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Textual Criticism and Medieval Irish Studies

Thesis submitted for the Degree of PhD

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Institute: University College Cork
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Submitted: October 2015

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CONTENTS

Table of Figures ii

List of Abbreviations iii

Declaration v

Acknowledgments vi

Introduction 1

1. *The Development of Modern Textual Critical Theory and Practice* 10

2. *Textual Criticism and Medieval Irish Studies* 55

3. *Editing Medieval Irish Narrative Prose* 111

4. *Theory into Practice: The Application of Textual Criticism to Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain* 182

5. *Theory into Practice II: The Application of Textual Criticism to Medieval Irish Poetry* 237

6. *Digital Editing: 'New Life for an Old Form'* 312

Conclusion 339

Appendix One *Theory into Practice: The Application of Textual Criticism to Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain* 346

Appendix Two *A Question of Orders* 368

Bibliography 370

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: A Sample Stemma 24

Figure 2.1: Stokes' 1880 edition of *Félire Óengusso Céli Dé* 89

Figure 2.2: Stokes' 1905 edition of *Félire Óengusso Céli Dé* 90

Figure 2.3: Binchy, '*Bretha Crólige*', p. 9 91

Figure 2.4: Carney, 'The Ó Cianáin Miscellany', p. 135 92

Figure 2.5: Bieler and Carney, 'The Lambeth Commentary', p. 12 93

Figure 3.1: Parker's Illustration of the Types of Variation Between Three Manuscripts of Luke 6:1-10 124

Figure 3.2: Epp's Variant Concious Edition of the Ascension Narratives: Luke 24:50-53 125

Figure 3.3: §45 Windisch's 1880 Edition of *Fled Bricrenn* 178

Figure 3.4: §45 of Henderson's 1899 Edition of *Fled Bricrenn* 179

Figure 4.1: British Library, MS Harl. 5280, fo. 48a 202

Figure 4.2: Carey, *In Tenga Bithnua*, p. 42 216

Figure 4.3: *BBmB*: A Sample Stemma 221

Figure 4.4: Scowcroft's Stemma of the Recensions of LGÉ 233

Figure 5.1: Stemma of *EIL* no. 34 Middle Irish Archetype 251

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACH	Association for Computers in the Humanities
ACLL	Archive of Celtic Latin Literature
AHDS	Arts and Humanities Data Service
AFM	Annals of the Four Masters
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
AI	Annals of Inisfallen
ALI	Ancient Laws of Ireland
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
ATig.	Annals of Tigernach
AU	Annals of Ulster
BB	Book of Ballymote
BBmB	*Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain*
CEAA	Centre for Editions of American Authors
CERN	European Organisation for Nuclear Research
CIH	*Corpus Iuris Hibernici*
CMCS	*Cambrian Medieval and Celtic Studies*
CSANA	Celtic Studies Association of North America
CSE	Centre / Committee for Scholarly Editions
DHO	Digital Humanities Observatory
Echtra	*Echtra mac nEchdach Mugmedóin*
EETS	Early English Texts Society
EIL	*Early Irish Lyrics*
FDG	*Fled Dúin na nGéd*
Fél.	*Félire Óengusso Céile Dé*
ITS	Irish Texts Society
HEA	Higher Education Authority

HTML	Hypertext Markup Language
HSIS	Humanities Serving Irish Society
L	Book of Lismore
LGÉ	*Lebor Gabála Érenn*
LL	Book of Leinster
MMIS	Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series
MR	*Mag Rath*
NT	New Testament
PHCC	*Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*
PTRLI	Programmes for Research in Third-Level Institutions
RIA	Royal Irish Academy
SAM	*Sex Aetates Mundi*
SCF	*Studia Celtica Fennica*
SGML	Standard Generalised Markup Language
TEI	Text Encoding Initiative
TRIA	Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy
TT	Texts and Transitions
XML	Extensible Markup Language
ZCP	*Zeitschrift für celtishce Philolgie*

Declaration
I declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or any other Institution.

Michelle Doran

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INTRODUCTION

Many textual scholars will be aware that the title of the present thesis has been composed in a conscious revisionary relation to Tim William Machan's influential *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*.[1] The primary subjects of Machan's study are works written in English between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, the latter part of the period conventionally labelled Middle English. In contrast, the works with which I am primarily concerned are those written by scholars of Old and Middle Irish in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Where Machan aims to articulate the textual and cultural factors that characterise Middle English works as Middle English, the purposes of this thesis are (a) to identify the underlying ideological and epistemological perspectives which have informed much of the way in which medieval Irish documents and texts are rendered into modern editions, and (b) to begin to place the editorial theory and methodology of medieval Irish studies within the broader context of Biblical, medieval and modern textual criticism. Hence, the title is *Textual Criticism and Medieval Irish Studies*, rather than *Textual Criticism and Medieval Irish Texts*.

Traditionally defined, the object of textual criticism is to establish from the divergent documentary copies a form of a text regarded as most nearly conforming to the original, the result of which is a scholarly edition complete with an introduction, an *apparatus criticus*, textual commentary and (in many instances) a glossary.[2] Until recently, the study of the transmission of the text was viewed primarily as an aid in the recovery of the underlying original. Similarly, variant

[1] Tim William Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts* (Charlottesville, 1994).
[2] Cf. Paul Maas, *Textual Criticism*, trans. Barbara Flower (Oxford, 1958), p. 1: 'The business of textual criticism is to produce a text as close as possible to the original'.

readings were judged to be secondary developments within the textual tradition. However, there is evident within the discipline a growing awareness of the importance of textual transmission and an understanding that the study of the variant forms of a text is a legitimate goal of textual criticism in its own right. Thus, I follow Greetham in defining textual criticism as:

> the archaeology of the text, although it is the sociology and the psychology of the text as well – for it is concerned not only with uncovering the layers of textual history as they accumulate one on another but also with examining the cultural and intellectual context of the text in its various appearances and with attempting to gain access to the consciousness (and even the unconsciousness) of the author and the subsequent bearers of the text's message.[3]

Such a definition is able to serve the purposes of a variety of perspectives and approaches of various scholars, including those who wish to continue to uphold the traditional goal of recovering the original text, those who wish to focus on the history of the transmission of the text, and those who may wish to study the wider reception of the text.

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of textual criticism for medieval Irish studies. Today it is the edited text rather than the medieval manuscript upon which the majority of students and scholars base their understanding of medieval Irish literature. When one considers that so much of our contemporary historical understanding rests on literary remains, it can be said without exaggeration that many of our ideas of the medieval Irish period itself are ultimately mediated by edited texts. To date, there has been relatively little discourse on the topic in the

[3] David C. Greetham, 'Introduction', in *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*, ed. David C. Greetham (New York, 1995), pp. 1-7, at p. 2.

field of medieval Irish studies.[4] This is particularly surprising given the central importance of scholarly editing within the discipline. Usually, ideas concerning editorial practice in a medieval Irish context are expressed implicitly. With the exception of a small number of recently published scholarly articles, discussion of textual criticism of medieval Irish texts has typically been restricted to introductions to editions. At present, there is no book-length examination of the subject. Thus, Kevin Murray writes:

> In most language-based university disciplines, textual scholarship is the handmaid of literary criticism; in our field the reverse is true. It is ironic, therefore, that the centrality given to textual criticism in medieval Irish studies, is not matched by an explicit engagement with the trends, theories, and modifications in this field which have emerged worldwide from those engaged in the editorial process.[5]

A major concern of the present thesis is the identification and articulation of a *de facto* method of editing medieval Irish texts. This methodology has had profound and far-reaching consequences for medieval Irish textual criticism and goes some way in explaining the current state of play within the discipline.

To avoid terminological confusion, I wish to specify the meanings of certain terms upon which I rely throughout this study. Firstly, the label *medieval Irish studies* designates the various and cumulative manifestations of the field of scholarly endeavour concerned with the texts written in the Old and Middle Irish periods

[4] Exceptions include Edgar Slotkin, 'Medieval Irish Scribes and Fixed Texts', *Éigse* 17 (1978-9), pp. 437-50; Máire Herbert, 'The Irish *Sex Aetates Mundi*: First Editions', *CMCS* 11 (Summer, 1986), pp. 97-112, at pp. 100-102; Kim McCone, 'Prehistoric, Old and Middle Irish', in *Progress in Medieval Irish Studies*, eds Kim McCone and Katharine Simms (Maynooth, 1996), pp. 7-53, at p. 28; Kaarina Hollo, *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDuíl Dermait and Its Place in the Irish Literary and Oral Narrative Traditions*, Maynooth Medieval Irish Texts 2 (Maynooth, 2005), pp. 50-51; Peter J. Smith, *Three Historical Poems Ascribed to Gilla Cóemáin: A Critical Edition of the Work of An Eleventh-Century Irish Scholar* (Münster, 2008), pp. 71-78; Kevin Murray, 'Reviews, Reviewers, and Critical Texts', *CMCS* 57 (Summer, 2009), pp. 51-70. Each of these contributions will receive specific attention throughout the course of this thesis.

[5] Murray, 'Reviews, Reviewers, and Critical Texts', p. 66.

which extended from the seventh to the ninth and from the tenth to the twelfth centuries respectively; many of these texts are only preserved in later manuscripts. In the discipline, 'Old and Middle Irish' and 'Early and Medieval Irish' (with uppercase 'm') are used synonymously. I have chosen to use Old and Middle Irish throughout, with medieval Irish (with lower case 'm') used as a convenient shorthand to encompass both periods of the language. My usage of the term 'medieval' in this context excludes the period of the thirteenth through to the fifteenth centuries, which is generally regarded as 'medieval' in other fields (including Irish history and archaeology).

Defining certain textual critical terminology proves to be more problematic. Recently the question of how one defines such fundamental concepts as *work* and *text* has become a source of considerable debate. Traditionally, textual criticism has been largely concerned with reproducing the work as an authorial intellectual product, defined by Peter Shillingsburg as 'the message or experience implied by the authoritative versions of a literary writing'.[6] Consequently, Gerard Thomas Tanselle stresses that the text can never be equivalent to the work it presents.[7] However, more recently some critics have contended that the work is constituted by the reader's appropriation of it and does not exist apart from those material copies in which it exists.

Tanselle defines *text* as 'the arrangements of elements in artifacts'.[8] Thus, we may speak of the texts of nonverbal or intangible works. The most common use of the word *text* in a textual critical context has been in reference to the actual

[6] Peter Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age: Theory and Practice* (Athens, 1986), p. 173. Also see Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, pp. 6-7.
[7] Gerard Thomas Tanselle, 'The Varieties of Scholarly Editing', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, pp. 1-32, at p. 12.
[8] Ibid., p. 10.

arrangement of words or marks of punctuation in any one physical form (the 'linguistic codes'), and in what follows I am concerned with texts in this sense.[9] Tanselle further distinguishes between the text of a *work* and the text of a *document*, writing that the former is 'an abstraction that may not have received a satisfactory embodiment in any one physical document'. In contrast, the latter 'stands on its own as a historical fact and is by definition, whatever appears in that particular document'.[10] Shillingsburg defines a *document* as 'the physical material, paper and ink, bearing the configuration of signs that represent a text'; he continues that, 'documents have material existence. Each new copy of a text, whether accurate or inaccurate, is a new document'.[11] As this is intended as a pragmatic study, I concentrate here far more on the texts of documents than on the texts of works.[12]

Despite the wide usage of the phrases such as *archetype*, *original text* and *authorial text* within the discourse of medieval Irish textual criticism, they are very seldom defined. Whilst these terms are related, they are not identical and require differentiation. The archetype of a text refers to the earliest possible state of the text that can be arrived at based on the extant manuscript witnesses and is generally (though not inevitably) distinct from the original text. By extension, the original text may be the archetype of the existing textual tradition. However, it is generally regarded as preceding the formation of the archetype. Within medieval Irish studies,

[9] For more concerning the term 'linguistic codes', see Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton, 1991), p. 13.
[10] Gerard Thomas Tanselle, 'Textual Scholarship' in *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*, ed. Joseph Gibaldi (New York, 1981), pp. 29-52, p. 34.
[11] Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age*, p. 51. Cf. Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p.7.
[12] Elsewhere ('Nineteenth-Century British Fiction', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, pp. 331-350, at p.345), Shillingsburg observes that 'scholarly editors now realize that they are not editing "the work itself" but, rather simply producing a new edition of the work, backed by a rich collection of textual materials' In contrast, Tanselle ('The Varieties of Scholarly Editing', p. 26) writes that 'editors of critical editions aim to go beyond documents to work or versions of works'.

the form of the original text is more often than not philologically determined – i.e. it is closely associated with the earliest stratum of linguistic data identifiable within the literary tradition. The original text may be associated with the authorial text insofar as it is perceived as the text of the original author. Recent discussion regarding the usage of these terms will receive extended treatment in Chapter Three.

I wish to emphasise that the present study is concerned with both the theory and practice of textual criticism and their relevance to medieval Irish studies. That the two are inextricably linked is reflected in the organisational structure of the thesis which is divided into two principal parts. Whilst editing is ultimately a pragmatic process, many challenges facing the textual critic are theoretically orientated. Therefore, the first three chapters are broadly historical and theoretical: they discuss, in turn, the history of textual criticism in general and the development of medieval Irish textual criticism within this wider framework, before responding to recent developments in textual criticism across disciplines and examining how these approaches might be applied in medieval Irish studies. Chapters Four, Five and Six are orientated in the practical application of the methodologies. Broadly speaking, the thesis examines where we were, where we are and where we might like to be.

The first two chapters characterise the theoretical framework that has come to define textual criticism and examines the impact of this framework on the field of medieval Irish studies. Chapter One explores the development of the theory and practice of textual criticism from the introduction of the printing-press in Rome in the late-fifteenth century to the present date. This initial chapter expressly excludes discussion of medieval Irish studies. In a thesis dedicated to the theory and practice of editing in a specific discipline, it might be asked why begin with an historical

study which omits it? The answer is twofold. Firstly, this structure reflects the reality of the development of textual criticism throughout the last half millennium. Whilst the prevalent theories of textual criticism were founded on the models of Biblical and classical studies, medieval Irish textual-critical scholarship has lagged far behind that of other European medieval vernacular based disciplines such as Middle English, medieval Italian, German and French. Indeed, it will be seen that many of the methods employed in our field were developed in response to the peculiar demands of other vernacular literatures rather than to the specific needs of medieval Irish manuscript culture. Secondly, the development of the wider editorial tradition plays a significant role in the explanation of the current approach(es) to medieval Irish texts. To date, the history of scholarly editing of Old and Middle Irish texts has been largely neglected. It is this lacuna in the knowledge of the discipline which Chapter Two attempts to address.

What follows is an analysis of various recent debates concerning the goals of scholarly editing. Chapter Three attempts to provide a succinct account of several more recent schools of textual methodology and, in doing so, emphasises not only the potential impact such approaches may have on the practice of medieval Irish textual criticism, but also the potential contribution which the field of medieval Irish has to offer the wider discipline of textual criticism.

The second section of the present study then moves to examine the application of theory to the practice of medieval Irish textual criticism. This section, I want to stress, is not intended as a manual for editing medieval Irish texts. Rather it focuses attention on the current state of play in the production of scholarly editions, and looks at the implications of the development of electronic means of

dissemination for editions of medieval Irish texts. It will be seen that one of the recurring issues throughout the present study is the importance for editors of being able to defend their choice of methodology through an awareness of the alternative approaches available to them. In this regard, Gregory Crane writes:

> If our goal is to support the intellectual life of humanity by making intellectual actions transparent for inspection, then the editorial process, construed as the sustained process of making primary sources intellectually accessible, rises to the fore. The most brilliant hypotheses and argumentation only assume their full value insofar as any human being can drill down behind the exposition and into the evidence.[13]

It is hoped that Chapters Four, Five and Six might provide future editors with a framework against which discusssions regarding the application of textual criticism and the editorial process to a particular text or set of texts can be set.

In his recent study questioning the traditional goal of New Testament textual criticism, Michael Holmes writes that the most important contribution of contemporary debates surrounding the goal of textual criticism is not a particular definition of the goal, 'but rather an increased awareness of the assumptions, methods, and procedures that shape (or are shaped by) any and every definition not just of the goal but of the discipline itself'.[14] In writing the present thesis, it has been my intention to encourage among both textual and literary critics greater awareness of the various 'assumptions, methods, and procedures' that shape current editorial methodology within medieval Irish studies. Only armed with such information can

[13] Gregory Crane, 'Give us Editors! Re-Inventing the Edition and Re-Thinking the Humanities', in *Online Humanities Scholarship: The Shape of Things to Come*, OpenStax CNX. May 14 2010, available at <http://cnx.org/contents/5df82a16-bb60-4ab2-8277-a61894c801ab@2@2> [accessed 07 February 2012].

[14] Michael W. Holmes, 'From "Original Text" to "Initial Text": The Traditional Goal of New Testament Textual Criticism in Contemporary Discussion', available at <https://events.umn.edu/prod /groups /public/@pub/@cla/@cnes /documents/eventfile/ 010984.pdf> [accessed, 01 May 2014]).

engagement with the challenges of textual theory and editorial practice begin in earnest.

CHAPTER ONE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

This chapter offers a description of the history of modern textual criticism, the aim of which is to provide a frame of reference for the history of scholarly editing of Old and Middle Irish texts to follow in the next chapter. It is divided into three main sections. The first outlines the developments in approaches to textual study during the pre-critical period (from the mid-fifteenth through to the closing decades of the eighteenth century). Beginning with the introduction of the printing-press in Rome and the impact this new technology had on textual scholarship, the main focus is on the achievements of certain distinguished personages and the developments which they represent.[1] Included in this section is a brief discussion of the importance of the developments of palaeography and accurate cataloguing of extant manuscripts in the advancement of a theory of recension. Secondly, the modern critical period – from the nineteenth century to the present – is discussed in two parts. The initial part pays specific attention to the critical methodologies most closely associated with New Testament and classical studies from which many of the basic methods of scholarly editing emerged. The focus then proceeds to the editorial methods which have developed in response to both medieval vernacular and modern literary scholarly editing. The following survey is necessarily concise for the critical reading of texts has a tradition encompassing more than two millennia, and it is not possible to

[1] Cf. Maurice D. Feld, 'The Early Evolution of the Authoritative Text', *Harvard Library Bulletin* 26 (1978), pp. 81-111, at p. 111: 'The history of classical scholarship ... is generally presented as a succession of idiosyncratic authorities. Rightly so, no doubt. The growth of knowledge is best described in the achievements of such unique and contentious figures as Scaliger, Bentley, Lachmann, and Housman'.

include every factor – historical, theoretical, or otherwise – which has had an effect on the development of contemporary textual criticism in such an overview.

The Pre-Critical Period

The three centuries following the arrival of the printing-press into Rome in 1469 witnessed many innovations in classical learning and the early evolution of European textual scholarship.[2] The invention of printing meant that large numbers of uniform copies of classical texts could be circulated without restriction; and despite the considerable faults of these early editions (commonly referred to as *editiones principes*), which we will presently be turning to consider, their dissemination was an essential precursor to the development of textual criticism upon which a mutually cooperative scholarly community could be built. 'The record of the *editiones principes* is then a prelude to, rather than a part of, the history of critical scholarship', writes Maurice Feld: 'It is only through the existence of a body of texts uniform in their contents and their irregularities that the critical approach became possible. The crucial contribution of printing is that it made this approach feasible'.[3]

Generally, the manuscripts which served as the printers' copy for the first editions were the more recent products of unsystematic and non-philological

[2] I have followed the example of Edward John Kenney by beginning my discussion of the pre-history of textual criticism with this event: 'It was a momentous occasion, pregnant with every kind of consequence, when Sweynheim and Pannartz came to Rome and set about issuing from their presses the great series of *editiones principes*'. Cf. *The Classical Text: Aspects of Editing in the Age of the Printed Book* (Berkeley, 1974), p. 1. The structure of the opening section of this chapter owes much to this work.

[3] Feld, 'The Early Evolution', pp. 83-4; cf. Kenney, *The Classical Text*, pp. 18-19: 'So far as textual scholarship and editing are concerned, the sole – but vitally important – difference [caused by the introduction of printing] was that the process of transmission had become, at a stroke, unilinear or 'monogenous' ... There now appeared, for the first time, the possibility of an effective, because permanent, control over the textual evidence'. Cf. Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, pp. 15-16: 'Psychologically, as exposure to written works came increasingly to depend on physically and lexically identical copies, readers would have come to regard these qualities as inherent in the nature of literary works. Their expectations for written works would in turn have encouraged the processes by which the copies were made'.

humanist activities.[4] These editions constituted the vulgate (*textus receptus* or *lectio recepta*), and became the basis of textual scholarship throughout the subsequent three centuries. During the latter half of the fifteenth century, Angelo Poliziano (Politian, 1454-94), a prolific Italian humanist, had advocated an approach to textual criticism which had as its central thesis the study of more ancient manuscripts.[5] In his *Miscellanea*, Politian went a step further by demonstrating an understanding of stemmatics which was not fully utilised until the Lachmannian era.[6] Politian was a scholar of exceptional brilliance and his work – and the work of Lorenzo Valla (1407-57) which falls outside the present discussion – represents the pinnacle of fifteenth-century textual scholarship.[7] Despite Politian's insistence that more ancient sources should be consulted, contemporary editors continued to make recourse to collations of manuscripts only in instances where they considered the vulgate to be obviously erroneous or unsatisfactory. This editorial procedure had a profoundly enduring impact upon the history of scholarly editing. In many ways, the history of pre-scientific textual criticism is the history of overcoming the vulgate tradition.

Initially, the survival of printing as the medium of learned communication was not guaranteed and during the first century following its invention the establishment of textual authority was an essential part of the development of the press. In all of this, the role of the printer-publisher was central. Names such as Sweynheim and Pannartz, or Froben, are inextricably linked to the activities of the

[4] See Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 3: 'it was nearly always the mongrel texts produced by the activities of the humanist copyists, scholars and critics ... of the Revival of Learning that served as printer's copy for the *editiones principes*'.

[5] For a summary of Politian's editorial methodology, see Sebastian Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, trans. Glenn W. Most (Chicago, 2005), pp. 46-8; Kenney, *The Classical Text*, pp. 4-10.

[6] Cf. pp. 22-27 for further details.

[7] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 16: 'The work of Italian scholars like Collucio Salutati (1331-1406), Niccolò Niccoli (1367-1437), and Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457) provides a terminus a quo for modern textual criticism'.

editors with whom they worked. Feld places considerable emphasis on the contributions of Aldus Manutius (1449-1515) of Venice to both the history of printing and the field of editing. Aldus – similar to other publishers of his time – was both a scholar and a businessman, and his main contributions were to Greek textual criticism.[8] The Aldine publications attempted to reproduce the texts of the ancient authors in their original form, free from medieval interpolations. In these texts we find 'the first systematic expression of the concept of primal authority'.[9]

During the sixteenth century, modern scientific textual criticism began to take shape. In 1516, Desiderius Erasmus' edition of the Greek New Testament became the first such text to be put on the market. His edition was far from perfect.[10] However, despite its many shortcomings (the most notable of which will be discussed in the following section), it became the *textus receptus* and held this venerable position right up to the modern period. Erasmus subscribed to the Aldine view of texts and his edition of the New Testament – faulty as it was – inspired a new scholarly enterprise throughout Europe. Through Erasmus' example, it became better understood that texts should be studied in their original form, i.e. free from interpolation, and in their original language. Furthermore, his work established the principle that texts of scripture were to be analysed according to the same principles

[8] Feld, 'The Early Evolution', pp. 90-5.

[9] Ibid., p. 94; Kenney (*The Classical Text*, pp. 49-51) also stresses the importance of printer-publishers for the history of the early development of textual criticism. For example, whilst discussing Denys Lambin's (Lambinius, 1520-72) edition of Horace (1561) which employs both roman and italic lettering to distinguish different classes of text, Kenney observes that: 'this particular point does not directly affect the editing of the text ... but it is a useful illustration of the dependence of the scholar, in the age of the printed book, on the resources, the technical skill, and the cooperation of his printer in conveying his message and that of his author' (pp. 64-5).

[10] For a summary of the criticisms of Erasmus' edition of the New Testament, see Bruce M. Metzger, 'The Greek New Testament', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, pp. 60-75, at pp. 65-6.

as all other works of literature.[11] Erasmus' editorial techniques, however, were largely negative. His aims were two-fold: on the one hand, Erasmus was a humanist who believed that the original texts should be freed from the conjectural emendations of their critics. On the other, he had become embroiled in contemporary theological debates and his editions reflect his reaction against scholastic learning.[12]

According to Feld, 'the actual originator of the tradition of positive, printed, critical authority, or textual criticism for the sake of the text, was the French humanist Guillaume Budé' (1468-1540).[13] Budé studied a broad range of subjects and his works include Latin translations of Plutarch, commentaries on the Roman legal system and the Greek language, and a ground-breaking examination of Roman numismatics. Although he was not primarily interested in textual criticism, Budé realised that a better understanding of ancient life depended on accurate editions and translations of the relevant sources. He initiated a trend in scholarship which encouraged authoritative learning and illumination of the past through as thorough an exposition as possible of the content of classical texts.[14]

Whilst the work of scholars such as Aldus, Erasmus and Budé contributed to the understanding of the original or authorial text, the three scholars generally considered to have laid the foundations of textual criticism emerged that towards the end of the *editio princeps* period in the early seventeenth century: they are Casaubon,

[11] Leighton D. Reynolds and Nigel G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford 3rd ed., 1991), pp. 161-2; see Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 51: 'What makes Erasmus important for the history of editing ... is the impetus which his great authority and example gave to the whole enterprise of establishing the foundations of all ... religious and secular learning – the texts themselves'.

[12] Feld, 'The Early Evolution', pp. 97-8; Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 50. Cf. David C. Greetham, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* (New York, 1994), p. 310: 'He [Erasmus] was a better advocate for humanistic/philological editing than a textual critic, for he lacked the technical skills to defend positions which he sensed to be right'.

[13] Feld, 'The Early Evolution', p. 98.

[14] Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*, pp. 172-3; Feld, 'The Early Evolution', pp. 98-100.

Lipsius and Scaliger.[15] The contributions of Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614) and Justus Lipsius (1547-1606) to the study of the classics are of the first importance. However, in the field of textual criticism with which we are primarily concerned, the French scholar Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540-1609) is pre-eminent. Scaliger is best known for his great work on Manilius published in two editions of 1579 and 1600. According to David Greetham, Scaliger's Manilius 'can be seen as epitomizing the difference between the subjective eclecticism of earlier editors and the more conservative methodology of the new'.[16] His scholarship contributed to a more scientific editorial approach by stressing the need to examine manuscripts critically. His stemmatic insight is best demonstrated by his edition of Catullus. Therein, Scaliger went further than any previous scholar in attempting to reconstruct the lost archetype and in establishing the history of a particular text.

Scaliger's scholarship can be seen as marking the beginning of an important juncture in the history of textual criticism. The goal of restoring of the authorial text was placed within the discipline of philology, one aspect of the more general *Altertumswissenschaft*, the science of antiquity.[17] Nicolaus Heinsius (1620-81), a Dutch classical scholar, was one of the greatest critics of Latin poetry and his career 'exemplifies well the gradual loosening of the hold of both the *textus receptus* and the humanists' highly selective collation methods upon textual theory'.[18] As a diplomat, Heinsius travelled extensively and enjoyed opportunities to explore the libraries of Europe. His work in this area, which is best exemplified in his Ovidian

[15] Feld, 'The Early Evolution', p. 83; John Edwin Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, II (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 103-5.
[16] Greetham (*Textual Scholarship*, p. 313) opines that Scaliger 'can be regarded as the founder of modern textual criticism'.
[17] Ibid., p. 314.
[18] Ibid., p. 317.

collations, set a new standard in the collation of classical texts.[19] Kenney notes that Heinsius' editorial methods were not exceptional; according to Kenney 'what distinguished Heinsius from all other critics of Latin texts was his peculiar combination of natural genius and laboriously acquired expertise'.[20] However, despite the evidence which he had amassed, Heinsius' editions fall far short of their potential. For example, although he acknowledges the haphazard manner in which the vulgate tradition of Ovid had developed in the preface to his edition, his reluctance to reject the vulgate is evident. Despite the abundance of manuscript material available to him, he continued to employ his father's (Daniel Heinsius, 1580-1655) text of 1629 as the base text of his edition. Consequently, his edition retains many erroneous readings against the evidence of the manuscripts.[21]

Heinsius' reluctance to emend the vulgate was not a reflection of his ability as an editor but of the editorial conventions in use during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The principal reason behind this practice of not communicating textual information, and the resultant lack of scientific progress in textual criticism, was the absence of a critical apparatus.[22] Confusion reigned. The documentation of sources was inconsistent and the differentiation between base text and editorial intervention was not always apparent. Furthermore, editors were unable to define the role of conjecture and, therefore, hesitant to include textual emendations which were not supported by evidence from the manuscripts.

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[19] Kenney, *The Classical Text*, pp. 59-60.
[20] Ibid., p. 58.
[21] Ibid., pp. 62-3; cf. Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, p. 53: 'Probably the scholarly disagreements about N. Heinsius and the divergent assessments of him for all the general recognition of his greatness, now as in the past, derive from the fact that he was a transitional figure, perhaps more conspicuously than others – half a Humanist in the restrictive sense of the term, half a Classical philologist aware of new requirements'.
[22] Kenney, *The Classical Text*, pp. 68-71; see also his appendix entitled 'Conservatism and the *Apparatus Criticus*', pp. 152-7.

The next important figure in the history of textual criticism is Richard Bentley (1662-1742), an English scholar of both the classics and theology; and, it is against the aforementioned background of textual criticism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the significance of Bentley's achievements and his famous statement in his note on Horace's *Odes* 3.27.15 that *nobis et ratio et res ipsa centum codicibus potiores sunt*, 'reason and the facts are worth more to us than a hundred manuscripts' are best understood.[23] Bentley's works – particularly his edition of Horace – are noteworthy for the part he allowed conjecture to play in the establishment of the text.[24] In 1721, Bentley proposed an edition of the Greek New Testament based on a comparison of the oldest Greek manuscripts with the Latin Vulgate and citations in the Patristic texts, which he believed would restore the text as it had been at the time of the Council of Nicaea.[25] Perhaps Bentley's approach to Biblical studies would have proved more revolutionary had his planned edition of the Greek New Testament come to fruition. However, Bentley abandoned this

[23] Richard Bentley, *Quintus Horatius Flaccus. Ex recesione et cum notis atque emendationibus Richardi Bentleii* (Cambridge, 1711), p. 147 (see Richard J. Tarrant, 'Classical Latin Literature', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, pp. 95-149, at p. 96). Note also that Bentley concluded his dictum by adding the words *praesertim accedente Vaticani veteris suffragio*, 'particularly if supported by the ancient Vatican manuscript'; cf. Kenney, *The Classical Text*, pp. 71-2. In addition to this famous pronouncement, Timpanaro cites a passage from the preface of Bentley's edition of Horace which is worth repeating here: 'In these Horatian labours, then, we offer more readings by means of conjecture than with the aid of manuscripts, and, unless I am entirely mistaken, for the most part more certain ones: for when there are variant readings, authority itself often deludes people, and encourages the deplorable itch to emend; but when conjectures are proposed against the testimony of all the manuscripts, not only do fear and sense of shame tweak one's ear, but reason alone and the clarity of the meanings and necessity itself dominate. Furthermore, if you produce a variant reading from one manuscript or another, you achieve nothing by claiming authority for one or two witnesses against a hundred, unless you bolster it with enough arguments to settle the matter on their own almost without the testimony of a manuscript. So don't worship scribes alone: no, venture your own wisdom, so that it is only when you have tested on their own the individual points against the general drift of the discourse and the character of the language that you pronounce your opinion and deliver your verdict' (*The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, pp. 55-6, n. 36).

[24] Kenney, *The Classical Text*, pp. 71-3 (p. 73): 'Bentley, with characteristic energy and audacity, had swept aside the inherited conventions of classical editing, the timid piecemeal nibbling approach of the older editors, and given what seemed to him to be the best text of Horace that the MS evidence and his own knowledge of Latin and the language of poetry allowed'.

[25] Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, p. 64; Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 100.

edition partly due to social pressure and partly because of the enormity of the task which he had outlined, and it was not until Karl Lachmann's edition of the New Testament, over a century later, that his goals were fully realised.[26] Although Bentley demonstrated a keen understanding of conjectural emendation, his methodology would now be considered unsatisfactory. The reason for this is that Bentley, like his contemporaries, failed to define textual criticism within the field of historical scholarship.[27]

During the following century, a theory of recension was advanced by a series of Biblical scholars. Before assessing the contributions of these scholars to the practice of modern textual criticism, there are two further developments to be discussed. The first is the emergence of palaeography as a scholarly discipline. That the editors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries failed to comprehend that the true nature of their studies was historical, and consequently lacked the techniques necessary to understand the nature of the manuscript evidence, has already been alluded to through the discussion of Bentley's editorial methods. Before textual criticism could progress towards a scientific methodology, it was, therefore, necessary to establish the discipline of palaeography. The primary function of palaeography is the study of handwriting in order to identify the age and type of script, allowing the palaeographer to help identify where and when a manuscript was written. Whilst certain scholars of the pre-critical period can be credited with a little palaeographical understanding of manuscripts, it was not until the end of the seventeenth century that the first steps were taken towards establishing palaeography

[26] Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, p. 84.
[27] Tanselle, 'The Varieties of Scholarly Editing', at p. 19; Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 19: 'This discovery and interpretation [of the manuscript materials] was essentially a historical process, and it cannot be too often reaffirmed, as Lachmann stated, that textual criticism belongs to the domain and to the discipline of history'.

as a proper independent scholarly discipline. The impetus behind this move was not, however, philological. Instead, it was a religious controversy between the Benedictines and the Jesuits that saw a Jesuit scholar allege, in 1675, that a charter which afforded certain rights to the French Benedictine order was a fake. In response to this accusation, Jean Mabillon (1632-1707), a Benedictine monk, wrote his seminal work on the history of Latin palaeography, *De re diplomatica* (1681). Within eighty years of its publication – through the works of Bernard de Montfaucon, Scipione Maffei, and the Maurist Benedictines Dom Tassin and Dom Toustain – the theoretical basis for the study of manuscripts, which is still largely employed today, was established.[28] With these developments in palaeography, textual criticism was placed in the field of history, an essential precursor towards creating the necessary conditions for scientific editing.

In addition to a lack of understanding of the nature of the manuscript material, scholars throughout the pre-critical era lacked sufficient knowledge of the evidence itself.[29] Tanselle defines the problem as follows:

> The idea that textual conjectures should be grounded on a knowledge of the relations among the extant texts of a work could not have produced practical results until the worldwide corpus of surviving manuscripts and printed books was brought under sufficient control to make access to relevant materials feasible.[30]

[28] For a summary of the developments in palaeography during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*, pp. 189-92.

[29] Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, p. 9: 'The advent of printing in the fifteenth century altered various parameters of the process of textual transmission but at first had no effect whatsoever on these methodological issues [the criteria for selecting a base text for an edition] ... What changed matters most was instead the concentration of three factors during the period from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries: the vast increase in the number of manuscripts, Greek and Latin, that became available throughout Europe during and after the Renaissance; the gradual concatenation of the holdings of libraries no longer in a large number of small collections ... and the general increase in the ease of communication and travel over the course of the early modern period. The result was that eventually there was no longer a scarcity of potentially available source texts from which further copies could be derived but an impressive, indeed intimidating overabundance'.

[30] Tanselle, 'The Varieties of Scholarly Editing', p. 19.

In order for textual criticism to continue to develop, more readily available and reliable information regarding both the location and the character of the witnesses was essential. The acquisition of this information was seriously hindered by the movement and exchange of manuscripts between 1500 and 1800. Furthermore, the editor and his publisher were forced to contend with the private book-collector whose interests were not always scholarly. Catalogues began to appear towards the end of the sixteenth century but it was not until the eighteenth century that they were published on a large scale. This is another field which benefitted from the advances in palaeography as standards of manuscript description subsequently improved. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, sufficient progress had taken place in this area to allow scholars access to the necessary textual evidence.[31]

Thus far, the focus main has been on the contributions of classical scholars to the foundation of modern textual criticism.[32] The intention now is to examine the advances made by theological textual scholars during the pre-critical era, paying particular attention to the developments occurring throughout the eighteenth century which led to the establishment of a scientific methodology. Bruce Metzger describes the science of New Testament textual criticism as consisting of three parts:

> (a) the making and transmission of ancient manuscripts, (b) the description of the most important witnesses to the New Testament text, and (c) the history of the textual criticism of the New Testament as reflected in the succession of printed editions of the Greek [New] Testament.[33]

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[31] Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 94: 'Thus after some three centuries and many vicissitudes the majority of the surviving MS material relevant to this discussion was by about the year 1820 in settled conditions, and a good part of it, though by no means all, known to the world at large through published catalogues'.

[32] The primary focus of the foregoing analysis [the history of classical scholarship] has been on editorial practitioners of the pre-critical period. Kenney (*The Classical Text*, pp. 21-46) devotes the second chapter of his book to the theorists of this period who tried to articulate a theory of textual criticism but were not themselves noted editors of classical texts.

[33] Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (Oxford, 2005; 4th ed.), p. xv.

The first two criteria fall outside the scope of this study. Utilising the example of Metzger's third criterion, the initial paragraphs of this section will deal specifically with the Greek New Testament, beginning with Erasmus' 1516 edition. It will then turn to consider the development of the genealogical method during the nineteenth century and the various modifications to this methodology by Biblical, classical and vernacular scholars throughout the subsequent one hundred and fifty years.

