist's stomach be cut out to see whether the gold will be found in it. If it is not found, you will die. If it is found, however, you will live."

Then they cut out the satirist's stomach to find the three gold coins in his belly, and the Dagda was saved.

Then the Dagda went to his work the next morning, and the Mac Óc came to him and said, „Soon you will finish your work, but do not seek payment until the cattle of Ireland are brought to you. Choose from among them the dark, black-maned, trained, spirited heifer."

Then the Dagda brought his work to an end, and Bres asked him what he would take as wages for his labour. The Dagda answered, „I require that you gather the cattle of Ireland in one place." The king did that as he asked, and he chose the heifer from among them as the Mac Óc had told him. That seemed foolish to Bres. He had thought that he would have chosen something more.

Now Núadu was being treated, and Dían Cécht put a silver hand on him which had the movement of any other hand. But his son Míach did not like that. He went to the hand and said „joint to joint of it, and sinew to sinew"; and he healed it in nine days and nights. The first three days he carried it against his side, and it became covered with skin. The second three days he carried it against his chest. The third three days he would cast white wisps of black bulrushes after they had been blackened in a fire.

Dían Cécht did not like that cure. He hurled a sword at the crown of his son's head and cut his skin to the flesh. The young man healed it by means of his skill. He struck him again and cut his flesh until he reached the bone. The young man healed it by the same means. He struck the third blow and reached the membrane of his brain. The young man healed this too by the same means. Then he struck the fourth blow and cut out the brain, so that Míach died; and Dían Cécht said that no physician could heal him of that blow.

After that, Míach was buried by Dían Cécht, and three hundred and sixty-five herbs grew through the grave, corresponding to the number of his joints and sinews. Then Airmed spread her cloak and uprooted those herbs according to their properties. Dían Cécht came to her and mixed the herbs, so that no one knows their proper healing qualities unless the Holy Spirit taught them afterwards. And Dían Cécht said, „Though Míach no longer lives, Airmed shall remain.“

At that time, Bres held the sovereignty as it had been granted to him. There was great murmuring against him among his maternal kinsmen the Túatha Dé, for their knives were not greased by him. However frequently they might come, their breaths did not smell of ale; and they did not see their poets nor their bards nor their satirists nor their harpers nor their pipers nor their horn-blowers nor their jugglers nor their fools entertaining them in the household. They did not go to contests of those pre-eminent in the arts, nor did they see their warriors proving their skill at arms before the king, except for one man, Ogma the son of Étain.

This was the duty which he had, to bring firewood to the fortress. He would bring a bundle every day from the islands of Clew Bay. The sea would carry off two-thirds of his bundle because he was weak for lack of food. He used to bring back only one third, and he supplied the host from day to day.

But neither service nor payment from the tribes continued; and the treasures of the tribe were not being given by the act of the whole tribe.

On one occasion the poet came to the house of Bres seeking hospitality (that is, Coirpre son of Étain, the poet of the Túatha Dé). He entered a narrow, black, dark little house; and there was neither fire nor furniture nor bedding in it. Three small cakes were brought to him on a little dish—and they were dry. The next day he arose, and he was not thankful. As he went across the yard he said,

1. Without food quickly on a dish,  
Without cow's milk on which a calf grows,  
Without a man's habitation after darkness remains,  
Without paying a company of storytellers—let that be Bres's condition.

„Bres's prosperity no longer exists,“ he said, and that was true. There was only blight on him from that hour; and that is the first satire that was made in Ireland.

Now after that the Túatha Dé went together to talk with their adopted son Bres mac Elathan, and they asked him for their sureties. He gave them restoration of the kingship, and they did not regard him as properly qualified to rule from that time on. He asked to remain for seven years. „You will have that,“ the same assembly agreed, „provided that the safeguarding of every payment that has been assigned to you—including house and land, gold and silver, cattle and food—is supported by the same securities, and that we have freedom of tribute and payment until then.“ „You will have what you ask,“ Bres said.

This is why they were asked for the delay: that he might gather the warriors of the síd, the Fomoiré, to take possession of the Túatha by force provided he might gain an overwhelming advantage. He was unwilling to be driven from his kingship.

Then he went to his mother and asked her where his family was. „I am certain about that,“ she said, and went onto the hill from which she had seen the silver vessel in the sea. She then went onto the shore. His mother gave him the ring which had been left with her, and he put it around his middle finger, and it fitted him. She had not given it up for anyone, either by sale or gift. Until that day, there was none of them whom it would fit.

Then they went forward until they reached the land of the Fomoir. They came to a great plain with many assemblies upon it, and they reached the finest of these assemblies. Inside, people sought information from them. They answered that they were of the men of Ireland. Then they were asked whether they had dogs, for at that time it was the custom, when a group of men visited another assembly, to challenge them to a friendly contest. „We have dogs,“ said Bres. Then the dogs raced, and those of the Túatha Dé were faster than those of the Fomoir. Then they were asked whether they had horses to race. They answered, „We have,“ and they were faster than the horses of the Fomoir.

Then they were asked whether they had anyone who was good at sword-play, and no one was found among them except Bres. But when he lifted the hand with the sword, his father recognized the ring on his finger and asked who the warrior was. His mother answered on his behalf and told the king that Bres was his son. She related to him the whole story as we have recounted it.

His father was sad about him, and asked, „What force brought you out of the land you ruled?“ Bres answered, „Nothing brought me except my own injustice and arrogance. I deprived them of their valuables and possessions and their own food. Neither tribute nor payment was ever taken from them until now.“

„That is bad,“ said his father. „Better their prosperity than their kingship. Better their requests than their curses. Why then have you come?“ asked his father.

„I have come to ask you for warriors,“ he said. „I intend to take that land by force.“

„You ought not to gain it by injustice if you do not gain it by justice,“ he said.

„I have a question then: what advice do you have for me?“ said Bres.

After that he sent him to the champion Balor, grandson of Nét, the king of the Hebrides, and to Indech mac Dé Domnann, the king of the Fomoir; and these gathered all the forces from Lochlainn westwards to Ireland, to impose their tribute and their rule upon them by force, and they made a single bridge of ships from the Hebrides to Ireland.

No host ever came to Ireland which was more terrifying or dreadful than that host of the Fomoir. There was rivalry between the men from Scythia of Lochlainn and the men out of the Hebrides concerning that expedition.

As for the Túatha Dé, however, that is discussed here.

After Bres, Núadu was once more in the kingship over the Túatha Dé; and at that time he held a great feast for the Túatha Dé in Tara. Now there was a certain warrior whose name was Samildánach on his way to Tara. At that time there were doorkeepers at Tara named Gamal mac Figail and Camall mac Ríagail. While the latter was on duty, he saw the strange company coming toward him. A handsome, well-built young warrior with a king's diadem was at the front of the band.

They told the doorkeeper to announce their arrival in Tara. The doorkeeper asked, „Who is there?“

„Lug Lonnansclech is here, the son of Cían son of Dían Cécht and of Ethne daughter of Balor. He is the foster son of Tailtiu the daughter of Magmór, the king of Spain, and of Eochaid Garb mac Dúach.“

The doorkeeper then asked of Samildánach, „What art do you practice? For no one without an art enters Tara.“

„Question me,“ he said. „I am a builder.“ The doorkeeper answered, „We do not need you. We have a builder already, Luchta mac Lúachada.“

He said, „Question me, doorkeeper: I am a smith.“ The doorkeeper answered him, „We have a smith already, Colum Cúaléinech of the three new techniques.“

He said, „Question me: I am a champion.“ The doorkeeper answered, „We do not need you. We have a champion already, Ogma mac Ethlend.“

He said again, „Question me: I am a harper,“ he said. „We do not need you. We have a harper already, Abcán mac Bicelmois, whom the men of the three gods chose in the síd-mounds.“

He said, „Question me: I am a warrior.“ The doorkeeper answered, „We do not need you. We have a warrior already, Bresal Etarlam mac Echdach Báethláim.“

Then he said, „Question me, doorkeeper. I am a poet and a historian.“ „We do not need you. We already have a poet and historian, Én mac Ethmain.“

He said, „Question me. I am a sorcerer.“ „We do not need you. We have sorcerers already. Our druids and our people of power are numerous.“

He said, „Question me. I am a physician.“ „We do not need you. We have Dían Cécht as a physician.“

„Question me,“ he said. „I am a cupbearer.“ „We do not need you. We have cupbearers already: Delt and Drúcht and Daithe, Tae and Talom and Trog, Glé and Glan and Glésse.“

He said, „Question me: I am a good brazier.“ „We do not need you. We have a brazier already, Crédne Cerd.“

He said, „Ask the king whether he has one man who possesses all these arts: if he has I will not be able to enter Tara.“

Then the doorkeeper went into the royal hall and told everything to the king. „A warrior has come before the court,“ he said, „named Samildánach; and all the arts which help your people, he practices them all, so that he is the man of each and every art.“

Then he said that they should bring him the fidchell-boards of Tara, and he won all the stakes, so that he made the cró of Lug. (But if fidchell was invented at the time of the Trojan war, it had not reached Ireland yet, for the battle of Mag Tuired and the destruction of Troy occurred at the same time.)

Then that was related to Núadu. „Let him into the court,“ said Núadu, „for a man like that has never before come into this fortress.“

Then the doorkeeper let him past, and he went into the fortress, and he sat in the seat of the sage, because he was a sage in every art.

Then Ogma threw the flagstone, which required fourscore yoke of oxen to move it, through the side of the hall so that it lay outside against Tara. That was to challenge Lug, who tossed the stone back so that it lay in the centre of the royal hall; and he threw the piece which it had carried away back into the side of the royal hall so that it was whole again.

„Let a harp be played for us,“ said the hosts. Then the warrior played sleep music for the hosts and for the king on the first night, putting them to sleep from that hour to the same time the next day. He played sorrowful music so

that they were crying and lamenting. He played joyful music so that they were merry and rejoicing.

Then Núadu, when he had seen the warrior's many powers, considered whether he could release them from the bondage they suffered at the hands of the Fomoiré. So they held a council concerning the warrior, and the decision which Núadu reached was to exchange seats with the warrior. So Samildánach went to the king's seat, and the king arose before him until thirteen days had passed.

The next day he and the two brothers, Dagda and Ogma, conversed together on Grellach Dollaid; and his two kinsmen Goibniu and Dían Cécht were summoned to them.

They spent a full year in that secret conference, so that Grellach Dollaid is called the Amrún of the Men of the Goddess.

Then the druids of Ireland were summoned to them, together with their physicians and their charioteers and their smiths and their wealthy landowners and their lawyers. They conversed together secretly.