The basis of Erasmus' 1516 edition of the Greek New Testament is a collection of rather inferior and incomplete manuscripts. In several parts, most notably the last six verses of the Book of Revelation, Erasmus introduced Greek material which he translated directly from the Latin Vulgate. Throughout the subsequent two centuries, editors departed from Erasmus' edition in varying degrees. Most notable of these were Simon de Colines' (Colinaeus, 1480-1546) 1534 edition which contained numerous differences, partly drawn from the Complutensian Polyglot Bible,[34] Robert Estienne's (Stephanus, 1503-59) four editions, and the ten editions of Théodore de Bèze (Beza, 1519-1605). However, in 1633, when the preface to the second edition of the Greek New Testament, derived primarily from Beza's 1565 edition and issued by the Dutch printers Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir at Leiden, said of the text that *Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus*, 'What you have here, then,

[34] The Complutensian Polyglot Bible, which contained the Greek New Testament, was printed in 1514 making it the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament. However, it was not made available to the public until 1522, at which stage Erasmus' edition had become widely influential. See Metzger, 'The Greek New Testament', p. 64: 'When completed, the edition [of the Complutensian Polyglot] was a monument of both learning and typographical excellence'.

is the text which is now universally recognized: we offer it free of alterations and corruptions', the text was essentially that of Erasmus.[35]

During the eighteenth century, the conservatism which had protected the *textus receptus* from any considerable revision came under increasing scrutiny. The leading nation in this endeavour was the English. In 1707, John Mills (1645-1707) published his version of the Greek New Testament. Although Mills did not depart from the text of Stephanus, his collection of over 30,000 variant readings in the introduction to his edition sparked debate concerning the authority of the vulgate. The ensuing editions of Edward Wells (1667-1727) – published between 1709 and 1719 – and of Daniel Mace (published 1729) became the first to completely abandon the *textus receptus*. Despite the progress of these English scholars, their editions simply did not go far enough and the credit for many of the advances in textual criticism during this period belongs to a number of German scholars – most notably, Bengel, Semler and Griesbach, whom Tanselle has referred to as Lachmann's 'eighteenth-century predecessors'.[36]

In 1725, Johan Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752) published an essay in which he presented the critical apparatus intended for his own edition of the New Testament. Bengel recognised that manuscripts should be weighed and not counted, i.e. classified into groups and families:

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[35] *Novum Testamentum ex regiis aliisque optimus editionibus cum cura expressa* (Leiden,1633) (cited by Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Michigan, 1989; 2nd ed.), p. 6); Cf. Metzger, 'The Greek New Testament', pp. 65-6 and p. 72, where he writes that the author of this Latin Preface was in all probability Daniel Heinsius.

[36] Tanselle, 'The Varieties of Scholarly Editing', p. 19. Cf. Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 101: 'A theory of *recensio* emerged through the work of Bengel, Semler and Griesbach; and Wettstein, though he played no part in developing the genealogical method first adumbrated by Bengel, nevertheless deserves special credit for helping to lay the foundations of an agreed system of *sigla*'.

> Two or more groups, often agreeing, are worth the same as one: two or more manuscripts of a single group are worth the same as one when they agree with one another. But when they disagree with one another, a group or a manuscript agreeing with many does away with the present error of its comrades (i.e., with the error of its present comrades).[37]

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, Bengel's theories of classification were expanded by Johann Salomo Semler (1725-91) and Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745-1812). Semler distinguished between the external and internal age of a manuscript, that is, between the antiquity of the physical artefact and the date of the text contained therein. Griesbach employed Bengel's system of classification whilst editing the New Testament and consequently he produced a text which differed greatly from the *textus receptus*.[38] The pre-critical period concludes with Griesbach's editions of the New Testament. Scholars now realised that relationships between manuscript witnesses could be identified and employed in editing a text. The next step was the establishment of a theory of recension which is traditionally ascribed to Karl Lachmann.

The Modern Critical Period

The work which New Testament philologists began during the eighteenth century was continued by editors of classical and non-classical texts in the nineteenth century. The modern critical period begins with the development of a new scientific methodology which will, henceforth, be referred to as the genealogical method.[39] The genealogical method of textual criticism can be divided into four main steps,

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[37] Johan Albrecht Bengel, *Novum Testamentum Graecum* (Tübingen, 1734), p. 21 (cited in Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, p. 66).

[38] Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 167. Note Timpanaro's observations that 'although ... he [Griesbach] fully recognized the inconsistency of the receptus, he too did not free himself from it courageously enough': *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, p. 70.

[39] Other titles include: recensionary method; classical method; 'filiation theory', and the Lachmannian method.

recension (*recensio*), examination (*examinatio*), emendation (*emendatio*) and divination (*divinatio*). The method is based on the premise that there once existed a single archetype of a text, from which all other copies are derived. The archetype of a text refers to the earliest possible state of the text that can be arrived at based on the extant witnesses and is generally (though not inevitably) distinct from the original which is often referred to as the authorial text. Recension is essentially a systematic method for ascertaining the genealogical affiliations between all the surviving manuscripts of a text, the aim of which is the construction of a *stemma codicum*, or family tree.[40] Such *stemmata* are predicated on the notion of common error: if a group of witnesses exhibits similar errors peculiar to them, then they must derive from a common exemplar and therefore constitute a family.[41]

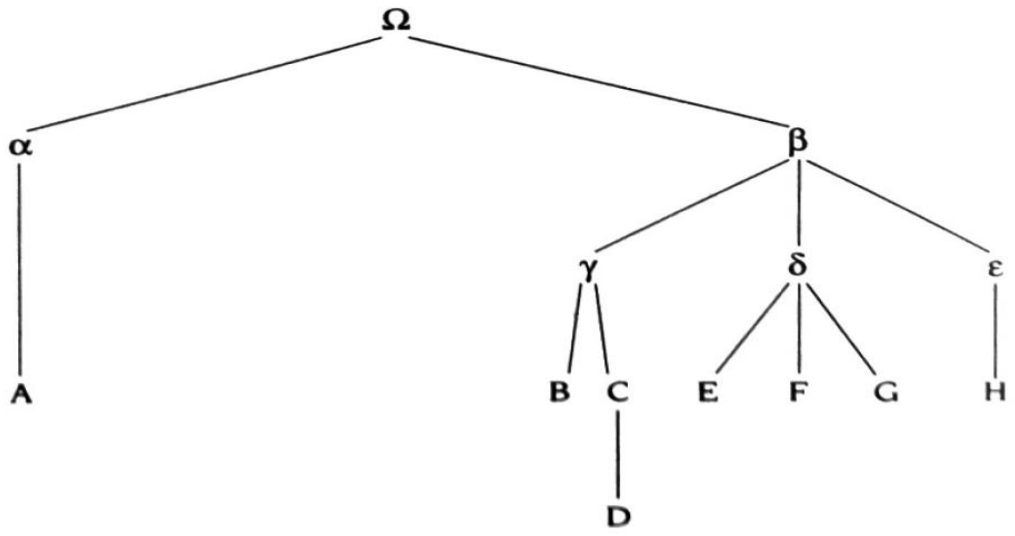

FIGURE 1.1: A SAMPLE STEMMA[42]

[40] For an excellent description of the method of recension, see Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 205-8. It should be noted, however, that the diagram contained therein does not employ Greek sigla which are generally employed to mark the presence of those manuscripts which are no longer extant. See fig. 1.1.

[41] For a summary of the objections to classification on the basis of shared error, see Lee Patterson, 'The Logic of Textual Criticism and the Way of Genius: The Kane-Donaldson *Piers Plowman* in Historical Perspective', in *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature*, ed. Lee Patterson (Madison, 1987), pp. 77-113, at p. 81.

[42] This image is from Tarrant, 'Classical Latin Literature', p. 104.

It follows that if, on the basis of common error, one manuscript witness can be proved to be derived from another then the derivative can be removed from the process of establishing the text of the archetype (*eliminatio codicum descriptorum*). Once the relationships between witnesses have been mapped out in a *stemma*, the next step is the reconstruction of the archetype (*examinatio*), emending the transmitted text when necessary (*emendatio*). Theoretically speaking, when there is a primary split of two branches, the editor will be able to establish the original to the point where there are no more than two variants to choose from. If the primary split is of three or more branches, then the aim is to reconstruct the archetype in full by regularly choosing forms attested in two or more of the manuscript families. Manuscripts are, therefore, weighed rather than counted in order to establish a given reading of the text and doubt only remains if all branches of the *stemma* contain different readings. The process of producing conjectures, referred to as *divinatio*, or divinatory criticism, is described most clearly by David Shackleton Bailey as follows:

> [The critic] is faced with a pattern of thought, part of which has been broken up. He has to adjust his mind to that pattern, run it into the mould of the author's, as represented in this particular passage. Once this is done, and the correct pattern, so far as it emerges from the context, is established, then, with the help of such indications as the corrupt piece itself provides, and subject to the control of touchstones which knowledge and experience automatically apply, the missing link may suggest itself, often with little conscious effort.[43]

The scholar traditionally credited with advancing the theory of recension is Karl Lachmann (1793-1851). In fact, much of the method employed by Lachmann

[43] David R. Shackleton Bailey, *Profile of Horace* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 108 (cited in Douglas Moffat (with Vincent P. McCarren), 'A Bibliographical Essay of Editing Methods and Authorial and Scribal Intention', in *A Guide to Editing Middle English*, eds Douglas Moffat and Vincent P. McCarren (Michigan, 1998), pp. 25-59, at p. 38).

had been foreseen by other scholars. Despite a long list of contributors to the method which includes Bentley, Johann Casper Orelli (1787-1849) and Johan Nicholai Madvig (1804-1886), Karl Gottlob Zumpt (1792-1849), Friedrich Ritschl (1806-1876), Hermann Sauppe (1809-93) and Johann Georg Baiter (1801-1877), Friedrich Wolf (1759-1824) and Immanuel Bekker (1785-1871),[44] Lachmann's influence was so great that it is often referred to as the 'Lachmannian method'.[45] Lachmann's identification with the genealogical method is due in no small part to his 1850 edition of Lucretius in which he famously employed the method to establish not only the text of the archetype but also the putative arrangement of the text on each manuscript page. In addition to classical texts, Lachmann also applied the method to the New Testament and to vernacular texts with varying degrees of success.[46]

The method advocated by Lachmann and his contemporaries dominated classical studies, particularly in Germany, for the latter half of the nineteenth century. In the course of the twentieth century, however, it became apparent that the logic which underlies this method is based on a number of assumptions regarding manuscript traditions which do not fully reflect the true nature of textual

[44] This list is mainly drawn from Tarrant, 'Classical Latin Literature', p. 106. See further, Kenney, *The Classical Text*, pp. 100-12.

[45] For an examination of the true extent of Lachmann's contribution to the formulation of the genealogical method of textual criticism, see Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, particularly pp. 43-118. He concludes on p. 118: 'Although Lachmann's natural talent as a Classical philologist was less acute and profound than that of some of his contemporaries ... and although he tended more toward a certain dogmatism than they did, he still deserves a place of considerable prominence in the history of nineteenth-century Classical scholarship because of his salutary insistence on the problem of *recensio*. And we will be able to continue to speak of "Lachmann's method," even if we will have to use this expression as an abbreviation and, as it were, a symbol, rather than as a historically accurate expression'.

[46] For an analysis of Lachmann's edition of the Greek New Testament, see Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 170-1; Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, p. 84-9. For a description of Lachmann's editorial approach to vernacular texts, see Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, pp. 320-1; Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 131; Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, pp. 79-81.

transmission: firstly, that all extant witnesses derive from a single archetype; and secondly, that diffusion from this archetype was only vertical and that no horizontal transmission, or cross-contamination (*contaminatio*), occurred. It has become increasingly apparent that the reality faced by editors is far more complex. For example, in instances where variants cannot be explained by the *stemma* models, there is the possibility that there originally existed more than one source for the tradition – i.e. that the tradition was 'open'. At some point in the transmission of the text, this source ceased to be used independently. However, redactors continued to consult it at various stages of the text resulting in the creation of variant readings within the main tradition. Similarly, copyists often employed more than one exemplar whilst transcribing a text, and consequently the branches of descent became entwined.

The early proponents of the genealogical method were not ignorant of the limitations of recension and the responsibility for misinterpreting its applicability mainly lies with post-Lachmannian editors.[47] Many of these later practitioners trusted the accuracy of the method implicitly, believing that they held in their hands a systematic means of establishing the archetype underlying the extant witnesses. Through the application of the genealogical method, the 'naturally and unreflectingly conservative type of critic' could now, on scientific grounds, rule out the use of subjective conjecture.[48] Such critics tended to afford too much respect to the

[47] Tarrant ('Classical Latin Literature', pp. 108-9) who cites examples of warnings from Sauppe and Housman (for whom, see Alfred E. Housman, *Selected Prose*, ed. John Carter (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 131-50, at p. 145); Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 125.

[48] Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 125. In fact, Lachmann did make substantial allowances for interpretation: 'On the other hand, interpretation – unless what the witnesses carry was understood and unless a judgement is made about the writer – cannot be freed from having a place. Again, emendation and determination of the origin of a book, because they extend to knowing the genius of a writer, just so utilize interpretation as a foundation. By which it may be that no part of this task can be separated from others, except that one which ought to be first of all': Karl Lachmann, *Nouum*

transmitted text and the readings contained therein. Often, they reduced the tradition of a text to a single manuscript (*codex optimus*), using recension to give their decision an air of authority – that many of these manuscripts were quite literally the 'best' surviving witness only served to further legitimate this approach.[49] Any consequent editions would follow the text of the elevated manuscript, referring to the other witnesses only in instances where the best manuscript was patently corrupt. That determining whether or not a reading is corrupt obviously entails critical judgement did not deter the practitioners of this methodology. The work of Lachmann contains no demonstrable parallels to this type of edition.[50] It was an evolution (or perversion) of the conservatism which the genealogical method encouraged.

Such dogmatic fidelity to fallacious methodology inevitably invoked an unfavourable reaction from more 'radical' editors. One of the principal detractors of later developments in the genealogical method was the English scholar and poet Alfred E. Housman (1859-1936). Whilst Housman acknowledged the usefulness of recension – indeed, he skilfully employed the technique in a number of his editions – he treated any attempt to eliminate editorial conjecture with derision. He was highly reproachful of conservative editors, famously commenting that: 'It would not be true to say that all conservative scholars are stupid, but it is very near the truth to say that

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Testamentum Graece et Latine (Berlin, 1842), p. v (cited in Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 23).

[49] Whilst making the same point, Tarrant ('Classical Literature', p. 111) has defined these manuscripts as 'best' on the grounds that 'they represented a purer, less heavily interpolated text-type than the majority of witnesses'.

[50] Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, p. 324. The relevant passage reads: 'Lachmann had wanted to go further than merely identifying the *extant* witnesses that stood in the "highest" position on the stemma: from comparing the reading of several such witnesses, it should be possible to arrive at the reading which certainly lay in the archetype'. Although Lachmann did not employ the *codex optimus* method, he did use stemmatics in order to eliminate awkward manuscripts; see Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, pp. 78-9.

all stupid scholars are conservative'.[51] It was not only practitioners of the genealogical method who were victims of Housman's aspersions – they were directed at any attempt to reduce textual criticism to 'hard-and-fast rules'.[52] In his 1921 address to the Classical Association, for example, he reiterates the criticisms of Moriz Haupt (1808-74) concerning the 'palaeographical' method which Housman describes as a 'silly game'.[53] But Housman reserved his most scornful invective for the exponents of the best manuscript approach. He ridiculed the practice in one very well-known passage from the introduction to his edition of Manilius:

> This method answers the purpose for which it was devised: it saves lazy editors from working and stupid editors from thinking … To believe wherever a best MS. gives possible readings it gives true readings, and that only where it gives impossible readings does it give false readings, is to believe that an incompetent editor is the darling of Providence, which has given its angels charge over him lest his sloth and folly should produce their natural results and incur their appropriate penalty. Chance and common course of nature will not bring it to pass that the readings of a MS. are right whenever they are possible and impossible wherever they are wrong: that needs divine intervention.[54]

Similar characteristically witty comments permeate the work of Housman, through which emerged some major editorial considerations regarding the dominant role of scientific methodology in classical textual criticism.

There can be no doubt that Housman possessed the faculties which allowed him to criticise so harshly. Between 1825 and the close of the nineteenth century, English classical studies had been in a state of decline: it was, as Kenney writes, a

[51] Alfred E. Housman, *M. Annaei Lucani, Belli Civilis Libri Decem* (Cambridge, 1950), p. xxvii.
[52] Alfred E. Housman, 'The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism', in *Selected Prose*, ed. Carter, p. 132.
[53] Housman, 'The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism', p. 142.
[54] Alfred E. Housman, 'Preface to Manilius I (1903)', in *Selected Prose*, ed. Carter, pp. 23-43, at p. 36.

period ‘characterized … by sloth, complacency and stagnation’.[55] The scholarship of Housman arrested this decline. However, the harshness of his criticisms meant that the extent of his genius was often overlooked by his European counterparts. According to Kenney, ‘what Housman’s editions provided and still provide for those willing to profit from them is a demonstration by a great scholar and critic of the fundamental principles of textual criticism in action’.[56] Housman was an exponent of the eclectic approach to textual criticism. The prime virtues of an editor, according to Housman, are ‘simplicity and rectitude of judgement’[57] and ‘the merits essential to a correction ... are fitness to the context and propriety to the genius of the author’.[58]

During the twentieth century, the genealogical method came under increasing attack from editors of both classical and non-classical texts. As a result of these animadversions, the positive contributions of Lachmann and his contemporaries to editorial method are often overlooked. Despite its many limitations, the genealogical method revolutionised textual criticism. The status of manuscripts was elevated above the vulgate which had hitherto been central to editorial activity. Post-Lachmannian editors no longer had any excuse for not recognising the importance of assessing all available manuscript witnesses. Furthermore, many of the principles set forth still remain central to editorial practice today. For example, following Lachmann’s edition of Lucretius, the editorial procedure was seen as consisting of two stages: recension and emendation. This distinction of editorial process is one of Lachmann’s genuine contributions to textual criticism.

[55] Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 116.
[56] Ibid, p. 128.
[57] Housman, ‘The Preface to Manilius I (1903)’, p. 32.
[58] Alfred E. Housman, ‘Preface to Manilius V (1930)’, in *Selected Prose*, ed. Carter, pp. 44-52, at p. 51.

The method of best-text editing – which is not to be confused with the best-manuscript approach described above – was developed in response to the shortcomings of the genealogical approach when applied to medieval texts and is most closely associated with the French scholar Joseph Bédier (1864-1938). Bédier first presented this model in his 1913 edition of *Lai de l'ombre* which it is claimed 'marked the death-knell of the old style critical edition [genealogical model] as far as the medieval French field was concerned'.[59] Bédier rejected the genealogical method on two grounds; firstly, he observed that the majority of reconstructed *stemmata* consisted of only two branches;[60] secondly, he recognised that the use of stemmatics often created a situation where various taxonomies were possible.[61] Regarding his former complaint, Bédier suggested two equally unflattering possible causes; either the method was fundamentally flawed, or its practitioners manipulated the *stemma* in order to remain in control of their editions.[62] Bédier's preferred method was to abandon the first stage of recension and to select the 'best text' – that is the most orthographically coherent and consistent text requiring minimum editorial intervention – and follow this text throughout, referring to the remaining

[59] Fredrick Whitehead and Cedric E. Pickford, 'The Introduction to the *Lai de l'ombre*: Sixty Years Later', *Romania* 94 (1973), pp. 145-56, at p. 145 (cited in Mary Speer, 'Old French Literature', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, pp. 382-416, at p. 394).

[60] Cf. Kenney, *The Classical Text*, pp. 133-4: 'It may also be suggested that, just as Lachmann's failure to equip his Lucretius with a pictorial stemma may have contributed to his misunderstanding of the relationships of the MSS, so conversely the now (that is by the end of the [twentieth] century) generally accepted convention of providing stemmata was liable to contribute to a different sort of misunderstanding. A clear distinction is not always drawn between the kind of stemma which is intended as an actual portrayal in diagrammatic form of proved relationships, on the basis of which editorial choices may (indeed must) be made, and the kind which merely illustrates without purporting accurately to describe the history of the text. The fundamental necessity is for the critic and editor to be clear in his own mind as to the historical implications of any model that he may use. A frequent cause of erroneous bipartite classification ... is the tendency to classify as a group what is in reality a residue'. See Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, pp. 157-87 and pp. 207-15.

[61] Cf. Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 133: 'Bédier was really criticizing, not the method itself but lack of circumspection in its employment'.

[62] Timpanaro includes a third cause in his discussion of Bédier's objections to the genealogical method: 'According to Bédier, the Lachmannian textual critic feels the persistent anxiety that, however far he has extended the criticism of variants, he has still not extended it far enough': *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, pp. 158-9.

witnesses only in instances where the base text was obviously erroneous (once again, a question of judgement arises here). Therein, lies the primary distinction between Bédiers approach and the best-manuscript approach employed by his Lachmannian predocessors: the version of the manuscript is selected as best not because it can be demonstrated through stemmatics to be closest to the original but because empirically it offers a more coherent text in a regular orthography and requires fewer emendations than the alternatives.

Although not without its merits (particularly in the sphere of vernacular editing which it must be noted was Bédier's primary concern) the decision to present one particular text as 'best' has been the subject of much criticism, particularly from editors of the classics. Greetham describes the failings of this method in the following way:

> There is an irony ... in Bédier's having decided that, because the genealogical system did not work honestly (or was not practised honestly), the editorial prerogative should be curtailed … he believes it possible to judge manuscripts by their ability to fulfill authorial preferences and yet then supposes that these preferences are otherwise unknowable, as far as emending the text is concerned.

Greetham continues by observing that Bédier's best-text theory merely duplicates the rationale of the more conservative Lachmannian editors, whom he opines were 'best-text editors of the Bédier stamp *avant la lettre*'.[63] Despite these failings, the 'best-text' method replaced the genealogical method as the most dominant editorial practice of medieval vernacular texts in the first half of the twentieth century, particularly in France where it remains firmly established.

[63] Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, p. 325.

Bédier was not the only scholar to object to the genealogical approach to editing medieval texts. Dom Henri Quentin determined that the genealogical method involved argument in a circle – in order to establish what constitutes an 'error', the editor must assume knowledge of the text originally contained in the archetype.[64] Quentin's solution, unlike Bédier's, was not the total abandonment of the method; instead he suggested modifying the theory of recension. Quentin's alternative approach was based on statistical or distributional analysis. He proposed replacing the word 'error' with the more objective 'variant'.[65] The manuscript evidence would then be arranged in a concordance table and compared in groups of threes. According to Quentin, in instances where two readings of a variant agreed the third could be eliminated. Quentin was also attempting to respond to Bédier's model and he demonstrated his method by constructing a *stemma* of *Lai de l'ombre* which he claimed would allow an editor to establish the text of the authorial original. The difficulty with this approach, however, is that it does not take into account the fundamental editorial principle set forth by Bengel that manuscript witnesses (and their variants) should be weighed rather than counted. Furthermore, the method does not differentiate between types of variants. However, Quentin's approach to textual criticism highlighted the importance of exercising caution when drawing conclusions based on shared error. According to Kenney, 'the historical importance of Quentin's

[64] Henri Quentin, *Essais de critique textuelle* (Paris, 1926). Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 135: 'This is one of those objections that are more striking in theory than in practice. It is something better than a quibble to observe that there is difference between deciding what stood in the original and what cannot have stood in it. In most classical texts it can be taken for granted that certain types of anomaly must be attributed to the accidents of transmission and not to authorial intention. Nor is argument in a circle necessarily vicious, providing, as Lachmann said, that the circle is trodden with care and discretion'.

[65] According to Kenney, this was Quentin's 'main positive contribution' to textual criticism: Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 135. Tarrant has a somewhat different opinion of this contribution: 'Attempts to meet the objection of circularity by replacing *error* with the apparently neutral *variant* – as suggested by Quentin – exchange one logical flaw for a worse one, since *variant* inevitably includes readings of the original, which cannot normally serve as the basis for family groupings': 'Classical Latin Literature', p. 107.

contribution is that it initiated a critical approach of a fundamentally different kind from Lachmann's, in which attention was directed to the textual variants themselves rather than the MSS which contained them'.[66]

The monumental work of Giorgio Pasquali (1885-1952), *Storia della tradizione e critica del testo*, developed from his review published in *Gnomon* of Paul Maas' (1880-1964) short treatise on the genealogical method, *Textkritik*.[67] Inspired by Maas' silence on the subject of contamination – the last sentence of Maas' book merely reads 'no specific has yet been discovered against contamination'[68] – Pasquali's response emphasises the non-mechanical (subjective) character of much contamination, particularly of Greek texts with which he was primarily concerned. His general thesis is that the problems of textual criticism are essentially historical problems. Given the haphazard nature of history (and by extension the history of textual transmission), there are a great deal more circumstances governing transmission than the adherents of the genealogical method would care to postulate. Therefore, each contamination or error must be treated according to its own merits rather than through the application of limited formulae which do not always accurately reflect the history of transmission. Pasquali attacked many of the basic assumptions which had arisen as a result of the misuse of the genealogical method. For example, the concept – which had hardened into a steadfast rule in some instances – that the more recent a manuscript was, the less valuable its readings were was objected to by Pasquali in his well-known aphorism *recentiores, non deteriores*, 'later, not inferior'.[69]

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[66] Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 136.
[67] Giorgio Pasquali, *Storia della tradizione e critica del testo* (Florence, 1934).
[68] Maas, *Text Criticism*, p. 49.
[69] This is the title of Chapter Four of Pasquali's seminal work.

Pasquali's reaction against the genealogical model was heavily influenced by the example of three German philologists whose works contributed to displacing the genealogical approach as the dominant method: Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1848-1931), Eduard Schwartz (1858-1940) and Ludwig Traube (1861-1907).[70] The approach which Pasquali advocated was not the complete abandonment of the method which the work of his German counterparts – Schwartz in particular – endorsed. He aimed to demonstrate that knowledge of external influences, such as historical or geographical considerations, was necessary in order to allow accurate emendations. Pasquali's insistence on external criteria was influenced by the theories of linguistics. For example, he insisted on the importance of the geographical criterion as defined by linguists; indeed, he cited it as one of the ideas with prompted him to write his *Storia della tradizione*. Although the value of the geographical criterion had been expressed by Lachmann – and before him Bengel and Bentley – Pasquali's view was more in keeping with the socio-cultural outlook of the linguists. According to the theory of lateral areas, when two or more manuscripts located at great distances from one another (or in 'marginal' zones) contain readings which agree, and where there is little or no chance of cross-contamination or coincidental innovation, then the readings must represent an authentic tradition.[71] In the model advocated by Pasquali and his neolinguistic counterparts, innovation originates within a cultural 'centre' radiating outwards towards the less advanced 'province(s)', i.e. 'the centre innovates, the margins

[70] The rebellion against the genealogical method in Germany (more specifically, the initial stage of recension) can be seen as early as 1843, when Otto Jahn (1813-1869), a diligent student and great admirer of Lachmann, in his *editio maior* of Persius, acknowledges that Lachmann, to whom the edition is dedicated, would more than likely disagree with his eclectic approach. Cf. Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, p. 125.

[71] The term 'authentic tradition' is deliberately ambiguous as the readings in agreement may come from a variety of textual traditions. These include (but are by no means limited to) an archetypal tradition, an authorial tradition, a scribal or parallel tradition (textual critical terminology will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three).

conserve'. Therefore, readings contained in manuscripts preserved within provincial or marginal areas may well be more ancient.[72]

The parallel developments in the methodologies of textual criticism and comparative philology offer valuable insights into the causes of the often excessive hostility encountered by the genealogical method. Timpanaro neatly summarises the methodological situation for the two disciplines in the early nineteenth century as follows:

> In both cases inherited elements must be distinguished from innovations, and the unitary anterior phase from which these have branched out must be hypothesized on the basis of the various innovations. The fact that innovations are shared by certain manuscripts of the same text, or by certain languages of the same family, demonstrates that these are connected by a particularly close kinship, that they belong to a subgroup: a textual corruption too is an *innovation* compared to the previously transmitted text, just like a linguistic innovation.[73]

Admittedly, this is a somewhat superficial sketch of the similarities in technique. However, the comparison remains valid. The analogy of method first became apparent in the work of August Schleicher (1821-1868) who applied the family tree model to the Indo-European languages. As with textual criticism, the confidence expressed in the genealogical method during the nineteenth century began to falter towards the close of the century. The importance of relationships between languages was emphasised and superseded the concept of vertical development from a mother language. For a time, linguistics exercised an influence over textual criticism,

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[72] Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, p. 86 n. 10: 'Neolinguistics (also called area or spatial linguistics) was a school originating from the teaching of Hugo Schuchardt and Jules Gilliéron which aimed above all to reconstruct the relative chronology of linguistic facts on the basis of their geographical distribution. The "neolinguists" were opposed to the "neogrammarians" and were influenced by the idealism of Benedetto Croce and Matter Bartoli'. For a discussion of the influence of neolinguistics on Pasquali's work, see idem, pp. 86-8 and pp. 130-8 to which the present discussion owes much.

[73] Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, p. 119. For a deeper analysis of the parallel between methods between textual criticism and linguistics, see ibid., pp. 119-38.

particularly with regards to explaining the genesis of corruptions. The similarity of approach, however, was the result of more than simply a coincidence or an exchange of ideas between the two disciplines. Towards the close of the nineteenth century, there was 'a shared cultural atmosphere' which witnessed the rejection of scientific method, or 'positivism', by the scholarly community.[74] This development had as its corollary a heightened appreciation of the historicity of texts.

Recent scholarship has tended to view the construction of modern textual criticism as taking place under the auspices of nineteenth-century philology.[75] As Karla Mallette declares, 'philology, as we know it and were taught to practice it today, was constituted during the nineteenth century under the sign of the nation. Under the influence of national ideologies it learned to represent the nation as natural phenomenon'.[76] Historicising textual criticism is an intrinsic aspect of Machan's investigation into the historical constitution of Middle English works and the modern editing of them. Commenting on the 'recognition of an original form of a text as the

[74] Ibid., p. 128.

[75] Machan (*Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 199, n. 23) notes, for example: Hans Aarsleff, 'Scholarship and Ideology: Joseph Bedier's Critique of Romantic Medievalism', in *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Madison, 1985) pp. 93-113; Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison, 1987), pp. 77-113; Bernard Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la variante: Historie critique de la philologie* (Paris, 1989); Allen J. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick, 1990), pp. 62-95; and Robert S. Struges, 'Textual Scholarship: Ideologies of Literary Production', *Exemplaria* 3 (1991), pp. 109-31. We might add to this list those more recent works cited by Kabir, 'Reading Between the Lines', pp. 78-97 such as: Nadia Altschul, 'Andrés Bello and the *Poem of the Cid*: Latin America, Occidentalism and the Foundations of Spain's "National Philology"' in *Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World: The Idea of The 'Middle Ages' Outside Europe*, eds Kathleen Davis and Nadia Altschul (Baltimore, 2009), pp. 219-236; Michelle R. Warren, 'Medievalism and the Making of Nations', in *Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World*, eds Davis and Altschul, pp. 286-98 and Karla Mallette, *European Modernity and the Arab Mediterranean: Toward a New Philology and Counter-Orientalism* (Philadelphia, 2010). A further notable example is John Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in a Manuscript Culture: Glossing the Libro de buen amor* (Princeton, 1994).

[76] Mallette, *European Modernity and the Arab Mediterranean*, p. 229. Cited in Kabir, 'Reading Between the Lines', p. 81.

product of an individual and as distinct from subsequent developments of that text — as, in fact, the correct form of the text', Machan remarks:

> This equation has recently experienced all manner of aesthetic and ideological attacks ... among New Historicists it has become commonplace to situate, often accusatorily, initial interest in an authorial text in the nineteenth century and its privileging of origins in linguistics, criticism, mythology. Such a view, however, is ultimately an index of the way the humanists safeguarded their textual criticism.[77]

Modern textual criticism would not be possible without a number of determining cultural factors that emerged during the Renaissance such as 'the humanists' appreciation of the Antique world, their almost clichéd valorization of self, and their refined sense of historicity'. Furthermore, the Renaissance view of linguistics 'which tended to be far more empirical than the speculative and philosophical medieval linguistics of the *modistae*' played a significant role in the humanist construction of textual criticism.[78] As the current discussion aptly demonstrates, the evolution of textual criticism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries is as much a question of nationalities as it is of personalities. Moreover, whilst Machan is undeniably correct in his assertions concerning the humanist origins of modern textual criticism, his contention that textual criticism remained a passive discipline during the intellectual revolution of 'relativism' during the decades surrounding World War I is overly simplistic. Though the aim of critical editions continued to be the recovery of genuine authorial texts, the manner in which critics attempted to achieve this objective was altered to incorporate a greater understanding of the variable nature of the manuscript materials.

[77] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 14, p. 19.
[78] Ibid., p. 14.

Throughout the twentieth century, more subjective editorial strategies to vernacular textual criticism, similar to Pasquali's approach, arose as a result of this new school of thought. The terms 'direct' or 'deep' editing refer to the eclectic method of editing as it is applied to Middle English materials. The theory of direct editing was developed by George Kane (1916-2008) – with whom the method is most closely associated – and Ethelbert Talbot Donaldson. The fullest explication of such an approach is found in their much debated 1975 edition of the B Text of *Piers Plowman*.[79] While attempting to produce a *stemma codicum* for the extant witnesses of the A text of *Piers Plowman*, Kane concluded that it was not possible to establish the genealogical filiation of the manuscripts with any degree of certainty. Faced with this problem, he determined that it would be more appropriate to edit Langland's text through collation and analysis of all points of variation. Kane postulated that it was possible, through the examination of categories of scribal errors, to differentiate between the writing practices (*usus scribendi*) of the author (also referred to as *usus auctoris*) and subsequent scribes and, therefore, to identify the form of the original text. Nothing that Kane said was in fact new; similar procedures had already been applied to Biblical and classical textual criticism, and parallels are present in the aforementioned work of Pasquali. The primary difference between Kane's approach and the genealogical approach is the nature of the emphasis each places on the systematic analysis of scribal variants.

For direct editing to be valid, it depends on two related criteria. First, there should be sufficient evidence to allow the editor to draw conclusions regarding the putative form of the original. Secondly, an analysis of the textual tradition must

[79] George Kane, Ethelbert Talbot Donaldson and George H. Russell (eds), *Piers Plowman – The Three Versions. Volume Two: The B Version* (London, 1988).

support the notion of a single archetype.[80] Ideally, the text will survive in many copies of considerable length so that the editor may attempt to establish the *usus auctoris*. The chief methodological principle involved is that formulated by Bengel of *lectio difficilior potior* 'the more difficult reading is the better one'. This maxim holds that when considering variants the more difficult one is generally correct, as scribes tended to simplify their texts rather than complicate them.[81] The author must, therefore, be a craftsman of considerable talent so that the editor may identify more banal scribal contributions. Regarding emendations, Kane did not employ a base text, nor did he limit himself to existing variants; he was willing to employ conjectural emendation as frequently and extensively as he judged it to be necessary.

The criteria necessary for utilising direct editing mean that Kane's method is extremely limited in its applicability. In an attempt to broaden the number of texts amenable to this editorial technique, scholars of Middle English have identified two preliminary steps to be carried out by editors before attempting to edit a text which does not fall strictly within the limits set forth by Kane. The initial step involves the establishment of a taxonomy of scribal variations. This is followed by a careful consideration of what constitutes the *usus auctoris*.[82] There are considerable challenges in evaluating the relationships between authors and scribes, and in qualifying the variations of authorial intention implied in this proposed alteration of the technique. The editor runs the risk of obscuring the textual tradition by eliminating equally legitimate variant readings in an attempt to identify the author with a single version of the text. Although direct editing may be slow to yield

[80] Ibid., p. 194.
[81] Cf. the cautionary note in ibid., p. 196: 'The quest for difficulty in textual criticism can become a self-fulfilling one, where editing becomes invention, justified by increasingly elaborate hypotheses'.
[82] Moffat (with McCarren), 'A Bibliographical Essay of Editing Methods and Authorial and Scribal Intention', p. 38.

practical results, the overall impact of Kane's example has been very important – particularly for Middle English studies. The method caused a shift in emphasis from the establishment of a stemma to a greater focus on individual variation. Consequently, the causes of scribal variation were given more consideration and the elevation of a particular witness through the process of recension ceased to be viewed as a necessity.

Before concluding this analysis of stemmatics the methodological contributions of two English Renaissance scholars – Walter W. Greg (1875-1959) and Vinton Dearing (1920-2005) – must be considered. The editorial methods they developed employ systems of complex mathematics which, in many ways, has hindered their reception by textual scholars. Greg's *Calculus of Variants* depends on complicated algebraic formulae employed as an alternative to the genealogical family tree model in order to chart the genealogical filiations of textual witnesses. The object of Greg's method is to define the concept of the 'exclusive common ancestor' (or the archetype) of individual variant groups within separate branches of a stemma 'by substituting, so far as may be convenient, the use of symbols and formal rules for the continuous application of reason'.[83] Greg's system is noteworthy as it can accurately represent relationships which may be only ambiguously demonstrated using the traditional model. Like Lachmann's approach, however, Greg's method fails to produce satisfactory results when dealing with texts subject to contamination. Furthermore, few critics subscribe to the method; this is largely due to the complexity of Greg's formulation. Thus, Greetham concludes his account of Greg's modifications to stemmatic theory by noting that he knows of 'no

[83] Walter W. Greg, *The Calculus of Variants: An Essay on Textual Criticism* (Oxford, 1927), p. 13 (cited by Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 136).

practical editing which has been entirely conducted according to the precepts of the *Calculus*'.[84] Greg's greatest contribution to scholarly editing was yet to come and will be discussed presently.

Vinton Dearing attempted to address Greg's lack of accountability for cross-contamination in his *Principles and Practice of Textual Analysis*.[85] Dearing's methodology is equally as complicated – if not more so – than that of his predecessor. It combines the 'ring' model of mathematical logic whereby the relationships between witnesses are charted in a ring, with the principle of parsimony which prevents an analyst from rewriting a number of variations when the filiation can be represented at a single point; at which point, the ring may be broken into lines.[86] While in theory, Dearing's approach appears to be perfectly logical (indeed, that was the intention), the method has one major short-coming. Similar to Quentin, the connections by which the rings are drawn are ascribed no value and, therefore, it is highly unlikely that the actual filiations between witnesses would be accurately represented.

Both Greg and Dearing were primarily concerned with vernacular literatures and before continuing to examine the independent contributions of vernacular studies to scholarly editing, something must be said of the state of classical scholarship in the latter half of the twentieth century. In his summary of the genealogical method, Metzger identifies three noteworthy contributions to the theory and practice of textual criticism during this period. These are: Martin West's *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique*, Kenney's *The Classical Text: Aspects of Editing in the Age of*

[84] Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, p. 328.
[85] Vinton Dearing, *Principles and Practice of Textual Analysis* (California, 1974).
[86] Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, pp. 328-9.

the Printed Book and Robert Renehan's *Greek Textual Criticism: A Reader*.[87] West's book was written as a replacement for Maas' *Textkritik* which the former criticises because 'it emphasizes the stemmatic aspect of the textual analysis, and treats contamination as a regrettable deviation about which nothing can be done, instead of as a normal state of affairs'.[88] West discusses examples of contamination of classical texts, offering the reader practical advice on how to deal with these and other issues. Similarly, Renehan's workbook considers eighty-two extracts from classical works and the various emendations which have been proposed by different critics. As we have seen, Kenney's *The Classical Text* details the history of the editing and criticism of classical texts from 1465 to the time of publication (1974).

Kenney concludes his history of classical textual criticism with a rather dismal view of the present condition of classical scholarship. He concedes that 'there is a good deal of truth' in Bailey's view that Housman's 1903 edition of Manilius was the last improvement in the field of classical editing.[89] Tarrant, in his briefer summary of the history of scholarly editing and classical Latin literature, identifies a number of potential causes of this decline including a shrinking corps of trained editors, diminishing respect for the skills involved in editing a classical text, scholarly demographics and the air of exclusivity which editors themselves have imposed upon the subject.[90] The second of these reasons has in part been caused by the shift in emphasis in textual studies during the latter half of the twentieth century from philology, textual criticism and classical and Biblical studies, to enumerative and analytical bibliography, literary criticism and vernacular studies.

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[87] Martin West, *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique* (Stuttgart, 1973), p. 5; Kenney, *The Classical Text*; Robert Renehan, *Greek Textual Criticism: A Reader* (Harvard, 1969).
[88] West, *Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique*, p. 5.
[89] Kenney, *The Classical Text*, p. 148.
[90] Tarrant, 'Classical Latin Literature', pp. 122-6.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, textual criticism was dominated by attempts to establish a common theory and 'to disestablish chance'.[91] Whilst progress in this field was led by scholars of Biblical and classical criticism, there was an appreciation of the uniqueness and importance of vernacular studies as far back as Lachmann. This awareness is present, for example, in the attempts of Bédier and Quentin to develop methodologies applicable to Old French texts, and later in the work of Kane and Donaldson on the text of the Middle English *Piers Plowman*. However, the editorial methods which vernacular scholars employed were often heavily influenced by the work of classicists and Biblicists and it was not until the middle of the twentieth century that principles for vernacular editing came into their own. This movement was led by the schools of Anglo-American textual criticism and the primary advances were in the methods of bibliography.[92]

The various disciplines of bibliography developed in response to the specifics of editing modern vernacular printed texts – in particular, authorial revision.[93] The primary manifesto of this scholarship is the emphasis on the physical form of the printed book. Whilst the initial impetus behind this new scholarship came at the end of the nineteenth century from medieval English studies, and although it can be witnessed in the work of Fredrick James Furnivall (1825-1910) and the Early English Text Society, the major change in editorial practice – which had as its

[91] This is the title of the fifth chapter of Kenney, *The Classical Text*.

[92] That the work of bibliographers is not traditionally considered to be a part of classical textual studies is witnessed in the preface of Kenney's *The Classical Text*, p. x: 'the chief novelty to which the present book can pretend is that in it an attempt is made to marry the results of work in what are usually discrete fields: classical scholarship on the one hand, printing and bibliography on the other'. Such topics are, however, an important factor in how modern scholars perceive (and ultimately edit) texts and, therefore, it is necessary to include an account of these developments in a history of modern textual criticism.

[93] For a discussion of the application of bibliography to textual criticism, see Fredson Bowers, 'Bibliography, Pure Bibliography, and Literary Studies', in *The Book History Reader*, 2nd edition, eds D. Finkelstein and A. McCleery (London, 2006), pp. 27-34.

central thesis the detailed analysis of the physical characteristics of the early printed book – came from English Renaissance studies. At the forefront of this movement were Gordon Duff's 1896 study of the type-forms of English incunabula and Robert Proctor's 1898 index to the incunabula of the British Museum and the Bodleian Library.[94] The fullest editorial explications of this new movement are to be found in Ronald B. McKerrow's (1872-1940) *The Works of Thomas Nashe* and *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare*, and Alfred Pollard's (1859-1944) *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*. McKerrow coined the term 'copy-text', which he described in his *Nashe* as referring to 'the text used in each particular case as the basis of mine'.[95] Moreover, McKerrow opined that the editor should make the text which embodies the latest authorial corrections – therefore, representing the author's final intentions – the basis for his edition. The resultant edition, which assigned prevailing authority to a particular witness, became known as a copy-text edition. This was essentially a traditional best-text edition, albeit with a different name.

The two major advocates of analytical bibliography during the later twentieth century were Greg (whose *Calculus of Variants* we have already discussed) and Fredson Bowers (1905-1991). Greg's greatest contribution to textual scholarship is his seminal article, 'The Rationale of Copy-Text', published in *Studies in Bibliography* (edited by Bowers).[96] Here Greg takes issue with McKerrow's definition of the term copy-text, arguing that the copy-text which English scholars

[94] See Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, p. 22: 'The term "incunabula" (literally "swaddling clothes") refers to those books printed on or before 31 December 1500, that is, in the "infancy" of printing'.
[95] Ronald B. McKerrow, *The Works of Thomas Nashe* (Oxford, 1957) (cited by William Speed Hill, 'English Renaissance: Non Dramatic Literature', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, pp. 204-30, at p. 211).
[96] Walter W. Greg, 'The Rationale of Copy-Text', *Studies in Bibliography* 3 (1950-1), pp. 19-37.

employ has nothing to do with its classical counterpart.[97] Greg's 'Rationale' was written in response to McKerrow's 'change in conception and its implications' and what he called 'the tyranny of copy-text'. He distinguished between 'substantives', that is readings which impact the general understanding of the text, and 'accidentals' such as spelling and punctuation which mainly affect its formal presentation. Utilising this distinction, Greg contended that:

> The true theory [of copy-text] is ... that the copy-text should govern (generally) in the matter of accidentals, but that the choice between substantive readings belongs to the general theory of textual criticism and lies altogether beyond the narrow principle of the copy-text.[98]

According to Greg, the text which most accurately represents the author's usage of accidentals was the one demonstrably closest to the author's manuscript (that is, the earliest edition).[99] Employing this text as his base-text, the editor should then emend it using later variant substantive readings judged to be authorial. The resultant copy-text edition is therefore an eclectic one, the aim of which is 'the construction of putative authorial usage out of the collation of multiple witnesses'.[100]

Bowers came to dominate the fields of bibliography and textual studies in the four decades following the publication of his *Principles of Bibliographical*

[97] McKerrow's editorial approach to his *Nashe* was to follow his copy-text with the utmost fidelity; in his *Prolegomena,* published thirty-five years later, he modified his methodology: he was now willing to accept emendations based on variations contained in later editions provided that all variations were accepted as a whole.
[98] Greg, 'The Rationale of Copy-Text', p. 19 and p. 26.
[99] Ibid., p. 31
[100] Greetham. *Textual Scholarship,* p. 334. Cf. ibid., 'Normalisation of Accidentals in Middle English Texts: The Paradox of Thomas Hoccleve', *Studies in Bibliography* 38 (1985), pp. 121-50, at p. 127, n. 10, where he argues that the distinction between Greg and Lachmann is as follows: 'that the Lachmannian genealogical system has been traditionally seen as a device for identifying the position of a witness in a hierarchy developed from a study of the substantive errors in texts (with comparatively little concern for the accidentals as they might be represented genealogically), whereas the Greg doctrine on copy-text has separated the authority of substantives and accidentals, while regarding both features as a necessary element in the reconstruction of auctorial intention, be it final (for substantives) or original (for accidentals)'.

Description in 1949.[101] While Greg's rationale was written in response to the specifics of editing Renaissance drama, Bowers' scholarship was an extension of Greg's editorial principles to post-Renaissance literature, and it is quite proper to refer to the Greg-Bowers school of textual scholarship. Through the influence of the work of Bowers (and Tanselle), Greg's approach overcame stiff opposition from editors of later periods and became the official editorial policy of the CEAA (the Center for Editions of American Authors) – now the Committee of Scholarly Editions. By the final quarter of the twentieth century, the principles set forth by the Greg-Bowers eclecticism had come to dominate Anglo-American textual theory.[102] However, the expansion of the purview of Greg-Bowers principles to the editing of later periods instigated an extensive debate on modern editorial principles and practices, which is still ongoing.

The textual scholarship of Greg and Bowers reveals a preoccupation with the authorially intended text which they had inherited from scholars of earlier periods. Given the often extensive distance in time between the extant manuscript witnesses and their authors, there had been no real theoretical need for these scholars to question the legitimacy of their editorial aims. More recent scholarship, however, with its unprecedented focus on the authors of the immediate past, has called into question the validity of this objective. For authors of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, holograph manuscripts are common, and for the works of some nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors, there is a wealth of documentary

[101] Gerard Thomas Tanselle, 'The Life and Work of Fredson Bowers', *Studies in Bibliography* 46 (1993), pp 1-154.

[102] Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, p. 335: 'The success of the eclectic method can be demonstrated by the fact that, with very few counter-examples ... virtually all of the three hundred or so volumes endorsed by the CEAA [Center for Editions of American Authors] or CSE [Center/Committee for Scholarly Editions] seal of approval have been constructed on the Greg-Bowers principles of eclecticism and copy-text theory'; cf. Tanselle, 'The Life and Work of Fredson Bowers' p. 1: 'By 1973 the period was already being called "the age of Bowers"'.

evidence. In these circumstances, the questions of authorial variants and copy-text become more pressing.

In the period since Greg, the theory of modern textual criticism can be seen to have gone in two separate directions. The first, emerging from the 'Intentionalist' camp, is concerned with the definition of the authorially intended text and its emphasis on final intention. Questions regarding the suitability of this approach in instances where there are several different authorial versions of a work have been raised. Whilst challenging the orthodoxy of final intentions, this methodology continues to uphold some form of the authorial intended text as a legitimate editorial goal. The second, the social textual school, rejects the supremacy of this approach through its emphasis on the collaborative nature of literary compositions. Its proponents contend that works do not exist apart from the social context in which they are created. The two major scholars who have best articulated these socially conscious theories of textual criticism are Jerome J. McGann and Donald F. McKenzie. According to McGann:

> when we speak of the working relations which exist between author and publishing institutions ... the point to be emphasized ... is that those relations of production do not sanction a theory of textual criticism based upon the concept of the autonomy of the author.[103]

In his highly influential *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, McGann's general thesis is that the entire history of a work is open to textual criticism – this includes non-authorial revision. McGann does not completely dispense with the notion of the author as a source of authority. He does, however, recommend that textual scholars concern themselves with the social context which led to the production of works and

[103] Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago, 1992), p. 54.

their variants. McKenzie has also proposed a reading of texts as social constructs which widens the scope of historical bibliography to incorporate not only the book but all forms of communication. Furthermore, his theory contends that the formatting of a work reflects not only social context but often also forms part of authorial intention.[104]

In his *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*, Greetham remarks that 'the characteristic feature of textual scholarship in the closing years of this century [i.e. the twentieth century] is its democratic pluralism: there is no longer, in Anglo-American editing, at least, any single orthodoxy among textual scholars'.[105] Whilst editors mainly continue to produce eclectic intentionalist editions, the focus on texts as social products has replaced authorial intention as the dominant theoretical concern of textual theory at the turn of the twenty-first century. This dramatic shift is witnessed in the works of many of today's most distinguished scholars. However, a major criticism of this approach is that it has failed to produce practical editorial results. One type of response has been produced by the editors of parallel- or multiple- text editions – 'versioning' – popular in the editing of Anglophone authors, the aim of which is to represent the developmental stages of a work.[106]

The rise of the sociological approach to texts is inextricably linked to the wider intellectual climate of the late twentieth century and the emergence of movements such as structuralism and post-structuralism. Much of the progress in works in European languages during the second half of the twentieth century influenced, either directly or indirectly, the changes in Anglo-American textual

[104] Donald F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge, 1986).
[105] Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, p. 341.
[106] The theories of social textual criticism will be explored in Chapter Three.

criticism during this period. For example, in the social approaches of McGann and McKenzie, the influence of the French school of Book History (*l'histoire du livre*), a movement originating from the *Annales* school of historiography which stressed the cultural and historical role of the book, can be identified.[107] This movement was founded by Lucien Febvre (1878-1956) and Marc Bloch (1886-1944) and was named after the scholarly journal which they edited in 1929, entitled *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*. The aim of the journal (as the name suggests) was to enlarge the scope of social history through its emphasis on deeper analyses of social and economic history. Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin's (1924-2007) widely influential 1958 publication, *L'apparition du livre*, emerged from the *Annales* school.[108] This work demonstrates the importance of knowledge of the history of publishing and emphasises the value of physical data contained in a book in establishing the provenance of specific editions.

In addition to the shift in emphasis from the traditional aim of the editor – the establishment of the authorial/original text – to the reading of texts as social products, Tanselle identifies three further recurring themes in the study of textual criticism during the second half of the 1990s as 'the application of textual criticism to nonverbal works, the editorial traditions of non-English-speaking countries, and the role of the computer in editing'.[109] In the interest of brevity, the first of these will not be examined in the current study while the impact and influence of electronic editing will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter. What remains, then, before concluding this section on the history of textual criticism, is to

[107] Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, p. 339.
[108] Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*, trans. David Gerard (London, 1976).
[109] Gerard Thomas Tanselle, 'Textual Criticism at the Millennium', *Studies in Bibliography* 54 (2001), pp. 1-80, at p. 6.

summarise the recent methodologies of European textual criticism – specifically those of France, Germany and Italy – during this period.[110]

Contemporary French editorial practice predominantly follows three trends. As previously noted, editors of medieval French texts prefer Bédier's best-text approach. Many scholars of the early modern period have adopted a version of the copy-text method in which the influence of the Bédier model is evident. Edmund J. Campion describes the French copy-text approach as differing from the Anglo-American practice in the following way:

> Unlike the practitioners of copy-text theory in Anglo-American textual studies, French copy-text editors do not usually produce eclectic editions … Thus, much weight is given to the selection of copy-text, and most editors understand the need to justify their choice of a specific copy-text over rival claimants.[111]

In modern literary studies, the concept of textual evolution was taken up by the discipline of genetic criticism, *critique génetique*. The object of this study is an authors' *avant-texte* (the drafts preceding publication). Editors of this school advocate an approach which attempts to offer a synoptic view of a text in which all variants are included and no reading is rejected, and it is comparable to Anglo-American versioning. Tanselle has repeatedly called into question the validity of claims that genetic criticism is a distinct approach. He observes that those scholars of the genetic school who place particular emphasis on the apparatus 'can be referring only to the form of the apparatus, not to its context', as in any scholarly

[110] Ibid., pp. 20-32: Tanselle reviews the major contributions made by European scholars during the final decade of the twentieth century in detail. Much of the following paragraphs engages with the more salient points of Tanselle's article. More recent developments, particularly in Old French and Middle English textual criticism, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

[111] Edmund Campion, 'Early Modern French Literature', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, pp. 417-37, at p. 423.

edition the record of textual variants is 'indispensable to a serious reading of the text'.[112]

In Germany, the prevailing editorial approach in medieval studies towards the close of the twentieth century continues to be the genealogical method; the legacy of scientific editing left behind by Lachmann and his successors is evident in many German editors' continued resistance to eclecticism and in their aversion to editorial interpretation of the text.[113] Theoretical discussions regarding texts from modern and early modern periods have focused on the dual issues of versions and intentional evolution. In response to these issues, German editors have tended to concentrate on the production of textual versions, representing a single stage in a text's development. The entire textual history is then arranged around the edition in the form of various types of apparatus.[114] In an article published in the 1998 volume of the journal *Editio*, Peter Shillingsburg identifies the main difference between Anglo-American and Germanic editing as 'the role of individual judgement and of emendation in scholarly editing'; in other words, German editions do not necessarily

[112] Tanselle, 'The Varieties of Scholarly Editing', p. 26.

[113] For a discussion of the various editorial approaches in German literary studies see, Bodo Plachta, 'German Literature', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, pp. 504-29.

[114] See Hans Walter Gabler's introduction to the anthology on German editing: *Contemporary German Editorial Theory*, eds Hans Walter Gabler, George Bornstein, and Gillian Borland Pierce (Ann Arbor, 1995), pp. 1-16 (cited by Tanselle, 'Textual Criticism at the Millennium', p. 23). Bodo Plachta identifies the three types of variant apparatuses presently employed by German editors as: '*Individuating apparatus*. When works are transmitted in single textual witnesses with scarce variance ... the editor frequently forgoes a detailed apparatus and indicates the variants directly in the text, in footnotes, or in a simplified lemmatized apparatus; *Layered apparatus*. The edition of a work in multiple transmission is divided into edited text and variant apparatus. One transmitted version provides the edited text. The apparatus relates the variant readings of the remaining transmitted versions to the edited text. Text and apparatus form an integral unit; *Synoptic apparatus*. The synopsis is used when a layering apparatus would leave the text-genetic objective obscure because of overabundant material ... Securing a clear presentation of the textual genesis, the synopsis attains independence in relation to the edited text and could, in principle, replace it': 'German Literature', p. 512.

include the emended critical text which is a standard part of Anglo-American editions.[115]

Textual criticism in Italy reveals a similar preoccupation with textual variants. The publication of Giorgio Pasquali's aforementioned seminal work *Storia della tradizione e critica del testo* and Michele Barbi's *La nuova filologia* in the 1930s marked the beginnings of the Italian school of New Philology which redefined the Lachmannian genealogical approach by attempting to render it more historical and less mechanical.[116] New Philologists maintain that editors are required to exercise their judgement at all stages of the editorial process; emphasising the historicity of texts whilst continuing to reflect on the process of manuscript tradition. During the remainder of the twentieth century, their methodology evolved into what is commonly referred to today as neo-Lachmannism. Paolo Cherchi identifies the study of textual tradition together with a growing interest in textual bibliography as the characteristic features of Italian philology at the turn of the twentieth century.[117]

Therefore, European textual studies largely reflect the issues currently in vogue in Anglo-American academic circles. The German, French and Italian approaches, though varied, are components of the much more general movement of *revisionism* which 'tends to emphasize process over product'.[118] Tanselle rightly observes that, 'each of these approaches ... has important observations to contribute but that each one by itself deals only with a limited aspect of textual history'.[119] A comparison of the various modern national editorial traditions demonstrates

[115] Peter Shillingsburg, 'A Resistance to Contemporary German Editorial Theory and Practice', *Editio* 12 (1998), pp. 138-50, at p. 138; cited by Tanselle, 'Textual Criticism at the Millennium', p. 26.
[116] Pasquali, *Storia della tradizione e critica del testo*; Michele Barbi, *La nuova filologia e l'edizione dei nostri scrittori* (Florence, 1938).
[117] Paolo Cherchi, 'Italian Literature', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, pp. 438-458, at p. 443.
[118] Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, p. 9.
[119] Tanselle, 'Textual Criticism at the Millennium', p. 32.

important differences, due in no small part to the history of scholarly activity within their own cultures. How then does the study of Early and Medieval Irish texts compare? And what are the dominant historical features which have contributed to the way in which we presently edit texts? These are the questions which will be considered in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND MEDIEVAL IRISH STUDIES

Regarding the application of textual criticism to Middle English works, Tim William Machan writes that it 'developed within the humanist paradigm'. He continues that:

> Middle English textual criticism has been fabricated, consequently, by the same threads that tie together textual criticism in general: the equation of the authoritative text with an authorial one, the valorization of an idealist, lexical conception of the work, a moral orientation, and an ambivalent sense of historicity. What problematizes and distinguishes textual criticism of Middle English works in particular is the fact that as works produced in the vernacular during the *medium aevum*, they represent the very traditions from which the humanists most wanted to dissociate themselves ... Thus, while traditional textual criticism has provided an inescapably humanist framework for editing Middle English materials, that same framework expressly excludes Middle English. To be edited at all, Middle English works have had to be accommodating and also accommodated to these incompatible forces.[1]

Much the same can be said of the development of textual criticism in medieval Irish studies. Medieval Irish textual-critical studies have lagged far behind those of other European vernacular languages, including the study of Middle English, a discipline with which it has much in common and from which we have much to learn.

An understanding of the manner in which textual critics within their discipline have traditionally responded to difficulties they faced is an essential precursor to an examination of current editorial practice in any field. To date, the history of scholarly editing of medieval Irish texts has been largely neglected. Thus,

[1] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 39. I have thought it necessary to include this lengthy quotation as it summarises so succinctly the challenges which textual critics of medieval Irish texts face whilst simultaneously highlighting the historical circumstances common to both medieval Irish and Middle English texts. It will be seen that Machan's work has had a significant influence on the current chapter and in particular on those ideas pertaining to the early development of the textual-critical approach to medieval Irish compositions.

this chapter offers an account of editorial activity in the field of medieval Irish studies. It examines the practice of editing Old and Middle Irish texts from the late-nineteenth century to the present. Machan's comments, quoted in the opening paragraph, provide a theoretical framework against which the development of medieval Irish textual criticism will be considered. Due to the extensive amount of material available, it will be necessary to put limits to this discussion. Therefore, this chapter is divided into two primary sections. Beginning with a brief description of the history of Celtic-language scholarship, the aim of which is to contextualise the early developments in medieval Irish editorial policy, the initial section surveys a number of editions prepared by three scholars of the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These are: Whitley Stokes (1830-1909); Daniel Anthony Binchy (1900-1989); and James Patrick Carney (1914-1989).[2] Each of these critics is representative of a different theoretical approach to medieval Irish textual criticism; the philological, the historical and the literary respectively. The intention here is to show that despite these differences the work of all three editors was fabricated according to the same humanist principles summarised by Machan, and to demonstrate that these underlying principles have been fundamental in shaping the modern critical edition of medieval Irish texts. Next, there is an overview of such theoretical discussion as has taken place among medieval Irish scholars of the modern period. It will be seen that those same humanistic principles have persisted in recent decades.

Before continuing, something must be said of the methodological terminology employed here. The previous chapter provided a general history of

[2] The editorial methodologies of Gerard Murphy and James Carney, specifically with regard to their handling of medieval Irish poetry will be discussed at length in Chapter Five. Also included in this chapter is a description of Kuno Meyer's and Kenneth Jackson's treatment of the *Cétemain* poem.

textual criticism during the pre-modern and modern periods, the aim of which was to elucidate the development and application of many of the methods to be encountered in the present discussion. However, a further note regarding the use of the terms 'critical' and 'diplomatic' in an editorial context must be made. In the field of medieval Irish studies, the term 'critical edition' is most often used to refer to an edition compiled based on the principles of genealogical scholarly editing as set forth by Lachmann and his contemporaries – i.e. the 'genealogical method'.[3] In contrast, the tendency in other fields is to regard a 'critical edition' as any non-facsimile type edition or diplomatic transcript and some recent scholarship in Irish studies reflects this tendency.[4] Thus, in order to situate the present discussion within international best practice, where the term 'critical edition' (or a variant thereof), is employed it refers to the latter definition. In order to avoid confusion, when the work of a scholar of medieval Irish is quoted their meaning of the term 'critical edition' will be made explicit in the footnotes. Diplomatic editions are generally thought to reproduce as many features of the manuscript text as possible, including abbreviations.[5] However, due to the large quantity of abbreviations which scribes of medieval Irish manuscripts tended to employ, diplomatic editions of such texts regularly contain expansions of the abbreviations in italic script. The inclusion of expansions is necessitated by the nature of the manuscript material; therefore, the phrase 'diplomatic edition' will continue to be used to describe those editions which, apart from the expansion of contractions, are diplomatic in most other aspects.

[3] Murray has drawn attention to this difficulty in his article on editorial practice in medieval Irish studies: 'Reviews, Reviewers, and Critical Texts', at p. 52.

[4] See, for example, Hollo, *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDuíl Dermait*, p. 50-1. Hollo's statement regarding editorial method makes it clear that her edition, which the sub-title correctly refers to as 'critical', is a semi-diplomatic edition.

[5] See Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, p. 391: 'The diplomatic transcript reproduces as many of the features of the manuscript as possible in a modern typesetting, including exact lineation, spelling and abbreviations, which are not expanded'.

The Philological Background

A brief description of the history of the study of the Celtic languages may go some way towards explaining the position of editorial theory in medieval Irish studies at the close of the nineteenth century – the period at which the present survey commences.[6] 'Philology [the central discipline of the long nineteenth century], under which rubric I subsume textual criticism as well as scholarship on comparative grammar and morphology', writes Ananya Kabir, 'provided a meta-epistemology for the generation of scholarly technologies that articulated concretely the relationship between the modern subject and its pre-modern past'.[7] Already in Chapter One, a parallel has been drawn between the methods of textual criticism and those of comparative linguistics. We must briefly return to this subject here as the comparison can help explain certain approaches adopted by scholars of Old and Middle Irish during the latter half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. For reasons already discussed, in the last decades of the nineteenth century the hitherto unshaken faith in the genealogical methodology began to falter among both textual critics and linguists. In both disciplines, the claim for the importance of 'horizontal transmission' or cross-contamination was made in the same period and the study of the genealogy of manuscripts was replaced by the study of the genesis of corruptions. During this phase, linguists directly influenced textual critics.[8]

[6] For a more detailed description of the history of Celtic philology and a description of the contents of the texts discussed in the following section, see McCone, 'Prehistoric, Old and Middle Irish', pp. 8-18.

[7] Kabir, 'Reading Between the Lines', p. 79.

[8] Timpanaro (*The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, p. 127) cites, for example, Hugo Schuchardt's work, *Der Vokalismus des Vulgärlateins*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1866-68), which demonstrated to classical philologists that corruptions due to psychological phenomena or phonetic vulgarisms such as those which occur in the evolution of languages are likely to be just as numerous as purely graphic corruptions.

Eoin MacNeill credits the writings of the Welsh intellectual, Edward Lhuyd (1660-1709) and his work in comparative linguistics which culminated in his milestone *Archaeologia Britannica* published in 1707 with placing Celtic studies on a sound academic footing.[9] The affinity of Welsh, Cornish and Breton had already been recognised prior to the publication of Lhuyd's work. However, while other scholars had argued for the links between British and the Gaulish language, Irish had not yet been fully integrated into the scheme. Lhuyd discovered the close relationship shared by Welsh and Irish and identified them as the original languages of the British Isles. He also linked them to Gaulish. Thus, as Brynley Roberts puts it, 'it is Lhuyd who justified the use of the term, the Celtic languages, and who placed their study on a sane and rational basis'.[10]

On the Continent, research into the relationships between the languages of Europe, India and Serbia was carried out throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. During this period, doubts remained over the provenance of the Celtic languages with a number of prominent German linguists considering them to be external to the Indo-European family. In the 1830s, the Indo-European pedigree of the Celtic languages was firmly established through the combined efforts of three 'pioneers of comparative Indo-European linguistics':[11] James Cowles Prichard (1786-1848), Adolphe Pictet (1799-1875) and Franz Bopp (1791-1867).[12] The work

[9] Eoin MacNeill, "The Rediscovery of the Celts", *The Irish Review* 34 (1913), pp. 522-23; Edward Lhuyd, *Archaeologia Britannica* (Oxford, 1707).
[10] Brynley Roberts, 'Edward Lhuyd and Celtic Linguistics', *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Celtic Studies*, eds David Ellis Evans, John G. Griffith and Edward Martyn Jope (Oxford, 1986), pp. 1-9, at p. 8.
[11] McCone, 'Prehistoric, Old and Middle Irish', p. 11.
[12] See James Cowles Prichard, *The Eastern Origin of the Celtic Nations, Proved by a Comparison of Their Dialects with the Sanscrit, Greek, Latin and Teutonic Languages* (London, 1831); Adolphe Pictet, 'De l'affinité des langues celtiques avec le sanscrit', *Journal asiatique* (1836), pp. 263-90 and pp. 417-48 (repr. as *De l'affinité des langues Celtiques avec le sanscrit* (Paris, 1837)); Franz Bopp, 'Über die celtischen Sprachen vom Gesichtspunkte der vergleichenden Sprachforschung',

of all three scholars represented a significant stride forward in the study of Celtic philology. However, the comparative methodology which they employed had not yet been perfected and the weaknesses of their contributions are readily apparent. The activities of Pictet and Bopp in particular were hampered by a lack of access to the earliest Irish sources and an inadequate understanding of the chronological stages of the Insular Celtic languages.

These difficulties were soon remedied by the work of Johann Kaspar Zeuss (1806-56). During the 1840s, Zeuss began to study the earliest manuscript witnesses of Irish – the Würzburg, Milan and St. Gall glosses on various Latin texts, and the Cambrai Homily – culminating in the publication of his *magnum opus*, *Grammatica Celtica* in 1853.[13] Within two decades of the publications of Prichard, Pictet and Bopp, Zeuss had managed to elucidate much of the complex Old Irish grammatical system, through the rigorous implementation of the comparative methodology which they had pioneered. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of Zeuss' monumental work for medieval Irish studies. In Ireland, the years following the publication of Lhuyd's *Archaeologia Britannica* were marked by a severe decline in native study of the early language, a discipline which was rooted in the Old and Middle Irish periods themselves. Zeuss' seminal study reawakened scholarly interest in the early language. Kim McCone notes that in addition to its linguistic importance, 'Zeuss' own work had shown how inextricably linked textual studies, synchronic grammar and comparative philology were'.[14] This interdisciplinary

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Abhandlungen der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin aus dem Jahre 1838. Philosophisch-historische Klasse (Berlin, 1839), pp. 187-272.

[13] Johann Kaspar Zeuss, *Grammatica Celtica: e monumentis vetustis tam hibernicae linguae quam britannicae dialecti* (Leipzig, 1853).

[14] McCone, 'Prehistoric, Old and Middle Irish', p. 15. For a recent discussion of the details of Zeuss' life and his contribution to Celtic Studies, see Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 'The Reception of Johann Kaspar Zeuss' *Grammatica Celtica* in Ireland and Britain, and on the Continent: Some New Evidence', in

approach became the characteristic feature of the study of Celtic and medieval Irish philology which experienced a striking growth in the century following the publication of Zeuss' *Grammatica Celtica*.

As far as the discipline of comparative linguistics was concerned, the closing decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a watershed in the proliferation of the methodology of the Neogrammarians who emphasised the primacy of the spoken word. The two central axioms of Neogrammarian scholars, that sound laws have no exceptions and that analogy played an important role in the creation of new linguistic forms in the older periods, were lucidly expressed by Karl Brugmann (1859-1919) and Hermann Osthoff (1847-1909) in the preface to the first volume of *Morphologische Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiete der indogermanischen Sprachen* published in 1878. These principles allowed for clarification of many of the morphological and phonological problems of the Indo-European languages. Work continued on the early sources throughout this period and the understanding of Old Irish grammar was furthered by scholars of the Neogrammarian and post-Neogrammarian eras who emphasised the relationships between languages rather than the traditional genealogical model of descent from a common ancestral mother-tongue.[15] Thus, it was not until the late nineteenth century that the state of knowledge of the language of the Old and Middle Irish periods was such as to allow for the editing of the manuscript witnesses to begin in earnest. As McCone notes, one of the most remarkable achievements of medieval Irish scholarship at this time

Recht-Wirtschaft-Kultur: Herausforderungen an Staat und Gesellschaft im Zeitalter der Globalisierung – Festschrift für Hans Habitzel zum 60. Geburtstag, eds Michael Wollenschläger, Eckhard Kreße and Johann Egger (Berlin, 2005), pp. 83-93.

[15] For details, see McCone, 'Prehistoric, Old and Middle Irish', pp. 13- 4.

was the abundance of material edited in various ways by a handful of scholars.[16] It was during this period that the foundations of medieval Irish editorial policy were laid. When editions of Old and Middle Irish texts began to proliferate in the latter part of the nineteenth century, it was under the aegis of the Neogrammarians and their interest in linguistic forms.

Whitley Stokes

One of the most prodigious Celtic scholars of the Neogrammarian period, and indeed of any period since, was Whitley Stokes (1830-1909).[17] Present at the birth of Celtic philology,[18] there was no aspect of the field of Celtic Studies which he did not endeavour to explore. Born in Dublin, Stokes briefly attended St. Columba's College in the winter of 1845 before entering Trinity College Dublin, where he graduated in 1851. He began publishing editions of Irish manuscript materials in 1859, six years after Zeuss' *Grammatica Celtica* first appeared. Stokes was engaged with the whole medieval literature of Ireland, historical, ecclesiastical and secular. A bibliography of his works details almost four hundred publications including one-hundred and thirty-four editions or partial editions of Old and Middle Irish texts, supplemented by numerous corrigenda and addenda, demonstrating clearly his constant effort to improve upon his edited material.[19] As the intention here is to provide an overview of the types of editions of medieval Irish texts produced by various eminent scholars throughout the modern period, the present discussion

[16] Ibid., p. 26.
[17] Some of the issues to be raised regarding Stokes' editorial methodology have been discussed by Caitríona Ó Dochartaigh in a paper presented at Cambridge on September 19th, 2009 entitled, 'Hymns, Homilies and Hagiography (and Martyrologies!): Stokes' Editions of Christian Texts'. I would like to thank Dr. Ó Dochartaigh for making a copy of this paper available to me.
[18] This phrase is from Richard Irvine Best, 'Bibliography of the Publications of Whitley Stokes', *ZCP* 8 (1912), pp. 351-406, at p. 352.
[19] Ibid., pp. 351-406.

examines a representative sample of Stokes' scholarly *oeuvre* – i.e. the prefaces, introductions and *apparatus critici* of his publications pertaining to medieval Irish material – as examples of his editorial methodology. Though a more thorough explication of Stokes' editorial methodology remains an obvious desideratum, to expand the present discussion to include the entirety of his Irish corpus, and indeed the remainder of his scholarly exploits, remains outside the purview of this thesis and must be left for a different occasion.

Among the medieval Irish texts edited by Stokes is the medieval Irish poem known as *Félire Óengusso Céli Dé* 'The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee' (hereafter *Fél.*). His edition and various discussions of *Fél.* remain one of Stokes' most significant contributions to the study of Old Irish metrics.[20] Stokes edited this work twice according to two very different methodologies. Publication of the respective editions was separated by an interval of fifteen years, during which time numerous significant medieval Irish works appeared in print. Consequently, an examination of the two editions of *Fél.* affords us a unique opportunity to observe the evolution of Stokes' editorial and intellectual principles during a period of rapid development within the discipline.

His first edition, which appeared in 1880 (*Fél.* I), is a multiple-text edition of 'four corrupt and uncorrected texts'.[21] These texts are, for the most part, printed in

[20] Whitley Stokes, *On the Calendar of Oengus*, The Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, Irish Manuscript Series vol. 1 (Dublin, 1880); idem, *Félire Óengusso Céli Dé: the Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*, Henry Bradshaw Society vol. 29 (London 1905). See also idem, 'On the Calendar of Oengus', *Revue Celtique* 5 (1883), pp. 339-80 (revised preface to TRIA edition) and 'On the Metre *rinnard* and the Calendar of Oengus as Illustrating the Irish Verbal Accent', *Revue Celtique* 6 (1885) pp. 273-97.

[21] Found in the following manuscripts: Dublin, Royal Irish Academy Library, MS 23 P 16, *Lebar Brecc* (fourteenth century) ('**A**'); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud 610 (fifteenth century) ('**B**'); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawl. B 505 (fourteenth/fifteenth century) (lacking the prologue and the epilogue of *Fél.*) ('**C**'); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawl. B 512 (fifteenth century) ('**D**').

parallel in semi-diplomatic format with an English translation of the corresponding verses at the bottom of each page. His edition is carefully assembled into two columns per page. Glosses and notes are numbered and appended to the relevant sections. Emendation is kept to a minimum; where the text is altered, the manuscript readings are indicated at the bottom of the page. The text is presented in Roman type with expansions marked by the use of italic script.[22]

Stokes' decision to present the variant witnesses in parallel is particularly interesting given that in the preface of his edition he acknowledges the possibility of reconstructing the original source text underpinning the four manuscripts.[23] An explanation for his editorial approach may be sought in his work in Celtic philology: Stokes was one of the Irish scholars most interested in the science of comparative philology, and he closely aligned himself to the rigorously methodological scholarship of German philologists.[24] The influence of this on his editorial methodology is apparent in the preface to his first edition of *Fél.*:

> in interpreting the Calendar of Oengus it is necessary to apply the scientific processes of modern philology, and especially those of comparison of texts and juxtaposition, that is to say, of placing together all the passages which are akin in diction or meaning.[25]

[22] It is important to note that not all editions of Old and Middle Irish texts produced during this period were presented in Roman type. Many editors continued to use the so-called Irish type which did not have an italic counterpart, so that the extension of abbreviations could not be marked. One notable example is the *Ancient Laws of Ireland* vol. v which, despite calls from Stokes that the Irish type should be dispensed with, was printed in Irish type in 1901: Whitley Stokes, 'Curiosities of Official Scholarship', *The Academy* 28 (1885), pp. 204-5 (26 Sept.).

[23] Stokes, *On the Calendar of Oengus*, p. 3: 'These four MSS. all offer the same text, and their disagreements in orthography (often very considerable) are due to the ignorance and carelessness of the copyists. By intercomparison and by attending to the rhymes the original text can generally be restored'.

[24] Bernhard Maier, 'Comparative Philology and Mythology', in *The Tripartite Life of Whitley Stokes*, eds Boyle and Russell, pp. 119-33, at pp. 126-7.

[25] Stokes, *On the Calendar of Oengus*, p. 19.

The methodological principle of compare and contrast was grounded in the idea of an Indo-European group of languages, which, as noted in the first section, was heavily indebted to the new philological learning emanating from Germany.

Almost two decades prior to the publication of his *Fél*. I, Stokes set forth his position on emendation in the opening remarks to his *Three Irish Glossaries* where he warned the reader that the glossaries were merely publications – that is diplomatic reproductions of the manuscripts – as he felt the time for emending Celtic texts had not yet arrived: 'We must reap and thresh before we winnow'.[26] In 1883 (the same year as the revised preface to *Fél.* I was published), his stance remained largely unchanged when he wrote regarding his edition of *Saltair na Rann*: 'Celtic philology has during the last thirty years made great strides forward; but it is not yet advanced enough to give a critical text of a complete version of the 162 Middle-Irish poems [of this work]'.[27] Stokes evidently felt the importance of Old Irish for the study of Indo-European. As Kabir notes in her study of the work of Stokes, 'his prefaces foreground his role in professionalizing and disseminating Celtic Studies within the umbrella of comparative philology'.[28] In turn, contemporary philological enquiry was fundamental in shaping his textual-critical approach to medieval Irish works.