Then he asked the sorcerer, whose name was Mathgen, what power he wielded. He answered that he would shake the mountains of Ireland beneath the Fomoiré so that their summits would fall to the ground. And it would seem to them that the twelve chief mountains of the land of Ireland would be fighting on behalf of the Túatha Dé Danann: Slieve League, and Denda Ulad, and the Mourne Mountains, and Brí Erigi and Slieve Bloom and Slieve Snaght, Slemish and Blaíslíab and Nephin Mountain and Slíab Maccu Belgodon and the Curliu hills and Croagh Patrick.

Then he asked the cupbearer what power he wielded. He answered that he would bring the twelve chief lochs of Ireland into the presence of the Fomoiré and they would not find water in them, however thirsty they were. These are the lochs: Lough Derg, Lough Luimnig, Lough Corrib, Lough Ree, Lough Mask, Strangford Lough, Belfast Lough, Lough Neagh, Lough Foyle, Lough Gara, Loughrea, Marlóch. They would proceed to the twelve chief rivers of Ireland—the Bush, the Boyne, the Bann, the Blackwater, the Lee, the Shannon, the Moy, the Sligo, the Erne, the Finn, the Liffey, the Suir—and they would all be hidden from the Fomoiré so they would not find a drop in them. But drink will be provided for the men of Ireland even if they remain in battle for seven years.

Then Figol mac Mámois, their druid, said, „Three showers of fire will be rained upon the faces of the Fomorian host, and I will take out of them two-thirds of their courage and their skill at arms and their strength, and I will bind their urine in their own bodies and in the bodies of their horses. Every breath that the men of Ireland will exhale will increase their courage and skill at arms and strength. Even if they remain in battle for seven years, they will not be weary at all.“

The Dagda said, „The power which you boast, I will wield it all myself.“ „You are the Dagda the Good God!“ said everyone; and »Dagda« stuck to him from that time on.

Then they disbanded the council to meet that day three years later.

Then after the preparation for the battle had been settled, Lug and the Dagda and Ogma went to the three gods of Danu, and they gave Lug equipment for the battle; and for seven years they had been preparing for them and making their weapons. Then she said to him, „Undertake a battle of overthrowing.“ The Morrígan said to Lug, „Awake [gap: meaning of text unclear]“



Then Figol mac Mámois, the druid, was prophesying the battle and strengthening the Túatha Dé, saying, „Battle will be waged [*gap: meaning of text unclear*]“

The Dagda had a house in Glen Edin in the north, and he had arranged to meet a woman in Glen Edin a year from that day, near the All Hallows of the battle. The Unshin of Connacht roars to the south of it. He saw the woman at the Unshin in Corann, washing, with one of her feet at Allod Echae (that is, Aghanagh) south of the water and the other at Lisconny north of the water. There were nine loosened tresses on her head. The Dagda spoke with her, and they united. »The Bed of the Couple« was the name of that place from that time on. (The woman mentioned here is the Morrigan.)

Then she told the Dagda that the Fomoiré would land at Mag Céidne, and that he should summon the áes dána of Ireland to meet her at the Ford of the Unshin, and she would go into Scétne to destroy Indech mac Dé Domnann, the king of the Fomoiré, and would take from him the blood of his heart and the kidneys of his valour. Later she gave two handfuls of that blood to the hosts that were waiting at the Ford of the Unshin. Its name became »The Ford of Destruction« because of that destruction of the king.

So the áes dána did that, and they chanted spells against the Fomorian hosts.

This was a week before All Hallows, and they all dispersed until all the men of Ireland came together the day before All Hallows. Their number was six times thirty hundred, that is, each third consisted of twice thirty hundred.

Then Lug sent the Dagda to spy on the Fomoiré and to delay them until the men of Ireland came to the battle.

Then the Dagda went to the Fomorian camp and asked them for a truce of battle. This was granted to him as he asked. The Fomoiré made porridge for him to mock him, because his love of porridge was great. They filled for him the king's cauldron, which was five fists deep, and poured four score gallons of new milk and the same quantity of meal and fat into it. They put goats and sheep and swine into it, and boiled them all together with the porridge. Then they poured it into a hole in the ground, and Indech said to him that he would be killed unless he consumed it all; he should eat his fill so that he might not satirize the Fomoiré.

Then the Dagda took his ladle, and it was big enough for a man and a woman to lie in the middle of it. These are the bits that were in it: halves of salted swine and a quarter of lard.

Then the Dagda said, „This is good food if its broth is equal to its taste.“ But when he would put the full ladle into his mouth he said, „Its poor bits do not spoil it, says the wise old man.“

Then at the end he scraped his bent finger over the bottom of the hole among mould and gravel. He fell asleep then after eating his porridge. His belly was as big as a house cauldron, and the Fomoiré laughed at it.

Then he went away from them to Traígh Eabha. It was not easy for the warrior to move along on account of the size of his belly. His appearance was unsightly: he had a cape to the hollow of his elbows, and a grey-brown tunic around him as far as the swelling of his rump. He trailed behind him a wheeled fork which was the work of eight men to move, and its track was enough for the boundary ditch of a province. It is called »The Track of the Dagda's Club« for that reason. His long penis was uncovered. He had on two shoes of horse-hide

with the hair outside. As he went along he saw a girl in front of him, a good-looking young woman with an excellent figure, her hair in beautiful tresses. The Dagda desired her, but he was impotent on account of his belly. The girl began to mock him, then she began wrestling with him. She hurled him so that he sank to the hollow of his rump in the ground.

He looked at her angrily and asked, „What business did you have, girl, heaving me out of my right way?“ „This business: to get you to carry me on your back to my father’s house.“ „Who is your father?“ he asked. „I am the daughter of Indech, son of Dé Domnann,“ she said. She fell upon him again and beat him hard, so that the furrow around him filled with the excrement from his belly; and she satirized him three times so that he would carry her upon his back. He said that it was a ges for him to carry anyone who would not call him by his name. „What is your name?“ she asked. „Fer Benn,“ he said. „That name is too much!“ she said. „Get up, carry me on your back, Fer Benn.“ „That is indeed not my name,“ he said. „What is?“ she asked. „Fer Benn Brúach,“ he answered. „Get up, carry me on your back, Fer Benn Brúach,“ she said. „That is not my name,“ he said. „What is?“ she asked. Then he told her the whole thing. She replied immediately and said, „Get up, carry me on your back, Fer Benn Brúach Brogaill Broumide Cerbad Caic Rolaig Builc Labair Cerrce Di Brig Oldathair Boith Athgen mBethai Brightere Tri Carboid Roth Rimaire Riog Scotbe Obthe Olaithbe [*gap: meaning of text unclear*]

Get up, carry me away from here!“ „Do not mock me any more, girl,“ he said. „It will certainly be hard,“ she said. Then he moved out of the hole, after letting go the contents of his belly, and the girl had waited for that for a long time. He got up then, and took the girl on his back; and he put three stones in his belt. Each stone fell from it in turn—and it has been said that they were his testicles which fell from it. The girl jumped on him and struck him across the rump, and her curly pubic hair was revealed. Then the Dagda gained a mistress, and they made love. The mark remains at Beltraw Strand where they came together.

Then the girl said to him, „You will not go to the battle by any means.“ „Certainly I will go,“ said the Dagda. „You will not go,“ said the woman, „because I will be a stone at the mouth of every ford you will cross.“ „That will be true,“ said the Dagda, „but you will not keep me from it. I will tread heavily on every stone, and the trace of my heel will remain on every stone forever.“ „That will be true, but they will be turned over so that you may not see them. You will not go past me until I summon the sons of Tethra from the síd-mounds, because I will be a giant oak in every ford and in every pass you will cross.“ „I will indeed go past,“ said the Dagda, „and the mark of my axe will remain in every oak forever.“ (And people have remarked upon the mark of the Dagda’s axe.) Then however she said, „Allow the Fomuire to enter the land, because the men of Ireland have all come together in one place.“ She said that she would hinder the Fomuire, and she would sing spells against them, and she would practice the deadly art of the wand against them—and she alone would take on a ninth part of the host.

The Fomuire advanced until their tents were in Scétne. The men of Ireland were in Mag Aurfolraig. At this point these two hosts were threatening battle. „Do the men of Ireland undertake to give battle to us?“ said Bres mac Elathan to Indech mac Dé Domnann. „I will give the same,“ said Indech, „so that their bones will be small if they do not pay their tribute.“

In order to protect him, the men of Ireland had agreed to keep Lug from the battle. His nine foster fathers came to guard him: Tollusdam and Echdam and Eru, Rechtaid Finn and Fosad and Feidlimid, Ibar and Scibar and Minn. They feared an early death for the warrior because of the great number of his arts. For that reason they did not let him go to the battle.

Then the men of rank among the Túatha Dé were assembled around Lug. He asked his smith, Goibniu, what power he wielded for them.

„Not hard to say,” he said. „Even if the men of Ireland continue the battle for seven years, for every spear that separates from its shaft or sword that will break in battle, I will provide a new weapon in its place. No spearpoint which my hand forges will make a missing cast. No skin which it pierces will taste life afterward. Dolb, the Fomorian smith, cannot do that. I am now concerned with my preparation for the battle of Mag Tuired.”

„And you, Dían Cécht,” said Lug, „what power do you wield?”

„Not hard to say,” he said. „Any man who will be wounded there, unless his head is cut off, or the membrane of his brain or his spinal cord is severed, I will make him perfectly whole in the battle on the next day.”

„And you, Crédne,” Lug said to his brazier, „what is your power in the battle?”

„Not hard to answer,” said Crédne. „I will supply them all with rivets for their spears and hilts for their swords and bosses and rims for their shields.”

„And you, Luchta,” Lug said to his carpenter, „what power would you attain in the battle?”

„Not hard to answer,” said Luchta. „I will supply them all with whatever shields and spearshafts they need.”

„And you, Ogma,” said Lug to his champion, „what is your power in the battle?”

„Not hard to say,” he said. „Being a match for the king and holding my own against twenty-seven of his friends, while winning a third of the battle for the men of Ireland.”

„And you, Morrigan,” said Lug, „what power?”

„Not hard to say,” she said. „I have stood fast; I shall pursue what was watched; I will be able to kill; I will be able to destroy those who might be subdued.”

„And you, sorcerers,” said Lug, „what power?”

„Not hard to say,” said the sorcerers. „Their white soles will be visible after they have been overthrown by our craft, so that they can easily be killed; and we will take two-thirds of their strength from them, and prevent them from urinating.”

„And you, cupbearers,” said Lug, „what power?”

„Not hard to say,” said the cupbearers. „We will bring a great thirst upon them, and they will not find drink to quench it.”

„And you, druids,” said Lug, „what power?”

„Not hard to say,” said the druids. „We will bring showers of fire upon the faces of the Fomoiré so that they cannot look up, and the warriors contending with them can use their force to kill them.”

„And you, Coirpre mac Étaíne,” said Lug to his poet, „what can you do in the battle?”

„Not hard to say,“ said Coirpre. „I will make a glám dicenn against them, and I will satirize them and shame them so that through the spell of my art they will offer no resistance to warriors.“

„And you, Bé Chuille and Díanann,“ said Lug to his two witches, „what can you do in the battle?“

„Not hard to say,“ they said. „We will enchant the trees and the stones and the sods of the earth so that they will be a host under arms against them; and they will scatter in flight terrified and trembling.“

„And you, Dagda,“ said Lug, „what power can you wield against the Fomorian host in the battle?“

„Not hard to say,“ said the Dagda. „I will fight for the men of Ireland with mutual smiting and destruction and wizardry. Their bones under my club will soon be as many as hailstones under the feet of herds of horses, where the double enemy meets on the battlefield of Mag Tuired.“

Then in this way Lug addressed each of them in turn concerning their arts, strengthening them and addressing them in such a way that every man had the courage of a king or great lord.

Now every day the battle was drawn up between the race of the Fomoiré and the Túatha Dé Danann, but there were no kings or princes waging it, only fierce and arrogant men.

One thing which became evident to the Fomoiré in the battle seemed remarkable to them. Their weapons, their spears and their swords, were blunted; and those of their men who were killed did not come back the next day. That was not the case with the Túatha Dé Danann: although their weapons were blunted one day, they were restored the next because Goibniu the smith was in the smithy making swords and spears and javelins. He would make those weapons with three strokes. Then Luchta the carpenter would make the spearshafts in three chippings, and the third chipping was a finish and would set them in the socket of the spear. After the spearheads were in the side of the forge he would throw the sockets with the shafts, and it was not necessary to set them again. Then Crédne the brazier would make the rivets with three strokes, and he would throw the sockets of the spears at them, and it was not necessary to drill holes for them; and they stayed together this way.

Now this is what used to kindle the warriors who were wounded there so that they were more fiery the next day: Dían Cécht, his two sons Octriuil and Míach, and his daughter Airmed were chanting spells over the well named Sláine. They would cast their mortally-wounded men into it as they were struck down; and they were alive when they came out. Their mortally-wounded were healed through the power of the incantation made by the four physicians who were around the well.

Now that was damaging to the Fomoiré, and they picked a man to reconnoitre the battle and the practices of the Túatha Dé—Rúadán, the son of Bres and of Brig, the daughter of the Dagda—because he was a son and a grandson of the Túatha Dé. Then he described to the Fomoiré the work of the smith and the carpenter and the brazier and the four physicians who were around the well. They sent him back to kill one of the áes dána, Goibniu. He requested a spearpoint from him, its rivets from the brazier, and its shaft from the carpenter; and everything was given to him as he asked. Now there was a woman there grinding weapons, Crón the mother of Fíanlach; and she ground Rúadán's spear. So the spear was given to Rúadán by his maternal kin, and for

that reason a weaver's beam is still called „the spear of the maternal kin“ in Ireland.

But after the spear had been given to him, Rúadán turned and wounded Goibniu. He pulled out the spear and hurled it at Rúadán so that it went through him; and he died in his father's presence in the Fomorian assembly. Bríg came and keened for her son. At first she shrieked, in the end she wept. Then for the first time weeping and shrieking were heard in Ireland. (Now she is the Brig who invented a whistle for signalling at night.)

Then Goibniu went into the well and he became whole. The Fomoiré had a warrior named Ochtriállach, the son of the Fomorian king Indech mac Dé Domnann. He suggested that every single man they had should bring a stone from the stones of the river Drowes to cast into the well Sláine in Achad Abla to the west of Mag Tuired, to the east of Lough Arrow. They went, and every man put a stone into the well. For that reason the cairn is called Ochtriállach's Cairn. But another name for that well is Loch Luibe, because Dían Cécht put into it every herb that grew in Ireland.

Now when the time came for the great battle, the Fomoiré marched out of their encampment and formed themselves into strong indestructible battalions. There was not a chief nor a skilled warrior among them without armour against his skin, a helmet on his head, a broad [gap: meaning of text unclear] spear in his right hand, a heavy sharp sword on his belt, a strong shield on his shoulder. To attack the Fomorian host that day was „striking a head against a cliff,“ was „a hand in a serpent's nest,“ was „a face brought close to fire.“

These were the kings and leaders who were encouraging the Fomorian host: Balor son of Dot son of Nét, Bres mac Elathan, Tuire Tortbuillech mac Lobois, Goll and Irgoll, Loscennlomm mac Lommglúinigh, Indech mac Dé Domnann, king of the Fomoiré, Ochtriállach mac Indich, Omna and Bagna, Elatha mac Delbaíth.

On the other side, the Túatha Dé Danann arose and left his nine companions guarding Lug, and went to join the battle. But when the battle ensued, Lug escaped from the guard set over him, as a chariot-fighter, and it was he who was in front of the battalion of the Túatha Dé. Then a keen and cruel battle was fought between the race of the Fomoiré and the men of Ireland.

Lug was urging the men of Ireland to fight the battle fiercely so they should not be in bondage any longer, because it was better for them to find death while protecting their fatherland than to be in bondage and under tribute as they had been. Then Lug chanted the spell which follows, going around the men of Ireland on one foot and with one eye closed [gap: meaning of text unclear]

The hosts gave a great shout as they went into battle. Then they came together, and each of them began to strike the other.

Many beautiful men fell there in the stall of death. Great was the slaughter and the grave-lying which took place there. Pride and shame were there side by side. There was anger and indignation. Abundant was the stream of blood over the white skin of young warriors mangled by the hands of bold men while rushing into danger for shame. Harsh was the noise made by the multitude of warriors and champions protecting their swords and shields and bodies while others were striking them with spears and swords. Harsh too the tumult all over the battlefield—the shouting of the warriors and the clashing of bright shields, the swish of swords and ivory-hilted blades, the clatter and rattling of

the quivers, the hum and whirr of spears and javelins, the crashing strokes of weapons.

As they hacked at each other their fingertips and their feet almost met; and because of the slipperiness of the blood under the warriors' feet, they kept falling down, and their heads were cut off them as they sat. A gory, wound-inflicting, sharp, bloody battle was upheaved, and spearshafts were reddened in the hands of foes.

Then Núadu Silverhand and Macha the daughter of Ernmas fell at the hands of Balor grandson of Nét. Casmáel fell at the hands of Ochtriallach son of Indech. Lug and Balor of the piercing eye met in the battle. The latter had a destructive eye which was never opened except on a battlefield. Four men would raise the lid of the eye by a polished ring in its lid. The host which looked at that eye, even if they were many thousands in number, would offer no resistance to warriors. It had that poisonous power for this reason: once his father's druids were brewing magic. He came and looked over the window, and the fumes of the concoction affected the eye and the venomous power of the brew settled in it. Then he and Lug met. *[gap: meaning of text unclear]*

„Lift up my eyelid, lad," said Balor, „so I may see the talkative fellow who is conversing with me."

The lid was raised from Balor's eye. Then Lug cast a sling stone at him which carried the eye through his head, and it was his own host that looked at it. He fell on top of the Fomorian host so that twenty-seven of them died under his side; and the crown of his head struck against the breast of Indech mac Dé Domnann so that a gush of blood spouted over his lips.

„Let Lóch Lethglas Halfgreen, my poet, be summoned to me," said Indech. (He was half green from the ground to the crown of his head.) He came to him. „Find out for me," said Indech, „who hurled this cast at me."

*[gap: meaning of text unclear]*

Then Lóch Lethglas said, „Declare, who is the man? *[gap: meaning of text unclear]*"

Then Lug said these words in answer to him, „A man cast [...] Who does not fear you *[gap: meaning of text unclear]*"

Then the Morrígan the daughter of Ernmas came, and she was strengthening the Tútha Dé to fight the battle resolutely and fiercely. She then chanted the following poem: „Kings arise to the battle! *[gap: meaning of text unclear]*"

Immediately afterwards the battle broke, and the Fomoiré were driven to the sea. The champion Ogma son of Elatha and Indech mac Dé Domnann fell together in single combat.

Lóch Lethglas asked Lug for quarter. „Grant my three requests," said Lug.

„You will have them," said Lóch. „I will remove the need to guard against the Fomoiré from Ireland forever; and whatever judgement your tongue will deliver in any difficult case, it will resolve the matter until the end of life."

So Lóch was spared. Then he chanted „The Decree of Fastening" to the Gaels. *[gap: meaning of text unclear]*

Then Lóch said that he would give names to Lug's nine chariots because he had been spared. So Lug said that he should name them. Lóch answered and said, „Luachta, Anagat, Achad, Feochair, Fer, Golla, Fosad, Cráeb, Carpat."

„A question then: what are the names of the charioteers who were in them?" „Medol, Medón, Moth, Mothach, Foimtinne, Tenda, Tres, Morb."

„What are the names of the goads which were in their hands?“ „Fes, Res, Roches, Anagar, Ilach, Canna, Riadha, Búaid.“

„What are the names of the horses?“ „Can, Doríadha, Romuir, Laisad, Fer Forsaid, Sroban, Airchedal, Ruagar, Ilann, Allriadha, Rocal.“

„A question: what is the number of the slain?“ Lug said to Lóch. „I do not know the number of peasants and rabble. As to the number of Fomorian lords and nobles and champions and over-kings, I do know:  $3 + 3 \times 20 + 50 \times 100$  men  $+ 20 \times 100 + 3 \times 50 + 9 \times 5 + 4 \times 20 \times 1000 + 8 + 8 \times 20 + 7 + 4 \times 20 + 6 + 4 \times 20 + 5 + 8 \times 20 + 2 + 40$ , including the grandson of Nét with 90 men. That is the number of the slain of the Fomorian over-kings and high nobles who fell in the battle.

„But regarding the number of peasants and common people and rabble and people of every art who came in company with the great host—for every warrior and every high noble and every over-king of the Fomoirie came to the battle with his personal followers, so that all fell there, both their free men and their unfree servants—I count only a few of the over-kings' servants. This then is the number of those I counted as I watched:  $7 + 7 \times 20 \times 20 \times 100 \times 100 + 90$  including Sab Úanchennach son of Coirpre Colc, the son of a servant of Indech mac Dé Domnann (that is, the son of a servant of the Fomorian king).