As we have seen, one of the fundamental developments in philology during the period under examination was the advent of the Neogrammarians, which Machan argues enabled textual critics of vernacular medieval literature 'to produce editions

[26] Whitley Stokes, *Three Irish Glossaries: Cormac's Glossary, Codex A ..., O'Davoren's Glossary ... and a Glossary to the Calender of Oingus the Culdee ... with a Preface and Index* (London, 1862), p. 14 (cited in Pádraic Moran, '"Their Harmless Calling": Stokes and the Irish Linguistic Tradition', in *The Tripartite Life of Whitley Stokes*, eds Boyle and Russell, pp. 175-84, at p. 177). It is evident that Stokes' interpretation of the term 'critical text' applies to a text which has been emended on the basis of linguistic analysis rather than the study of textual history or the establishment of a *stemma codicum*.

[27] Whitley Stokes, 'Emendations of *Saltair na Rann*', *The Academy* 584 (1883), pp. 31-2.

[28] Kabir, 'Reading Between the Lines', p. 93.

within the paradoxes of humanist textual criticism'. He continues that 'philology depended on a lexical, idealist notion of the work without making the pretense of imputing artistic superiority'.[29] Such an editorial procedure is mirrored not only in Stokes' methodology, it may also be observed in his opinion of the artistic talents of the original composer of the martyrology: 'It must be confessed that in all this long poem there is not a trace of imaginative power or of observation of nature ... Touches characteristic of the poet's time and country are almost wholly absent'.[30] Thus, Stokes' textual-critical approach to *Fél.* parallels Machan's hypothesis of the late-nineteenth century editor of medieval manuscripts continuing to uphold the ideal of the authorial text under the auspices of philological enquiry.

Stokes edited the martyrology once more in 1905 (*Fél.* II). On this occasion he presented his reader with a 'critical text' of the poem, 'with various readings from the ten MSS. in which it is partially or wholly preserved'.[31] An examination of his edition reveals that he was heavily reliant on the incomplete text of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson B 505, his **R1**, which he took to be 'as far as it goes, by far the best [manuscript] that has come down to us'.[32] Though it was not his intention to follow the text of a single manuscript, *Fél.* II is based on the text of one witness considered superior to the others, akin to the *codex optimus* method which remains as one of the main types of editorial approaches to medieval Irish texts.[33] Stokes' change in approach was influenced by the advances in the study of the Old Irish

[29] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 49.
[30] Stokes, *Félire Óengusso Céili Dé*, p. vxii.
[31] Ibid., p. i.
[32] Ibid, p. xxi. David Dumville ('*Félire Óengusso*: Problems of Dating a Monument of Old Irish', *Éigse* 33 (2002), pp. 19-48, at pp. 25-6) has pointed out that an examination of Stokes' critical apparatus reveals that variant witnesses offer at times different saints for commemoration; 'the relative merits and demerits of the different names remain to be established'.
[33] McCone, 'Prehistoric, Old and Middle Irish', p. 28.

language made during the decade and a half intervening between the publication of his two editions of *Fél.*:

> In forming the text, as well as in making the translation and glossary, I have used to the best of my power the discoveries in Old-Irish grammar and etymology achieved during the past twelve years by Ascoli, Windisch, Thurneysen, Zimmer, Zupitza, Osthoff, Sommer, Razwadowski, Perdersen, Sarauw, Strachan and Lidén.[34]

Yet despite these advances, Stokes' initial reluctance to emend the text is still evident in the preface to *Fél.* II, and he is far from regarding his critical edition as definitive.[35]

Stokes did not attempt the construction of a *stemma codicum* for the martyrology and there are few explicit indications of the problems of textual transmission.[36] Rather, concerns of textual history are superseded by those of metricality. Evidently, Stokes believed that the metre of the poem as it was originally composed was exactly regular, and so he proposed in his edition to restore the text through a thorough exposition 'of the [metrical] rules by which the author was guided'.[37] In this statement, it is made abundantly clear that Stokes equates the original poem with the authorial text and thus that the ideal to be aimed for when

[34] Stokes, *Félire Óengusso Céili Dé*, p. vii.
[35] Ibid., p. i.
[36] Of course, Stokes was undeniably aware of the theories of recension and employed them regularly. For example, in his critical edition of *Acallam na Sénorach*, he noted regarding University College, Dublin, MS OFM, A.4 that the 'arrangement of the stories ... differs somewhat from that of the other copies... [and there are] so many minor variations and additions ... that it may well be regarded as a second recension': 'Acallamh na Sénorach', in *Irische Texte*, eds Whitley Stokes and Ernst Windisch, 4 vols (Leipzig, 1880-1909), iv, I (1900), pp. 1-438, p. xii. See, Geraldine Parsons, 'Whitley Stokes, Standish Hayes O'Grady and *Acallam na Sénorach*', in *The Tripartite Life of Whitley Stokes*, eds Boyle and Russell, pp. 185-195, at p. 194. Parsons observes that despite this statement, Stokes regularly introduced passages from A_4 into the main body of the text (pp. 194-5).
[37] Stokes, *Félire Óengusso Céili Dé*, p. xlii: 'I have dwelt at some length on the characteristics of this metre, partly because nothing is more important for correcting the corrupt text of a poem ... than a right understanding of the rules by which the author was guided'.

establishing a critical edition is the text of the author, a patently 'humanist paradigm' for textual criticism.

I recount the history of Stokes' continuing engagement with this poem because it highlights a serious concern regarding editorial responsibility in the not-always compatible matters of philological accuracy, textual integrity and linguistic accessibility. Emanating from his philological interests is the recognition of the need to present variant readings in a clear form. Yet, his concern for the faithful presentation of texts does not preclude emendation. Where emendation does occur, the text of the original is cited in the notes at the bottom of the page. Emendations are regularly indicated within square brackets though their primary editorial function seems to be to indicate additions to the text rather than alterations. Stokes' second edition of the poem also shows fidelity to the idea of the reproduction of the original text. The authoritative text is equated with the authorial one, and whilst Stokes strongly criticises the artistry of the original poet, he continues to uphold the principle that the original poem was metrically superior to its textual descendants.

This point leads us to the consideration of a further aspect of the nineteenth-century vernacular editors' valorisation of the authoritative text: the lack of regard held by textual critics during this period for the activities of scribes. Present throughout Stokes' corpus of medieval Irish editions are disparaging remarks concerning the transcribers of the manuscripts. As an example, we may cite Stokes' comments concerning the emendations contained in his 1883 edition of *Saltair na Rann*:

> The difficulty is partly due to the obscurity of some of the subjects, partly to the antiquity of the language (which is about eight hundred years old), partly to the licence which the stringency of his

> rules as to rhyme compelled the author to allow himself in matters of grammar, but chiefly to the occasional carelessness or ignorance of the twelfth-century copyist. Though the text which he has given us is generally accurate and intelligible, of the 8,392 lines about 450 are more or less corrupt. In these he has managed to commit every crime of which an Irish scribe, as such, could be guilty.[38]

Such a highly critical attitude towards scribes is a further illustration of the influence of genealogical textual criticism of the period where scribal reworking of the archetypal copy is generally viewed as an act of decomposition from the ideal form of the authorial text.

Lastly, we might consider Stokes' omission of those passages which he considered to be offensive from his editions. Once more, this practice fits Machan's concept of the nineteenth-century vernacular textual critic and it is resonant of the 'moral character' of humanist textual criticism.[39] Perhaps the best known example is his edition of *Cath Maige Tuired* 'The Second Battle of Mag Tuired' where he omitted those passages which he considered indecent alongside the obscure *rosc* sections.[40] Despite this, his edition and partial translation remained the scholarly standard for almost a century after its issue, until the publication of the edition of Elizabeth A. Gray in 1982.[41]

The work of Stokes reflects the early development of the close association between the editing of medieval Irish manuscripts and philological study, which required relatively conservative editions. This conservative, philologically-

[38] Stokes, 'Emendations of *Saltair na Rann*', pp. 31-2.
[39] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 43. Cf. Derek Pearsall ('Texts, Textual Criticism and Fifteenth-Century Manuscript Production', in *Fifteenth Century Studies: Recent Studies*, ed. Robert F. Yeager (Hamden, 1984), pp. 92-106, at p. 103: 'it is interesting how the language of moral approbation and disapprobation hangs around textual criticism and to speculate on the influence it may have on editorial attitude'.
[40] Whitley Stokes, 'The Second Battle of Moytura', *Revue Celtique* 12 (1891), pp. 52-130, 306-8.
[41] Elizabeth A. Gray, *Cath Maige Tuired: The Second Battle of Mag Tuired*, ITS vol. 52. (London, 1982).

orientated attitude towards the editing of medieval Irish remains extremely influential to this day. It is a procedure which developed in a manner similar to Middle English textual criticism, i.e.:

> not from articulated theoretical concerns but from the cultural context of Middle English literature subsequent to the Renaissance and from a valorization of the lexical aspect of a work that was inherited from humanist textual criticism and consonant with the objectives of philology.[42]

Stokes' policy regarding the role of editorial emendation developed as a response to the philological advances made during the same period. Moreover, his editions demonstrate the influence humanist textual criticism had on the early development of textual criticism of medieval Irish works. The humanist equation of the authoritative text with a uniformly correct and superior authorial one is apparent in his critical editions which were so influential in early medieval Irish textual-critical studies. His methodology reflects the post-Lachmannian Neogrammarian rebellion against recensionary principles whilst upholding the humanist classical precepts which dominated much of early modern textual criticism and which has shaped much of the current editorial practice in the field.

Daniel Anthony Binchy

Daniel Anthony Binchy (1900-1989) remains one of the foremost scholarly authorities on the medieval Irish law tracts, popularly referred to as the Brehon Laws. Binchy came to the study of Old Irish from a background of classics, history and law and then general medieval studies. In 1925, he took up a post as Professor of Roman Law and Jurisprudence at University College Dublin where his study of the Old Irish language began in earnest. During the course of his retraining, he was

[42] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 50

mentored by some of the great nineteenth- and twentieth-century contributors to the field: Charles Plummer (1951-1927), Rudolf Thurneysen (1857-1940), Eoin MacNeill (1867-1945) and Osborn Bergin (1873-1950). In the year following Binchy's death, Pádraig Breatnach wrote that '[i]n many ways he was our last link with the "heroic age" of Celtic Studies'.[43] Once more, I propose to examine various examples of the scholarly apparatus of the editor as a means of establishing his editorial methodology.

As an historian, Binchy devoted most of his attention to the detection of changes in the primary texts which formed the basis of his editions. However, he also remained conscious of continuing the philological tradition which had been central to his linguistic apprenticeship. It was Thurneysen who published the first critical editions of Irish law texts.[44] Thurneysen, like Stokes, was a philologist first and foremost and his primary goal was to produce linguistically accurate editions. As a student of Thurneysen, Binchy inherited certain aspects of his mentor's approach to legal texts, such as his distrust of the later glosses and commentaries. Throughout Binchy's corpus of edited works are scattered remarks regarding the unreliability of the contributions made by later scribes and glossators. In light of his linguistic instruction, comparative philology inevitably influenced Binchy's legal editorial work. The result was that in the years following Thurneysen's death, 'Binchy was employing his formidable abilities partly in editorial work but also in using tools derived from nineteenth-century history and comparative philology to

[43] Pádraig Breatnach, 'Daniel A. Binchy † May 1989', *Éigse* 24 (1990), pp. 153-4.
[44] Thomas Charles-Edwards notes that Charles Plummer began work on the Irish law texts prior to the First World War but died in 1926 before his studies could come to fruition: *The Early Mediaeval Gaelic Lawyer*, Quiggin Pamphlets on the Sources of Mediaeval Gaelic History 4 (Cambridge, 1999), p. 11, n. 25.

tease out chronological strata in texts'.[45] Some of his most important discoveries in Irish legal history came by combining philological and historical methodologies. [46]

Binchy devoted much of his working life to the preparation of his *magnum opus*, the six-volume *Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (henceforth *CIH*), published in 1978.[47] Here, he presented the greater part of the Irish legal corpus from the Old Irish through to the Modern Irish periods. Binchy intended the texts of *CIH* 'to serve as a basis for future editions by printing all passages of the ancient text precisely as they appear in the manuscript without any attempt to restore corrupt forms, supply missing words, normalize scribal neologisms or even to correct obvious scribal error'.[48] As such, an analysis of these texts provides us with minimal information regarding Binchy's editorial methodology. However, certain principles of his editorial policy may be ascertained through examining his reasons for opting in favour of this method of presentation. Perhaps most interestingly, Binchy states in his introduction to *CIH* that he felt unable 'to produce anything like a definitive text', and had he attempted to emend the evidence 'the result would have been a misleading compromise between edition and transcription'.[49] From this statement, the question emerges of what exactly constitutes Binchy's idea of 'a definitive text'.

Elsewhere, Binchy argues that the 'sole purpose of *CIH* is to provide future students with the raw materials from which they can construct *scientific editions* and

[45] Ibid., p. 14. At p. 15, Charles-Edwards points out that Binchy's attempts were often hampered by the reluctance of the sources to acknowledge change and consequently, '[w]hen he came to legal history, the readiness of such great nineteenth-century scholars as Tocqueville, Maine, and Marx to argue for long-term patterns of change remained influential'.
[46] For example, he was able to identify cognate phrases in Irish and Welsh law allowing him to further detect the most ancient parts of Irish law.
[47] Daniel A. Binchy, *Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin, 1978).
[48] Binchy, Introduction to *CIH*, p. xiii.
[49] Ibid.

translations of all the tracts' (my emphasis).[50] In yet another publication, Binchy sets forth the procedure to be followed by those linguists concerned with establishing such editions. He begins by stating that the initial step will be to correct his own transcriptions of the manuscript material. He continues that such scholars:

> must then restore the original forms, attested or predictable, of the ancient text, purging it of the innumerable corruptions which have arisen to some extent from subsequent linguistic changes but still more from lack of understanding on the part of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century scribes. Their next task will be to establish, with the aid of the cross-references I have supplied in the margins to the parallel passages in different manuscripts, something like a uniform text for those tracts which have survived in whole or in part.

Regarding those Irish tracts are known to us only from brief extracts in later commentaries or from quotes in manuscripts, Binchy recommends a number of editorial procedures in order 'to restore the original form of the text where this has been obscured by successive scribal innovations'.[51]

Certain attitudes concerning editorial policy can be inferred from Binchy's recommendations. Firstly, the principal objective in compiling a 'scientific edition' is to establish the definitive text which is uniform throughout and can be considered to be synonymous with the original text. In order to achieve this, Binchy instructs editors to free the original text from the corruptions which, he believes, have arisen as a result of ignorance on the part of the later contributors, particularly scribes. The next step is to establish a uniform text through a comparison of the various manuscript sources pertaining to a particular tract. Binchy does not counsel the establishment of a *stemma codicum* or analysis of the genealogical filiations of the

[50] Binchy, 'Irish History and Irish Law: I', *Studia Hibernica* 15 (1975), pp. 7-36, at p. 13.
[51] Binchy, 'Irish History and Irish Law: II', *Studia Hibernica* 16 (1976), pp. 7-45, at p. 13.

various witnesses, and from this it may be concluded that the term 'scientific' refers to the detailed collation of the sources rather than the application of recensionary principles. In all of this, the study of the oldest stratum of the law tracts is seen to be independent of study of the glosses and commentaries which accompany them. This approach is unsurprising in light of Binchy's inherited suspicion of the later glosses and commentaries.

Further insight into Binchy's editorial procedures may be gained from studying his various other contributions to the field of medieval Irish law. Included in this body of work are numerous criticisms of the official edition of the Irish legal tracts, the *Ancient Laws of Ireland* (henceforth *ALI*).[52] It is widely acknowledged that errors abound in the six-volume *ALI*, partly due to the turbulent circumstances under which the edition was compiled.[53] In 1852, when the study of Old Irish was still in its infancy and Zeuss' *Grammatica Celtica* was yet to be published, work was undertaken to transcribe and translate the ancient laws of Ireland. John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry were appointed to work with the manuscript materials. However, both scholars died before a single volume of *ALI* was published. Thus, the first four volumes of the *ALI* were compiled from O'Donovan's and O'Curry's notes by men who were not Irish-language scholars. The fifth and sixth volumes were afforded a different treatment and were edited by Robert Atkinson.

Binchy was particularly critical of the editors of the first four volumes of *ALI*. His initial critique appeared in the *Proceedings of the Bristish Academy* in 1943 and

[52] Robert Atkinson, William Neilson Hancock, William Maunsell Hennessy, Thaddeus O'Mahony and Alexander George Richey (eds), *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, 6 vols (Dublin 1865-1901).
[53] In 1885, Stokes initiated a series of responses to the failings of the work: 'Curiosities of Official Scholarship', pp. 204-5. For a discussion of these criticisms, see Thomas Charles-Edwards, 'Whitley Stokes and Early Irish Law', in *The Tripartite Life of Whitley Stokes*, eds Boyle and Russell, pp. 161-74, at pp. 165-70.

he continued to highlight the publication's short-comings throughout the remainder of his academic career.[54] In his first article, Binchy criticises the editors for not making a greater contribution to *ALI*: 'Indeed, these four volumes hardly show a trace of real editorial work ... they are mere reproductions of the transcripts and translations provided by O'Donovan and O'Curry'.[55] Binchy attacks on numerous editorial fronts: the official edition fails to distinguish the text of the tracts from the glosses and commentaries on the text added by later jurists except in those incidences 'where it has already been indicated in the manuscripts themselves'.[56] Next he criticises the editors' method of following a single manuscript exclusively where a tract is attested in two or three: 'Bad in all circumstances, this practice is inexcusable when editing an ancient text that has been corrupted by successive generations of copyists'.[57] Elsewhere, he criticises the editors of *ALI* for the lack of information regarding the manuscripts employed as the basis for the various texts.[58] This then leads Binchy straight into the issue of the lack of italics in expanding the numerous contractions and abbreviations employed by the scribes.[59] It may be observed that whilst at times Binchy criticises the methodology adopted by the editors of *ALI*, his criticisms are in the main concerned with their inaccurate presentation of the manuscript material. It was Binchy's view that accurate and

[54] Daniel A. Binchy, 'The Linguistic and Historical Value of the Irish Law Texts', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 29 (1943), pp. 195-227, critique of *ALI* at pp. 197-202; idem, 'Irish Law Tracts Re-edited, 1: *Coibnes Uisci Thairidne*', *Ériu* 17 (1995), pp. 52-77, at p. 52; idem, 'Ancient Irish Law', *Irish Jurist* 1 (1966), pp. 84-92, critique of *ALI* at pp. 84-5; Binchy's introduction to Eoin MacNeill, 'Prolegomena to a Study of *The Ancient Laws of Ireland*', *Irish Jurist* 2 (1967), pp. 106-15, at p. 107; idem, 'Irish History and Irish Law I', pp. 8-9; idem, *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, Introduction pp. vii-xxii, with critique of *ALI* at pp. xvii-xviii and xx.

[55] Binchy, 'The Linguistic and Historical Value of the Irish Law Tracts', p. 197.

[56] Ibid., p. 203.

[57] Ibid., p. 202.

[58] Binchy, Introduction to *CIH*, p. xii: 'for those tracts which have appeared only in the *Ancient Laws of Ireland* editorial policy, in particular the method of selection between the relevant manuscripts, is so arbitrary and chaotic as to defy any attempt at classification'.

[59] It could be argued that this is an unfair criticism as the practice of not expanding abbreviations was, as noted above, an inevitable consequence of employing the Irish-type font in presenting the text.

reliable publication of the primary sources for the legal tracts was the first priority in the study of medieval Irish law and it was this gap which he attempted to fill in compiling his *CIH*.

The legal texts critically edited by Binchy are: *Bretha Crólige*; *Críth Gablach*; *Coibnes Uisci Thairidne*; *Bretha Déin Chécht*; 'An Archaic Legal Poem' [on *Comaithches*], and 'A Text on the Forms of Distraint'.[60] The first of these, *Bretha Crólige*, exemplifies the approach which he took to the laws during the rest of his career.[61] The complete text of *Bretha Crólige* is found in a single manuscript. Fragments of the text and a number of commentaries are found in other legal sources. In Binchy's edition, the text of the main manuscript is presented in semi-diplomatic format. Italics are used to mark the expansion of all suspensions and contractions. Full-stops are employed only where the point appears in the manuscript and further punctuation is added according to sense. Suggested emendations are supplied in the footnotes and readings from other manuscripts are given in the notes at the end of the edition. Glosses are separated from the main text and appended to the relevant sections in a smaller font. Translation of the text is supplied on the facing page. Letters, syllables, or words required by sense are added in square brackets, whereas letters considered superfluous are enclosed in round brackets. Consequently the typographical appearance of the edition, with its plethora of square and round brackets, is confusing. The edition of the sister tract to *Bretha Crólige*, *Bretha Déin Chécht*, published in *Ériu* over three decades later, was

[60] Binchy , '*Bretha Crólige*', *Ériu* 12 (1934), pp. 1-77; *Críth Gablach*, MMIS, vol. 11 (Dublin 1941); '*Coibnes Uisci Thairidne*', *Ériu* 17 (1955), pp. 52-85; idem, '*Bretha Déin Chécht*', *Ériu* 20 (1966), pp. 1-66; idem, 'An Archaic Legal Poem', *Celtica* 9 (1971), pp. 152-68; idem, 'A Text on the Forms of Distraint', *Celtica* 10 (1973), pp. 72-86.

[61] See Fergus Kelly, 'Early Irish Law: The Present State of Research', *Études Celtiques* 29 (1992), pp. 15-22, at p. 19.

established according to similar principles with the exception that in the text proper no mark of punctuation other than the point has been inserted, because of the uncertainty of clausal division in the rhetorical sections.[62]

We may also consider the fifth of Binchy's editions as an example of his editorial approach to poetic material. The text in question is a poem largely concerned with the relations between neighbouring landholders and is preserved in a single manuscript witness. The poem was initially edited by Eoin MacNeill in 1923; he notes that it was composed in an archaic metre 'without rhyme or exact measure of syllables, in short verses, each of which as a rule contains two fully stressed words, the last stressed word of each verse making alliteration with the first stressed word of the following verse'.[63] Regarding MacNeill's edition, Binchy notes that the editor did not always apply his own metrical rules consistently. Thus, the opening six lines of MacNeill's edition read:

> Má bé rí rofesser / recht flatho fo thōith / iar miud mescbaid / a slog sabaid / cuirmmthige cuirmmescai / mess tire[64]

Binchy's primary difficulty with MacNeill's edition is that there is no linking alliteration between any of the lines after the second. Binchy's edition is based on the assumption that all the lines were originally linked by alliteration and concludes that where this alliteration cannot be supplied the scribe has omitted one or more lines. This highlights an important issue regarding the significance of metrical rules in the editing of medieval Irish verse. This point will be expanded upon in a later chapter. Suffice to say that, in this instance, Binchy concluded that the text of the

[62] Binchy, '*Bretha Déin Chécht*', p. 17.
[63] Eoin MacNeill, 'The Law of Status or Franchise', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 36 C (1923, 1921-24), pp. 265-314, at p. 307.
[64] Ibid., p. 308.

original poem was metrically uniform throughout. Whilst Binchy's edition is in places markedly dissimilar to the text of the manuscript, he supplies his reader with a transcript 'for the purposes of comparison'.[65] Furthermore, he did not consider his edition definitive remarking that 'any attempt to restore the language of the original in its entirety would be premature'.[66] From this, we may conclude that it was Binchy's position that the language of the original poem is the ideal to be aimed at in establishing the text.

Nowadays, much of the editorial work being done on medieval Irish law tracts is by philologists rather than historians. Therefore, it is unsurprising that in the years following Binchy's death there was a reversion to the textual and philological methodology pioneered by Thurneysen. Though Binchy's agenda differed somewhat from that of philologists such as Stokes and Thurneysen, it is possible to discern certain shared patterns in the basic assumptions of their editorial approaches, diverse though they may appear at first sight. Recognition of these common characteristics, and their implications for current editorial practice, allows future editors to challenge these ideals which have become so deeply rooted in the discipline, thus providing theoretical and practical opportunities for the expression of a specifically medieval Irish textual criticism.

James Patrick Carney

Before moving on to consider the implications of this shared theoretical framework, I wish to consider briefly the scholarly contributions of James Patrick Carney (1914-1989) to the field of medieval Irish textual criticism. Carney received his primary degree in Celtic Studies at University College Dublin in 1935, before going to Bonn

[65] Binchy, 'An Archaic Legal Poem', p. 155.
[66] Ibid.

University to study with Thurneysen. On his return, he worked with many of the great twentieth-century contributors to the field of Old and Middle Irish – Osborn Bergin, Gerard Murphy, Richard Irvine Best and Thomas Francis O'Rahilly. He was attached to the School of Celtic Studies at the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies from its foundation in 1940 until his death. He and his wife (Maura Morrissey, a highly respected scholar in her own right) founded a Department of Celtic Studies at Uppsala University, where he was visiting professor from 1950-52. In 1973, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by that same institution in recognition of his contribution to Celtic Studies.

Carney pioneered a view of Old and Middle Irish texts which emphasised their literary nature rather than their philological content, the results of which are still evident in the discipline. His theories of literary criticism were most lucidly expressed in his controversial *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, published in 1955.[67] Carney's work was not well received in all quarters and some critics accused him of overstating his 'anti-nativist' formulations.[68] According to Terence McCaughey, Carney's literary model was a concept of European literature which stressed the influence of medieval Latin literature on subsequent writing in modern European languages put forward by the German scholar Ernst Robert Curtius (1886-1956) in 1948.[69] The core of Carney's hypothesis may be summed up in a single sentence: 'Irish literature has, in my opinion, approximately the same relationship to

[67] James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin, 1955).
[68] For details of this debate, see Chapter Three pp. 162-3.
[69] Terence McCaughey, 'James Patrick Carney', *Celtica* 23 (1999), pp. 188-92, at p. 188; the reference is to Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* (Franke, 1948).

the European literature that preceded it – whether Christian or classical – as has Latin to Greek'.[70]

Carney was primarily concerned with the editing and presentation of poetry. The editorial methodology which he espoused, specifically with regard to the treatment of medieval Irish verse, is discussed at length in Chapter Five. It is not necessary for our present discussion to detail this method. It is sufficient that we get a clear picture of the basic assumptions which constitute Carney's approach to medieval Irish texts in order to juxtapose it with the approaches employed by Stokes and Binchy. In summary, Carney was a proponent of the recensionary approach and his editorial method was given extended expression in one of his contributions to the 1969-70 volume of *Éigse*.[71] Here he maintained that contemporary editorial practice was based on an exaggeration of the difficulties posed by the manuscript material.[72] Carney suggested that better results might be achieved by altering the genealogical procedure of editing texts in response to the specifics of the Irish tradition together with avoiding superfluous emendation. He outlines his understanding of the genealogical method as 'a preliminary grouping of manuscripts into families and, then, a mechanical production of the text'.[73]

As examples of Carney's editorial work on prose texts we might examine his 1969 edition of the prose items from the Ó Cianáin Miscellany and his 1972 edition

[70] Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, p. 312.
[71] James Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', *Éigse* 13 (1969-70), pp. 291-312.
[72] Ibid., p. 294. For an alternative view, see Daniel A. Binchy, 'Review of Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics: Eighth to Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1956)', *Celtica* 4 (1958), pp. 292-6, at p. 293, where Binchy states that Murphy 'rightly deprecates the idea that these problems [i.e. the difficulties facing editors of Irish poems] can be solved with the machinery devised by classical scholars for establishing the received text'.
[73] Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', p. 294. Note, however, that the proposed alterations to the classical system are not defined further and a close analysis of Carney's observations demonstrates that the editorial procedure which he recommends is, for the most part, that of classical philologists.

of the macaronic Lambeth commentary which he edited with Ludwig Bieler.[74] The first of these presents four short prose texts from NLI MS G3 and the corresponding passages from the Book of Ballymote (hereafter *BB*) in parallel diplomatic texts.[75] The expansion of all manuscript abbreviations is shown in italic script and translations are appended to each section. Given the striking similarities between the two texts, Carney's decision not to critically edit the prose work is noteworthy. It may be argued that his editorial intention was to demonstrate the relationship between the manuscript sources rather than to present their textual archetype.[76] This point is further substantiated by the fact that Carney opens his edition by remarking on the palaeographical content of G3 with the primary aim of establishing Ádhamh Ó Cianáin as the scribe of the original miscellany.[77] Thus, his comments emphasise his concern for scribal rather than authorial activities.

This example of Carney's editorial work on medieval Irish prose serves to highlight Carney's keen interest in scribal activity; included in his analysis of the work is a discussion concerning the relationship of G3 to *BB* where Carney briefly alludes to the question of scribal intention.[78] In his contribution to the 1969-70 volume of *Éigse*, Carney analysed the scribal processes by which the variant forms of medieval Irish texts come into being. Here, he differentiated between two primary types of scribal variants: the first group results from orthographical changes

[74] James Carney, 'The Ó Cianáin Miscellany', *Ériu* 21 (1969), pp. 122-47; Ludwig Bieler and James Carney, 'The Lambeth Commentary', *Ériu* 23 (1972), pp. 1-55.
[75] Manuscripts G 2 and G 3 were originally a single manuscript. Thus, Carney refers to G2 and G3 as G2-3 as though they were still a single manuscript.
[76] Carney, 'The Ó Cianáin Miscellany', p. 126: 'The short prose texts, ABC, G 3, 19V, are found together in the Book of Ballymote, p. 14 (Facs.) and the MSS. (G 2-3 and BB) have fairly obviously used a common exemplar'.
[77] Carney, 'The Ó Cianáin Miscellany', p. 124-6.
[78] See Carney, 'The Ó Cianáin Miscellany', p. 126, where he writes regarding the common source of G 2-3 and the *BB* that 'the scribes of the separate gathering were continuing the intention of those of the preceding, that is, the collection of miscellaneous snippets from various sources'.

or modernisation: correction of these is 'usually mechanical, convincing, and, as often as not, supported by other evidence drawn from the poem itself'. The second group is produced by deliberate rewriting with the variants constituting 'secondary creative acts'.[79] By extension, when scribal innovation can be arguably demonstrated to be of the latter sort the editor may be dealing with a new version of an existing text. It will be seen in Chapter Five that, despite these observations, Carney's primary editorial object continues to be the recovery of the authorial or archetypal text and his remarks regarding scribal activity are made with a view to aiding this process.

The three poems set forth by Carney in the same article allow us to draw comparisons between his editorial approaches to prose versus poetry. Unlike the prose, the poems are given in a normalised as well as a diplomatic edition. In addition to the editions and their translations, notes regarding the emendations of the diplomatic text are appended to the relevant sections. Once more, the importance of metrical rules in the editing of medieval Irish verse becomes apparent; many of Carney's alterations of the poetry are based on his analysis of the presumedly uniform metrical patterning. Thus, Carney presents his reader with multiple edited texts, established according to two different methodologies and predetermined by his editorial aims.

The second edition to be examined presents fragments of the Lambeth Commentary written largely in Irish, but with extensive Latin quotations, mainly

[79] Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', p. 293. Cf. Stanley S. Hussey's observations regarding the unconscious and conscious errors of medieval scribes: 'Editing the Scale of Perfection', in *Crux and Controversy in Middle English Textual Criticism*, ed. Alastair Minnis and Charlotte Brewer (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 97-107, at p. 97.

from patristic sources. The fragments are preserved in a single manuscript witness.[80] The commentary was edited jointly by Bieler and Carney, the latter carrying the main responsibility for the Irish text. The reader is offered a facsimile reprint of the two fragments. Furthermore, the editors give a transcript of each fragment and although it is clear from remarks in their introduction that the intention was to present the edited text on the opposite page,[81] the edition is printed following the transcript *in totom*. The reader is then offered a translation of the Irish text, with notes concerning the translation completing the edition. In the transcript, the punctuation mark is represented as a dot on the line. Square brackets are used to indicate lacunae, whether filled or left blank. Italic script is employed to indicate expansions of the Irish text; contractions have been silently expanded in the Latin text with the exception of a few doubtful instances where the expansion has been placed between round brackets. In the edited text, the Latin portion is in Roman type script whereas the entire Irish section is in italic type. Here, square brackets are used to indicate editorial deletion, and angular brackets indicate editorial insertions. As is done in the Ó Cianáin Miscellany, the editors of the Lambeth Commentary begin their discussion of the text with a brief palaeographical study of the manuscript witness.

I include this summary of Carney's contributions to the study of medieval Irish texts in the present discussion because it offers an approach to such texts which is quite different from the philological and historical editions of Stokes and Binchy. Carney's view of Irish literature informed his editorial policy and his general

[80] The late twelfth-century MS. London, Lambeth Palace 119 (G.n. 12 - N. 14); they now form fols 7 and 8 of fascicle labelled 'Fragments 1229'.

[81] Bieler and Carney, 'The Lambeth Commentary', p. 5: 'We give here a transcript of the two fragments, with an edition of the text on the opposite pages'.

approach to medieval Irish manuscripts. His understanding of scribal activity stands in stark contrast to the attitudes expressed by his academic forerunners. The resultant editions reflect something of the materialist conception of the work and the theories of socialisation of text which became popular in the closing decades of the twentieth century. According to McGann's formulation:

> For an editor and textual critic the concept of authority has to be conceived in a more broadly social and cultural context. Authoritative texts are arrived at by an exhaustive reconstruction not of an author and his intentions so much as of an author and his context of work.[82]

For Carney, scribal reworking may constitute authorial activity; thus, the aims of his editions are less restricted than those of the traditional author-centred scholarly editions.

As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, my intention is not to argue that editions produced from such a perspective are (or are not) more correct than those produced from a philological or historical stance. Rather, my aim is to demonstrate that whilst such literary editions are constructed according to a different critical perspective, the methodology Carney employed during his editorial work is shaped according to the same humanist principles which are identifiable in the editions of Stokes and Binchy. The resultant editions, whilst strikingly different in theory, remain similar in practice and presentation.

[82] McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, p. 121.

Conclusions

If we return to Machan's summary of the precepts which constitute textual-critical studies in general, as quoted in the opening paragraph of the present chapter, it may be seen that he distinguishes four elements: 'the equation of the authoritative text with an authorial one, the valorization of an idealist, lexical conception of the work, a moral orientation, and an ambivalent sense of historicity'.[83] The three approaches to medieval Irish texts discussed here each depend on certain basic editorial assumptions regarding the textual situation. First, that extant (and, by extension, lost) manuscripts all descend from a single authorial copy or archetypal text, with the editorial task being conceived of as the recuperation of that copy. The next assumption, perhaps even more deeply entrenched in the discipline, is that the primary purpose of critical editing of medieval Irish texts is seen to be an attempt to recover the work of the original author; or, if that proves to be irrecoverable, the archetype will be of interest. One may argue that Carney's editorial work exemplifies a fundamental shift from this received tradition of textual criticism. However, Carney does not deny the notion of the authorial text; rather, he merely extends its definition through the inclusion of certain acts of scribal (re)creation.

The material realisation of the manuscript text is not seen as an intrinsic aspect of that work. In Tanselle's formulation, 'messages may be inextricable from their media, but the medium of literature and other pieces of verbal communication is language, not paper and ink'. Thus, 'if one is restructuring texts intended by their authors, one generally need not preserve these features [e.g., paper quality, leaf dimension, style of letters, margins] of documents, for they are not, except in

[83] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 39.

unusual cases, part of the intended texts'.[84] Machan, whilst citing this particular passage, concludes that in this vein the textual apparatus of the modern critical edition does not impact upon the character of the original work or on the readers' interpretation of it.[85] The conventions of medieval Irish textual criticism provide very little in the way of conceptual objection to this approach to editing. Although palaeographical observations can be seen to be a key feature in editions of medieval Irish texts, such commentaries are generally constructed with the view to elucidating the textual history. Furthermore, whilst the recreation of the documentary realisation of a work is not regarded as an editorial necessity, the arrangements of the editions themselves with their introduction, critical apparatus, notes, glossary, indices and corrigenda remain constant. Similarly, the presentation of such texts has come close to orthodoxy. Italic script is regularly used to mark editorial expansion. Brackets of various types are consistently employed but not always with consistency. The apparatus given with the edited text calls attention to textual corruptions, refers to sources, and in the cases where the latter have been critically edited, lists varints of and deviations from the edited text.

The task of recording variant readings of manuscripts is rarely significant for establishing the authorial text. Despite this, collation of alternative manuscript readings has remained central in editions of medieval Irish texts. Initially, the purpose of this practice was to record those readings of philological significance. For scholars such as Binchy and Carney, the real significance of collating different versions and analysing their readings lies in what this tells us about the history of the

[84] Gerard Thomas Tanselle, *A Rationale of Textual Criticism* (Philadelphia, 1989), p. 40 and p. 92. Cf. Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 65.
[85] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 66.

text, its reception and the wider ramifications of learning and culture in the medieval period.

These similarities are profoundly significant in sustaining 'the idealist, lexical conception of the work that has been predominant throughout textual-critical history'.[86] Whilst all three editors represent different critical approaches to medieval Irish textual criticism, each scholar subscribes to the same fundamental theories concerning the ideals of the critical edition and the methods of presentation. Regarding the hierarchy of theories of textual criticism, Machan writes:

> When a number of theories obtain in what is regarded as a discipline, some of them are necessarily of different conceptual orders in such a way that each theory is framed in accordance with the limitations imposed on it by higher-order theories and in turn delimits the hermeneutic options of lower-order theories ... In textual criticism and literary interpretation, understanding of a historical reality and of the objectives of a modern edition must logically be higher up the theoretical hierarchy than methodological discussions, for in any edition method is always an extension – a concretisation – of theory, however unacknowledged the latter may be.[87]

Accordingly, the praxes of humanist textual criticism are situated higher up the theoretical hierarchy than the disciplinary orientation of the editor. Provided that the critic agrees with the underlying humanist ideals which constitute modern textual criticism – 'the equation of the authoritative text with an authorial one, the valorization of an idealist, lexical conception of the work, a moral orientation, and an ambivalent sense of historicity'[88] – any disagreements in the resultant editions are relatively superficial given the extent of the theoretical agreement.