„As for the men who fought in pairs and the spearmen, warriors who did not reach the heart of the battle who also fell there—until the stars of heaven can be counted, and the sands of the sea, and flakes of snow, and dew on a lawn, and hailstones, and grass beneath the feet of horses, and the horses of the son of Lir in a sea storm—they will not be counted at all.“

Immediately afterward they found an opportunity to kill Bres mac Elathan. He said, „It is better to spare me than to kill me.“

„What then will follow from that?“ said Lug. „The cows of Ireland will always be in milk,“ said Bres, „if I am spared.“ „I will tell that to our wise men,“ said Lug.

So Lug went to Máeltne Mórbrethach and said to him, „Shall Bres be spared for giving constant milk to the cows of Ireland?“

„He shall not be spared,“ said Máeltne. „He has no power over their age or their calving, even if he controls their milk as long as they are alive.“

Lug said to Bres, „That does not save you; you have no power over their age or their calving, even if you control their milk.“

Bres said, „Máeltne has given bitter alarms!“

„Is there anything else which will save you, Bres?“ said Lug. „There is indeed. Tell your lawyer they will reap a harvest every quarter in return for sparing me.“

Lug said to Máeltne, „Shall Bres be spared for giving the men of Ireland a harvest of grain every quarter?“

„This has suited us,“ said Máeltne. „Spring for ploughing and sowing, and the beginning of summer for maturing the strength of the grain, and the beginning of autumn for the full ripeness of the grain, and for reaping it. Winter for consuming it.“

„That does not save you,“ said Lug to Bres. „Máeltne has given bitter alarms,“ said he.

„Less rescues you,“ said Lug. „What?“ asked Bres.

„How shall the men of Ireland plough? How shall they sow? How shall they reap? If you make known these things, you will be saved.“ „Say to them, on

Tuesday their ploughing; on Tuesday their sowing seed in the field; on Tuesday their reaping.“

So through that device Bres was released.

Now in that battle Ogma the champion found Orna, the sword of Tethra, king of the Fomoir. Ogma unsheathed the sword and cleaned it. Then the sword told what had been done by it, because it was the habit of swords at that time to recount the deeds that had been done by them whenever they were unsheathed. And for that reason swords are entitled to the tribute of cleaning after they have been unsheathed. Moreover spells have been kept in swords from that time on. Now the reason why demons used to speak from weapons then is that weapons used to be worshipped by men and were among the sureties of that time. Lóch Lethglas chanted the following poem about that sword [*gap: meaning of text unclear*]

Then Lug and the Dagda and Ogma went after the Fomoir, because they had taken the Dagda's harper, Úaithne. Eventually they reached the banqueting hall where Bres mac Elathan and Elatha mac Delbaíth were. There was the harp on the wall. That is the harp in which the Dagda had bound the melodies so that they did not make a sound until he summoned them, saying,

1. Come Daur Dá Bláo,  
Come Cóir Cetharchair,  
Come summer, come winter,  
Mouths of harps and bags and pipes!

(Now that harp had two names, Daur Dá Bláo and Cóir Cetharchair.)

Then the harp came away from the wall, and it killed nine men and came to the Dagda; and he played for them the three things by which a harper is known: sleep music, joyful music, and sorrowful music. He played sorrowful music for them so that their tearful women wept. He played joyful music for them so that their women and boys laughed. He played sleep music for them so that the hosts slept. So the three of them escaped from them unharmed—although they wanted to kill them.

The Dagda brought with him the cattle taken by the Fomoir through the lowing of the heifer which had been given him for his work; because when she called her calf, all the cattle of Ireland which the Fomoir had taken as their tribute began to graze.

Then after the battle was won and the slaughter had been cleaned away, the Morrigan, the daughter of Ernmas, proceeded to announce the battle and the great victory which had occurred there to the royal heights of Ireland and to its síd-hosts, to its chief waters and to its rivermouths. And that is the reason Badb still relates great deeds. „Have you any news?“ everyone asked her then. „Peace up to heaven. Heaven down to earth. Earth beneath heaven, Strength in each, A cup very full, Full of honey; Mead in abundance. Summer in winter [*gap: meaning of text unclear*] Peace up to heaven [*gap: meaning of text unclear*]

She also prophesied the end of the world, foretelling every evil that would occur then, and every disease and every vengeance; and she chanted the following poem: „I shall not see a world Which will be dear to me: Summer without blossoms, Cattle will be without milk, Women without modesty, Men without valour. Conquests without a king [*gap: meaning of text unclear*]

Woods without mast. Sea without produce [*gap: meaning of text unclear*]



False judgements of old men. False precedents of lawyers, Every man a betrayer. Every son a reaver. The son will go to the bed of his father, The father will go to the bed of his son. Each his brother's brother-in-law. He will not seek any woman outside his house [gap: meaning of text unclear]

An evil time, Son will deceive his father, Daughter will deceive..."

---

## Version B

### The edition used in this version:

Whitley Stokes, *The Second Battle of Moytura* in *Revue Celtique*. Volume 12, Paris, F. Vieweg (1891) page 52-130, 306-308

The present text represents odd pages 57-111 of Whitley Stokes' printed edition.

The Tuatha Dé Danonn were in the northern isles of the world, learning lore and magic and druidism and wizardry and cunning, until they surpassed the sages of the arts of heathendom.

There were four cities in which they were learning lore and science and diabolic arts, to wit Falias and Gorias, Murias and Findias.

Out of Falias was brought the Stone of Fál, which was in Tara. It used to roar under every king that would take the realm of Ireland.

Out of Gorias was brought the Spear that Lugh had. No battle was ever won against it or him who held it in his hand.

Out of Findias was brought the Sword of Nuada. When it was drawn from its deadly sheath, no one ever escaped from it, and it was irresistible.

Out of Murias was brought the Dagdae's Caldron. No company ever went from it unthankful.

Four wizards there were in those four cities: Mór-fesae was in Falias; Esras was in Gorias; Uscias was in Findias; Semias was in Murias. Those are the four poets of whom the Tuatha Dé learnt lore and science.

Now the Tuatha Dé made an alliance with the Fomorians, and Balor, grandson of Nét, gave his daughter Ethne to Cian son of Dian-cecht, and she brought forth the gifted child, even Lugh.

The Tuath Dé came with a great fleet unto Ireland to take it perforce from the Fir Bolg. They burnt their barques at once on reaching the district of Corcu-Belgatan that is, Connemara today, so that they should not think of retreating to them; and the smoke and the mist that came from the vessels filled the neighbouring land and air. Therefore it was conceived that they had arrived in clouds of mist.

The first battle of Moytura was fought between them and the Fir Bolg; and the Fir Bolg were routed, and a hundred thousand of them were slain, including their king Eochaid son of Erc.

In that battle, moreover, Nuada's hand was stricken off—it was Sreng son of Sengann that struck it off him— so Dian-cecht the leech put on him a hand of

silver with the motion of every hand; and Credne the brazier was helping the leech.

Now the Tuath Dé Danonn lost many men in the battle, including Edleo son of Alla, and Ernmas, and Fiachra and Turill Bicroo.

But such of the Fir Bolg as escaped from the battle went in flight unto the Fomorians, and settled in Arran and in Islay and in Mann and in Rathlin.

A contention as to the sovereignty of the men of Ireland arose between the Tuath Dé and their women; because Nuada, after his hand had been stricken off, was disqualified to be king. They said that it would be fitter for them to bestow the kingdom on Bres son of Elatha, on their own adopted son; and that giving the kingdom to him would bind the alliance of the Fomorians to them. For his father, even Elatha son of Delbaeth, was king of the Fomorians.

Now the conception of Bres came to pass in this wise:

Eri, Delbaeth's daughter, a woman of the Tuath Dé, was one day looking at the sea and the land from the house of Maeth Sceni, and she beheld the sea in perfect calm as if it were a level board. And as she was there she saw somewhat. A vessel of silver was revealed to her on the sea. Its size she deemed great, save that its form did not appear to her. And the stream of the wave bore it on to land. Then she saw that in it was a man of fairest form. Golden-yellow hair was on him as far as his two shoulders. A mantle with bands of golden thread was around him. His shirt had trimmings of golden thread. On his breast was a brooch of gold, with the sheen of a precious stone therein. Two white silvern spears, and in them two smooth riveted shafts of bronze. Five circlets of gold on his neck. A golden-hilted sword with (inlayings) of silver and studs of gold.

The man said to her: „Is this the time that our lying with thee will be easy?“

„I have not made a tryst with thee, verily,“ said the woman.

„Come against the (trystings),“ saith he.

Then they stretched themselves down together. Now the woman wept when the man would rise.

„Why weepest thou?“ saith he.

„I have two things for which I should lament,“ saith the woman. „Severing from thee (however) we have met. The fair youths of the Tuatha Dea Danonn they have been entreating me in vain, and my desire is for thee as thou hast possessed me.“

„Thy anxiety shall be taken away from these two things,“ saith he. He draws his golden ring from his middlefinger, and put it into her hand, and told her that she should not part with it, by sale or by gift, save to one whose finger it should fit.

„I have another sorrow,“ saith the woman. „I know not who hath come to me.“

„Thou shalt not be ignorant of that,“ saith he. „Elotha son of Delbaeth, king of the Fomorians, hath come to thee. And of our meeting thou shalt bear a boy, and no name shall be given him save Eochaid Bres, that is Eochaid the beautiful; for every beautiful thing that is seen in Ireland, whether plain or fortress or ale or torch or woman or man or steed, will be (compared) to that boy, so that men will say of it then *it is a Bres*.“

After that the man went back again by the way he had come, and the woman fared to her house, and unto her was given the famous conception.

Then she brought forth the boy, and he was named as Elotha had said, even Eochaid Bres. When a week after the woman's lying-in was complete the boy had a fortnight's growth; and he maintained that increase till the end of his first seven years, when he reached a growth of fourteen years.

Because of that contest which took place among the Tuath Dé the sovereignty of Ireland was given to that boy; and he gave seven hostages to Ireland's champions, that is, to her chiefs, for restoring the sovereignty if his own (misdeeds) should so give cause. His mother afterwards bestowed land upon him, and on the land he had a fortress built, even Dún Brese; and it was the Dagdae that built that fortress.

Now when Bres had assumed the kingship, Fomorians, even Indech son of De Domnann and Elatha son of Delbaeth, and Tethra, three Fomorian kings, bound their tribute upon Ireland, so that there was not a smoke from a roof in Ireland that was not under tribute to them. The champions were also reduced to his service, to wit, Ogma had to carry a bundle of firewood, and the Dagdae was a rath-builder, wherefore he, the Dagdae, trenched Rath Brese.

So the Dagdae was weary at the work, and he used to (meet) in the house an idle blind man named Cridenbél, whose mouth was out of his breast. Cridenbél thought his own ration small and the Dagdae's large. Whereupon he said: „O Dagdae! of thy honour let the three best bits of thy ration be given to me!“ So the Dagdae used to give them to him every night. Large, however, were the lampooner's bits, the size of a good pig, this was the bit. But those three bits were the third of the Dagdae's ration. The Dagdae's (health) was the worse of that.

One day, then, as the Dagdae was in the trench, he saw the Mac Óc coming to him. „That is good, O Dagdae,“ says the Mac Óc. „Even so,“ says the Dagdae. „What makes thee look so ill?“ says the Mac Óc. „I have cause for it,“ says the Dagdae. „Every evening Cridenbél the lampooner demands the three best bits of my portion.“

„I have a counsel for thee,“ says the Mac Óc. He puts his hand into his pouch, and takes thereout three crowns of gold, and gives them to him.

„Put,“ says the Mac Óc, „these three crowns into the three bits which thou givest at close of day to Cridenbél. These bits will then be the goodliest on thy dish; and the gold will turn in his belly so that he will die thereof, and the judgment of Bres thereon will be wrong. Men will say to the king: 'The Dagdae has killed Cridenbél by means of a deadly herb which he gave him.' Then the king will order thee to be slain. But thou shalt say to him: 'What thou utterest, O king of the warriors of the Féne, is not a prince's truth. For I was watched by Cridenbél when I was at my work, and he used to say to me 'Give me, O Dagdae, the three best bits of thy portion. Bad is my housekeeping tonight.'“

„So I should have perished thereby had not the three shillings which I found today helped me. I put them on my ration. I then gave it to Cridenbél, for the gold is the best thing that was before me. Hence, then, the gold is inside Cridenbél, and he died of it.“

„It is clear,“ says the king. „Let the lampooner's belly be cut open to know if the gold be found therein. If it be not found, thou shalt die. If, however, it be found, thou shalt have life.“

After that they cut off the lampooner's belly, and the three crowns of gold were found in his stomach, and so the Dagdae was saved.

Then the Dagdae went to his work on the following morning, and to him came the Mac Óc and said: „Thou wilt soon finish thy work, and thou shalt not seek reward till the cattle of Ireland are brought to thee, and of them choose a heifer black-maned, black [gap: meaning of text unclear/ extent: one word]“

Thereafter the Dagdae brought his work to an end, and Bres asked him what he would take in guerdon of his labour. The Dagdae answered: „I (charge) thee,“ saith he, „to gather the cattle of Ireland into one place.“ The king did this as the Dagdae said, and the Dagdae chose of them the heifer which the Mac Óc had told him to choose. That seemed weakness unto Bres: he thought that the Dagdae would have chosen somewhat more.

Now Nuada was in his sickness, and Dian-cecht put on him a hand of silver with the motion of every hand therein. That seemed evil to his son Miach. He went to the hand which had been struck off Dian-cecht, and he said „joint to joint of it and sinew to sinew,“ and he healed Nuada in thrice three days and nights. The first seventy-two hours he put it over against his side, and it became covered with skin. The second seventy-two hours he put it on his breasts. The third seventy-two hours he would cast white [gap: meaning of text unclear/ extent: one word] of black bulrushes when they were blackened in fire.

That cure seemed evil to Dian-cecht. He flung a sword on the crown of his son's head and cut the skin down to the flesh. The lad healed the wound by means of his skill. Dian-cecht smote him again and cut the flesh till he reached the bone. The lad healed this by the same means. He struck him the third blow and came to the membrane of his brain. The lad healed this also by the same means. Then he struck the fourth blow and cut out the brain, so that Miach died, and Dian-cecht said that the leech himself could not heal him of that blow.

Thereafter Miach was buried by Dian-cecht, and herbs three hundred and sixty five, according to the number of his joints and sinews, grew through the grave. Then Airmed opened her mantle and separated those herbs according to their properties. But Dian-cecht came to her, and he confused the herbs, so that no one knows their proper cures unless the Holy Spirit should teach them afterwards. And Dian-cecht said „If Miach be not, Airmed shall remain.“

So Bres held the sovranity as it had been conferred upon him. But the chiefs of the Tuath Dé murmured greatly against him, for their knives were not greased by him, and however often they visited him their breaths did not smell of ale. Moreover, they saw not their poets or their bards or their lampooners or their harpers or their pipers or their hornblowers or their jugglers or their fools amusing them in the household. They did not go to the contests of their athletes. They saw not their champions proving their prowess at the king's, save only one man, Ogma son of Etáin.

This was the duty which he had, to bring fuel to the fortress. He used to carry a bundle every day from the Clew Bay islands. And because he was weak from want of food the sea would sweep away from him two thirds of his bundle.

So he could only carry one third, and yet he had to supply the host from day to day.

Neither service nor wergild from the tribes continued, and the treasures of the tribe were not delivered by the act of the whole tribe.

Once upon a time the poet came a-guesting to Bres' house, even Corpre son of Etáin, poet of the Tuath Dé. He entered a cabin narrow, black, dark, wherein

there was neither fire nor furniture nor bed. Three small cakes, and they dry, were brought to him on a little dish. On the morrow he arose and he was not thankful. As he went across the garth he said:

Without food quickly on a dish:  
without a cow's milk whereon a calf grows:  
without a man's abode under the (gloom) of night:  
without paying a company of story-tellers,  
let that be Bres' condition.

„So there is no amain in Bres,“ saith he. Now that was true. Nought save decay was on him from that hour. That is the first satire that was made in Ireland.

Now after that the Tuath Dea went together to have speech with their fosterson, Bres son of Elatha, and demanded of him their sureties. He gave them the restitution of the realm, and he was not (well-pleased) with them for that. He begged to be allowed to remain till the end of seven years.

„Thou shalt have this,“ says the same assembly together, „but thou shalt come on the same security [*gap: meaning of text unclear/extent: one word*] every fruit [*gap: meaning of text unclear/extent: one word*] to thy hand, both house and land and gold and silver, kine and food, and freedom from rent and wergild until then.“

„Ye shall have“, says Bres, „as ye say.“

This is why they were asked for the delay, that he might gather the champions of the Fairy-Mound, even the Fomorians, to seize the tribes perforce, provided that [*gap: meaning of text unclear/extent: three words*]. Grievous to him seemed his expulsion from his kingdom.

Then he went to his mother and asks her whence was his race? „I am certain of that,“ saith she; and she went on to the hill whence she had seen the vessel of silver in the sea. She then went on to the strand, and his mother gave him the ring which had been left with her for him, and he put it round his middle-finger, and it fitted him. For sake of no one had she delivered it, either by sale or gift. Until that day there was none of them whom it suited.

Then they went forward till they reached the land of the Fomorians. They came to a great plain with many assemblies therein. They advanced to the fairest of these assemblies. Tidings were demanded of them therein. They replied that they were of the men of Ireland. They were then asked whether they had hounds; for at that time it was the custom, when a body of men went to another assembly, to challenge them to a friendly contest. „We have hounds,“ saith Bres. Then the hounds had a coursing-match, and the hounds of the Tuath Dé were swifter than the hounds of the Fomorians. Then they were asked whether they had steeds for a horse-race. They answered, „We have“; and their steeds were swifter than the steeds of the Fomorians.

They were then asked whether they had any one who was good at sword-play. None was found save Bres alone. So when he sets his hand to the sword his father recognises the ring on his finger, and inquires who was the hero. His mother answered on his behalf and told the king that Bres was a son of his. Then she related to him the whole story even as we have recounted it.

His father was sorrowful at him. Said the father: „What need has brought thee out of the land wherein thou ruledst?“

Bres replied: „Nothing has brought me save my own injustice and arrogance. I strip them of their jewels and treasures and their own food. Neither tribute nor wergild was taken from them till today.“

„That is bad,“ says the father. „Better were their prosperity than their kingship. Better their prayers than their curses. Why hast thou come hither?“ says his father.

„I have come to ask you for champions,“ saith he. „I would take that land perforce.“

„Thou shouldst not gain it by injustice if thou gain it not by justice,“ said the father.

„Query, then, what counsel hast thou for me?“ says Bres.

Thereafter he sent him to the champion, to Balor grandson of Nett; the king of the Isles, and to Indech son of Déa Domnand the king of the Fomorians; and these assembled all the forces from Lochlann westwards unto Ireland, to impose their tribute and their rule perforce on the Tuath Dé, so that they made one bridge of vessels from the Foreigners' Isles to Erin.

Never came to Ireland a host more horrible or fearful than that host of the Fomorians. The man from Scythia of Lochlann and the man out of the Western Isles were rivals in that expedition.

Now as to the Tuath Dé, this is what is here dealt with.

After Bres, Nuada was again in sovranity over the Tuath Dé. At that time he held for the Tuath Dé a mighty feast at Tara. Now there was a certain warrior on his way to Tara, whose name was Samildánach. And there were then two doorkeepers at Tara, namely Gamal son of Figal and Camall son of Riagall. When one of these was there he sees a strange company coming towards him. A young warrior fair and shapely, with a king's trappings, was in the forefront of that band.

They told the doorkeeper to announce their arrival at Tara. The doorkeeper asked: „Who is there?“

„Here there is Lugh Lonnannsclech son of Cian son of Dian-cecht, and of Ethne daughter of Balor. Fosterson, he, of Tallan daughter of Magmor king of Spain and of Echaid the Rough, son of Duach.“

The doorkeeper asked of Samildánach: „What art dost thou practise?“ saith he; „for no one without an art enters Tara.“

„Question me,“ saith he; „I am a wright.“

The doorkeeper answered: „We need thee not. We have a wright already, even Luchtae son of Luachaid.“

He said: „Question me, O doorkeeper! I am a smith.“

The doorkeeper answered him: „We have a smith already, even Colum Cualléinech of the three new processes.“

He said: „Question me: I am a champion.“

The doorkeeper answered: „We need thee not. We have a champion already, even Ogma son of Ethliu.“

He said again: „Question me,“ saith he, „I am a harper.“

„We need thee not. We have a harper already, even Abhcán son of Bicelmos whom the Men of the three gods (chose) in the fairy hills.“

Said he: „Question me: I am a hero.“

The doorkeeper answered: „We need thee not. We have a hero already, even Bresal Echarlam, son of Echaid Baethlam.“

Then he said: „Question me, O doorkeeper! I am a poet and I am a historian..“

„We need thee not. We have already a poet and historian, even En son of Ethaman.“

He said: „Question me,“ says he, „I am a sorcerer.“

„We need thee not. We have sorcerers already. Many are our wizards and our folk of might.“

He said: „Question me: I am a leech.“

„We need thee not. We have for a leech Dian-cecht.“

„Question me,“ saith he: „I am a cupbearer.“

„We need thee not. We have cupbearers already, even Delt and Drucht and Daithe, Taé and Talom and Trog, Gleí and Glan and Glési.“

He said: „Question me. I am a good brazier.“

„We need thee not. We have a brazier already, even Credne Cerd.“

He said again: „Ask the king,“ saith he, „whether he has a single man who (possesses) all these arts, and if he has I will not enter Tara.“

Then the doorkeeper went into the palace and declared all to the king. „A warrior has come before the garth,“ saith he. „His name is Samildánach, and all the arts which thy household practise he alone possesses, so that he is the man of each and every art.“

This he the king said then, that the chessboards of Tara should be fetched to him Samildánach and he won all the stakes, so that then he made the Cró of Lugh. But if chess was invented at the (epoch) of the Trojan war, it had not reached Ireland then, for the battle of Moytura and the destruction of Troy occurred at the same time.