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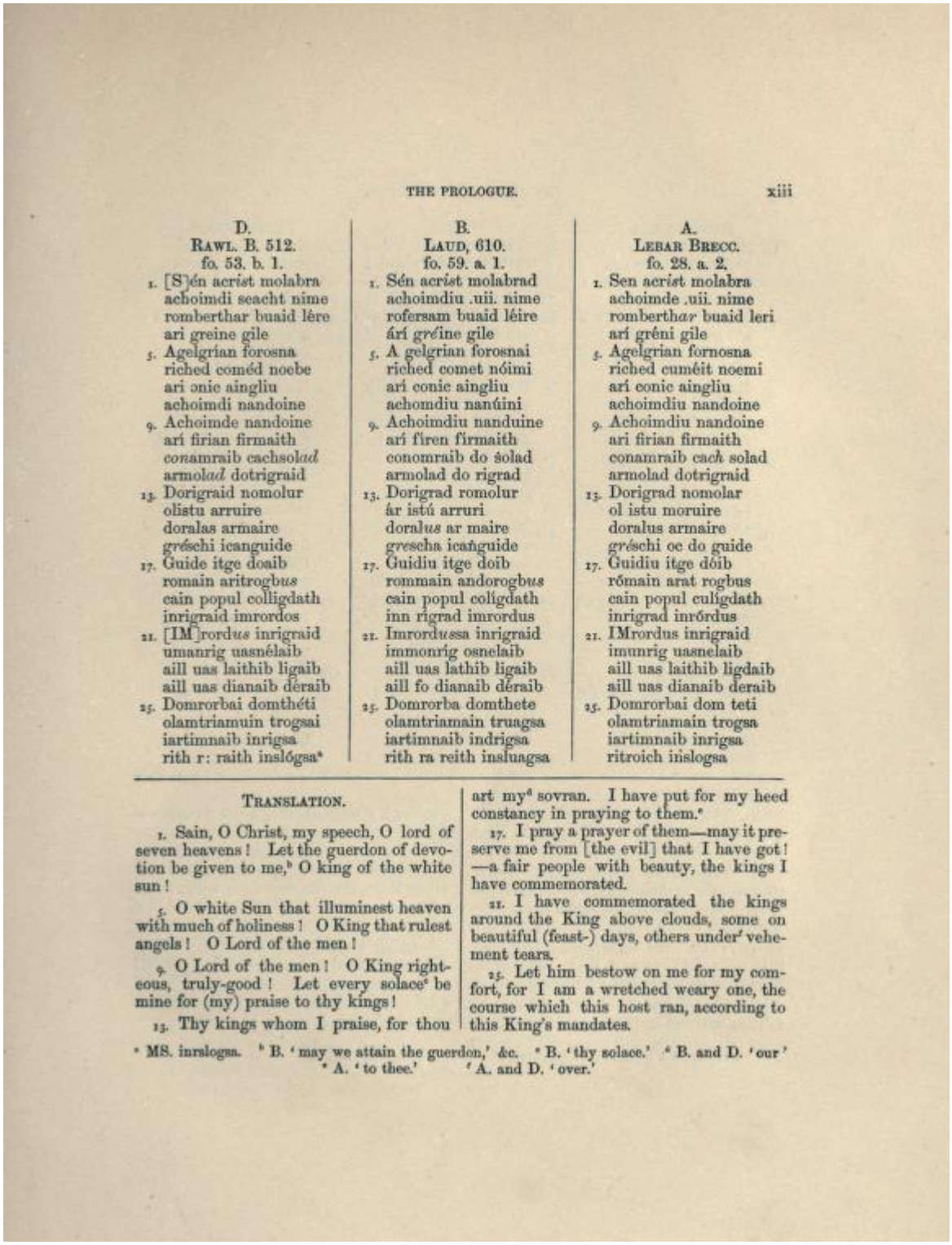
[86] Ibid., p. 65.
[87] Ibid., p. 69.
[88] Ibid., p. 39. See n. 1 of the present chapter.

In the conclusion to her history of editing in Middle English, Anne Hudson writes: 'The old reductive view of the editor, then – the view that the editor "merely" provides a text which the literary critic may interpret, the historian plunder, and the philologist gut for interesting forms has to go'.[89] Traditionally, the practice of textual criticism in the field of medieval Irish has not viewed as distinct from that of literary criticism, palaeography, history and linguistics or indeed any other aspect of the subject.[90] Rightly or wrongly, this perspective of textual criticism was inherent in the original formulation of medieval Irish textual studies and persists in the modern view of the subject.

[89] Anne Hudson, 'Middle English' in *Editing Medieval Texts: English, French and Latin Written in England*, ed. Arthur George Rigg (New York, 1977), pp. 34-58, at p. 50.

[90] In the following chapter we will see that there is a growing awareness within the discipline of the needs of literary critics for a different type of scholarly edition.



THE PROLOGUE. xiii

D. Rawl. B. 512. fo. 53. b. 1.	B. Laud, 610. fo. 59. a. 1.	A. Lebar Brecc. fo. 28. a. 2.
1. [S]én acrist molabra	1. Sén acrist molabrad	1. Sen acrist molabra
achoimdi seacht nime	achoimdiu .uii. nime	achoimde .uii. nime
romberthar buaid lére	rofersam buaid léire	romberthar buaid leri
ari greine gile	árí gréine gile	arí gréni gile
5. Agelgrian forosna	5. A gelgrian forosnai	5. Agelgrian fornosna
riched coméd noebe	riched comet nóimi	riched cuméit noemi
ari conic aingliu	arí conic aingliu	arí conic aingliu
achoimdi nandoine	achomdiu nanúini	achoimdiu nandoine
9. Achoimde nandoine	9. Achoimdiu nanduine	9. Achoimdiu nandoine
arí firian firmaith	arí firen firmaith	ari firian firmaith
conamraib cachsolad	conomraib do ṡolad	conamraib cach solad
armolad dotrigraid	armolad do rigrad	armolad dotrigraid
13. Dorigraid nomolur	13. Dorigrad romolur	13. Dorigrad nomolar
olistu arruire	ár istú arruri	ol istu moruire
doralas armaire	doralus ar maire	doralus armaire
gréschi icanguide	gvescha icaṅguide	gréschi oc do guide
17. Guide itge doaib	17. Guidiu itge doib	17. Guidiu itge dóib
romain aritrogbus	rommain andorogbus	rómain arat rogbus
cain popul colligdath	cain popul coligdath	cain popul culigdath
inrigraid imrordos	inn rigrad imrordus	inrigrad inrórdus
21. [IM]rordus inrigraid	21. Imrordussa inrigraid	21. IMrordus inrigraid
umanrig uasnélaib	immonrig osnelaib	imunrig uasnelaib
aill uas laithib ligaib	aill uas lathib ligaib	aill uas laithib ligdaib
aill uas dianaib déraib	aill fo dianaib déraib	aill uas dianaib deraib
25. Domrorbai domthéti	25. Domrorba domthete	25. Domrorbai dom teti
olamtriamuin trogsai	olamtriamain truagsa	olamtriamain trogsa
iartimnaib inrigsa	iartimnaib indrigsa	iartimnaib inrigsa
rith r: raith inslógsa[a]	rith ra reith insluagsa	ritroich inslogsa

Translation.

1. Sain, O Christ, my speech, O lord of seven heavens! Let the guerdon of devotion be given to me,[b] O king of the white sun!

5. O white Sun that illuminest heaven with much of holiness! O King that rulest angels! O Lord of the men!

9. O Lord of the men! O King righteous, truly-good! Let every solace[c] be mine for (my) praise to thy kings!

13. Thy kings whom I praise, for thou art my[d] sovran. I have put for my heed constancy in praying to them.[e]

17. I pray a prayer of them—may it preserve me from [the evil] that I have got! —a fair people with beauty, the kings I have commemorated.

21. I have commemorated the kings around the King above clouds, some on beautiful (feast-) days, others under[f] vehement tears.

25. Let him bestow on me for my comfort, for I am a wretched weary one, the course which this host ran, according to this King's mandates.

[a] MS. inrslogsa. [b] B. 'may we attain the guerdon,' &c. [c] B. 'thy solace.' [d] B. and D. 'our' [e] A. 'to thee.' [f] A. and D. 'over.'

FIGURE 2.1: STOKES' 1880 EDITION OF FÉLIRE ÓENGUSSO CÉLI DÉ

FÉLIRE ÓENGUSSO CÉLI DÉ.

THE MARTYROLOGY OF OENGUS THE CULDEE.

IN PROLACH.

1. SÉN a Chríst mo labrai,[1]
a choimmdiu[2] secht nime!
dom-berthar[3] búaid lére,
a rí gréne gile!

5. A gelgrían forosnai[4]
riched co méit nóibe,
a rí conic[5] aiṅgliu,
a choimmdiu na ndóine[6]!

9. A choimmdiu na ndóine,[7]
a rí fírén[8] fírmaith,
condom-roib cach solad[9]
ar molad dot rígraid.[10]

13. Do rígrad[11] no molur,[12]
ol[13] is tú mo ruiri,[14]
doralus ar m'airi
gréschi[15] occa ṅguidi.[16]

17. Guidiu[17] itge doaib,[18]
romm-ain a ndo-rogbus,[19]
cain popul col-lígdath,
ind[20] rígrad im-rordus.[21]

THE PROLOGUE.

1. Sain, O Christ, my speech, O Lord of the seven heavens! Let the guerdon of devotion be given to me, O King of the bright sun!

5. O bright Sun that illuminest heaven with much of holiness! O King that rulest angels, O Lord of men!

9. O Lord of men, O King righteous, truly-good, let every profit be mine for (my) praise of thy kingfolk.

13. Thy kingfolk whom I praise, for 'tis Thou art my sovran, I have borne in mind constancy in beseeching them.

17. I pray a prayer to them: may what I have taken protect me—the fair people with beauty, the king-folk I have commemorated.

[1] labra *R*[2]. *F. LB. C.* labrad *L. E.* [2] choimdi *R*[2]. choimdiu *L.* choimde *LB.* [3] romberthar *R*[2]. *LB.* rofersam *L.* rofeasam *F.* [4] fornosna *LB.* forosnai *L.* forosnaidh *F.* forosna *R*[2]. [5] conic *LB.* onic *C. F. R*[2]. [6] nanúini *L.* nandoene *F.* nandoine *R*[2]. *LB.* [7] nandoine *R*[2]. *LB.* nandaine *F.* nanduine *L.* [8] fíren *L.* firian *R*[2]. *LB.* [9] do solad *L.* solud *C. B.* soludh *F.* [10] do rigrad *LB. L.* dot rigraid *R*[2]. *LB.* do righradh *F.* [11] sic *L. LB.* rigraid *R*[2]. [12] *sic C*, romolur *B. L.* nomolar *LB.* romolar *F.* [13] ár *L.* ar *B. R*[2]. ol *R*[2]. *LB.* [14] ar ruri *B.* ar ruire *R*[2]. *F.* mo ruire *LB.* [15] *gre*scha *L. B.* grescha *F. B.* [16] oc do guide *LB.* ican guide *R*[2]. icaṅguide *L.* ican guidhe *F.* [17] *sic L. LB.* Guide *R*[2]. [18] dóib *LB.* doib *L.* doaib *R*[2]. doaibh *F.* [19] aratrógbus *LB.* andorogbus *L. F.* aritrogbus *R*[2]. *C.* aratraghbus *B.* [20] inn *L.* in *R*[2]. *LB.* [21] *sic LB. L.* Imrordos *R*[2]. *E.* Imrordussa *R*[2].

FIGURE 2.2: STOKES' 1905 EDIITON OF FÉLIRE ÓENGUSSO CÉLI DÉ

[1] equal honour-price. [2] apart from the 'penance' [in addition]. [3] All the other seven church grades—apart from a bishop—are paid equal honour-price with the lay grades—and *Fēne* comes from Fēnius—like their equals in rank among the laity. [4] save what 'penance' adds in excess to the churchman together with honour-price: double for sacred persons.

§ 5. Each person has equal *dīre* with another in *cāin* regulation[1]—both king and subject, free[2] and servile,[3] weak[4] and strong.[5] Moreover in like manner they have equal *dire* in the books [of Canon law?],[6] apart from what penance adds to the *dīre* of a church grade.[7] For it is in the native law[8] that unequal *dire*[9] has been established for the lay grades[10] in the assessments of blood-lyings.[11]

[1] equal honour-price for each with another in the publication of the rules according to the ancients, as regards body-fine and honour-price, viz. church and laity. [2] a member of the noble grades. [3] a member of the freemen grades. [4] from the church. [5] from the laity. [6] They have equal honour-price in the books of learning, that is according to the ancients. [7] save what penance adds to the church grades, viz. to the church over and above the laity. [8] in the *Senchas*—not in the books and not in *cāin*. [9] For the world was in equality until the *Senchas Mār* came. [10] as regards honour-price and nursing fee. [11] after they have been estimated in a lying of blood.

§ 6. Moreover there has been laid down under pain of penalties the bringing away[1] of every [person who has received a] wound which entitles him to nursing[2] and of every boy in fosterage.[3] Half the *dire* for the nursing wound of every man [is due] to his wife.[4]

[1] The penalties which are [here] declared have been established if he who is forced into a blood-lying is not brought away to be nursed. [2] . . . which is fit to be brought [away] on sick-maintenance. [3] after the conclusion of fosterage. . . . [4] Half of what is due to each man on sick-maintenance after he has been forced into blood-lying is due to his chief wife; or half the penalty for the nursing wound of every man [is due] to his wife.

§ 7. Every wound of sanctity[1] or infancy[2] after baptism is paid for by equal *dire* with the church grades[3] up to the end of seven years until they [the children] have put off their status of childhood.[4]

From that on[5] they are paid *dire* according to the honour of their father[6] or of any person who is fostering them[7] up to the conclusion of seventeen years; after that they are paid *dire* according to [that given to] the freemen grades and according to their own deserts.[8]

[1] the boy. [2] the girl. [3] There is paid to them equal honour-price with the grades which are in the church, i.e. with the lector. [4] until their pure grades have been definitely put [5] from them at the conclusion of

[8] 'etymological' gloss.

FIGURE 2.3: BINCHY, '*BRETHA CRÓLIGE*', P. 9

G 3, 21v, col. B–22r, col. A	BB, p. 14. col. B
Xp̄s dub d*h*on*n* a f*h*olt ⁊ casulc*h*a	Xp̄s dub dond a f*h*olt ⁊ casulc*h*a
f*h*ota gablanac*h* f*air*	foda gablanac*h* f*air*
Petr*us* liat*h* uili ⁊ smotulc*h*a f*air*	Petr*us* liath uili ⁊ smot ulc*h*a fair
Paulus urm*h*æl dub*h*	Paul*us* urmæl dub.
Andreas folt dub tuaimneac*h* f*air* ⁊ ulc*h*a f*h*ota	Andreas folt dub tuai*m*nec*h* f*air* ⁊ ulc*h*a foda
IAcob f*ili*us zebedi folt dub*h* ⁊ ulc*h*a f*h*ota fair	IAcob f*ili*us zebedei folt dub ⁊ ulc*h*a f*h*oda f*air*
IOh*ann*es folt dub*h* tuai*m*nec*h* f*air* ⁊ gan ulc*h*a itir	IOh*ann*es folt dub tuai*m*neac*h* f*air* ⁊ gan ulc*h*a itir.
Pilipo*us* derg uili ⁊ ulc*h*a f*air*	Pilipo*us* d*er*g uili ⁊ ulc*h*a fair
Bart*h*olome*us* folt dub*h* cas f*air* ⁊ ulc*h*a f*h*ota	Bart*h*olome*us* folt dub cas f*air* ⁊ ulc*h*a foda
Tomas dono folt dub f*air* ⁊ ulc*h*a f*h*ota	Tomas dno folt dub f*air* ⁊ ulc*h*a foda
Mate*us* folt cas dub fair[1] ⁊ gan ulca itir[1]	Mate*us* folt cas dub f*air* ⁊ gan ulc*h*a itir
IAcob*us* f*ili*us alp*h*ei folt dub f*air* ⁊ ulc*h*a f*h*ota	IAcob*us* f*ili*us alp*h*ei folt dub f*air* ⁊ ulc*h*a foda
IOhanes bap*tista* folt cas dub f*air* ⁊ ulc*h*a f*h*ota	IOh*ann*es bap*tista* folt cas dub f*air* ⁊ ulc*h*a foda
Tat*h*eus ulcha dea[r]g f*air* ⁊ mong liath	Tat*h*eus ulc*h*a d*er*g f*air* ⁊ mong liat*h*
Simon lapidat*us*[2]	Simon lapidat*us*
Stepanus lapidat*us*[2]	Sdeafan*us* lapidat*us*
Marcus dorrnuit[2]	M*ar*c*us* dormiuit
Lucas crucifix*us*	Luccas crucifix*us*
	Finit Amen

TRANSLATION

Christ: dark brown hair and a long curly forked beard.
Peter: completely grey and a very small beard.
Paul: bald in front, black.
Andrew: wavy black hair and a long beard.
James, son of Zebedee: long black hair and a long beard.
John: wavy black hair and no beard whatsoever.
Phillip: completely red, having a beard.

[1] Added over line. [2] Written overhead.

FIGURE 2.4: CARNEY, 'THE Ó CIANÁIN MISCELLANY', P. 135

cum inferni supplicia flendo pertimescit et
quidem prius inferius ac post inriguum superius datur sed
quia conpunctio amoris dignitate praeminet
necesse fuit ut prius inriguum superius ⁊ post inri
guum inferius commemorari debuisset.
Ataat t*ra* di erdil f*or*ssindubu. spirtidiu ani
mæ .i. dubæ naithirge dinabpeccdaib
sechmadachtib ⁊ dube sírectæ imflaith
nime. issí insin in dingen caleph m*aicc* effon
næ dorímther isinscriptúir issiede
doluid f*or*sindassin. dochum a athar anas
mb*er*t fris dedisti mihi terram aridam ⁊ aus
tralem. dá mihi terram inriguam inferius ⁊ superius issí
t*rá* insin indanim roradi atoisc frisin
caleph rúnde fridia anasrub*ar*t fris
doratis dom chaíngnímu. ⁊ choí mopeccdæ
sechmodacte dá mihi da*no* sírect imflaith
nime. ISé inbrónsin roboí f*or*snabnoeb
ib ⁊ f*or*s nafirionib am*al*ronboí f*or* d*aui*d dicens
exitús aquarum deduxerunt oculi mei. is dindubusin
roradi gregorius dicens // dicat terrenarum rerum
$\overline{gg}$ **M**emor fui dei ⁊ dilectatus sum ac sí aperte
mé nec habundantia refouet aucto
ris mei. quem adhúc uidere non ualeo uel sola
memoria dilectat. haec igitur amaritudo
sapientium quia dum spé in alta erecti sunt
nullís híc gaudís animum sternunt hinc
scriptum est cor sapientium ubi tristitia est

(Fol. 1, r^{b})

(*Two lines lost.*)

in luctum conu[er]tat[ur] ⁊ gaudiu[m] i[n] merorem. hinc per
semet ipsam. ueritas attestatur dicens beati qui lugent
nunc ⁊ rl item dicit // in conpunctione uechimenter
$\overline{gg}$ **Q**uatuor qualitates de quibus uiri iusti anima
afficitur cum aut malorum suorum reminiscitur consi
derans ubi fuit aut iudiciorum dei sententiam
metuens ⁊ secum quaerens cogitat ubi erit aut cum
mala uitæ praesentis soler[ti]ter attendens
moriens considerat ubi est aut cum bona supernæ
contemplatur quae quia necdum adepiscitur langens con
spicit ubi non est malorum suorum paulus meminerat
cum diceret non sum dignus uocari apostolus rursus

FIGURE 2.5: BIELER AND CARNEY, 'THE LAMBETH COMMENTARY', P. 12.

Modern Textual Critical Discourse

As outlined in the introduction, the purpose of the present section is to discuss the various contributions to the theory of textual criticism in a medieval Irish context in recent decades. The primary focus here will be on Old and Middle Irish prose texts as the theory of editing medieval Irish poetry will be discussed at length in Chapter Five. For the most part, the relevant theses are assessed in chronological order. Certain issues will be seen to recur, in particular the matter of manuscript transmission and its importance as far as editorial methodology is concerned. Usually, ideas concerning editorial practice in a medieval Irish context are expressed implicitly. As we noted in the introduction, with the exception of a small number of recently published scholarly articles, discussion of textual criticism of medieval Irish works has typically been restricted to introductions to editions. At present, there is no book-length examination of the subject.

In 1979, Edgar Slotkin discussed the possibility that variant readings present in early Irish secular literature represent oral multiforms.[91] In this article, Slotkin properly points out that each evaluation of Irish saga material, and, we may add, any other material must be grounded in its manuscript tradition and knowledge of scribal practices.[92] Putting this point in another way, he says that 'we [scholars primarily concerned with early secular literature] wish to know whether a scribe treated a text in transcription as a fixed text: and if not, whether we can distinguish between his additions and the possibility that his text represents an oral multiform'.[93] Utilising an example of scribal attitudes to twelfth-century Latin epics, his analysis

[91] Slotkin, 'Medieval Irish Scribes and Fixed Texts'. Slotkin's theses regarding oral composition in medieval Irish saga material will be examined at length in the next chapter.
[92] Ibid., p. 440.
[93] Ibid., p. 444.

demonstrates that though the Irish redactors closely followed their Latin sources, they reshaped the material to correspond more closely to Irish narrative texts.[94] In addition, Slotkin stresses the importance of scribal attitudes towards themes, 'as thematic variation is frequently the grounds for the textual critic to suggest different recensions'.[95] He differentiates between two orders of recensions: recensions as traditionally understood and 'thematic recensions' which are the result of scribes having treated their texts as multiforms. In conclusion, Slotkin argues that given scribal attitudes towards their works, 'we can think of each one of their productions as a kind of multiform of the original', and thus, 'the entire nature of a critical edition [i.e. an edition established by the genealogical method] of a saga is a false concept'.[96]

Slotkin was not the only scholar to raise the issue of the oral multiform for medieval Irish literary studies, nor indeed was he the first. In 1975, Daniel Melia opined that the *macgnímrada* 'The Boyhood Deeds of Cúchulainn' section of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* 'The Cattle Raid of Cooley' provides evidence for an associated oral tradition for at least one section of the medieval Irish saga. Melia compares the events of the *macgnímrada* contained in the two major extant manuscripts, *Lebor na hUidre* (*LU*) and the *Book of Leinster*, and suggests that the extra material contained in the former functions as an 'alternative parallel' version of the *macgnímrada*.[97] Although the primary concern of this publication is the relationship between orality

[94] Ibid., p. 445. In a more recent issue of *Studia Hibernica*, Uáitéar Mac Gearailt examined the surviving recensions of the Irish version of the destruction of Troy, *Togail Troí*. His conclusions are similar to those of Slotkin. Mac Gearailt does not, however, introduce the subject of modern textual editing into his discussion of scribal attitudes: '*Togail Troí*: An Example of Translating and Editing in Medieval Ireland', *Studia Hibernica* 31 (2000-1), pp. 71-85.
[95] Slotkin, 'Medieval Irish Scribes', p. 449.
[96] Ibid., p. 450.
[97] Daniel Melia, 'Parallel Versions of "The Boyhood Deeds of Cuchulainn"', in *Oral Literature*, ed. Joseph J. Duggan (New York, 1975), pp. 25-41, at p.27.

and literacy, Melia hints at his dissatisfaction with the use of the genealogical method to edit medieval Irish prose material.[98]

In 1985, Hildegard Tristram published a diplomatic best-text edition of the Irish *Sex Aetates Mundi* text (*SAM*) as part of a more general study of the 'six ages of the world' theme in both Irish and Anglo-Saxon literature. In her discussion of the relationships between the principal manuscript witnesses, Tristram opines that texts such as *SAM* did not exist in a canonical form and, therefore, are not suited to critical editing and cites the aforementioned article by Slotkin to substantiate her decision not to present a 'synoptic-critical edition'.[99] Tristram's editorial work on the Irish *SAM* became the subject of a review by Máire Herbert published the following year. In addition to Tristram's edition, Herbert reviews the 1983 critical edition of the same material by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín. 'In both cases', writes Herbert:

> general conclusions about the Middle Irish version of the *Sex Aetates Mundi* rest on the outcome of the prior process of edition of the text. Since fundamental questions regarding the content, construction, and date are involved, the manner of edition must be examined in some detail.[100]

Whilst Herbert's criticisms are directed specifically at the editions of Tristram and Ó Cróinín, her evaluation has interesting things to say regarding the editing of medieval Irish texts in general. In contrast to the theses of both Slotkin and Melia, Herbert argues in favour of the application of the general principles of

[98] Ibid., p. 26: 'The *Cattle Raid of Cooley* has survived in no less than ten manuscripts and manuscript-fragments, no one of which seems to have been copied directly from any other, and among which there are at least three (and perhaps four or more) "recensions". With so many variants in existence, the entire question of what constitutes an "interpolation" (which pre-supposes a fixed text into which something can be interpolated) seems to me to be problematic in the extreme'. Melia further addressed the issue of the application of the classical method to Irish prose narrative in his 1974 doctoral dissertation entitled 'Narrative Structure in Irish Saga'.

[99] Hildegard Tristram, *Sex Aetates Mundi: Die Weltzeitalter bei den Angelsachsen und den Iren. Untersuchlungen und Texte* (Heidelberg, 1985), pp. 104-5.

[100] Herbert, 'The Irish *Sex Aetates Mundi*: First Editions', p. 100.

recension to early Irish vernacular material: 'experience shows that most texts have a comparatively small number of manuscript witnesses, whose scribes tended to follow a single exemplar only. Thus, vertical transmission within a closed tradition is more usual than an open recension with contamination'.[101] Herbert further observes that when the textual tradition is closed the editor may proceed with the establishment of a *stemma codicum*. In instances where the tradition is open, and the stemmatic method proves to be of little value, the editor may then apply an alternative method – for example, *codex optimus*. Herbert's criticism of Tristram for not producing 'a full edition' of the text is particularly interesting. It may be inferred from the context that such an edition would be constructed according to genealogical methodology and that Tristram's failure to produce a *stemma* somehow renders her edition incomplete. There is, however, an important distinction drawn between medieval scholarly compositions (such as *SAM*) and the narrative traditions which Herbert emphasises in her discussion of Tristram's edition.

The issue of genre in editing medieval Irish works had already been briefly alluded to by Vernam Hull in the introduction to his 1968 edition of *Noínden Ulad*.[102] In response to earlier comments made by Gerard Murphy discounting the applicability of recensionary principles in editing medieval Irish verse on account of Irish being a living language subject to constant change and scribal innovation,[103] Hull advocates the continued validity of such principles for editing Irish prose material. He argues that prose texts were not altered to the same extent as poetry and

[101] Ibid., p. 101.
[102] Vernam Hull, '*Noínden Ulad*: The Debility of the Ulidians', *Celtica* 8 (1968), pp. 1-42. For more on genre in medieval Irish literature, see Chapter Three, p. 110, n. 4.
[103] Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics: Eighth to Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1956; repr. Dublin, 2009), at p. xix. I have not thought it necessary to detail Murphy's editorial observations in the present discussion; as previously stated, the theory of editing medieval Irish poetry is discussed at length Chapter Five.

that in general scribes of prose were reasonably faithful to their exemplars. Therefore, an editor of such texts can still produce a stemma establishing the relationships between extant witnesses of certain prose texts 'provided that due allowance is made for scribal innovations in the vocabulary and especially in the grammatical terminations'.[104]

Herbert expressed sentiments similar to those articulated by Murphy in the discussion accompanying her Irish *Life of Colum Cille*, published in 1988.[105] Though the *Life* survives in seven manuscripts, Herbert presents her reader with an edition which is based on a single manuscript (*An Leabhar Breac*) with variant readings from the other main manuscript witnesses. Like Murphy, Herbert defends her methodology on linguistic grounds: 'Since the language of Middle Irish is in a state of continual change, one finds a variety of early and later forms coexisting at the same time, even within the same text. In such a situation, it does not seem feasible to impose "standard" or "normalised" forms on the text here'.[106]

Returning to *SAM*, it may be observed that Tristram's editorial approach is criticised for lacking a sound theoretical foundation. Regarding Tristram's reference to Slotkin's proposal, Herbert remarks that 'whatever its potential in the context of Irish saga ... it has little to do with a text like *Sex Aetates Mundi*', as *SAM* was 'from the outset a written, scholarly compilation without oral antecedent'.[107] An examination of the sources, Herbert continues, illustrates clearly the existence of a 'common fixed core … with additional material in particular recensions explicable in

[104] Hull, '*Noínden Ulad*', p. 5. For more on genre in medieval Irish literature, see Chapter Three, p. 110, n. 4.
[105] Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry: The History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Colmba* (Oxford, 1988).
[106] Ibid., p. 216. Cf. Murray 'Reviews, Reviewers, and Critical Texts', *CMCS* 57 (Summer, 2009), pp. 51-70, at pp. 57-8.
[107] Herbert, 'The Irish *Sex Aetates Mundi*', p. 103.

terms of scholarly glossing and expansion'.[108] The primary difficulty noted with Tristram's edition, therefore, is the failure to make the textual tradition of *SAM* the basis of the decision to present a single manuscript. Setting aside the construction of a *stemma codicum*, Tristram's elevation of manuscript **R** (Rawlinson B 502) to best text is determined by the fact that it is the oldest complete witness. On this point, Tristram's reviewer emphasises that the early date of a manuscript does not guarantee its superiority. Furthermore, Herbert observes that as a consequence of omitting the evidence of the other manuscript witnesses, Tristram limits both her view of the work and her conclusions concerning it.

Ó Cróinín's edition is also based on manuscript **R**, presented in this instance as a normalised text with regularised punctuation, capitalisation and word-division. Here, the decision that **R** represents the best text is based on the application of 'critical conventions' – i.e. the application of recension, combined with a comparison of all the manuscript witnesses.[109] Herbert, however, contends that 'the editor's methodology and conclusions bear re-examination'.[110] Citing the famous aphorism of Housman that 'we should neglect no safeguard lying within our reach',[111] Herbert assesses the relationships between the various manuscript witnesses in light of the evidence provided by the sources of the Irish *SAM* tradition and, together with her own 'tentative analysis' of the textual tradition, concludes that **R** is not consistently the best text.[112] In disagreeing with Ó Cróinín's assessment of the manuscripts,

[108] Ibid., p. 101.
[109] Dáibhí Ó Croinín, *The Irish Sex Aetates Mundi* (Dublin, 1983), p. 48.
[110] Herbert, 'The Irish *Sex Aetates Mundi*', p. 102.
[111] Housman, 'The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism (1921)', p. 138.
[112] Herbert, 'The Irish *Sex Aetates Mundi*', p. 105.

Herbert argues that the original Irish *SAM* would be best represented by an edition that incorporated the evidence of all relevant witnesses.[113]

It is not only both editors' methodology which Herbert is criticising in her review. Whilst acknowledging the benefits of producing an edition based on a single manuscript, particularly one as idiosyncratic as **R**, Herbert contends that 'the value of any edition depends on the fidelity and accuracy with which it represents the material'. Herbert comments that Tristram's treatment of certain features of the manuscript causes unnecessary disruption to her edition. Furthermore, her lack of elucidation concerning editorial emendations means that her work 'falls short of providing the sort of information required of an edition of a text'.[114] The criticisms of Ó Cróinín's edition are more numerous. In addition to his editorial approach, Herbert also criticises many of his inferences regarding textual tradition, the inaccuracies in his concordance tables, aspects of his translation, and his failure properly to inform readers of his editorial decisions and interpretations.[115] Both editors are criticised for their failure to refer to the sources of the tradition and their over-pious preference of readings of their base text. In conclusion, Herbert observes that while the editions of both scholars prove them to be talented in the fields of historical and literary commentary, that does not automatically qualify them to act as textual critics: 'textual edition requires its own particular set of skills and … its application to Irish materials presupposes careful consideration of its principles'.[116]

[113] Ibid., p. 106.
[114] Ibid., p. 109.
[115] At a recent conference concerning the Book of Ballymote held by the Royal Irish Academy, Feb. 5th-6th 2015, Prof. Ó Cróinín has drawn attention to the fact that all his editorial decisions are found in the M.Phil thesis on which his edition was based, but that the publisher was unwilling to accommodate this in the printed volume.
[116] Herbert, 'The Irish *Sex Aetates Mundi*', pp. 111-142.

A decade later, Kim McCone reviewed the advances made in the application of the principles of textual criticism in medieval Irish studies in the century following the appearance of Zeuss' *Grammatica Celtica*, as part of his contribution to the collection *Progress in Medieval Irish Studies*. Here McCone observes that, in the period under consideration, editors of early medieval Irish texts were invariably provented from producing editions based on 'the rigorous tenets of textual criticism developed around the middle of the nineteenth century by classical philologists such as Karl Lachmann'.[117] McCone's reasoning is threefold. Firstly, he asserts that this situation was due to the state of play in the area of Old and Middle Irish philology during this period (the details of which have been elucidated in the opening section of the present chapter). The second contributory factor, McCone contends, was the fact that medieval Irish texts were far more likely to develop variant readings than their classical counterparts.[118] The third issue was the desire of editors of medieval Irish texts to make available as many functional editions, together with reliable translations, as possible. Consequently, McCone observes that 'critical editions in the Lachmannian sense have been something of a rarity as far as Old and Middle Irish texts surviving in several manuscripts are concerned'.[119]

McCone divides modern editions of medieval Irish texts into four basic categories 'capable of some degree of overlap': diplomatic, best-text, critical (i.e. editions compiled according to the genealogical methodology) and normalised texts. He briefly describes each of the four approaches and supplies examples of their application to Old and Middle Irish texts. Perhaps most interestingly from the point

[117] McCone, 'Prehistoric, Old and Middle Irish', p. 27.
[118] This assertion disagrees with the aforementioned observations made by Herbert regarding the application of the general principles of recension to early Irish vernacular material.
[119] McCone, 'Prehistoric, Old and Middle Irish', p. 28.

of view of the present thesis, McCone cites Stokes' *Fél.* II in his discussion of critical (i.e. genealogical) editions as a 'notable early attempt at a reasonably even-handed attitude to no less than ten extant manuscript versions'; he continues that the absence of a stemma is a 'deficiency counteracted to a considerable extent by the availability of metrical criteria for guidance'.[120] Each of McCone's examples will receive detailed attention in Chapter Four.

Kaarina Hollo's succinct statement regarding editorial approach in her introduction to her edition of *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDuíl Dermait* presents an attempt, albeit a cursory one, to engage with some of the developments in the theory of textual editing at the turn of the twentieth century. Hollo begins her discussion with a brief outline of some more recent criticisms of the recensionary approach to establishing texts. She writes that '[the] notion of the active scribe problematizes the concept of authorship and the authoritative text in a medieval context, particularly with regard to the distinction generally made between scribe and author'. Hollo then uses these considerations as justification for her minimalist approach to emendation and normalisation, which she refers to as 'an amusing intellectual challenge'. Hollo opines that 'it is of more value to the scholar or student to have the text in front of her or him more or less as it stands'.[121]

In the introduction to his *Three Historical Poems ascribed to Gilla Cóemáin*, Peter J. Smith surveys some of the major established approaches to textual editions in general and the applicability of the genealogical method – his chosen method of presentation – in particular. Smith categorises these approaches as the 'genealogical approach', Bédier's 'best-text/best-copy' method, statistical analysis such as that put

[120] Ibid.
[121] Hollo, *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDuíl Dermait*, p. 50.

forward by Greg in his *Calculus of Variants*, computer aided stemmatic analysis and New Philology. With the exception of the former, this sketch has very little to say regarding editorial practice within a medieval Irish context. However, it is an excellent defence of the editor's methodology, demonstrating an awareness of various methods available to him together with a discussion concerning both the benefits and drawbacks of his preferred approach. Moreover, Smith clearly states the aim of his edition: 'My objective has been to ... present the text as the author intended, or as nearly as he intended'. [122] Furthermore, his commentary regarding the technical aspects of the editing process, which is divided into seven sub-sections, allows the reader to understand the reasoning behind every decision taken.[123]

Turning to the genealogical method: Smith states that it is the approach best suited to his objective of recovering the authorial text as '[i]t facilitates the elimination of derivative witnesses, allows us to identify which copies are closest to the archetype and indeed enables us to identify which of several variant readings is most likely to be authorial by virtue of their location within the stemma'.[124] Smith also makes three criticisms of this method. The first two are made with regard to the specific texts of his edition and relate to the difficulties of conflation and contamination. The final criticism is applicable to the entire corpus of Irish manuscripts:

> One of the inherent drawbacks in the Lachmannian approach is the need to hypothesise the existence of lost archetypes. The loss of witnesses to our manuscript tradition in Ireland and abroad means

[122] Smith, *Three Historical Poems Ascribed to Gilla Cóemáin*, at p. 74.
[123] The sub-sections are titled 'Presentation of Clear Reading Text', 'Orthography of Critical Editions', 'Critical Apparatus', 'Emendations', 'Translations', 'Analogues and Chronological Framework', 'Textual Notes and Indices': ibid., pp. 76-8.
[124] Ibid., p. 73.

> that our overall reconstruction of the historical textual tradition can therefore be merely hypothetical.[125]

Smith presents his reader with a balanced analysis of the genealogical method; he is not advocating the genealogical methodology as a solution to editing medieval Irish texts in general; rather he is defending his choice of the method on the grounds that it is the most suited to his editorial agenda.

In 2008, Liam Breatnach and Jürgen Uhlich penned two critical reviews of Kevin Murray's 2004 edition of *Baile in Scáil*.[126] In addition to general criticisms of the edition in question, each review contains recommendations regarding the establishment of an edition of a medieval Irish text. *Baile in Scáil* is contained in two manuscript witnesses: Rawlinson B. 512 (**R**) and Harley 5280 (**H**) – the former being the only complete copy of the tale. Murray presents his readers with diplomatic editions of the two manuscript sources in which the text is extant together with a best-text edition 'based on the text available in Rawl. with lacunae filled from Harl. when available'.[127] Thus, Uhlich contends that the edition on offer is not a critical one. His understanding of what such an edition would be is worth quoting in full:

> This [i.e. a critical edition] would first analyse the historical interrelationship of the extant manuscript versions with the aim of ascertaining whether at least two of these can be shown to be independent of each other, meaning that neither is a copy drawn from the other whether directly or indirectly via lost intermediate copies. In cases of significant (i.e. not purely orthographic of otherwise trivial) disagreement between such independent versions, the critical method would seek to establish, individually for each case, which variant is more likely to derive from the lost archetype and so ought to be adopted –

[125] Ibid., p. 74.
[126] Reviews published in *CMCS* 55 (2008), pp. 75-82, and *Éigse* 36 (2008), pp. 228-34 respectively; Murray, *Baile in Scáil: The Phantom's Frenzy*, ITS 58 (London, 2004).
[127] Murray, *Baile in Scáil*, p. 30.

> unless, of course, all variants can be plausibly shown to represent scribal innovation. The objective of the critical edition, therefore, is to reconstruct the original text as far as possible on the basis of the available evidence (p. 228).[128]

Uhlich concludes his review by stating that 'compiling a critical edition of this text still remains a task for the future' (p. 234). It may be observed that Uhlich is referring to a critical edition in the classical or Lachmannian sense. If we apply Uhlich's self-confessed narrow definition of the concept of a critical edition, then his observations regarding Murray's edition are, in fact, correct. Murray's edition of *Baile in Scáil* is not a critical edition as set forth by Uhlich. However, that is not to say that Murray's edition is not a critical edition. Breatnach argues that in an edition 'of a text such as this one' the editor should first date the text and then create an edition which corresponds with this date (p. 75). The brevity of Breatnach's statement is regrettable, in particular his remarks regarding the type of text in question. Without further qualifying criteria, it is impossible to assess the validity of his recommendations.

In a detailed response, Murray defends his choice of methodology on the basis that **R** is the only complete copy of *Baile in Scáil*. Moreover, both manuscripts contain unique evidence which does not lend itself to the composition of a genealogical edition. Obviously, these are legitimate arguments in favour of opting for a method of presentation other than the genealogical approach. The subsequent criticism of Murray's methodology and the ensuing debate say much about the centrality of source-based critical editions in the field of medieval Irish textual criticism. Furthermore, it highlights a challenge faced by those editors who wish to

[128] Uhlich later qualified his definition of a critical edition by dividing it into three parts: '(1) assessment of the relationship between the manuscript versions; (2) evaluation of their differences in detail; and (3) reconstruction of the lost original version of the text'. See 'Reviewers, Reviewees, and Critical Texts: A Brief Final Response', *CMCS* 57 (Summer, 2009), pp. 75-9, at p. 76.

present an edition which does not have at its core the authorial or archetypal text, i.e. defending one's methodology. The weakness in Murray's edition is not in his method of presentation but rather in his failure to state his editorial aim; if one's intention is not to create a 'single "composite" edition' then what is it?[129] This failing is not unique to Murray; editorial statements such as that of Smith are a rarity in the discipline. I wish to emphasise that my intention here is not to suggest that such statements should be exclusive to editions other than those which aim to establish the original text. Rather, every editor has a responsibility to make clear the aim of their edition and their editorial procedures. To quote the Modern Language Association's 'Guidelines for Editors of Scholarly Editions': 'scholarly editions make clear what they promise and keep their promises'.[130]

As we will see in the following chapter, the problem of the recovery of the original reading is frequently fraught with difficulty particularly when dealing with those medieval Irish texts that draw on the wider corpus of medieval Irish literature, both written and oral, as many do. In this regard, many of the problems associated with the medieval Irish manuscript tradition have already been outlined by Murray. He notes, for example, the issue of editing composite texts and prosimetric texts

[129] Murray, 'Reviews, Reviewers, and Critical Texts', p. 58. Here Murray is quoting Dan Embree and Elizabeth Urquhart, 'The Simonie: The Case for a Parallel-Text Edition', in *Manuscripts and Texts: Editorial Problems in Later Middle English Literature: Essays from the 1985 Conference at the University of York*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 49-59, at p. 58.

[130] 'A Summary of Principles', published by the Committee on Scholarly Editions, MLA, in *Electronic Textual Editing*, (ed.) Lou Burnard and others (New York, 2006), pp. 47-9, at. p. 48 (cited by Murray, 'Reviews, Reviewers, and Critical Texts', p. 61). Cf. Shillingsburg, 'Nineteenth-Century British Fiction', p. 345: 'The result is that editions should be judged not according to which method has been followed but by how clearly that method has been identified, by how fully it has been justified, and by how accurately the work has been done'.

where the prose and verse date to different periods.[131] The role of the editor in such situations can be very difficult:

> If we add into the mix that the 'putative original act of composition' could, in the case of medieval Ireland, be drawing on earlier traditional sources, both oral and written, then we find that the creator of a critical edition in the Lachmannian sense may end up making judgments about the nature of composition and recomposition that neither his text, nor his methodology, will support. This is particularly true for any editor who would try to get beyond the reconstructed archetype to the putative original lying behind it.[132]

Although Murray's discussion of editorial methodology begins by noting the potential usefulness of the genealogical approach (or Lachmannian critical edition to use the terminology employed in the article), particularly with regards to poetic material, the overall impression created by Murray is that the creation of editions based on this methodology, focused as it is on establishing the original text, has an extremely limited place in medieval Irish studies.

Conclusions

This chapter began by exploring the origins of medieval Irish textual criticism during the Neogrammarian and post-Neogrammarian eras. The model of editing medieval Irish texts which has developed through the last century and a half is a relatively straightforward one. It is a procedure which sustains the inherited positions of humanist textual criticism – the equation of author with authority and the privileging of the verbal text – and testifies to the modern concern for consistency in morphology and orthography. In this respect, medieval Irish editing has altogether avoided the issues that have concerned editors of later periods. Most striking,

[131] Murray, 'Reviews, Reviewers, and Critical Texts', pp. 58-9.
[132] Ibid., pp. 64-5.

perhaps, is the lack of much consciousness of the theory of copy-text and Greg's distinction between substantive and accidental readings. There has been little interest in the orthographic forms of a text beyond what they contribute to our understanding of the original date of composition.[133]

The absence of engagement with Greg's theory and the works of editors concerned with authors of the immediate past remains as only one of a number of lacunae in existing medieval Irish textual critical scholarship. The latter half of the twentieth century witnessed a series of paradigm shifts in the perception of the role of the editor and the goal of textual criticism. Despite the integration of these new intellectual tools into the theory and practice of multiple avenues of scholarly editing, including that of other medieval vernacular literatures, medieval Irish studies as a whole has continued to operate within the framework set forth by the practitioners of the late-nineteenth century.

In other theoretical respects, medieval Irish editing has tended to avoid questions concerning the hermeneutical nature of the discipline and lacks much of the self-awareness evident throughout the humanities at the turn of the twenty-first century. In this regard, Maria Tymoczko has observed that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a great deal of research in the humanities concentrated on the collection of what she terms 'observable' data, 'including such things as the elucidation of different languages, the preparation of editions of texts, and the attempt to determine such factors as textual authorship [and] historical context'. She continues by observing that:

[133] This may also be due to the fact that there is wholesale usage of what may be termed 'non-standard orthography' throughout the entire medieval Irish manuscript tradition. Some examples include the Annals of Inisfallen, *Liber Flavus Ferguriorum*, and as we will see in Chapter Four, Harl. 5280 to name but a few.

> In the second half of the twentieth century, postpositivist views of knowledge shifted inquiry in the humanities … away from primary research orientated towards digging out and amassing observable 'facts', to self-reflexive methods involving interrogations of perspective, premises, and the framework of inquiry itself.[134]

To date, medieval Irish studies has remained largely resistant to these new theoretical frameworks. However, there is evidence within the discipline of a growing awareness of the issues of literary criticism and the need for synchronic textual editions of specific narratives and poems. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Whilst each of the contributions discussed in the closing section of the present chapter furthers our understanding of ideas about medieval Irish textual criticism, none of them constitute a systematic critical theory. For the most part, they continue to emphasise the traditional role of the editor. The opening sections of Murray's article deals with the various established formats for textual editions of medieval Irish in general and that of the critical edition in the genealogical sense in particular and may potentially serve as a starting point for a debate on editorial practice in the field of medieval Irish. However, before such meaningful discussion can take place, attempts must be made to define a specifically medieval Irish textual critical terminology and to challenge the inherent positions of modern textual criticism within the discipline.

The following chapter attempts to address a number of these issues, focusing specifically on prevalent perceptions of such concepts as the 'original text', the 'authoritative text' and the 'definitive text' within the discourse of medieval Irish

[134] Maria Tymoczko, 'What Questions Should we Ask in Celtic Studies in the New Millenium', *CSANA Yearbook 2, Identifying the Celtic*, ed. Joseph Falaky Nagy (Dublin, 2002), pp. 10-29, at pp. 16-7.

textual criticism together with the challenges of editing composite textual material briefly alluded to above.

CHAPTER THREE

EDITING MEDIEVAL IRISH NARRATIVE PROSE

The development of the theory and practice of textual criticism as applied to medieval Irish literature has tended to privilege the notion of singular authoritative original texts. Published critical editions reveal the influence of nineteenth-century philological inquiry which provided scholars with the means to produce editions 'within the paradoxes of humanist textual criticism'.[1] There has, however, been relatively little discourse regarding the validity of this approach. When one considers that the principles of humanist textual criticism were developed as a means of recovering the authorial text, to what extent is it appropriate to continue to apply them to those Irish manuscripts where little or nothing is known about the author or his original composition? What does it mean to search for the 'original text' in a textual tradition, especially if its origins may involve multiple forms? Is it appropriate here to speak of an 'original text' and does the modern preoccupation with seeking to reconstruct such texts remain theoretically defensible?

Recent developments in textual criticism across disciplines emphasise the importance of the texts available to readers at a particular time and the reception accorded to them whilst marginalising the role of the author and, in particular, the notion of authorial originality. In what follows, I shall offer some preliminary comments regarding the applicability of such concepts as the 'original text', the 'authoritative text' and the 'definitive text' within the discourse of medieval Irish

[1] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 49. At pp. 14-15, Machan cites the work of John D'Amico, *Theory and Practice in Renaissance Textual Criticism* (Berkeley, 1988), p. 27: 'Meaning was connected to and dependent upon the integrity of the word, and the wrong word led to falsehood. In order properly to understand a text, one had to discover the actual words of the author; this usually meant extracting them from the corrupt manuscripts'.

textual criticism given the circumstances of the composition and transmission of medieval Irish vernacular texts.[2] In his exploration of medieval Irish literary theory, Erich Poppe summarises the corpus of textual material thus:

> [it] includes hymns and prayers, paraphrases of biblical stories, exegesis, homilies, church law, hagiography, martyrologies, religious prose (such as 'visions', 'journeys', apocryphal stories), religious poetry; secular law, genealogy, chronicles and synthetic history, learned/didactic genres (such as explanation of place-names, grammatical and poetological texts, kings' mirrors), secular poetry (mainly panegyric), secular (pseudo-) historical narrative prose, and adaptations of foreign narrative texts.[3]

A comprehensive analysis of each of the categories enumerated by Poppe is beyond the scope of this discussion. Out of this vast body of material, the issues to be considered here are mainly focused on the scholarly responses to the texts which he loosely terms 'secular (pseudo-) historical narrative prose', which were written in Old and Middle Irish and which, as the label suggests, purport to represent historical events.[4] Following a brief introduction to recent discussion concerning the

[2] This chapter is not offered as a 'history' of medieval Irish theory of authorship. Any such exposition would be premature given the present state of our knowledge and requires a study of its own. Although what follows will inevitably have recourse to the theories of medieval literary criticism, the current enquiry remains grounded in the study of textual criticism.

[3] Erich Poppe, 'Reconstructing Medieval Irish Literary Theory: The Lesson of *Airec Menman Uraird maic Coise*', *CMCS* 17 (1999), pp. 33-54, at p. 33.

[4] According to Poppe ('Reconstructing Medieval Irish Literary Theory, pp. 33-4), the term 'secular (pseudo-) historical narrative prose' covers a significant portion of medieval Irish literature, 'namely the narrative texts of the so-called Mythological, Historical (or King), and Ulster (or Heroic cycles)'. Cf. Poppe's comments in *Of Cycles and Other Critical Matters*, E. C. Quiggin Memorial Lectures 9 (Cambridge, 2008) at p. 47, where he states that: 'This concept [i.e. of pseudo-history], however, still implies a modern value judgement and a modern concern with the demarcation between fact and fiction which is, I think, potentially misleading for the historian of medieval Irish textual culture'. The classification of medieval Irish texts as 'secular (pseudo-) historical narrative prose' is a modern practice. As Máire Herbert has pointed out ('*Fled Dúin na nGéd*: A Reappraisal', *CMCS* 18 (1989). pp 75-87, at p. 76), 'as far as early Irish literature is concerned, generic classification of particular texts is not immediately achievable. The surviving tale-lists, which group stories together under headings such as cattle-raids, wooing, battles, and feasts, may, perhaps, be viewed as a tenth-century attempt in this direction'. With regard to the tenth-century tale-lists, Poppe ('Reconstructing Medieval Irish Literary Theory', p. 35) has stressed that '[t]he members of this list transcend the boundaries of modern cycles and belong to both "religious" and "secular" genres'. On the subject of genre in early Irish literature, see Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1980) and Leonie Duignan, *The Echtrae as an Irish Literary Genre* (Marburg, 2011). The

transmission and adaptation of such texts, the section will move to consider specific examples which will be examined in intertextual terms. Here, the functions of intertextuality in a specific genre and the challenges they pose for the inherent model of textual criticism will be addressed. But it is necessary to begin with at least a brief consideration of contemporary theoretical and practical textual-critical debate from which the field of medieval Irish editing has been almost wholly absent.

As we have seen, textual scholars of modern works such as McGann and McKenzie contend that texts do not exist apart from the social environment in which they were created. Whilst proponents of the social textual theory do not completely dispense with the authorial text or authorial intention, they do challenge the hegemony of the Greg-Bowers textual critical approach, focused as it is on final authorial intention. Furthermore, McGann has argued that the practice of textual criticism should encompass more than the production of editions. In his *Textual Criticism and Literary Interepretation*, McGann attempts to open a dialogue between literary and textual critics ('[c]onventionally the former is concerned with the sources used by and the editorial judgements of the original author, the latter with the way in which his published book was copied').[5] Accordingly, McGann argues that:

> [a] proper theory of textual criticism ought to make it clear that we may perform a comprehensive textual and bibliographical study of a work with different ends in view; as part of an editorial operation that will result in the production of an edition; as part of a critical operation for studying the character of that edition; as part of an interpretive operation for incorporating the meaning of the (past)

issue of genre in a medieval Irish context requires more detailed research and recently has been the subject of a colloquium held at the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies ('Genre in Medieval Celtic Literature', 27-28 September 2013).

[5] James Keith Elliott '*The Living Text of the Gospels* (review)', *Novum Testamentum* 41 (1999), pp. 176-181, at p. 179.

> work into a present context. No one of these practical operations is more fundamental than another, and all three depend for their existence on a prior scholarly discipline: textual criticism.[6]

McGann is not alone in advocating an approach to texts which combines both textual criticism and literary interpretation. Tanselle, a staunch defender of the Greg-Bowers method, has repeatedly called for increased cooperation between the two disciplines.[7]

The responses of modern theorists to the inherent difficulties of final authorial intention and the concept of the authorial text have contributed to the way in which many scholars of more ancient literatures now perceive the editorial task. For scholars working with Biblical and medieval textual materials, the emphasis laid on the authorial text is in some ways always potentially problematic. In the discussion to follow, I wish to invoke contemporary views from within these disciplines which have departed in varying degrees from such notions as a single 'original' or 'authorial' text.

Recent Departures in New Testament Textual Criticism

A typical modern description of the purpose of New Testament textual criticism has been offered by Michael W. Holmes: 'Textual criticism, the science and art of reconstructing the original text of the document, is a necessary step in the exegesis of the NT because the originals are no longer extant and the existing copies differ

[6] Jerome J. McGann, 'The Monks and the Giants: Textual and Bibliographical Studies and the Interpretation of Literary Work', in *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Chicago, 1985), pp. 180-99, at p. 189.

[7] Gerard Thomas Tanselle, 'The Editorial Problem of Final Intention', *Studies in Bibliography* 29 (1976), pp. 167-211, at p. 211. See also David C. Greetham, 'Textual and Literary Theory: Redrawing the Matrix', *Studies in Bibliography* 42 (1989), pp. 1-24; Philip Cohen, ed., *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory* (Charlottesville, 1991); Derek Pearsall, ed., *Manuscripts and Readers in Fifteenth-Century England: The Literary Implication of Manuscript Study* (Cambridge, 1983).

(sometimes widely) among themselves'. He continues that one of the primary tasks of exegetes is to evaluate and assess the manuscript evidence so that they might 'determine which of the variant readings most likely represents the original text'.[8] In a subsequent essay, Holmes himself admits that in light of recent developments in the discipline his earlier definition might be considered inadequate in two major respects: 1) the study of variant readings is no longer viewed solely or primarily as a means to establishing the text of the original, but rather the study of the context of variant forms and of the transmission of the text are now considered as legitimate goals in their own right; and 2) there is a growing awareness within the discipline of the inherent ambiguity of the phrase 'original text' as the traditional description of the goal of New Testament textual criticism. These are the issues to be explored here.[9]

David C. Parker's *The Living Text of the Gospels*, first published in 1997, represents a major departure from the traditional goal of New Testament textual criticism. In this important work, Parker challenges the firmly held belief that the ultimate objective of the discipline is to recover the original text. As the title suggests, all of the examples are drawn from the Gospels though Parker states that his observations are not restricted to this material. Nor indeed are they restricted to New Testament textual studies.[10] Through the analysis of the variant forms of a number of key passages of the Gospels, Parker argues that Christianity did not produce controlled texts. Hence, he characterises the texts of the Gospels as 'a free, or perhaps, a living text' (that is, each copying of the manuscript tradition differed,

[8] Michael W. Holmes, 'New Testament Textual Criticism', in *Introducing New Testament Interpretation*, Guides to New Testament Exegesis 1, ed. Scot McKnight (Grand Rapids, 1989), p. 53 (cited in idem., 'From "Original Text" to "Initial Text"').
[9] Holmes, 'From "Original" Text to "Initial" Text', p. 1.
[10] David Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 4.

and copyists introduced changes to the text not only accidentally but also intentionally).[11] To the question 'whether the attempt to recover a single original text is consonant with the character of the free-manuscript tradition', Parker replies in the negative.[12] He argues that the desire for such a text arises from the need of the churches for an authoritative text, and from the need of scholars for a sure foundation upon which to base their theories.

Another central theme of Parker's thesis is the overlap of the boundaries of literary and textual criticism. For him, the physical form of the Bible determines the way in which it has been read over the millennia. Thus, the assumption that the text was issued in a single definitive form is based on a misunderstanding of the manuscript tradition: 'Manuscripts do not carry a tradition. They are that tradition, for the text has no existence apart from those copies in which it exists'.[13] As he observes, the dichotomy implied between literary and textual reconstructions is deceptive as the written texts testify to the continuity in the development and history of the textual tradition. However, Parker does acknowledge that the attempt to recover the 'earliest forms of the text' is an essential task of the textual critic but in his estimation it does not follow that it is also necessary to recover a single original text. The issue, as he sees it 'is not whether we *can* recover it, but why we want to'.[14]

With this in mind, Parker sets forth a new approach to New Testament textual criticism, advocating a position in which the editor analyses all the developments of

[11] Ibid., pp. 200.
[12] Ibid., pp. 209.
[13] Ibid., p. 210. In his 2002 review of Parker's work ((*Text* 14, 2002), pp. 334-8), Peter Robinson remarks that '[i]t is not the task of textual scholars to discover the text, which literary scholars and source scholars then work on. Rather we are all – all of us, from every branch of scholarship –readers of the many texts' (p. 337).
[14] Parker, *The Living Text*, p. 209.

the material and attempts to explain how and why variant forms of the text arose [see Figure 3.1]. In his estimation, the effect is to enhance the importance of the role of textual criticism:

> The textual critic's task has not become less important because there is no definitive text to be recovered. There is a sense in which an editor's continuing importance has increased. For when it is assumed that there *is* an original text, the textual critic's task is very simple: to recover the original text ... But if the task does not consist in the recovery of an original text, then the study of the entire range of materials available will not cease with the publication of an edition.[15]

In short, Parker suggests a new approach to the text of the Gospels which holds as its goal the elucidation of the historical and cultural contexts disclosed by variant readings. There is nothing new *per se* in this approach, as the author readily admits the reconstruction of the way in which the text was altered (as it was copied) has always been central to the traditional goal of textual criticism.[16] The primary difference between Parker's approach and that goal lies in the emphasis placed on the study of variant forms of the text.

In his influential article 'The Multivalence of the Term "Original Text"', Eldon J. Epp explores the use of the term 'original text' as the traditional description of the goal of New Testament textual criticism. Beginning with a survey of past use of the term in textual-critical manuals and other studies, he highlights the increasing complexity of defining the concept of 'original text' even among those who continue to aim to recover that 'original'. In his introduction, Epp illustrates the implications of any given definition of the term:

[15] Ibid., p. 6.
[16] Ibid., p. 45.

> The issue of 'original text' is, for example, more complex than the issue of canon, because the former includes questions of both canon and authority. It is more complex than ... the transmission of traditions in different languages and their translation from one to another [which] are relevant factors in what is 'original'. It is more complex than matters of oral tradition and form criticism, because 'original text' encompasses aspects of the formation and transmission of pre-literary New Testament tradition. It is more complex than ... questions of compositional stages within and behind the New Testament, because such matters affect definitions of authorship, and of the origin and unity of writings. More directly, it is more complex than making a textual decision in a variation unit containing multiple readings when no 'original' is readily discernible, because the issue is broader and richer than merely choosing a single 'original' and even allows making no choice at all.

Finally, he writes that the question of 'original text' takes first priority as it comprises each of these challenges and resonates throughout contemporary textual-critical theories and methodologies.[17]

Epp then moves to examine what he calls 'the legitimate domain of textual criticism': here he cites the Alands' description of the competence of New Testament textual criticism ('[it] is restricted to the state of the New Testament text from the moment it began its literary history through transcription for distribution. All events prior to this are beyond its scope').[18] He demonstrates that the term 'beginning' in this context is as multifaceted as the term 'original'. Moreover, he highlights that this formulation expressly excludes any exploration of precursor compositional levels which he believes remain within the proper sphere of textual criticism. Epp sets forth the following framework of the province of New Testament textual criticism:

[17] Eldon J. Epp, 'The Multivalence of the Term "Original Text" in New Testament Textual Criticism', in *The Harvard Theological Review* 92 (1999), pp. 245-81, at pp. 256-7.
[18] Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 297. See Epp, 'The Multivalence of the Term "Original Text"', p. 266.

> Any search for textual *pre*formulations or *re*formulations of a literary nature, such as *prior* compositional levels, versions, or formulations, or later textual alteration, revision, division, combination, rearrangement, interpolation, or forming a collection of writings, legitimately falls within the sphere of textual-critical activity *if such an exploration is initiated on the basis of some appropriate textual variation or other manuscript evidence*.[19]

He further delineates the goal of New Testament textual criticism into two subcategories. Category One aims to provide legitimacy for the study of '"pre-original" compositional levels' (that is, '[t]extual variants signalling *predecessor literary activity*'). Category Two legitimises theories concerning textual reformulation (that is, 'textual variants signalling *successor literary activity*').[20] Thus, Epp's definition of the traditional goal of textual criticism allows for both the recovery of a single original text — or a text as close as possible to that original — and for the possibility of a multiplicity of 'originals'.

In a subsequent essay, Epp proposes a 'unitary definition' of New Testament textual criticism which encompasses both the search for the 'earliest attainable text' and a greater emphasis on the study of textual variants and the contextual use of the New Testament text(s). Whilst this definition represents a twofold methodology, Epp envisages a single integrated broader goal as a replacement for the traditional activities of the discipline. i.e. 'to study the transmission of the text, being alert — at the same time — both to the earliest attainable form but also to the narratives that the variant readings disclose and what they reveal about Christians and their communities as time went along'.[21] The 'earliest attainable text' is described as 'a text, or better, texts that represent the best that the modern text-critical resources and

[19] Epp, 'The Multivalence of the Term "Original Text"', p. 268 (original emphasis).
[20] Ibid., pp. 268-70.
[21] Epp, 'It's All About Variants: A Variant Conscious Approach to New Testament Textual Criticism', *Harvard Theological Review* 100 (2007), pp. 275-308, at p. 297.

methods can recover'. The function of the earliest attainable text is to provide a universally employable baseline text which is necessitated by the nature of New Testament textual transmission. In contrast to traditional baseline texts (particularly where the objective is defined as restoring the original text), the earliest attainable text does not necessarily carry the same ideological implications of a singular, recoverable, authoritative text which Epp maintains represents an unrealistic goal for New Testament textual critics.[22]

In his estimation, present critical editions detract from our understanding of variant readings and consequently, obscure significant concerns of the churches and their doctrines in various periods.[23] In the place of existing scholarly editions of the New Testament, he advocates a more variant-conscious approach to New Testament textual criticism in which significant variants would confront every reader. He explains what he means by this as follows: 'A variant-conscious edition ... would display significant variants in a single running text, that, at each variation-unit, places the selected variant readings in horizontal comparison, one below another, and then reverts to a running text until the next variation-unit is reached'.[24] The attestation for the various readings would be listed in a separate apparatus [see Figure 3.2].

A further participant in the current discussion concerning the definition and status of the term 'original text' in New Testament textual criticism is the aforementioned Michael W. Holmes. In his estimation, the assumption that there once existed a singular definitive original reading (or '*the* original text') which is

[22] Ibid., p. 287. Holmes ('From "Original Text" to "Initial Text"', p. 10) criticises Epp's definition of the 'earliest attainable text', writing that Epp does not clarify what he means by earliest: 'chronological or logical priority?'.
[23] Epp, 'It's All About Variants', p. 297.
[24] Ibid., p. 301.

attested by one or more of the surviving manuscript traditions has led not only to deficiencies in the methodological process, but also to a 'crisis in method'. Holmes, after referring to Paul Maas' explication of the four stages of textual criticism – *recensio, examinatio, selectio* and *diviniatio* – suggests that the assumption that there once existed a single definitive original reading has reduced the practice of New Testament textual criticism to *recensio* and *selectio* on the basis that the reading recovered by these two stages is the 'original text' (however one might define it) and is not subject to further scrutiny.[25] Holmes has proposed that the traditional goal of New Testament textual criticism ('the science and art of reconstructing the original text of the document') be restated as a two-fold process involving first 'identification of the earliest recoverable stages of the text's transmission' and second 'the evaluation of the variant readings that represent the earliest recoverable stages of the text, with an eye to assessing … their claims to originality'.[26] He subsequently proposed defining 'the earliest recoverable stages of the text' as 'the form(s) of text in which an early Christian writing first began to circulate and be copied'.[27] This textual-critical goal, Holmes believes, better reflects the realities of the production and distribution of early Christian texts. Accordingly, it is defined in terms of textual transmission rather than authorial product: 'Textual criticism, in other words, need not seek to construct an ideal text, but rather to restore the wording of a lost material object … by means of other material objects'.[28]

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[25] Michael W. Holmes, 'Reasoned Eclecticism in New Testament Textual Criticism', in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, ed. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes (Michigan, 1995), pp. 336-60, at p. 348.

[26] Michael W. Holmes, 'The Case for Reasoned Eclecticism', in *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism*, ed. David Alan Black (Grand Rapids, 2002), pp. 77-100, at p. 78.

[27] Michael W. Holmes, 'Text and Transmission in the Second Century', in *The Textual Reliability of the New Testament: Bart Ehrman and Daniel Wallace in Dialogue*, ed. Robert Stewart (Minneapolis, 2011), pp. 69-71; cf. Holmes, 'From "Original Text" to "Initial Text"', p. 16.

[28] Holmes, 'From "Original Text" to "Initial Text"', p. 18

Following the example of the editorial team of the *Editio Critica Maior*, Holmes advocates a position which holds the reconstruction of the *Ausgangstext*, or 'Initial Text', as its ultimate goal, that is, 'the reconstructed hypothetical form of text from which all surviving witnesses descend, a stage of a text's history that stands between its literary formation, on the one hand, and the archetype of the extant manuscripts on the other'.[29] This approach, he argues, undermines the traditional assumptions of New Testament textual criticism and reasserts the importance of *examinatio* (and, by extension, *divinatio*). The relationship between the 'initial text' and any earlier form(s) of the text must be investigated rather than taken for granted. Therein lies the primary theoretical difference between Epp's 'earliest recoverable text(s)' and Holmes' 'earliest transmitted text'. For the former, 'the nature of New Testament textual criticism virtually precludes any ultimate identification of the "earliest" attainable with "*the* original"'.[30] The latter, on the other hand, does not make any such assumptions.

Before moving to consider the responses of medievalists to this emerging view of the notion of 'original text', a brief summary may be useful. The status of the 'original text' as the traditional goal of New Testament textual criticism has come under increasing scrutiny in recent decades and there is a growing awareness of the implicit assumptions which accompany the term. Perhaps the most prevalent of these formulations is the notion that 'original text' may be equated with a singular recoverable text, usually considered to be synonymous with the authorial text (or 'autograph'). The existence of such a text can no longer be treated as axiomatic.

[29] Ibid., p. 35: 'The concept of the Initial Text is both empirically grounded, in that it seeks to determine the textual form(s) (archetypes) from which the extant evidence derives, and also theoretically open-ended, in that it both seeks to move beyond the archetype(s) to the Initial text, and leaves open the question of the relationship between the Initial Text and any earlier form(s) of text'.
[30] Epp, 'It's All About Variants', p. 294.

Scholars such as Parker and Epp stand against the possibility of recovering an authorial text and as Holmes points out their challenges entail questions not just about methodology but also about epistemology.[31] He continues that:

> the more important outcome of the current discussions of the goal of textual criticism may not be any particular definition of the goal, but rather an increased awareness of the assumptions, methods, and procedures that shape (or are shaped by) any and every definition not just of the goal but of the discipline itself.[32]

This self-reflexive trend is one which continues to be observed when we move to consider contemporary developments in medieval vernacular textual criticism.

[31] Holmes, 'From "Original Text" to "Initial Text"', p. 33.
[32] Ibid., pp. 34-5.

34 *The living text of the Gospels*

B (CODEX VATICANUS)

[1]*Now* it came to pass on **a** sabbath,
that he was going through
† cornfields,
and his disciples *were plucking* and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands.
[2]But some of the Pharisees *said* ‡,
'Why
are you doing
what is not lawful
on the sabbath?'
[3]*And* answering them Jesus said
'Have you *not* read
what David did,
when he was hungry,
he and those
‡ *with* him?

[4] *He entered* into
the house of God,
and **taking** ate the
shewbread, and gave
† to those with him,
which it *is* not lawful
to eat except only
the priests.'

[5]And he said to them †
'The Son of man is
lord of the sabbath †.'
‡

D (CODEX BEZAE)

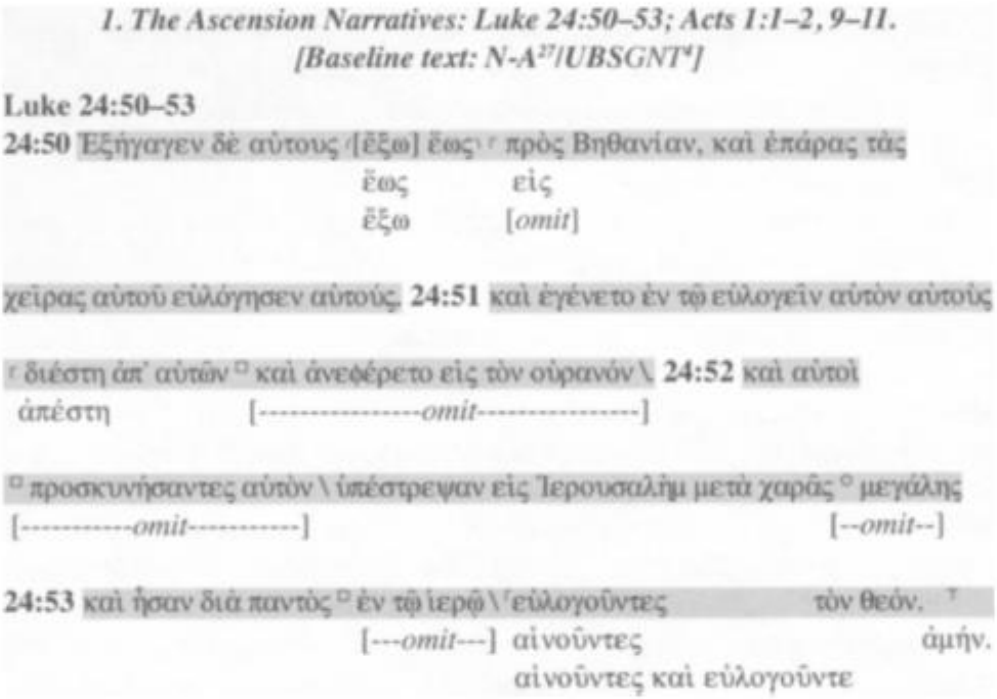
[1]**And** it came to pass on
a second-first sabbath
that he was going through
the cornfields.
Now his disciples **began**
to pluck the heads of grain
and rubbing
them in their hands ate.
[2]But some of the Pharisees
said *to* **him**
'**Look** what **your disciples are doing**
on the sabbath
which is not lawful.
[3]**But** answering
Jesus **said** to them
'Have you **never** read
this that David did, *when* he
was hungry, he and those ‡
with him?
†‡ **Entering** into the house
of God,
and † he ate the shewbread,
and gave *also* to those with
him,
which it **was** not lawful to
eat except only
for the priests.

The same day, seeing someone working on the sabbath, he said to him, 'Man, if indeed you know what you are doing then you are blessed.

Ω (CODEX ATHOUS DION.)

[1]*Now* it came to pass on
the second-first sabbath
that he was going through
the cornfields,
and his disciples *were plucking* the heads of grain
and eating, rubbing
them in their hands.
[2]But some of the Pharisees
said to **them**
'Why
are you doing
what it is not lawful
to do upon the sabbath?'
[3]*And* answering them
Jesus said
'Have you *not* read
what David did,
when he was hungry,
he and those
who were *with* him?
[4]**How** *he entered* into
the house of God,
and **took and** ate the
shewbread, and gave
also to those with him,
which it *is* not lawful
to eat except only
the priests.'
[5]And he said to them that
'The Son of man is
lord of the sabbath also.'
‡

FIGURE 3.1: PARKER'S ILLUSTRATION OF THE TYPES OF VARIATION BETWEEN THREE MANUSCRIPTS OF LUKE 6.1-10.



• **50** ⟨ 2 $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ ℵ B C* L 1 33 579 *l* 2211 *pc* a e $sy^{s.\,p}$ arm geo ⁝ *l* D lat ⁝ *txt* [*1+2*] A C^3 K W Γ Δ Θ Ψ f^{13} 118 565 700 1424 1582^{c} 𝔐 | ⌜ εἰς A C^3 K W^{c} Γ Δ Θ Ψ f^{13} 118 565 700 1424 1582^{c} 𝔐 ⁝ *omit* W* e ⁝ *txt* $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ ℵ B C* D L 1 33 579 1582* *pc* • **51** ⌜ ἀπέστη [≈ *discessit*] D a b c d e l Aug ⁝ διέστη [≈ *recessit*] $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ ℵ* A* B W Ψ *rell* | ⌑ ℵ* D a b d e ff^2 j l* sy^{s} [= "lifted up"] geo^{1} $Aug^{1/3}$ ⁝ *txt* $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ $\aleph^2$ A B C L W Δ Θ Ψ f^{1} f^{13} 33 565 579 700 892 1241 1424 *Byz* [F H] *Lect* aur c f q r^{1} vg $sy^{p.\,h.\,pal}$ $cop^{sa.\,bo}$ arm eth geo^{2} slav Severian (Hes) $Aug^{2/3}$ • **52** ⌑ D a b d e ff^2 l sy^{s} geo^{2} Aug ⁝ *omit* αὐτόν 700 *l* 253 c g^{1} vg ⁝ *txt* $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ ℵ A B C L W Δ Θ Ψ f^{1} f^{13} 33 565 579 892 1241 1424 *Byz* [F H] *Lect* aur f q vg^{mss} $sy^{p.\,h.\,pal}$ $cop^{sa.\,bo}$ arm eth geo^{1} slav | ° B* • **53** ⌑ A* ⁝ *txt* $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ B *rell* | ⌜ αἰνοῦντες D a b d e ff^2 l r^{1} Aug ⁝ αἰνοῦντες καὶ εὐλογοῦντες A C^2 K W Γ Δ Θ Ψ f^{1} f^{13} 33 565 579 700 892 1241 1424 𝔐 aur c f q vg $sy^{p.\,h}$ arm eth slav (Hes) ⁝ *txt* $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ ℵ B C* L sy^{s} $cop^{sa.\,bo}$ geo | ⊤ ἀμήν A B C^2 K Γ Δ Θ Ψ f^{13} 118 565 579 700 892 1241 1424 𝔐 *Lect* c f l r^{1} vg $sy^{p.\,h}$ $cop^{bo\,mss}$ eth^{pp} slav ⁝ *txt* $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ ℵ C* D L W f^{1} 33 *pc* a aur b d e ff^2 (q) vg^{mss} $sy^{s.\,pal}$ $cop^{sa.\,bo}$ arm eth^{TH} geo (*add here* John 7:53–8:11 1333^{supp})

FIGURE 3.2: EPP'S VARIANT CONCIOUS EDITION OF THE ASCENSION NARRATIVES: LUKE 24:50-53

Recent Departures in Medieval Vernacular Textual Criticism

In recent years, there has been an increasing tendency among writers on textual criticism to challenge the validity of the author-centric approach to medieval vernacular works. The textual transmission of some (though not all) medieval vernacular works reflects a lack of concern for the textual integrity of an original work, and a level of variation which makes the differentiation between 'authorial' and 'scribal' activity difficult, if not impossible to distinguish. Work across disciplines has drawn significant attention to the way in which our modern perceptions of authorship have informed our approach to medieval literary culture. The author-function, to use Michel Foucault's terminology, 'does not affect all discourses in the same way at all times and in all types of civilisation'.[33] In this section, I propose to survey a number of responses to the growing awareness of the divergences between medieval and modern notions of authorship, and the challenges they pose for the demands of traditional textual criticism.