Then that was related to Nuada. „Let him into the garth,“ says Nuada. „for never before has man like him entered this fortress.“

Then the doorkeeper lets Lugh pass him, and he entered the fortress and sat down in the sage's seat, for he was a sage in every art.

Then the great flag-stone, to move which required the effort of four-score yoke of oxen, Ogma hurled through the house, so that it lay on the outside of Tara. This was a challenge to Lugh. But Lugh cast it back, so that it lay in the centre of the palace; and he put the piece which it had carried away into the side of the palace and made it whole.

„Let a harp be played for us,“ say the hosts. So the warrior played a sleep-strain for the hosts and for the king the first night. He cast them into sleep from that hour to the same time on the following day. He played a wail-strain, so that they were crying and lamenting. He played a smile-strain, so that they were in merriment and joyance.

Now Nuada, when he beheld the warrior's many powers, considered whether he Samildánach could put away from them the bondage which they suffered from the Fomorians. So they held a council concerning the warrior. This is the decision to which Nuada came, to change seats with the warrior. So Samildánach went to the king's seat, and the king rose up before him till thirteen days had ended.

Then on the morrow he met with the two brothers, even Dagdae and Ogma, on Grellach Dollaid. And his brothers Goibniu and Dian-cecht were summoned to them.

A full year were they in that secret converse, wherefore Grellach Dollaid is called Amrun of the Men of the Goddess.

Thereafter the wizards of Ireland were summoned to them, and their leeches and charioteers and smiths and farmers and brehons. They held speech with them in secret.

Then Nuada inquired of the sorcerer whose name was Mathgen, what power he could wield? He answered that through his contrivance he would cast the mountains of Ireland on the Fomorians, and roll their summits against the ground. And he declared to them that the twelve chief mountains of the land of Erin would support the Tuatha Dé Danonn, in battling for them, to wit, Slieve League, and Denna Ulad and the Mourne Mountains, and Bri Ruri and Slieve Bloom and Sliab Snechtai, Slemish and Blai-sliab and Nemthenn and Sliab Maccu Belgodon and Segais and Cruachan Aigle.

Then he asks of the cupbearer, what power he could wield? He answered that he would bring the twelve chief loughs of Ireland before the Fomorians, and that they would not find water therein, whatever thirst might seize them. These are those loughs: Derg-loch, Loch Luimnigh, Lough Corrib, Lough Ree, Lough Mask, Strangford Lough, Loch Laeig, Lough Neagh, Lough Foyle, Lough Gara, Lough Reagh, Márloch. They would betake themselves to the twelve chief rivers of Ireland, even Bush, Boyne, Baa, Nem, Lee, Shannon, Moy, Sligo, Erne, Finn, Liffey, Suir; and they will all be hidden from the Fomorians, so that they will not find a drop therein. Drink shall be provided for the men of Ireland, though they bide in the battle to the end of seven years.

Then said Figol son of Mamos, their druid: „I will cause three showers of fire to pour on the faces of the Fomorian host, and I will take out of them two thirds of their valour and their bravery and their strength, and I will bind their urine in their own bodies and in the bodies of their horses. Every breath that the men of Ireland shall exhale will be an increase of valour and bravery and strength to them. Though they bide in the battle till the end of seven years they will not be weary in any wise.“

Said the Dagdae: „The power which ye boast I shall wield it all by myself.“

„It is thou art the Dagdae (good hand)“ saith everyone: wherefore thenceforward the name „Dagdae“ adhered to him.

Then they separate from the council, agreeing to meet again that day three years.

Now when the (provision) of the battle had then been settled Lugh and Dagdae and Ogma went to the three Gods of Danu, and these give Lugh the [gap: meaning of text unclear/ extent: one word] of the battle; and for seven years they were preparing for it and making their weapons.

The Dagdae had a house in Glenn Etin in the north.

Now the Dagdae had to meet a woman in Glenn Etin on that day year about the Allhallowtide of the battle. The river Unius of Connaught roars to the south of it. He beheld the woman in Unius in Corann, washing herself, with one of her two feet at Allod Echae i.e. Echumech, to the south of the water, and the other at Loscuinn, to the north of the water. Nine loosened tresses were on her head. The Dagdae conversed with her, and they make a union. „The Bed of the Couple“ is the name of the stead thenceforward. The woman that is here mentioned is the Morrígan Lamia.



Then she told the Dagdae that the Fomorians would land at Magh Scetne, and that he should (summon) Erin's men of art to meet her at the Ford of Uinius, and that she would go into Scetne to destroy Indech son of Dé Donann, the king of the Fomorians, and would deprive him of the blood of his heart and the kidneys of his valour. Now she afterwards gave her two handfuls of that blood to the hosts that were waiting at the Ford of Uinius. „Ford of Destruction“ became its name, because of that destruction of the king.

Then that was done by the artists, and they chanted spells on the hosts of the Fomorians.

This was a week before Allhallowtide, and each of them separated from the other until all the men of Ireland came together on Allhallowseve. Six times thirty hundred was their number, that is, twice thirty hundred in every third.

Then Lugh sent the Dagdae to spy out the Fomorians and to delay them until the men of Ireland should come to the battle.

So the Dagdae went to the camp of the Fomorians and asked them for a truce of battle. This was granted to him as he asked. Porridge is then made for him by the Fomorians, and this was done to mock him, for great was his love for porridge. They fill for him the king's caldron, five fists deep, into which went four-score gallons of new milk and the like quantity of meal and fat. Goats and sheep and swine are put into it, and they are all boiled together with the porridge. They are spilt for him into a hole in the ground, and Indech told him that he would be put to death unless he consumed it all; he should eat his fill so that he might not reproach the Fomorians with inhospitality.

Then the Dagdae took his ladle, and it was big enough for a man and woman to lie on the middle of it. These then are the bits that were in it, halves of salted swine and a quarter of lard.

Then said the Dagdae: „Good food this, if its broth attains what its taste attains.“ But when he used to put the ladle full into his mouth, then he would say: „Its [*gap: meaning of text unclear/extent: one word*] do not spoil it, says the old man.“

Then at the end he puts his curved finger over the bottom of the hole among mould and gravel. Sleep came upon him then after eating his porridge. Bigger than a house-caldron was his belly, so that the Fomorians laughed at it.

Then he went away from them to the strand of Eba. Not easy was it for the hero to move along owing to the bigness of his belly. Unseemly was his apparel. A cape to the hollow of his two elbows. A dun tunic around him, as far as the swelling of his rump. It is, moreover, long-breasted, with a hole in the peak. Two brogues on him of horse-hide, with the hair outside. A wheeled [*gap: meaning of text unclear/extent: one word*] fork to carry which required the effort of eight men, behind him so that its track after him was enough for the boundary-ditch of a province. Wherefore it is called „The Track of the Dagdae's Club“. [*gap: meaning of text unclear/extent: a few lines*]

Then the Fomorians march till their [*gap: meaning of text unclear/extent: one word*] were in Scetne.

The men of Ireland were in Magh Aurfolaigh. Then these two hosts were threatening battle. „The men of Ireland venture to offer the battle to us,“ says Bres son of Elier to Indech son of Dia Domnann. „I give this anon,“ says Indech, „so that their bones will be small unless they pay their tribute.“

Because of Lugh's knowledge the men of Ireland had made a resolution not to let him go into the battle. So his nine fosterers are left to protect him, even Tollus-dam and Ech-dam and Eru, Rechtaid the white and Fosad and Fedlimid, Ibor and Scibar and Minn. They feared an early death for the hero owing to the multitude of his arts. Therefore they did not let him forth to the fight.

Then the chiefs of the Tuath Dé Danann were gathered round Lugh. And he asked his smith, even Goibniu, what power he wielded for them?

„Not hard to say,“ quoth he. „Though the men of Erin bide in the battle to the end of seven years, for every spear that parts from its shaft, or sword that shall break therein, I will provide a new weapon in its place. No spearpoint which my hand shall forge,“ saith he, „shall make a missing cast. No skin which it pierces shall taste life afterwards. That has not been done by Dolb the smith of the Fomorians. I am now *[gap: meaning of text unclear/extent: one word]* for the battle of Magh Tuired.“

„And thou, O Dian-cecht,“ saith Lugh, „what power can you wield in sooth?“

„Not hard to say,“ saith he. „Every man who shall be wounded there, unless his head be cut off, or the membrane of his brain or his (spinal) marrow be severed, I will make quite whole in the battle on the morrow.“

„And thou, O Credne,“ says Lugh to his brazier, „what is thy power in the battle?“

„Not hard to say,“ quoth Credne, „Rivets for their spears, and hilts for their swords, and bosses and rims for their shields, I will supply them all.“

„And thou, O Luchta,“ says Lugh to his wright, „what power wouldst thou attain to in the battle?“

„Not hard to say,“ quoth Luchta. „All the shields and javelin-shafts they require, I will supply them all.“

„And thou, O Ogma,“ saith Lugh to his champion, „what is thy power in the battle?“

„Not hard to say,“ quoth he: „repelling the king and repelling three enneads of his friends, and capturing the battalion up to a third by the men of Ireland.“

„And thou, O Morrigan,“ saith Lugh, „what power wilt thou wield?“

„Not hard to say,“ quoth she. „What I shall follow I shall (hunt): what I shall strike has been *[gap: meaning of text unclear/extent: one word]*; what I have cut out shall be *[gap: meaning of text unclear/extent: one word]*.“

„And ye, O sorcerers,“ saith Lugh, „what power will ye wield?“

„Not hard to say,“ quoth the sorcerers. „Their white soles on them when they have been overthrown by our craft, till their heroes are slain, and to deprive then of two thirds of their might, with constraint on their urine.“

„And ye, O cupbearers,“ saith Lugh, „what power?“

„Not hard to say,“ quoth the cupbearers. „We will bring a strong thirst upon them, and they shall not find drink to quench it.“

„And ye, O druids,“ saith Lugh, „what power?“

„Not hard to say,“ quoth the druids. „We will bring showers of fire on the faces of the Fomorians, so that they cannot look upwards, and so that the warriors who are contending with them may slay them by their might.“

„And thou, O Carpre son of Etain,“ saith Lugh to his poet, „what power can you wield in the battle?“

„Not hard to say,“ quoth Carpre. „I will make a glam dicinn on them. And I will satirize them and shame them, so that through the spell of my art they will not resist warriors.“

„And ye, O Bé-chulle and O Dianann,“ saith Lugh to his two witches, „what power can ye wield in the battle?“

„Not hard to say,“ quoth they; „we will enchant the trees and the stones and the sods of the earth, so that they shall become a host under arms against them, and shall rout them in flight with horror and (affliction).“

„And thou, O Dagdae,“ saith Lugh, „what power canst thou wield on the Fomorian host in the battle?“

„Not hard to say,“ quoth the Dagdae. „I will take the side of the men of Erin both in mutual smiting and destruction and wizardry. Their bones under my club will be as many as hailstones under feet of herds of horses [*gap: meaning of text unclear*] where ye meet [*gap: meaning of text unclear*] on the battlefield of Moytura.“

So in that wise Lugh had speech as to their arts with everyone of them in turn; and he strengthened and (addressed) his army, so that each man of them had the spirit of a king or a mighty lord.

Now every day the battle was (joined) between the tribe of the Fomorians and the Tuatha Dé, save only that kings or princes were not delivering it, but only keen and haughty folk.

Now the Fomorians marvelled at one thing which was revealed to them in the battle. Their weapons, their spears and their swords, to wit, were blunted and broken and such of their men as were slain used not to come on the morrow. But it was not so with the Tuatha Dé. For though their weapons were blunted and broken to-day, they were renewed on the morrow, because Goibniu the Smith was in the forge making swords and spears and javelins. For he would make those weapons by three turns. Then Luchtaine the Wright would make the spearshafts by three chippings, and the third chipping was a finish and would set them in the ring of the spear. When the spearheads were stuck in the side of the forge he would throw the rings with the shafts, and it was needless to set them again. Then Credne the Brazier would make the rivets by three turns, and would cast the rings of the spears to them, and it was needless to [*gap: meaning of text unclear/ extent: one word*] before them; and thus they used to cleave together.

This then is what used to put fire into the warriors who were slain there, so that they were swifter on the morrow. Because Dian-cecht and his two sons, even Octriuil and Miach, and his daughter Airmed were singing spells over the well named Sláine. Now their mortally wounded men were cast into it as they would be slain. They were alive when they would come out. Their mortally wounded became whole through the might of the chant of the four leeches who were about the well.

Now that was harmful to the Fomorians, so they told a man of them to inspect the battle and the (custom) of the Tuath Dea, namely Ruadán son of Bres and of Brígh the Dagda's daughter. For he was a son and a grandson of the Tuath Dé. Then he related to the Fomorians the work of the Smith and the Wright and the Brazier and the four Leeches who were around the well. He was sent again to kill one of the artists, even Goibniu. From him he begged a spear, its rivets from the Brazier and its shaft from the Wright. So all was given to him as he asked. Now there was a woman there grinding the weapons, even Cron mother of Fianlug, she it is that ground Ruadán's spear. Now the spear was

given to Ruadán by a chief, wherefore the name *a chief's spear* is still given to weavers' beams in Erin.

Now after the spear had been given him, Ruadán turned and wounded Goibniu. But he plucked out the spear and cast it at Ruadán, so that it went through him, and he died in the presence of his father in the assembly of the Fomorians. Then Brigh comes and bewailed her son. She shrieked at first, she cried at last. So that then for the first time crying and shrieking were heard in Erin. Now it is that Brigh who invented a whistle for signalling at night.

Then Goibniu went into the well, and he became whole. There was a warrior with the Fomorians, even Octriallach son of Indech son of Dé Domnann, son of the Fomorian king. He told the Fomorians that each man of them should bring a stone of the stones of Drowes to cast into the well of Slaine in Achad Abla to the west of Moytura, to the east of Loch Arboch. So they went, and a stone for each man was brought on the well. Wherefore the cairn thus made is called Octriallach's Cairn. But another name for that well is Loch Luibe, for Dian-cecht used to put into it one of every herb lub that grew in Erin.

Now when the meeting of the great battle came, the Fomorians marched out of their camp outside, and formed themselves into strong indestructible battalions. Not a chief nor man of prowess of them was without a hauberk against his skin, a helmet on his head, a broad, (sounding) spear in his right hand, a heavy sharp sword on his belt, a firm shield on his shoulder. To attack the Fomorian host on that day was „striking a head against a cliff“, was „a hand in a serpent's nest“, was „a face up to fire“.

These were the kings and chiefs that were heartening the host of the Fomorians, namely, Balor son of Dot son of Nét, Bres son of Elathu, Tuirí Tortbuillech son of Lobos, Goll and Irgoll. Loscenn-lomm son of Lommglúnech, Indech son of Dé Domnann, the king of the Fomorians, Octriallach son of Indech, Omna and Bagna, Elathu son of Delbaeth.

On the other side the Tuath Dé Donann arose and left his nine comrades keeping Lugh, and they marched to the meeting of the battle. Then when the battle (follows) Lugh escaped from the keeping in which he was, as his charioteer, so that it was he who was in front of the battalion of the Tuath Dea. So then a keen and cruel battle was fought between the tribe of the Fomorians and the men of Ireland. Lugh was heartening the men of Ireland that they should fight the battle fervently so that they should not be any longer in bondage. For it was better for them to find death in protecting their fatherland than to bide under bondage and tribute as they had been. Wherefore then Lugh sang this chant below, as he went round the men of Erin, on one foot and with one eye closed:

*Arotroi cath comartan,  
etc.*

The hosts uttered a great shout as they entered the battle. Then they came together and each of them began to smite the other.

Many beautiful men fell there in the stall of death. Great the slaughter and the grave-lying that was there! Pride and shame were there side by side. There was anger and indignation. Abundant was the stream of blood there over the white skin of young warriors mangled by hands of eager men while fleeing the danger for [*gap: meaning of text unclear/extent: one word*] Harsh was the [...]

and [...] of the heroes and the champions mutually fending their spears and their shields and their bodies when the others were smiting them with spears and with swords. Harsh, moreover, was the thunder that was there throughout the battle, the shouting of the warriors and the clashing of the shields, the flashing and whistling of the glaives and the ivory-hilted swords, the rattling and jingling of the quivers, the sound and winging of the darts and the javelins, and the crashing of the weapons!

The ends of their fingers and of their feet almost met in the mutual striking, and owing to the slipperiness of the blood under the feet of the soldiers, they would fall from their upright posture and beat their heads together as they sat. A battle was upheaved, gory, shivering, (crowded), sanguinary, and then the river Unnsenn ran in corpses of foes.

Then Nuada Silverhand and Macha daughter of Ernmass fell by Balor grandson of Nét. And Cassmael fell by Octriallach son of Indech. Lugh and Balor of the Piercing Eye met in the battle. An evil eye had Balor. That eye was never opened save only on a battle-field. Four men used to lift up the lid of the eye with a (polished) handle which passed through its lid. If an army looked at that eye, though they were many thousands in number they could not resist a few warriors. Hence had it that poisonous power. His father's druids were concocting charms. He came and looked over the window, and the fume of the concoction came under it, so that the poison of the concoction afterwards came on the eye that looked. Then he and Lugh meet. *[gap: meaning of text unclear]*

„Lift up mine eyelid, my lad,“ says Balor, „that I may see the babbler who is conversing with me.“

The lid is raised from Balor's eye. Then Lugh cast a sling-stone at him, which carried the eye through his head. And so it was his own army that looked at it. And it fell on the host of the Fomorians, and thrice nine of them died beside it, so that the crowns of their heads came against the breast of Indech son of Dé Domnann, and a gush of blood sprang over his lips.

Says Indech: „Let Loch Half-green my poet be summoned to me!“ Half-green was he from the ground to the crown of his head. Loch goes to the king. „Make known to me,“ saith Indech, „who has (flung) this cast on me?“

Then the Morrígan, daughter of Ernmass, came, and was heartening the Tuatha Dea to fight the battle fiercely and fervently. So then she sang this lay below:

*Kings arise to the battle,  
etc.*

Thereafter the battle became a rout, and the Fomorians were beaten to the sea. The champion Ogma son of Elathu, and Indech son of Dé Domnann, the king of the Fomorians, fell in single combat.

Loch Half-green besought Lugh for quarter. „Give me my three wishes,“ says Lugh.

„Thou shalt have them,“ says Loch. „Till Doom I will ward off from Ireland all plundering by the Fomorians, and what *[gap: meaning of text unclear/ extent: a few words]* at the end of the world for every ailment.“

So Loch was spared. Then he sang to the Gael the „decree of fastening“:

*Gebat foss,*

etc.

Then Loch said that he would bestow names on Lugh's nine chariots because of the quarter that had been given him. So Lugh told him to name them. Loch answered and said, „Luachta, Anagat,“ etc.

„Query, what are the names of the charioteers who were in them?“

„Medol, Medon, Moth,“ etc.

„What are the names of the rods that were in their hands?“

„Not hard to say; Fes, Res, Roches,“ etc.

„What are the names of the horses?“

„Can, Doriadha,“ etc.

„Query: what is the number of the slain?“ says Lugh to Loch.

„I know not the number of peasants and rabble. As to the number of Fomorian lords and nobles and champions and kings' sons and overkings, I know, even five thousand and three score and three men; two thousand and three fifties; four score thousand and nine times five: eight score and eight; four score and seven; four score and six: eight score and five: two and forty including Nét's grandson. That is the number of the slain of the Fomorian overkings and high nobles who fell in the battle.“

„Howbeit as to the number of peasants and common people and rabble, and folk of every art besides who came in company with the great army—for every champion and every high chieftain and every overking of the Fomorians came with his host to the battle, so that all fell there, both his freemen and his slaves—we reckon only a few of the servants of the overkings. This then is the number that I have reckoned of these as I beheld: seven hundred, seven score and seven men [gap: extent: a few numbers] together with Sab Uanchennach son of Carpre Colc, son was he of a servant of Indech son of De Domnann, that is, a son of a servant of the Fomorian king.“

„As to what fell besides of *half-men* and of [gap: extent: three words] who reached not the heart of the battle, these are in no wise numbered till we number stars of heaven, sand of sea, flakes of snow, dew on lawn, hailstones, grass under feet of herds, and the Son of Ler's horses in a sea-storm.“

Thereafter they Lugh and his comrades found Bres son of Elathu unguarded. He said: „It is better to give me quarter than to slay me.“

„What then will follow from that?“ says Lugh.