As previously noted, the first of these objections in an Old French context was fully articulated by Joseph Bédier in his 1913 edition of *Lai de l'ombre*. Here he expressed a deep dissatisfaction with the stemmatic method and advocated an approach whereby the textual critic selects the 'best-text' and edits it with extreme conservatism. More recently and more radically, theoretical discussion in the discipline has challenged its practitioners to acknowledge and re-examine many of the underlying assumptions which form the basis of the critical edition, arguing that the attempts to produce a singular definitive text are based on a misunderstanding of medieval literature and therefore anachronistic as an editorial approach. Most

[33] Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', trans Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, in *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*, eds Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer (New York, 1989), pp. 263-75, at p. 271.

notably Paul Zumthor and Hans Robert Jauss have stressed the 'otherness' – or the alterity – of medieval texts. Mary B. Speer has argued that two aspects of this otherness are particularly relevant for textual critics as they impact the definition of the editor's object of study, they are: 'the notion of *mouvance* and the related belief that modern concepts of authorship do not apply to medieval works'.[34] We will examine each of these in turn.

The concept of meaningful texual instability, or *mouvance*, was formulated by Zumthor in his seminal study of medieval French poetry, *Essai de poétique médiévale*.[35] Here, Zumthor argued that the overwhelming authorial anonymity and the high level of textual variance of much of medieval vernacular literature were connected: medieval scribes did not place the same significance on the vernacular authors as modern editors tend to. In the Middle Ages, the term *auctor* was reserved only for those ancient writers whose works were deemed by the church and the universities to possess *auctoritas*. Such a definition expressly excluded the works of vernacular writers. This theoretical model envisions the various active participants in medieval literary culture as co-creators of the text together with the original authors: 'Each version, each "state of text" should in principle be considered not so much the result of an emendation as of a re-using, a re-creation'.[36]

Zumthor explained *mouvance* as partly a product of the continuing influence of oral culture upon some medieval texts: the variety of manuscript manifestations of

[34] Mary B. Speer, 'Wrestling with Change: Old French Textual Criticism and *Mouvance*', *Olifant* 7 (1980), pp. 311-26, at p. 311.
[35] Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris, 1972). For an introduction to the development of *mouvance* in Old French textual criticism, see Mary B. Speer, 'Wrestling with Change', pp. 311-26. See also Bella Millett, 'What is *Mouvance*?', available at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/~wpwt/mouvance/ mouvance.htm> [accessed, 25 September 2013].
[36] Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale*, p. 72 (cited in translation in Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture*, p. 22).

a particular work reflects an ongoing interaction between written and oral culture. As a result, Zumthor's approach called for a redefinition of our concept of the medieval work. The nature of the work is seen not as static, but rather as something more fluid and dynamic, constantly adapted in the course of its transmissions: 'the complex unity constituted by the collectivity of its material versions; the synthesis of the signs employed by the successive "authors" (singers, reciters, copyists) and of the literality of the texts ... the work is fundamentally mobile'.[37] Advocates of *mouvance* may continue to reconstruct the archetype of a text; yet unlike the traditional approach to textual criticism which bestows unimpeachable authority on the 'original text', any archetype exists for evaluative purposes and is considered on a par with its variants.[38]

More recently, the French linguist Bernard Cerquiglini and the Italian school of New Philology have argued for a renewed interest in the material contexts of medieval literature often referred to as manuscript culture. In 1989, Cerquiglini published his essay *Eloge de la variante: histoire critique de la philologie*. Here, he criticises the editorial practices of Old French scholars for suppressing the fluidity of manuscript transmission when they produce a fixed text: 'the variation of the medieval romance work is its prime characteristic, a concrete alterity which founds this object and which publication [of these works] should give priority to demonstrating'.[39] For Cerquiglini, stemmatic editions offer an 'illusory reconstruction' of the work; the production of best-text editions is also considered

[37] Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale*, p. 73 (cited in translation in Bella Millet, 'What is *Mouvance*?').
[38] For a detailed review of editions which have incorporated (or attempted to incorporate) the notion of *mouvance*, see Speer, 'Wrestling with Change', esp. pp. 320-5.
[39] Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la variante*, p. 62 (cited in translation in Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture*, p.12).

unsatisfactory as they represent 'only snapshots' in the process of textual development.[40] The editor has to find some way of representing purposeful variance and the relationships between the different versions of a work. Cerquiglini's definition of *variance* consciously builds on Zumthor's discussion of the *mouvance* characteristic of medieval literary culture. His emphasis is less on the role of oral culture than on the relationships between the various manuscript manifestations of medieval vernacular works and, in particular, the implication of their variance for the medieval concept of textual authority.

Underlying the school of New Philology is the principle that each work has survived in an individual manuscript tradition which requires a special editing approach. In his introductory essay to the 1990 number of *Speculum* devoted to this topic, Stephen Nichols writes:

> What is 'new' in the philology common to all the contributions may be found in their insistence that the language of texts be studied not simply as discursive phenomena but in the interaction of text language with the manuscript matrix and of both language and manuscript with the social context and networks they inscribe.[41]

Echoing Cerquiglini's by-now famous aphorism, 'medieval writing does not produce variants; it is variance',[42] Nichols concludes that 'medieval culture did not simply live with diversity, it cultivated it'.[43]

Whilst the proponents of New Philology did not intend to address the issue of oral provenance, the impact of the new critical approach on editorial methodology is

[40] Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la variante*, p. 101 (cited in translation in Millet, 'What is *Mouvance*?')
[41] Stephen G. Nichols, 'Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture', *Speculum* 65 (1990), pp. 1-10, at p. 8; cf. Derek Pearsall, 'Theory and Practice in Middle English Editing', *Text* 7 (1994), pp. 107-26, at p. 124.
[42] Cerquiglini, *Eloge de la variante*, p. 111.
[43] Nichols, 'The New Philology', p. 9.

most clearly felt in instances where the presence of oral transmission or multiple archetypes within an open transmission can be demonstrated.[44] In a further contribution to the same number of *Speculum*, Suzanne Fleischman discusses the possibility of detecting 'oral residue' in Old French texts composed in a written environment. Citing the work of Cerquiglini, Fleischman argues that it is precisely these remnants of oral culture that the editorial process suppresses in the act of determining what constitutes a 'good' text. Setting aside the issue of orality, Fleischman addresses the possibility of a 'postmodern textual criticism in which "the text" is destabilized into the plurality of its variants' – an approach which returns to the manuscripts not as the source of texts to be edited but as the 'original texts'. [45] She further speaks of 'a discourse in which the authorial voice is silenced' and the possibility of recontextualising the texts 'as acts of communication'.[46]

In his recent work on the medieval Spanish text the *Libro de buen amor*, John Dagenais calls for a reversal of the old paradigm of textual criticism, a reversal in which the individual reader and the multitude of medieval literary activities, rather than the author occupies the central position. For Dagenais, even the developments hinted at in the New Philology are unsatisfactory:

> Too often, the new recognition of 'la variante,' of the richness and variety of the medieval manuscript 'matrix'... of our 'texts', has celebrated them merely as the opening of a new territory for verbal play, a new object/subject of *jouissance*.[47]

[44] Speer, 'Wrestling with Change', p. 315, who notes that New Philologists continue to strongly advocate the retrieval of the archetype in instance of closed recensions.
[45] Susan Fleischman, 'Philology, Linguistics, and the Discourse of the Medieval Text', *Speculum* 65 (1990), pp. 19-37, at p. 25.
[46] Ibid., pp. 32, 37.
[47] Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading*, p. xv.

Dagenais expresses deep dissatisfaction with the ability of modern critical editions to accurately represent the literature of the Middle Ages. In his estimation, the process by which critical editions are produced can be informative. However, he believes that the end product – the critical edition itself – 'is of absolutely no evidentiary value'.[48] Dagenais opines that the critical edition suppresses the fluidity and individuality of manuscript texts in its attempts to reduce the readings to a single coherent text. Furthermore, when one views the documentary evidence from a reader-orientated perspective, the underlying assumptions of modern scholarly editions are fundamentally flawed: 'Each medieval text was as unique and concrete as the individual who copied it or who read it. This reality must alter, irremediably, our ideas about relations among author, work, text, and reader in the Middle Ages'.[49] Dagenais proposes an approach in which medievalists work directly with manuscripts and mediate the evidence from the model of the scriptorium rather than the modern scholarly edition, thus further displacing the concept of the author and the authorial text from the study of medieval vernacular literatures.

The German literary theorist, Hans Jauss, one of the founders of the reception-orientated medieval literary studies (reception theory), described the aesthetics of medieval literature in similar terms. In the 1970s, in an issue of *New Literary History* devoted to 'Medieval Literature and Contemporary Theory', Jauss contributed an essay entitled 'The Alterity and Modernity of Medieval Literature', in

[48] Ibid., p. 113.

[49] Ibid., p. 16. Tymoczko ('What Questions Should We Ask in Celtic Studies in the New Millennium?', p. 22) has suggested that reader response theory has much to offer scholars of Celtic Studies: 'Such insights are relevant, for example, to the highly stratified cultures of early Celtic societies, and Celtic Studies scholars would be well advised to take them into account in thinking about the meaning of any of the early texts'. She continues that, '[t]he consumers of medieval texts included a professional class of literary practitioners, a highly differentiated aristocratic audience, and other audiences as well'. The relevance of these observations to the study of medieval Irish texts will be considered in more detail presently.

which he emphasised the 'astounding or surprising otherness of the world opened up by the text'.[50] Jauss begins his introduction to the concept of alterity by observing that 'for us medieval literature is even more alien than that of the antiquity'.[51] He argues that the philologically orientated humanistic model of research which has prevailed in medieval literary studies has resulted in various 'implicitly applied aesthetics' which have 'no foundation in fact'. Whilst commenting on the various retellings of the cycle of *Le Roman de Renart*, for example, Jauss remarks that '[w]hat positivistic research viewed as a series of "corrupt variants" of a lost original could be viewed by the medieval public as a succession of sequels'. This is a principle which he argues 'runs completely counter to the humanistic understanding of the original and its reception'.[52] He calls for 'a reconstruction of the horizon of expectation of the addressees for whom the text was originally composed'.[53] Once we understand this horizon of expectations, we can appreciate those parts of medieval literature that appear foreign when viewed from a modern aesthetic and create meaning for a contemporary audience. Other key aspects of Jauss' contribution will be discussed below.

Regarding the textual criticism of Middle English romances in particular, Derek Pearsall has argued most cogently for editing medieval materials according to the realities of their manuscript contexts. He contends that the modern editorial

[50] Hans Jauss, 'The Alterity and Modernity of Medieval Literature', *New Literary History* 10 (1979), pp. 181-229, at p. 182.
[51] Ibid., p. 187. John Anthony Burrow ('"Alterity" and Midldle English Literature', *The Review of English Studies* 50, no. 200 (1999), pp. 483-92) warns against the over-zealous application of Jauss' theory of alterity to the study of the literature of the Middle Ages in general: 'General assertions of alterity serve as a warning against what linguists call false friends; but they should not be allowed to discourage recognition of things – words, feelings, customs, or whatever – that have not changed. The matter is best approached by observing distinctions within particular fields, leaving generalizations about the "alterity of medieval literature" to a much later stage of the discussion' (p. 485).
[52] Jauss, 'The Alterity and Modernity', pp. 189, 190.
[53] Ibid., p. 185.

desire to recover the authorially intended text should be significantly de-emphasised as an editorial goal in favour of an approach which emphasises the material contexts of medieval literature. The efforts of textual critics to restore an hypothetical ideal authorial text is 'to substitute a myth of the text for the concrete and perceivable realities of the texts' and characterises what Pearsall refers to as 'the tyranny of the critical edition'.[54] For him, editing is a practical necessity which is poorly facilitated by the underlying assumptions of modern critical editions, 'a text to which the manuscripts witness but that they do not themselves embody'.[55]

Questions as to whether or not a differentiation between 'authorial' and 'scribal' activity is achievable lie behind Pearsall's objections to the possibility of recovering an 'authorial text'. Commenting on the English popular romances, he writes: 'Here there can be no certainty, no act of faith, that the level of poetic and intellectual activity of the author in one manuscript is superior to that of the scribal editor in another, and no certainty, therefore, that a "better" reading is necessarily the responsibility of the author'.[56] Traditional textual criticism assumes the existence of a text that represents the author's intentions. For the manuscripts of the English romances, Pearsall argues that not only is such a text irrecoverable, it is also to a large extent unimportant. Scribal reworking of the archetypal copy is generally viewed as an act of decomposition from the ideal form of the authorial text. However, surviving manuscripts of certain popular romances indicate that each act

[54] Derek Pearsall, 'Editing Medieval Texts: Some Developments and Some Problems', in *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. McGann, pp. 92-106.
[55] Patterson, 'The Logic of Textual Criticism and the Way of Genius', p. 88.
[56] Pearsall, 'Theory and Practice', p. 111.

of copying was to a large extent an act of recompositon and that it is often these acts of recomposition which are suppressed by the editor of a critical texts.[57]

Despite his criticisms of the traditional critical edition, Pearsall also warns against making sweeping generalisations in the study of medieval literatures. For him, it is important to make a clear distinction between texts which although they survive in written form, reflect the continuing influence of oral culture on the one hand and of written texts by single authors on the other. The theories of *mouvance* and the New Philology may be more suited to texts of the former type but that is not to suggest that they are universally applicable. Regarding the editorial treatment of the latter, Pearsall recognises the role of authorial intention 'which remains intention even when it is multiple, ambiguous, shifting and uncertain'. He writes that '[e]diting is not impossible here, at least not theoretically impossible; it just needs to be more versatile, resourceful, and openminded'; he continues: 'The concept of intentionality needs to be constantly re-examined, recognised to be complicated, deliberately made difficult, but it cannot be got rid of, and it is fundamental to the consideration of authorial revision'.[58]

By far the most ardent rejection of the modern preoccupation with seeking to recover the authorially intended text in a Middle English context comes from Tim William Machan.[59] At the heart of Machan's repudiation of the applicability of the principles of humanist textual criticism to the editing of Middle English texts are late-medieval literary theory and the Middle English writers' conceptions of literary authority and an authoritative text. Machan argues that medieval works were not

[57] Ibid., pp. 102-3.
[58] Ibid., pp. 125-6.
[59] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*.

normally regarded as the intellectual property of a single named author. Accordingly, the Middle English writers' awareness of their non-authorial status both informed and enabled Middle English writing. Since this lack of authority is fundamental for the discourse of late Middle English manuscripts, to equate the authoritative texts of vernacular literature with the authorial one is both inadequate and anachronistic. From Machan's point of view, the aim of stabilising the perceived authorial text is a purely academic pursuit which prevents us from fully understanding Middle English literary culture.[60]

The concept of *auctoritas* corresponds with the *res* (content) of a literary work and was the product of the *auctores* themselves. The *verba* (words, metre etc.) and the document, on the other hand, were the products of scribes and constituted any given text of this *res*: 'Within this framework, words and their layout are not integral to a given text, which in turn is not integral to a given work'.[61] The textual transmission of many – though not all – medieval vernacular texts indicates a lack of concern for the textual integrity of the original work. Machan suggests that a genuinely historical edition of a medieval text might entail reconstructing 'the work behind the document' rather than an 'authorized text' underlying the surviving documents, taking into account the social and cultural framework within which it would have been read, and giving greater attention than at present to the bibliographical codes involved in its documentary realisation.[62]

[60] This point has not been lost on scholars of medieval Irish literature. For example, in a recent article, Máire Herbert ('Crossing Historical and Literary Boundaries: Irish Written Culture Around the Year 1000', *CMCS* 53/4 (2007), pp. 87-101, at p. 88) poses the question: 'Has the production of authoritative but hypothetical "original" texts detracted from consideration of the scholarly contexts which determined their preservation?'. Herbert's contributions to medieval Irish literary and textual criticism will be discussed in further detail presently.

[61] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 162.

[62] Ibid., p. 184.

Is it Possible to Recover an Authorial Text?

This is the question posed by Holmes while considering what he refers to as 'some collateral issues' that arise as a result of the various attempts to (re)define the goal of New Testament textual criticism.[63] Increasingly, the author/work paradigm is coming under considerable pressure with adherents of the traditional methods continuing to be called upon to justify their approaches. Nicolas Jacobs responded to this call in his essay 'Kindly Light or Foxfire? The Authorial Text Revisited'. Here, Jacobs employs the term 'relativism' to refer to the shift in interest away from the reconstruction of a critical text to an examination of scribal variants as readings in their own right.[64] He believes the practical implications of strong relativism are that the editor would effectively cease to edit and a reconstruction of the archetype would no longer be the objective. The aim of editing a text would become the presentation of its textual variants, drawing conclusions about the social context in which these variants were produced.[65]

Although Jacobs recognises that there is a place for relativism in the study of medieval texts, he continues to defend the traditional task of reconstructing the authorial text as a legitimate aim of editorial practice. Authorship is redefined as dependent on an intention to communicate and the fact that an author took the time to compose a literary work entitles the original version to editorial respect.[66] He argues that a scribe can be differentiated from an author when this intention is lacking and the activity is purely scribal. By applying this definition of authorship to

[63] Holmes, 'From "Original Text" to "Initial Text"', p. 25.
[64] For more on relativism cf. Chapter One, p. 38.
[65] Nicolas Jacobs, 'Kindly Light or Foxfire?', in *A Guide to Editing Middle English*, eds Moffat and McCarren, pp. 3-14, at p. 5.
[66] Ibid., p. 7. In her essay 'Wrestling with Change' (p. 325), Speer draws an important distinction between *mouvance* in a loose sense and deterioration in the Lachmannian sense. Here, she warns against banishing the author from all editions.

the alterations made by scribes and redactors, Jacobs differentiates between six degrees of scribal activity and justifies the compilation of a critical edition of both the original and any versions which are the result of a conscious revision of the original. Aside from questions of authorial revision and collaborative authorship, Jacobs identifies various other possibilities ranging from 'the reproduction *literatim* of the exemplar to the creation of an entirely new composition only loosely based on it'.[67]

Each of these cases will not necessarily be clear cut and decisions regarding where on the spectrum a particular variant belongs may be as conjectural as selecting between variant readings. However, treatment of the source in a manner suggested by Jacobs allows the textual scholar to resolve the perceived polarity between authors and scribes 'not by blurring the distinction between the two but by recognizing it as a question less of persons than of functions, which can in some cases be exercised simultaneously'. It is recognised that at times the scribe has taken on the function of the author and 'for that reason they [the surviving texts] are a proper object of study for the textual critic, both in themselves and for the conclusions that can be drawn from comparisons between them and from the study of the progressive developments that may have given rise to them'.[68] Thus, the model of a single authorial text of a work has been replaced with the idea that is possible to have several authorial versions of a tradition and that each version merits individual study.

[67] Jacobs, 'Kindly Light or Foxfire?', p. 11. For more on Jacobs' formulation for assessing the status of derivative versions, see Chapter Five, pp. 295-6.
[68] Ibid., p. 13; p. 7.

Jacobs' response highlights the fact that even those scholars who would continue to uphold the authorially intended text as the central aim of textual-critical activity have become less rigid in their definitions of authorship. Jennifer Fellows also addresses the issues of scribal redaction and asks whether it is appropriate to apply modern notions of a single 'correct' reading of authorial texts given that the circumstances of the production of medieval manuscripts differ greatly from those of the printed word?[69] Similar to Jacobs, Fellows advocates an approach where redactions and derivatives of texts are treated according to their individual merits as a concession to relativism. Again, the authorial original is seen as the ideal aim of the editor. However, Fellows offers an alternative method in particular instances where this is not deemed possible. To conclude, she suggests that the treatment of variants as authorial versions rather than the abandonment of the notion of the common archetype would better serve as a means of exploring medieval culture.[70]

The proponents of theoretical models such as *mouvance*, New Philology or the reader-oriented approach have often been criticised for failing to develop new editorial paradigms to replace the author-centred models which they so ardently criticise. However, these modes of textual criticism do not purport to be new editorial methods. Rather, they provide us with new means of viewing the literary world of the Middle Ages free from the assumptions of the traditional models of critical editions which have tended to dictate how we experience and understand this literature. However, as Holmes warns regarding the contributions of Parker and Epp to the study of New Testament textual criticism, 'their perspectives are no more

[69] Jennifer Fellows, 'Author, Author, Author …: An Apology for Parallel Texts', in *A Guide to Editing Middle English*, eds Moffat and McCarren, pp. 15-24, at p. 15. Fellow's alternative approach, the parallel-text method, will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Three and Chapter Four.
[70] Ibid., pp. 23-4.

ideological than the assumptions that have shaped the traditional view of the discipline and definition of its goal'.[71]

A further consequence of the increasing scepticism surrounding the idea of an 'original text' is that scholars of both modern and medieval textual materials are now advocating an approach to texts which incorporates textual and literary theories. The combined effect of these changes is the growing realisation that textual criticism and editing need not be so closely related to one another. Pearsall, for example, has argued that the relationship between textual theory and 'the practical business of editing' is 'remote', allowing that the study of medieval literature necessitates two basic types of edition: the first is for textual scholars and may take the form of a either a diplomatic or facsimile edition or of a critical edition together with a compendia of variants; the other type is for students and general readers who require a reliable readable text. 'To make this distinction', he adds, 'would help to remove the association between textual criticism and editing, which is too often assumed to be necessary'.[72]

As we have observed in Chapter Two, scholars of medieval Irish are yet to seriously engaged in the recent discourse concerning the applicability of the traditional models of textual criticism to medieval vernacular texts. Given the central role of textual criticism in the field of medieval Irish, this is not only surprising but also regrettable. The preceding discussion highlights many of the challenges to the author-centric model of textual criticism. Modern debates have influenced how the authorial text can be viewed, and its reconstruction or the reconstruction of the archetype underlying the extant witnesses is no longer seen by

[71] Holmes, 'From "Original Text" to "Initial Text"', p. 34.
[72] Pearsall, 'Theory and Practice', p. 117.

all as the primary objective of editing a text. Scholars such as Machan have argued that the study of the authorial text within medieval vernacular literature is anachronistic. Others have replied by modifying their definitions of authorial intention. Others still have called for innovative ways of looking at medieval literatures which better reflect the manuscript cultures in which they were produced. These approaches may ultimately lead to a study of medieval literatures which deprivileges the central role of the critical edition.

Where then does that leave the editor of medieval Irish textual materials? One thing is certain: textual scholars can no longer afford to ignore these debates. For textual criticism in any discipline to remain viable, its practitioners must continue to engage with the ongoing dialogue about the usefulness and applicability of critical editions of all kinds. Presently, the burden of proof within the field of medieval Irish lies with those who would seek to challenge the traditional editorial paradigm. However, it is no longer sufficient to legitimise an approach on the grounds that it is how things have always been done. Those scholars who would continue to uphold the traditional modes of textual criticism must also be called to account for their methods because as Greetham puts it 'no dictum should be implicitly and permanently accepted without continual demonstration of its validity'.[73]

The Authoritative Text

The restoration of an authorial text that represents a single fixed moment in its history remains the principal goal for most editors of medieval Irish works. In this approach, ultimate authority is conceived of as deriving from the original author

[73] Greetham, 'Textual and Literary Theory', p. 3.

whose words will always be discerned to be superior among the mass of scribal variants. The activities of scribes and the manuscripts they produce are largely seen as vehicles which supply us with this original text, albeit in a corrupt form; and they are usually considered secondary to discovering what the author wrote (if they are considered at all). Thus, such a definition expressly excludes the work of more recent textual theorists who, as we have seen, question the authority of the medieval vernacular author and emphasise an approach in which the meaning of a 'work' may be seen as a co-operative process evolving over time.

Textual criticism is a subject where authority is always in question and it is clear from the preceding discussion that various kinds of authorities need to be distinguished. A key concern of this argument is that writing is essentially a collaborative experience and this collaboration aids the author in achieving his intentions. For social textual theorists, the meaning of a text is further shaped by the physical artefact in which it is embodied. According to McGann's formulation: 'For an editor and textual critic the concept of authority has to be conceived in a more broadly social and cultural context. Authoritative texts are arrived at by an exhaustive reconstruction not of an author and his intentions so much of an author and his work'. In short, 'authority is a social nexus, not a personal possession'.[74] Quoting Bower's definition of the editorial task as the 'attempt to determine what the author wrote', Machan remarks that such a definition 'imputes unambiguous and transcendent significance to the concept of authority'. This approach to textual criticism, grounded as it is in the ideological concerns of humanist scholars, equates the authoritative text with the authorial one. However, as Machan makes explicit, even within a literary context the concept of authority embraces several meanings:

[74] McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, pp. 84, 48.

> It can be used in reference to the individual or individuals who created (or 'authored') a literary work; to the legal or cultural entitlement certain individuals or institutions may have to a particular work or text (their 'authoritativeness'); to the claim imputed to certain texts to represent accurately the original texts from which they are judged to derive (their 'authenticity'); to the validity of what a work or text states about a certain topic and of its right to make such statements in the first place (its 'authorization'). While each of these references is distinct from others, they clearly can and do overlap and occur simultaneously.[75]

In this formulation, the authorial text is just one of numerous authorities to which the textual critic can appeal.

Of such statements of authority, one of the clearest and most useful has been set forth by Peter Shillingsburg. He contends that it is the word 'authority' more than any other which creates the greatest obstacle to understanding differences in editorial principles, arguing that 'authority is not intrinsic or discovered in the textual problem but is, instead, brought to the problem by the editor to help evaluate the problem'.[76] In his view, 'authority' can be divided into four main types: (1) 'deriving from the author' – 'primary authorial authority'; (2) 'having a demonstrable, though not precisely known, relation to the author' – 'secondary authorial authority'; (3) 'deriving from a document with "primary" or "secondary authorial authority"' – 'primary documentary authority'; (4) 'having a precedent in a historical document' – 'radial documentary authority'. The first refers to the author's manuscript, or autograph alterations in proofs or later editions; the second refers to instances where it is known that the author did revise or proofread the text but the details of specific revisions cannot be recovered. The final two are perhaps more relevant in medieval vernacular textual criticism. The third refers to the text

[75] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 93.
[76] Peter Shillingsburg, 'An Inquiry into the Social Status of Texts and Modes of Textual Criticism', *Studies in Bibliography* 42 (1989), pp. 55-78, at p. 68.

which is chronologically closest to one the author wrote; the fourth is of particular relevance to the interpretation of medieval Irish literary works and refers to the text 'as preserved in physical documents that may be (and probably are) corrupt, has an unknown relation to the author and may or may not preserve the authorial forms as successfully as other documents with similar characteristics'. Furthermore, Shillingsburg contends that in expressions such as 'more authority' and 'sticking to authority' the word *authority* is used comparatively and evaluatively rather than descriptively and reveals the critical judgment of the editor. Each of these definitions continues to reflect a preoccupation with the authorially intended text. However, there is considerable room for disagreement within these views and the point at which one chooses to stress authority may lead to radically different editorial approaches. [77]

Social-textual theorists advocate a higher-level definition of authority which marginalises the role of the author.[78] Thus McGann writes that 'the fully authoritative text is … always one which has been socially produced; as a result, the critical standard for what constitutes authoritativeness cannot rest with the author and his intentions alone'; Parker contends that 'we have a long way to go before we can talk confidently about the authority of the author'; and Cerquiglini argues that 'in the generalized authenticity of the medieval work, philology has seen only a lost authenticity'.[79] In terms of such studies, the modern concepts of authorship do not apply to medieval works: all manuscript versions are of equal interest to the textual

[77] Ibid., pp. 69-70.
[78] I am using the term 'social-textual theorists' to refer to those non-authorial textual and literary theorists discussed in the opening section.
[79] McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, p. 43; Parker, 'Lost Authority', p. 774; Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la Variante*, p. 58 (cited in translation in Millet, 'What is *Mouvance*?').

scholar, and textual authority (or rather, authorial authority) comes into question only to the extent that readers and scribes themselves impute it to a particular author.

Shillingsburg also considers the authority assumed by the editor to emend the text: he elaborates this problem further asking 'what is the critical theory about works of art that leads you to believe that the author is the ultimate source of authority?'[80] In relation to the textual criticism of medieval Irish materials, this question has been explored in depth in the preceding chapter. We have seen that the theory of textual criticism as it developed from the Renaissance onward was shaped by the ideological concerns of humanist scholars. The specifics of the development of the discipline of Early and Medieval Irish Studies reflect a close association between the editing of medieval Irish manuscripts and philological enquiry, in particular the post-Lachmannian Neogrammarian rebellion against recensionary principles. Furthermore, we have noted that the persistence of nineteenth-century positivism within the field of medieval Irish has made the discipline particularly resistant to theory and consequently incompatible with the theoretical models outlined above.

These considerations suggest, first of all, that textual critics need to be constantly aware of the historical circumstances which have shaped their responses to textual materials. As both Machan and Shillingsburg have argued, the relationship between the various kinds of authority is both culturally generated and historically determined. Secondly, scholars must bear in mind that preconceived ideas about the author will inevitably impact on how the authorial text is determined and the editorial task is enacted: 'what controls the editor's freedom of interpretation

[80] Shillingsburg, 'An Inquiry into the Social Status of Texts', p. 71.

is his self-imposed limitation'.[81] Although editors may subscribe to the same textual theoretical models their perception of authority may lead to radically different realisations of the authoritative text.[82] Finally we may observe that underlying assumptions of textual criticism (whether they are authorially or sociologically orientated) tend to determine how the evidence will be interpreted.

As previously noted, Jacobs has argued that the practical implications of strong relativism where the authorial text becomes a matter of only incidental concern are that the editor would effectively cease to edit, and merely reproduce multiple versions of the text under investigation.[83] Shillingsburg, on the other hand, argues that the new editorial theories seek to broaden modern concepts of authority which function as a security blanket for those critics whose approaches remain grounded in seeking to reconstruct the authorial text: 'As long as one remains settled inside the author-centric world of ideas, the concept of authority is very useful practically in the business of producing scholarly editions, documentary authority is a firm resting place, primary authorial authority is like being in clover'.[84] It is difficult to envision how the broadening of the concept of textual authority would ultimately limit the task of the editor. Rather, when one expands the conceptual boundaries of modern textual criticism to include social-textual theories, other options suggest themselves. The range of options will ultimately be determined by the intended function of an edition and the editor's desired audience.

[81] Tanselle, 'The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention', pp. 167-211, at p. 182.
[82] This idea is discussed at length in relation to the editorial treatment of Irish lyric verse in Chapter Five. It is demonstrated that whilst numerous textual scholars have approached this material with the same goal in mind, i.e. to produce an author-centred critical edition, their emphasis on either authorial authority or documentary authority results in markedly different editions of the same poetic materials.
[83] Jacobs, 'Kindly Light or Foxfire?', p. 5.
[84] Shillingsburg, 'An Inquiry into the Social Status of Texts', p. 71.

These arguments focus, for the most part, on modern critics' definitions of textual authority. However, as we move towards a more sociological view of medieval Irish material, we must also consider the role of textual authority within medieval Irish written culture. In this regard, we may briefly consider the observations of Joseph Nagy and Kevin Murray concerning the aesthetics of medieval Irish literature. In his book *Conversing with Angels and Ancients*, Nagy examines the Irish hagiographical tradition as a source of information about the authorising techniques underlying Irish literary tradition. In the introduction to this study, he writes:

> Certainly the *topos* of literary filiation (one text as indebted to another) is to be found in medieval Irish literature, but its creators were rarely content to authorize a text simply by invoking the concept of *auctoritas*, the rootedness of a work in earlier revered works, a validated quality to which classical and medieval texts typically aspire.[85]

Nagy argues that the aesthetics of medieval literature dictates that the purveyors of Irish literature must convincingly capture the past so that they might speak with authority about contemporary concerns.[86] Similarly, Murray has recently argued that the concept of authority is one of the most prominent reasons for the reworking of earlier materials: 'By using established conventions, and reworking earlier texts and traditions, authors could ensure that their compositions resonated with a society familiar with these materials'.[87] Thus, we find a model of textual authority which does not rest on authorial authority. Rather, authority rests with the text and meaning derives from the audiences' familiarity with and understanding of the text.

[85] Joseph F. Nagy, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients: Literary Myths of Medieval Ireland* (New York, 1997), p. 15.
[86] Ibid., p. 10.
[87] Kevin Murray, 'The Reworking of Old-Irish Texts in the Middle-Irish Period: Contexts and Motivations', in *Authorities and Adaptations: The Reworking and Transmission of Textual Sources in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 2011), eds Elizabeth Boyle and Deborah Hayden, pp. 291-306.

The concept of multiple authorities becomes particularly pertinent in the following two sections which consider not only the author-centric and sociological definitions of authority, but also the concept of textual authority within the discourse of medieval Irish manuscripts and the impact of these ideas on the task of the editor.

Medieval Irish Secular (Pseudo-) Historical Prose Narrative

Recent textual critical dialogue is characterised by an unprecedented focus on editorial theorising together with a growing awareness of the theories of scholarly literary criticism which underlie it. Challenges from within the discipline have resulted in the acknowledgement by many of the intrinsically hermeneutical nature of their work: how one perceives the textual material under investigation and what concept of authorship and of textual authority it entails are crucial questions, the answers to which determine one's goal in producing an edition. In view of the preceding survey, I propose to examine the central issue of the 'original text' in the discourse of medieval Irish textual scholarship. The primary subject of this section is medieval Irish secular (pseudo-) historical prose narrative.[88] The focus will be on the literary scholarship which has emerged within the field in recent decades and its potential consequences for the theory and practice of editing medieval Irish texts.

In the closing section of Chapter Two, we noted that there is a growing awareness among scholars of medieval Irish literature that the production of putative original texts in the editorial treatment of this material may ultimately impede a proper understanding of its cultural and historical significance, and of the scholarly *mileu* responsible for its preservation. Among writers on textual and literary criticism, two in particular – Máire Herbert and Erich Poppe – have addressed

[88] See n. 4.

themselves to the question of how one can accommodate medieval Irish textual culture in a modern scholarly edition. Their ideas concerning editorial theory and practice are usually expressed implicitly in the context of other matters of literary and textual analysis. For both, historical narratives are to be understood within their social, political, and cultural contexts. Furthermore, each gives serious thought to the intrinsic alterity of medieval Irish narrative and the consequences of the incorporation of otherness for the users of scholarly editions.

Herbert's position serves to focus attention on some of the issues. In a paper discussing the impact of certain modern scholarly conceptions of early Irish heroic narrative published in 1988, she states that it is self-evident 'that modern readers never experience medieval texts directly, unambiguously or ahistorically'. She continues that 'their reading is mediated in the first place by the scholarly activities which bridge the linguistic and historical divide between manuscript versions and printed translation'.[89] In this concise summary of the critical history of early Irish heroic literature, certain editorial challenges come to the fore. Herbert highlights the philological ideal of establishing an 'original' text which, as we have already observed, deeply influenced the study of medieval literatures in general. She also draws the readers' attention to the prevailing tendency for textual commentary and philology to focus on the 'insular' text independent of the social and historical

[89] Herbert, 'The World, The Text and the Critic of Early Irish Heroic Narrative', *Text and Context* 3 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 1-9, at p. 1. One of Herbert's primary aims in this piece is to emphasise the multi-faceted nature of early Irish narrative, particularly with regard to the interaction between orality and literacy. This subject will be discussed in detail in the next section of the present chapter. In his discussion of medieval Irish literary theory, Poppe ('Reconstructing Medieval Literary Theory', p. 34) highlights the tendency for 'well-edited texts' of secular pseudo-historical narrative prose to become central to the critical discourse surrounding such texts. Similar to Herbert, Poppe stresses that 'the received modern corpus of texts does not necessarily reflect its medieval counterpart'. He continues: 'Because of the inherent alterity of their sources they [i.e. Medievalists] cannot – and presumably should not – transfer their own modern understanding of "literature" (and related concepts) to the objects of their analysis if they want to arrive at a historically appropriate assessment of their meaning'.

contexts of early Irish narrative.[90] As one would expect, Herbert recognises the importance of the study of historical contexts for accurate critical analysis and encourages a more interdisciplinary approach in the areas of early Irish history and literature. It is also noteworthy that this succinct piece concludes by citing the works of both Jauss and Zumthor.[91] The incorporation of the meaning of early Irish narrative into a modern aesthetic, argues Herbert, necessitates an approach which holds as its central tenets the preservation and rejuvenation of those texts.

This approach comes to fruition in her subsequent analysis of the Middle Irish tale *Fled Dúin na nGéd* 'The Banquet of the Fort of the Geese' (hereafter *FDG*).[92] In her reappraisal of the tale, Herbert once more makes reference to the work of Jauss when she argues that accurate assessment of a medieval text requires 'the reconstruction of the "horizon of expectation" of those for whom the text was originally composed', together with a 'concern with both the text *and context*, with the location of the work within the historical and cultural worlds which shaped its creation'.[93] Accordingly, Herbert remarks that reading medieval narrative in general

[90] Herbert, 'The World, The Text and the Critic', p. 5.

[91] Ibid., p. 6: Firstly, she observes that as in all medieval literature, we find in early Irish narrative '"that particular double structure" of a discourse which not only appears to us as evidence of a distant, historically absent past "in all its surprising "otherness"' but also an aesthetic object 'communicating with a later, no longer contemporary addressee' (citing Jauss, 'The and Alterity and Modernity of Medieval Literature', p. 187). She closes her discussion by stating that 'as we seek to incorporate the meaning of past works into a present content ... our aim at all times must be to pose the questions that will find in the texts themselves an answer that is pertinent, and capable of bringing those texts to life' (citing Paul Zumthor, *Speaking of the Middle Ages*, trans. Sarah White of *Parler du Moyen Age* (Lincoln and London, 1986), p. 13).

[92] Edited by Ruth Lehmann, *Fled Dúin na nGéd*, MMIS 21 (Dublin, 1964). The tale itself may be dated, on linguistic grounds, to the late eleventh to the mid-twelfth century and is classified by modern scholars as part of the 'Cycles of the Kings' [Cf. Miles Dillon, *The Cycles of the Kings* (Oxford, 1946; repr, Dublin, 1994). The primary subject of the tale is the conflict between Congal Claén of the Ulaid and his foster-father, Domnall mac Áeda, over-king of the Uí Néill. Included in the narrative are details of the historically attested battle of Mag Rath (AU 637) [Ed. Carl Marstrander, 'A New Version of the Battle of Mag Rath', *Ériu* 5 (1911), pp. 226-47]. Thus, it may be comfortably assigned to the group of pseudo-historical narrative prose under examination.