„If I be spared,“ says Bres, „the kine of Erin will always be in milk.“

„I will set this forth to our wise men,“ says Lugh.

Hence Lugh went to Maeltné Mór-brethach, and said to him: „Shall Bres have quarter for giving constant milk to the kine of Erin?“

„He shall not have quarter,“ saith Maeltné; „he has no power over their age or their (offspring) though he can milk them so long as they are alive.“

Lugh said to Bres: „That does not save thee: thou hast no power over their age and their (offspring) though thou canst milk them.“

Said Bres: „Forbotha,“ etc. [...]

„Is there aught else that will save thee, O Bres?“ says Lugh.

„There is in sooth. Tell your brehon that for sparing me the men of Ireland shall reap a harvest in every quarter of the year.“

Said Lugh to Moeltne: „Shall Bres be spared for giving the men of Ireland a harvest of corn every quarter?“

„This has suited us“; saith Maeltne: „the spring for ploughing and sowing, and the beginning of summer for the end of the strength of corn, and the beginning of autumn for the end of the ripeness of corn and for reaping it. Winter for consuming it.“

„That does not rescue thee,“ saith Lugh to Bres. „Forbotha,“ etc., [...] saith he.

„Less than that rescues thee,“ saith Lugh.

„What?“ says Bres.

„How shall the men of Ireland plough? How shall they sow? How shall they reap? After making known these three things thou wilt be spared.“

„Tell them,“ says Bres „that their ploughing be on a Tuesday, their casting seed into the field be on a Tuesday, their reaping on a Tuesday.“

So through that stratagem Bres was let go free.

In that fight, then, Ogma the champion found Orna the sword of Tethra, a king of the Fomorians. Ogma unsheathed the sword and cleansed it. Then the sword related whatsoever had been done by it; for it was the custom of swords at that time, when unsheathed, to set forth the deeds that had been done by them. And therefore swords are entitled to the tribute of cleansing them after they have been unsheathed. Hence, also, charms are preserved in swords thenceforward. Now the reason why demons used to speak from weapons at that time was because weapons were worshipped by human beings at that epoch, and the weapons were among the safeguards of that time. It is of that sword that Loch Lethglas sang this lay:

*Admell maorna uath,  
etc.*

Now Lugh and the Dagdae and Ogma pursued the Fomorians, for they had carried off the Dagdae's harper, whose name was Uaitne. Then they reached the banqueting-house in which were Bres son of Elatha and Elathan son of Delbaeth. There hung the harp on the wall. That is the harp in which the Dagdae had bound the melodies so that they sounded not until by his call he summoned them forth; when he said this below:

*Come Daurdabla!  
Come Coir-cethar-chuir!  
Come summer, Come winter!  
Mouths of harps and bags and pipes!*

(Now that harp had two names, even Dur-da-bla, „Oak of two (greens)“ and Coir-cetharchuir, „Four-angled music“).

Then the harp went forth from the wall, and kills nine men, and came to the Dagdae. And he played for them the three things whereby harpers are distinguished, to wit, sleep-strain and smile-strain and wail-strain. He played wail-strain to them, so that their tearful women wept. He played smile-strain to them, so their women and children laughed. He played sleep-strain to them, and the hosts fell asleep. Through that sleep the three of them escaped unhurt from the Fomorians though these desired to slay them.

Then the Dagdae brought with him [gap: text omitted in original] through the lowing of the heifer which had been given him for his labour. For when she

called her calf all the cattle of Ireland which the Fomorians had taken as their tribute, grazed.

Now after the battle was won and the corpses cleared away, the Morrigan daughter of Ernmas proceeded to proclaim that battle and the mighty victory which had taken place, to the royal heights of Ireland and to its fairy hosts and its chief waters and its rivermouths. And hence it is that Badb also describes high deeds. „Hast thou any tale?“ saith everyone to her then. And she said:

*Peace up to heaven,  
Heaven down to earth,  
Earth under heaven,  
Strength in everyone,  
etc.*

Then, moreover, she was prophesying the end of the world, and foretelling every evil that would be therein, and every disease and every vengeance. Wherefore then she sang this lay below:

*I shall not see a world that will be dear to me.  
Summer without flowers,  
Kine will be without milk,  
Women without modesty,  
Men without valour,  
Captures without a king.  
[gap: extent: approx. 6 words]*

*Woods without mast,  
Sea without produce,  
[gap: extent: approx. 40 words]*

*Wrong judgments of old men,  
False precedents of brehons,  
Every man a betrayer,  
Every boy a reaver.  
Son will enter his father's bed,  
Father will enter his son's bed,  
Everyone will be his brother's brother-in-law.  
[gap: extent: 8 words]*

*An evil time!  
Son will deceive his father,  
Daughter will deceive her mother.*

---

## Sources

### Manuscript sources.

1. London, British Library, Harleian MS 5280, 63a-70b (Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum, by Robin Flower (London, 1926) vol. 2, 318-319).



### **Editions (including reviews)**

1. Whitley Stokes, [*Story of Goibniu the Smith at Moytura*], in Three Irish Glossaries (London 1862) 32.
2. Whitley Stokes, *The Second Battle of Moytura*, Revue Celtique 12 (1891) 52-130, 306-308.
3. Rudolf Thurneysen, *Zu irischen Texten* [3. *Cath Maige Turedh*], Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie 12 (1918) 401-406.
4. Vernam E. Hull, *Cairpre mac Edaine's satire upon Bres mac Eladain*, Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie 18 (1929) 63-69.
5. Brian Ó Cuív, *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*. The Second Battle of Magh Tuireadh (Dublin: DIAS 1945).
6. Brian Ó Cuív, *Lugh Lámhfhada and the death of Balar ua Néid*, *Celtica* 2 (1954, pt.1 1952) 64-66.
7. Elizabeth A. Gray, *Cath Maige Tuired: The Second Battle of Mag Tuired* (Irish Texts Society 1982). With English translation.
8. Review of above: Fergus Kelly, *Celtica* 17 (1985) 185-186.
9. Review of above: E. G. Quinn, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 9 (Summer 1985) 99-101.

### **Translations**

1. John O'Donovan, [translation: *Story of Goibniu the Smith in Moytura*], in *Sanas Chormaic*, ed. W. Stokes (Calcutta 1868) 123f.
2. H. d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Une légende irlandaise en Bretagne*. [The episode of Lug Samildánach], Revue Celtique 7 (1886) 230-33.
3. H. d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Le dieu irlandais Lug et le thème gaulois Lugu*, Revue Celtique 10 (1889) 238-43.
4. Whitley Stokes, *The Second Battle of Moytura*, Revue Celtique 12 (1891) 52-130, 306-308.
5. H. d'Arbois de Jubainville, *L'épopée celtique en Irlande* (1892).
6. Vernam E. Hull, *Cairpre mac Edaine's satire upon Bres mac Eladain*, Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie 18 (1929) 63-69.
7. Gustav Lehmacher, *Die zweite Schlacht von Mag Tured und die keltische Götterlehre*, Anthropos 26 (1931) 435-459.
8. Arzel Even, *La Bataille de Mag Tured*, Ogam 2-7 [n.s. vol. 2] (Sept. 1948-1950)

### **Secondary literature**

1. Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History* (Dublin 1861) 247-250.
2. Sir William R. Wilde, *On the Battle of Moytura*, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 9 (1866) 545-550.
3. Carl Marstrander, *A New Version of the Battle of Mag Rath*, *Ériu* 5 (1911) 227-231.
4. Gustav Lehmacher, *Die zweite Schlacht von Mag Tured und die keltische Götterlehre*, *Anthropos* 26 (1931) 435-459.
5. A.H. Krappe, *Nuada à la main d'argent*, *Revue Celtique* 49 (1932) 91-95.
6. Mary M. Banks, *Na Tri Mairt*, the Three Marts and the Man with the Withy, *Études Celtiques* 3 (1938) 131-143.
7. M.A. O'Brien, *Varia*, 5. *Second Battle of Moytura*, para. 132, *Ériu* 12 (1938) 239-240.
8. Georges Dumézil, *Servius et la Fortune: essai sur la fonction sociale de louange et de blâme et sur les éléments indo-européens du cens romain* (Paris: Gallimard 1943).
9. S. Ó Catháin, [review] *Studies* 35 (1946) 124-5.
10. Lugh [pseud.], [review] *Ir. Eccles. Rec.* 67 (1946) 69.
11. Máirín O'Daly, [review] *Ir. Hist. Stud.* 5 (1946/47 (1947)) 89-91.

12. Thomas F. O'Rahilly, *Mag Tuired*, in: *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin: DIAS 1946) app. 4, 388-90.
  13. Arzel Even, *Les Fomoiré*, *Ogam* 3 n.s. (1949) 10-14.
  14. Gerard Murphy, *Notes on Cath Maige Tuired*, *Éigse* 7 (1953/55, pt.3 1954) 191-198, 204.
  15. Brian Ó Cuív, *Cath Maige Tuired*, in: *Irish sagas by Myles Dillon* ([Dublin] 1959) no. 2, 24-37.
  16. Christian Guyonvarc'h, *Le cró Logo ou enclos de Lug, enclos sacré ou parc à bétail?* *Ogam* 13 (1961) 587-92.
  17. Jean Gricourt, *L'enclos du dieu Lug*, *Latomus* 20 (1961) 79-84.
  18. Elizabeth A. Gray, *Cath Maige Tured: Myth and Structure* (1-24), *Éigse* 18 (1980/1) 183-209.
  19. Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *Cath Maige Tuired as Exemplary Myth*, in: Pádraig de Brún, S. Ó Coileáin, P. Ó Riain (eds.), *Folia Gadelica: Essays Presented by Former Students to R. A. Breatnach*, Cork 1983, 1-19.
  20. William Sayers, *Bargaining for the Life of Bres in Cath Maige Tuired*, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 34 (1987) 26-40.
  21. Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *Three Notes on Cath Maige Tuired*, *Ériu* 40 (1989) 61-68.
  22. Kim McCone, *A Tale of Two Ditties: Poet and Satirist in Cath Maige Tuired*, in: Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone (eds.), *Sages, Saints and Storytellers. Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney*, Maynooth Monographs 2. Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989, 122-143.
  23. John Carey, *Myth and mythography in Cath Maige Tuired*, *Studia Celtica* 24/25 (1989/90) 53-69.
  24. Caoimhín Breatnach, *Oidheadh Chloinne Tuireann agus Cath Maige Tuired: Dhá Shampla de Mhiotas Eiseamláireach*, *Éigse* 32 (2000) 35-46.
-