[93] Herbert, '*Fled Dúin na nGéd*', p. 75 (citing Jauss, 'The Alterity and Modernity of Medieval Literature', p. 182), my emphasis. Cf. Poppe's definition of 'functional analysis' in 'Reconstructing

entails a reversal of our modern understanding of literature which is to a great extent characterised by the unity of author and work, and by the autonomy of a text understood as a work. Herbert sets forth the following position: 'the public of the early narrative did not seek to discover the unique world-view of a particular author, but rather, sought recognition of familiar codes and conventions shared from one work to another'.[94]

Herbert describes the tale as 'a *tour de force* of intertextual composition' and argues that in addition to contemporary political concerns to be discussed presently, these literary borrowings also form an integral part of the author's intention.[95] The tale draws heavily on a tenth-century account of the historical battle of Mag Rath. Despite this, the narrative reflects a large degree of independent writing: its author expands and embellishes certain events, presents others summarily and inserts numerous intertextual cross-references on multiple literary levels. The tale is parodic in tone and the author deliberately employed other texts to communicate his satirical message with the learned establishment. Thus, we can identify two layers of meaning and two levels of audience for *FDG*: the communication of the 'familiar codes and conventions' of public life intended for the general audience and the literary message intended for the initiated members of society.[96]

Having established for whom the tale was composed, Herbert then situates the text within its contemporary social, historical and cultural contexts. Included in

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Medieval Literary Theory', p. 34: 'Functional analysis', he writes, 'is concerned with the meaning of texts within their cultural contexts, which may change in the course of their transmission, and seeks to explore the intention of their authors and their reception by their audiences'.

[94] Herbert, '*Fled Dúin na nGéd*', p. 75. Cf. Nagy's arguments that '[t]hese ubiquitous motifs and patterns are recycled by the producers of oral or literary story not simply because they are familiar and usable but because they convey messages that their audience wants to receive': *Conversing with Angels and Ancients*, p. 20.

[95] Herbert, '*Fled Dúin na nGéd*', p. 81.

[96] Ibid., p. 87.

the narrative are details of the historically attested battle of Mag Rath (AU 637) and Herbert posits that the tenth-century version of events provided the starting-point for the author of *FDG*.[97] Among the tale's most notable departures from the structure of the tenth-century account of the battle of Mag Rath (hereafter *MR*) are the representations of familial relations, and Herbert opines that the author of *FDG* deliberately utilised a narrative of political events of the seventh century to comment on contemporary social concerns: noting that *FDG* was written during a period in which the association between paternity and property became established both in Ireland and throughout the rest of Europe. Moreover, she suggests that the contemporary political rivalry between the kingdoms of the Northern Uí Néill and of the Ulaid which culminated in the battle of Mag Coba (AU, AI 1103) was a likely catalyst for the compilation of the tale. Herbert's treatment highlights the role of immediate cultural and literary contexts in determining the shape of the tale.

Let us return to consider Herbert's observations regarding the role of 'intertextuality' in *FDG*. The application of the critical concept of 'intertextuality' to medieval Irish literature has recently received careful consideration from a number of scholars. The original concept, developed by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s, has gained widespread currency and has often been misused and misappropriated.[98] Maria Tymoczko has remarked that '[i]ntertextuality takes many forms, from the reuse of textual elements (like characters), to allusions, quotations, and the embedding of texts in other texts'.[99] Intertextuality in each of these meanings is a pervasive feature of medieval Irish literature. Hugh Fogarty has explored the

[97] Ibid., p. 79.
[98] Julia Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue and Novel', in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York, 1986). For an introduction to the concept, see Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London, 2000).
[99] Tymoczko, 'What Questions Should We Ask in Celtic Studies in the New Millennium?', p. 24.

phenomenon in relation to early Irish narrative and he emphasises that those scholars who have recourse to intertextuality must clarify their understanding of the term.[100]

Clodagh Downey employs the concept as a critical tool in her essay 'Intertextuality in *Echtra mac nEchdach Mugmedóin*' (hereafter *Echtra*). The intertextuality of the essay's title embraces both a text's integration of intertextual allusions in addition to the relationship between the text and its audience assumed to be familiar with the source materials. Downey explicitly says that she is using intertextuality in the sense delineated by Neil Wright who speaks of 'the way in which early medieval writers' medium and message could be informed by and interact with other texts which would, for the most part, also have been familiar to their audience'.[101]

The Middle Irish tale under investigation has been described by Bart Jaski as 'not an Old Irish "original", but a composite work in which various themes and motifs were skilfully combined to produce a *coherent* tale' (my emphasis) and Ó Corráin has argued that as the tale stands it is best understood as Uí Néill propaganda of the eleventh century.[102] Downey explores the relationship between *Echtra* and

[100] Hugh Fogarty, '*Aided Guill meic Carbada ₇ Aided Gairb Glinne Rige*: Intertextuality and Inward Look in a Late Middle Irish Prose Saga', in *Authorities and Adaptations*, eds Boyle and Hayden. In his contribution, Fogarty explores the intertextual aspects of the Middle Irish tale *Aided Guill meic Carbada ₇ Aided Gairb Glinne Rige* (hereafter, *AGG*) and concludes that 'whoever was responsible for the composition of *AGG* studiously and judiciously selected and gathered relevant components from diverse sources which (though related) did not constitute a unity, and assembled them into a definite and well-composed one, amounting to a dramatic and highly effective *gressacht*, arguably the finest of its kind in medieval Irish literature'.

[101] Neil Wright, *History and Literature in Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval West: Studies in Intertextuality* (Aldershot, 1995) p. vii (cited in Clodagh Downey, 'Intertextuality in *Echtra mac nEchdach Mugmedóin*', in *Cín Chille Cúile; Texts, Saints and Places. Essays in Honour of Pádraig Ó Riain*, eds John Carey, Máire Herbert and Kevin Murray (Aberystwyth, 2004) pp. 77-104, p. 78).

[102] Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin, 2000), p. 169. For the contemporary function understood to underpin the *Echtra*, see Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Irish Origin Legends', in *History and Heroic Tale*, eds Iørn Piø, D.M. Sørenen and A. Trommer (Odense, 1985), pp. 51-96, at pp. 74-9; idem, 'Historical Need and Literary Narrative', in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Celtic Studies*, ed. Evans, Griffith and Jope, pp. 141-58, at pp. 144-6; idem, 'Legend as

three other texts – *Baile in Scáil*, *Betha Findchú Brí Gobann* and *Fled Bricrenn* – and has demonstrated that a number of significant passages in the *Echtra* were borrowed (in many cases almost verbatim) from these other sources or from shared underlying authorities. Downey suggests that literary imitations of the type witnessed in *Echtra* were a fundamental element of medieval Irish literature and concludes that the appropriation of earlier materials was a literary technique intended to resonate with an audience familiar with the source texts. Regarding the Irish material, Downey writes that if we can assume audience familiarity with the parallel material 'a text may microcosmically assimilate the interests, purposes and perspectives of other texts into its own fabric in an economic and efficient synthesis'.[103]

Similar issues have been explored in relation to the Old Irish version of *Tochmarc Emire* and its Middle Irish redaction. It has long been acknowledged that many passages in the first half of the Middle Irish version of the tale are closely paralleled in other texts.[104] Ruairí Ó hUiginn argues that the author of the Middle Irish narrative was primarily concerned with reworking earlier materials to highlight the tension present in twelfth-century Ireland between native practices and church decree concerning marriage.[105] James Miller postulates similar political concerns for the compositor of the eighth-century version of the narrative. Miller concludes that the literary borrowings of the latter tale were intended to resonate with an audience

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Critic', in *Historical Studies* 16. *The Writer as Witness: Literature as Historical Evidence*, ed. Tom Dunne (Cork, 1987), pp. 23-38, at pp. 31-35; Máire Herbert, 'Goddess and King: The Sacred Marriage in Early Ireland', in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. L.O. Fradenburg (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 264-75, at pp. 270-2.

[103] Downey, 'Intertextuality', pp. 79-80.

[104] Rudolf Thurneysen, Hans Hessen and Gerald O'Nolan, '*Zu Tochmarc Emire*', *ZCP* 8 (1912), pp. 498-524; cf. *Die Irische Helde- und Konigsage Bis Zum Siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (Halle, 1921), at pp. 381-82.

[105] Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Rúraíocht agus Rómánsaíocht: Ceisteanna faoi Fhorás an Traidisiúin', *Éigse* 32 (2000), pp. 77-87.

familiar with the source materials: citing the aforementioned work of Herbert, he argues that the author/redactor of the Middle Irish version of *Tochmarc Emire* was attempting to ground his work within 'familiar codes and conventions' and did so 'at least in part by borrowing from other "established" texts and traditions'.[106]

In the last of Herbert's contributions to be considered here, she questions the value of the continued production of 'authoritative but hypothetical "original" texts' as aids to our understanding of the scholarly contexts which ultimately determined their preservation.[107] Commenting on the manner in which the codices of the eleventh and twelfth centuries have been edited by modern scholars, Herbert observes that 'contemporary [editorial] practice tends to separate texts from their manuscript contexts'. She argues that textual critics tend to construct a 'flowing historical narrative which views works of the seventh and eighth centuries as though they were present in full focus before us rather than mediated through a sometimes tortuous redaction which may be centuries later than the period of textual composition'.[108]

Herbert draws the readers' attention to the impact of the Viking invasions on the Irish scholarly community and the importance of the eleventh century, when 'it was texts which were recovered, reshaped, and reappropriated that were the main begetters of other texts'.[109] We have seen that the author of *FDG* was familiar with

[106] James P. Miller, 'Authorial Intent, Audience Expectation and Appropriation of the Past in Medieval Irish Narrative', forthcoming.
[107] Herbert, 'Crossing Historical and Literary Boundaries', p. 88.
[108] Ibid., p. 87. Cf. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York, 1981), p. 132: 'A century of analytic scholarship has made powerful arguments to the effect that where we might naively imagine that we are reading a text, what we actually have is a constant stitching together of earlier texts drawn from divergent literary and sometimes oral traditions, with minor or major interventions by later editors in the form of glosses, connecting passages, conflations of sources, and so forth'.
[109] Herbert, 'Crossing Historical and Literary Boundaries', p. 101. The contemporary impetus behind this increase in historical activity which Herbert envisages is fourfold: firstly, there may have been a

earlier Irish narratives and employed existing learned tradition to comment on contemporary social conditions. It has been amply demonstrated that the composition of many Irish historical narratives of the medieval period was motivated by the contemporary historical and social environments. Utilising the example of the medieval Irish tale *Airec Menman Uraid maic Coise* 'The Stratagem of Urard mac Coise', Poppe argues that 'such texts' [i.e. (pseudo-) historical narratives] presentation of the past was intended to be understood by their audiences, or at least by some sections of their audiences, as allegories for the present'.[110] Similarly, Donnchadh Ó Corráin has argued that for much of early Irish literature 'the past was skilfully re-made … the tales and the poem[s] are occasional pieces devised to serve specific ends and justify specific situations'.[111] Murray has demonstrated that *Baile in Scáil* is a text primarily concerned with defending Uí Néill power and as we have seen, similar assertions have been set forth for the composition of *Fled Dúin na nGéd* and *Echtra mac nEchdach Mugmedóin*. Other examples of texts in which it has been suggested that the past is employed to comment on the present include

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desire on the part of Irish *literati* to recreate the conditions of an Irish golden age of the pre-Viking era; a further primarily scholarly preoccupation during this period was the positioning of Irish history within the framework of world history, a preoccupation which is reflected in works compiled in both Ireland and in continental Europe; thirdly, the influence of contemporary social conditions and political concerns on much of the historical writing of the eleventh and twelfth centuries played an integral part in shaping the texts as we now have them; lastly, a macroscopic view of Irish written culture indicates that scholarly activity declined throughout much of the tenth century; 'retrieval of texts, then, was fundamental to the process of reconnecting with the past and its learning in trans-millennial Ireland' (p. 98). Regarding the works written in the twelfth century, Proinsias Mac Cana ('The Rise of the Later Schools of *Filidheacht*', *Ériu* 25 (1984) pp. 126-46, at pp. 140-141) has written: 'In fact one can hardly doubt that much of the vast output of the late eleventh- and twelfth-century scholars came as a reflex to ominous change, like the fighter betraying his inner distress by the very fury and volume of his counter-attack. It is significant that this wave of literary activity is predominantly compilatory in character: the great manuscript *bibiothecae* … which suggests not so much a creative urge as a conscious effort to regroup and consolidate the resources of native learning'.

[110] Poppe, 'Reconstructing Medieval Irish Literary Theory', p. 53.

[111] Ó Corráin, 'Historical Need and Literary Narrative', pp. 141-2.

Aislinge Meic Conglinne, *Airne Fíngein*, *Tromdámh Guaire*, *Tochmarc Emire*, *Scéla Muicce Meic Da Thó* and *Fingal Rónáin*.[112]

Such observations are not restricted to (pseudo-) historical narrative prose. Speaking of the corpus of medieval Irish manuscripts, Tymoczko writes that:

> [they] are full of cross references, citations, and allusions; older texts are frequently inscribed within other younger texts (including systematic commentaries and glosses); the stories are constantly reformed, retold, rewritten; the principle of allusion (rather than narration) dominates much of the poetic tradition.[113]

This point has been long understood in the field. For example, John Kelleher has suggested the structure of pre-Norman Irish genealogies 'reflects, and surely was meant to reflect, the dominance of Uí Néill kingship of Tara as it existed in, let us say, the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries, and to imply that that dominance was natural, inevitable, and fore-ordained';[114] Brian Ó Cuív remarked that *seanchas* must also be treated with caution, 'for its authors were not infrequently looking to particular interests when they were creating their works';[115] and it has been successfully demonstrated that hagiography is 'a production which rewrites history for its own particular purposes'.[116] As Carey writes, '[i]nherited materials were combined,

[112] This list is intended to be representative rather than exhaustive: doubtless many other examples could be cited.
[113] Tymoczko, 'What Questions Should We Ask in Celtic Studies in the New Millennium?', p. 24.
[114] John Kelleher, 'The Pre-Norman Irish Genealogies', *Irish Historical Studies* 16 (1986), pp. 138-53, at p. 142.
[115] Brian Ó Cuív, *Literary Creation and Irish Historical Tradition* (Oxford, 1963), p. 237.
[116] Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells,and Derry*; *Betha Adamnáin*; *The Irish Life of Adamnán*, eds Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain, ITS 54 (London, 1988), p.179 (cf. Poppe, 'Reconstructing Medieval Irish Literary Theory', p. 40). For further illustrations of this premise, see: Pádraig Ó Riain, *Beatha Bharra: Saint Finbarr of Cork, The Complete Life*, ITS 57 (London, 1994); Padraig Ó Riain, *The Making of a Saint: Finbarr of Cork 600-1200*, ITS, SS, 5 (London, 1997); Máire Herbert, 'The Preface of *Amra Coluim Cille*', in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney*, eds Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone (Maynooth, 1989), pp. 67-75. Compare Nagy, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients*, p. 21: 'The achievements and failures of the saint in the course of establishing and strengthening his reputation mirror how the

recombined, adapted and transmuted: archaism and innovation must constantly be weighed against one another in appreciating an Irish text'.[117]

There is a general scholarly consensus that texts of (pseudo-) historical narrative have at least a tenuous connection with the historic actuality of the persons and events they purport to represent. However, many scholars have warned of the difficulty of establishing the boundary between fact and fiction.[118] Others who focus on the 'historical' aspect of medieval Irish texts believe that this dichotomy between 'fact' versus 'fiction' is a modern and misleading one. Poppe has become one of the most prominent advocates of this point of view. Poppe contends that many of the medieval Irish prose narratives composed up to about the twelfth century were considered by authors and audiences alike to belong to a genre of medieval *historia*:

> the majority of medieval Irish narratives not only formed interconnected narrative universes, but were considered by their authors to be parts of a massive project of learned, collective *memoria* intended to preserve the country's past as narrated history, within the textual genre of *historia* – which must be kept strictly separate from modern notions of historical veracity and documentation, but must be also distinguished from a detached antiquarian interest in a remote past.[119]

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hagiographer … perceived his function as a recorder in a still relatively new medium of the fluid oral tradition that bound the past in which the saint lived to the present of the hagiographer'.

[117] John Carey, 'Myth and Mythography in *Cath Maige Tuired*', *Studia Celtica* 24/5 (1989-90), pp. 53-69, p. 53.

[118] See, for example, the comments of Dillon, *The Cycles of the Kings*, p. 2; Gearóid Mac Eoin, 'Orality and Literacy in Some Middle Irish King Tales', in *Media and Communication in Early Irish Literature*, eds. Stephen Tranter and Hildegard Tristram (Tübingen, 1989), pp. 149-83, at p. 183.

[119] Poppe, *Of Cycles and Other Critical Matters*, p. 48. Similarly, as Gregory Toner ('The Ulster Cycle: Historiography of Fiction?', *CMCS* 40 (2000), pp. 1-20) has pointed out, such modern deliberations have no bearing on the attitudes of medieval scholars and their audiences to these texts which were regularly understood in their own time as inherently true and historically accurate representations of the past.

Medieval *historia* differs from modern historiographical practices in scope and in claim, and allows for the embellishment and augmentation of the past.[120] These *historiae* were normally produced with some kind of didactic intention for their present. Thus, what has come to be called 'medieval Irish literature' transcends the boundaries of the modern classifications of 'fact' and 'fiction'.

Investigation of composite texts highlights the problems involved in the prevalent methodological ideal among many scholars working with early Irish narrative materials of a singular authoritative original text. It is widely accepted that *Acallam na Senórach*, *Cath Almaine*, *Fled Dúin na nGéd*, *Echtra mac nEchdach Mugmedóin* and *Tochmarc Emire* are examples of texts containing diffuse strands of earlier material combined by later redactors to produce the sagas in the forms in which we now have them.[121] In a similar fashion, Binchy has noted that *Scéla Cano meic Gartnáin* is a composite tale consisting of four major episodes which appear to have at one time existed independently; and Mac Eoin has made similar assertions regarding *Bórama Laigen*, most of the tales relating to the battle of Mag Rath, *Cath Cairn Chonaill*, *Tromdámh Guaire*, *Aided Cuanach meic Ailchine*, *Imtheachta na nOinmhideadh* and *Cath Almaine*.[122] The lengthy and often arduous process of manuscript redaction by which such texts have come before us inevitably deprives the editor of essential contextual information pertaining to the historical process of a text's transmission. As with many Irish medieval texts, the surviving copies or even the archetypes from which they derive were not the original compositions. Indeed,

[120] For a summary of the historiographical tradition in medieval Ireland, see Edel Bhreathnach, *Ireland in the Medieval World* (Dublin, 2014), pp. 1-8.
[121] Pádraig Ó Riain, 'The Materials and Provenance of "Buile Shuibhne"' *Éigse* 4 (1973-4), pp. 173-88; Downey, 'Intertextuality in *Echtra mac nEchdach Mugmedóin*', pp. 77-104; James P. Miller, 'The Role of the Female Warrior in Early Celtic Literature: The Case of *Tochmarc Emire*' (unpubl. doctoral thesis, University College Cork, 2010), pp. 89-97 and pp. 103-6.
[122] Daniel Anthony Binchy, *Scéla Cano meic Gartnáin*, MMIS, 8 (Dublin, 1963), p. xiv; Mac Eoin, 'Orality and Literacy'.

as Mac Eoin points out, it may be inaccurate to apply this term as the process by which the tales came into being may not have involved an 'original composition'.[123]

Alexandra Bergolm has addressed a number of these issues in her recent study of the scholarly reception of the medieval Irish tale *Baile Shuibhne*.[124] Here Bergholm argues that the establishment of James G. O'Keefe's 1913 edition as an accurate restoration of the original twelfth-century composition has both impeded scholarly consideration of the processes of transmission from which the tale is ultimately derived and detracted attention from the significance of the composite nature of the tale.[125] Employing the example of the early seventeenth century Brussels MS 2324-40 version of the tale, known as **L**, Bergholm argues that study of individual manuscripts reveals active scribal participation in determining the text's reproduction and transmission; thus preserving 'a historical record that concretely testifies to the contemporary attitude towards literary transmission in the cultural environment in which that manuscript was written'. The incorporation of this issue into current scholarship, argues Bergholm, necessitates a re-evaluation of the concept of authorship to be examined from the perspective of function rather than individual identity. Bergholm concludes that 'only this shift in perspective allows for a full reconsideration of the ongoing development of the Middle Irish text in its various

[123] Mac Eoin, 'Orality and Literacy', pp. 151-2. Cf. the comments by R. Mark Scowcroft regarding the textual tradition of *Lebor Gabála Érenn* ('*Leabhar Gabhála* – Part 1: The Growth of the Text', Ériu 38 (1987), pp. 81-142, at p. 92): 'If the modern writer suffers from an "anxiety of influence" – the compulsion to address and the need to defy a vast literary patrimony – his ancient forbear suffered the opposite: the anxiety of originality, as it were, which challenged his fidelity to an unwritten but notionally absolute tradition'. This is discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

[124] Alexandra Bergholm, *The Saintly Madman: A Study of the Scholarly Reception of Buile Shuibhne* (Helsinki, 2009).

[125] Ibid., pp. 190-1.

forms, including the supposed authorial original, the extant manuscript variants and the modern scholarly edition'.[126]

It is possible, then, that the assimilated passages of each of the aforementioned texts are intended to recall to the audience the specific tales that they are borrowed from. Returning to the arguments by Jauss concerning the aesthetics of medieval literature; Jauss calls for 'a reconstruction of the horizon of expectation of the addressees for whom the text was originally composed' to better aid modern understanding of the 'anomalies' of medieval literature.[127] One such outstanding 'anomaly' of medieval Irish literature is the presence of intertexual references. Jauss attributes the presence of intertextuality to an 'aesthetic pleasure principle',[128] that is:

> The reader's pleasure can spring today, as it already did with the medieval listener, from an attitude which does not presuppose a self-submersion in the unique world of a single work, but which rather presupposes an expectation which can only be fulfilled by the step from text to text, for here the pleasure is provided by the perception of difference, of an ever-different variation on a basic pattern. The character of a text as a work is therefore not constitutive of this aesthetic experience … rather, intertextuality is constitutive, in the sense that the reader must negate the character of the individual text as a work in order to enjoy the charm of an already ongoing game with known rules and still unknown surprises.[129]

At times, intertextuality becomes originality itself. From this perspective, the original or underlying text (or 'predecessor textforms' to employ Epp's terminology) may be considered as source texts or influential texts. Moreover, the scribe becomes an author in his own right and rewriting becomes an essential aspect in determining authorial intention.

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[126] Bergholm, *The Saintly Madman*, p 191.
[127] Jauss, 'The Alterity and Modernity', p. 185.
[128] This phrase is from Ursula Schaefer, 'Alterities: On Methodology in Medieval Literary Studies', *Oral Tradition* 8/1 (1993), pp. 187-214, at p. 204.
[129] Jauss, 'The Alterity and Modernity', p. 189.

The preceding survey of the composition of historical narrative raises questions about the continued viability of the singular authorially orientated research of medieval Irish textual criticism. It would appear that the medieval Irish author – like many of his European vernacular counterparts – did not seek out originality or innovation. In his study of the re-use of Old Irish narrative texts in the Middle-Irish period, Murray asserts that '[o]ne of the principal reasons why medieval scribes reworked earlier compositions is because it was an established literary convention'.[130] One implication is that the use of earlier written texts determined the shape of medieval Irish vernacular materials. Given the compositional circumstances (or recompositional circumstances as the case may be), can the humanistic model of the original text stand in the context of Irish written culture? As Ó Corráin has remarked, '[o]riginality is, after all, a scarce commodity and it is easier to recycle old material, put it to new uses and new purposes, than to invent afresh'.[131]

The philological challenges posed by composite material from medieval vernacular literary traditions are the subject of a recent essay by William Robins who argues that 'a considerable amount of literary analysis is predicated upon unstated assumptions regarding continuities of unified form'.[132] The contributions of Herbert stress that textual criticism of medieval Irish narrative material has tended to privilege the narrative arch as a unified whole. As Downey argues in relation to the improvisatory nature of many medieval Irish texts, '[j]ust as we postulate direct or indirect textual relationships between the manuscript versions of the same texts, it is

[130] Murray, 'The Reworking of Old-Irish Texts in the Middle-Irish Period', p. 176.
[131] Ó Corráin, 'Historical Need and Literary Narrative', p. 143.
[132] William Robins, 'Composite Texts: Some Methodological Considerations', in *Probable Truth: Editing Texts from Britain in the Twenty-First Century*, *TT* 5 (Brepols, 2013), eds. Vincent Gillespie and Anne Hudson, pp. 131-50, at p. 149.

perhaps no less appropriate to expect such relationships between different texts'.[133] Although they appear only in a footnote presenting refutations of Ruairí Ó hUiginn's socio-political analysis of the Middle Irish redaction of the tale, Miller's remarks concerning the complex nature of the surviving written tradition of *Tochmarc Emire* merit special attention. Ó hUiginn's thesis that the Middle Irish redaction of the tale constitutes a negative exemplary myth on marriage has as it basis certain facts which are not attested by the surviving Middle Irish recension of the tale. Rather, they are described as being present in 'other versions' of the tale or they are included in other narrative traditions associated with the main characters of *Tochmarc Emire*. This raises the question to what extent the underlying 'mother' texts count for the purpose of editing those 'daughter' texts? And vice versa.

Moreover, there exists the possibility that these excerpts existed independently of their narrative setting. Ó Corráin has suggested thinking in terms of a 'standardization … [which] extends also to themes and to the selection of narrative elements – some might call them narremes – used in much of the literature'. He has put forward the idea of a 'kind of grammar of narrative elements, which occur and recur, as the same or similar topics are repeatedly treated of in the narrative literature which treats of the great "public" concerns'.[134] On the other hand, we must consider Geraldine Parson's thesis that texts containing demonstrably disparate underlying materials 'are intended to be read as a single unit'.[135] As

[133] Downey, 'Intertextuality', p. 102.
[134] Ó Corráin, 'Textuality and Intertextuality', p. 32; cf. Downey, 'Intertextuality', p. 78.
[135] Geraldine Parsons, '*Acallam na Senórach* as Prosimetrum', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 24-25 (2004), pp. 86-100, at p. 87.

Murray has argued, in such instances the literary interest falls on the activities of the final redactor rather than the original author.[136]

The suggestion that the redactors of Irish manuscript material adopted an authorial function when transmitting the texts available to them is one which has gained some currency in Old and Middle Irish scholarship. Mac Eoin's observations regarding the role of the scribes in the transmission of medieval Irish texts are one example of this change in approach:

> The author's contribution to the development of Middle Irish literature should not be forgotten. It was they who identified, chose and structured the scattered materials for their tales. They added the narrative prose to cement the items together. They introduced new characters whose names had been quarried out of annalistic or genealogical sources or simply invented. Characters, whether historical or fictitious, were portrayed in whatever way suited the author's purpose, though the conventions of personality, chronology, and location were usually respected. New plots were adapted from whatever source presented itself ... The authors who gave these sagas their final form were merely the last in a line that may have gone back for centuries. The earlier redactors whose work is known to us only through that of their successors formed a vital link in the literary chain. Without them this literature would never have come into being in the form in which we know it.[137]

Mac Eoin's remarks are encouraging. However, these remarks (and others like them) have yet to manifest themselves in the practical business of editing. It is evident from the preceding discussion that medieval Irish narratives can be viewed from numerous perspectives. It follows logically then that the task of the textual critic can also be executed with a multitude of methodologies and to very different ends.

[136] Murray, 'The Reworking of Old Irish Narrative Texts', p. 182.
[137] Mac Eoin, 'Orality and Literacy', p. 183.

In the opening section of the present chapter, we noted that recent textual critical dialogue has become increasingly aware of and responsive to the theories of scholarly literary criticism which underlie it. Just as philological enquiry helped to shape the discipline of textual criticism as it has been traditionally practiced so too is literary criticism playing an integral role in determining the shape of things to come. Ann Dooley's recent treatment of the Irish saga the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* as an 'open text' serves to highlight the need for a re-examination of the underlying aims of textual criticism within the field of medieval Irish studies. In Chapter Three, 'A Scribe and His *Táin*: The H Interpolations in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*', Dooley focuses on the changes made by scribe 'H' to the version of Recension I preserved in the earliest extant vernacular Irish manuscript *Lebor na hUidre* as a means of analysing 'degrees of authorship and textual engagement on the part of Irish scribes, and their reading communities'. Dooley stresses the importance of a synchronic reading of the text rather than diachronic reading aimed at uncovering the 'original':

> By taking such a synchronic test case … one may begin to see at close reading range the nature of the medieval Irish writerly compact itself; one may observe this compact as it operated in the matter of the contextual choices made and the options explored by one reader, 'H', in order to transmit to a specific set of readers in his cultural group his own literary insights.[138]

Dooley's comments serve to highlight the growing need for editions that are capable of representing the various ways a literary work might have been historically constituted: only by engaging directly with extant texts can the material aspects of the transmission of a text be revealed.

[138] Ann Dooley, *Playing the Hero: Reading the Irish Saga 'Táin Bó Cúailnge'* (Toronto, 2006), pp. 65-6.

The preceding discussion highlights the elusiveness of the very notion of 'the original text' within the discourse of much of secular (pseudo-) historical narrative prose. It is possible in these examples to identify what Epp refers to as 'predecessor textforms' (or 'predecessor 'originals') in the shape of the various intertextual references.[139] If the goal of textual criticism is to recover the 'original text', what in actuality is the object of the textual critic's research? Which aspects of these composite texts are to be considered truly 'original'? Furthermore, given that earlier forms of the text (or at least parts of it) can be discerned, does this text constitute a revision of the original(s) and consequently do we identify the person responsible for creating the text as an author or a scribe? Following Jacob's definition, scribal activity may be differentiated from authorial activity when there is an intention to communicate present. Yet the issue is more complex still. How does one distinguish between 'intentional' and 'unintentional' alterations to the text? And if one is to make such a distinction, where do we draw the line between authorial intentional alterations and scribal intentional alterations? Or can one be drawn at all? Multiple analyses of the individual tales highlight the importance of social and political contexts in determining intentionality. How then does the textual critic justifiably remove variant forms of the text which reveal the intentions of scribes? Lastly, if the textual critic chooses to approach the text from a reader-orientated perspective, which reader should they follow – the general audience member seeking those 'familiar codes and conventions' or the initiated members of society for whom the intertextual references carry a higher level of meaning?

I have attempted here to highlight some of the issues of originality and the concept of authority in the discourse of medieval Irish textual scholarship. In light

[139] See p. 117 of the present chapter.

of the foregoing discussion, we may reconsider the arguments of Jacobs concerning the nature of authorship: 'authorship, in the sense with which we are concerned, does not depend on originality of material or even of treatment so much as on an intention to communicate on a wider scale than that of immediate personal interaction'.[140] Elsewhere he has written that 'even where it is anachronistic to postulate an authoritative text, the original version of a literary work acquires a de facto authority by the mere fact of the author's having troubled to compose it'.[141] For many works, this formulation both reaffirms the validity of the traditional task of the editor, that of reconstructing as far as possible the text of the original author while also legitimising the establishment of subsequent redactions of the authorial text, in accordance with Ó Corráin's dictum that 'different recensions of the same tale are not usually capricious synchronic variants but different versions developed to suit the changing circumstances which come about with the passage of time'.[142]

Some Collateral Issues: Oral Literature and The Definitive Text

At times, literature depicts itself as emerging from oral tradition; at other times, it appears to be running alongside it, intersecting with it, running counter to it, or all of the above simultaneously.[143]

We have seen that textual scholars such as Fleischman and Dagenais have argued that we can no longer ignore oral and memorial culture when dealiscong with written texts from medieval societies. Proinsias Mac Cana has described the interaction between orality and literacy 'as the great problem — and in some ways the peculiar

[140] Jacobs, 'Kindly Light or Foxfire?', p. 7.
[141] Nicholas Jacobs, 'Regression to the Commonplace in Some Vernacular Textual Traditions', in *Crux and Controversy in Middle English Textual Criticism*, eds. Minnis and Brewer, pp. 61-71, at pp. 69-70.
[142] Ó Corráin, 'Historical Need and Literary Narrative', p. 145.
[143] Nagy, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients*, p. 7.

interest — of Irish literary history'.[144] The primary debate involved in the interpretation of medieval Irish vernacular literature in the latter half of the twentieth century was (and to a certain extent still is) between scholars who stressed the presence of an underlying pre-Christian — Celtic or Indo-European — oral culture and those who argued that the material is derived from Christian or classical sources and therefore entirely literary in nature — between the so-called 'nativists' and 'anti-nativists' respectively. The former nativist view was popular in the middle of the century and in some ways, the formulation of the 'anti-nativist' school may be seen as an over-reaction to the excesses of the 'nativist' approach.[145] The issue of orality and literacy in a medieval Irish context is once again beginning to receive attention and the former dichotomy is no longer encouraged. As the preceeding section highlights, numerous scholars now realise the importance of distinguishing between the final literary product and the building blocks utilised by medieval Irish authors, however one might define them. Orality and literacy are no longer regarded as mutually exclusive, a point which can be clearly demonstrated through an examination of Irish manuscript material.

In Chapter Two, we highlighted Slotkin's discussion of the possibility that variant readings present in medieval Irish saga literature represent oral multiforms. He summarises this problem as follows: 'we wish to know whether a scribe treated a text in transcription as a fixed text: and if not, whether we can distinguish between his additions and the possibility that his text represents an oral multiform'.[146] Citing

[144] Proinsias Mac Cana, 'Irish Literary Tradition', in *A View of the Irish Language* (Dublin, 1969), ed. Brian Ó Cuív, pp. 35-46, at p. 35.
[145] Patrick Sims-William, 'Review of Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature*', *Éigse* 29 (1996), pp. 179-196, at p. 191.
[146] Slotkin, 'Medieval Irish Scribes', p. 444. Jacobs has discussed the possibility that the influence of the techniques of oral composition on scribal practice shaped the idea of the definitive text for different kinds of writing and for different authors. Cf., 'Regression to the Commonplace in Some

examples of scribal attitudes to Irish translations of twelfth-century Latin epic, Slotkin concludes that though the Irish redactors closely followed their Latin sources, they reshaped the material to correspond more closely to Irish narrative texts.[147] In certain instances, this reshaping took the form of an added episode, or episodes, paralleled by similar scenes in Irish saga material. According to Slotkin, the scribe-translator of the text in question was not concerned with the fixed text in the modern literary sense: whilst he does seem reluctant to omit anything in the manuscript before him, he felt free to adapt the text and shows little interest in accurate retention of the source's wording. For the most part, he has left the thematic elements of the tale intact (the significance of this will be felt when we move on to consider the theoretical model for Slotkin's thesis). Slotkin argues in conclusion that 'scribes treated sagas as the multiform oral products they ultimately were'. From here, he moves on to discuss the concept of recensions. Slotkin writes that:

> When a number of manuscripts show essential verbal agreement, but one has an episode more or less than the others, an hypothesis of different recensions in this case can claim no more than that the manuscripts are not accurate transcripts of one another.[148]

Vernacular Textual Traditions', pp. 65-8. See also ibid., 'Kindly Light or Foxfire?', p. 10. Here, Jacobs argues that 'the residual memory of a tradition of oral performance, is probably the fundamental cause [of scribal variation]'.

[147] Slotkin, 'Medieval Irish Scribes', p. 445.

[148] Ibid., p. 449. In his aforementioned discussion of the written transmission of orality in early Ireland, Melia ('Parallel Versions of "The Boyhood Deeds of Cuchulainnn') opines that the *macgnímrada* (the 'Boyhood Deeds of Cúchulainn' section of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* 'the Cattle Raid of Cooley') provides evidence for an associated oral tradition for at least one section of the medieval Irish saga. Melia compares the events of the *macgnímrada* contained in the two major extant manuscripts, *Lebor na hUidre* and the *Book of Leinster*, noting that the former version contains five additional incidents. He suggests that the extra material functions as an 'alternative parallel' version of the *macgnímrada* (p. 27). Melia substantiates this claim by demonstrating that story patterns contained in both versions of the *macgnímrada* correspond to Indo-European tradition. He concludes that the parallelism exemplified by the 'Boyhood Deeds' section is a kind of multiform which is more closely associated with oral tradition but which may have been employed to renew and reshape the written sources. For Melia's dissatisfaction with the theory of recension, see Chapter Two, n. 97.

He continues that in those cases where differences between manuscript texts cannot be demonstrated to be the result of truly different recensions then they may be treated as separate performances of the tale, and concludes that 'the entire nature of a critical edition [i.e. an edition established by the genealogical method] of a saga is a false concept'.[149]

Slotkin's analysis of scribal attitudes towards their sources forms part of his doctoral dissertation.[150] Here, he attempts to address the issue of codifying the oral component of Irish saga composition. For the most part, his arguments are based on a stylistic analysis of *Fled Bricrenn* and his ideas are grounded in the oral-formulaic theory.[151] Though the application of textual criticism is not the primary concern of this thesis, Slotkin's observations regarding the suitability of critical editing for Irish saga material merit attention. Before moving on to consider the implications of Slotkin's remarks, it is necessary to review the main arguments presented in his thesis so that we may better understand the editorial observations upon which this aspect of the study intends to build.

The oral-formulaic theory (also known as the Parry-Lord theory) was developed initially in the twentieth century through fieldwork carried out by Milman Parry and his student and co-worker, Albert Lord, in the 1930s in Yugoslavia. Their study of the living oral tradition was born out of an attempt to determine the extent to which the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were the results of an oral poetic process, i.e. the

[149] Ibid., p. 450.
[150] Edgar Slotkin, 'Evidence for Oral Composition in Early Irish Saga', unpublished doctoral diss. (Harvard University, 1977).
[151] For a history of the oral formulaic theory, see John Miles Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (Bloomington, 1988). Slotkin was not the first scholar to address the issue of the oral-formulaic theory in medieval Irish narrative texts. In 1968, the classicist Kevin O'Nolan addressed the issue of formulaic composition in *Tóraigheacht an Ghiolla Dheacair*, 'Pursuit of the Troublesome Lad': 'Homer and the Irish Hero Tale', *Studia Hibernica* 8 (1968), pp. 7-20.

Homeric Question. The central tenet behind the theory, which Parry developed through a thorough analysis of the noun-epithet phrases for gods and heroes of Homeric diction, was the formula defined as 'a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical patterns to express a given essential idea'.[152] Such formulae are at the core of performance of oral epic.

An additional aspect of the formula is the criterion of usefulness: the poet employs such formulae as meet the compositional needs of oral narration. Formulae were not memorised by the poet-singer, rather they were learnt in a manner similar to the way children learn to speak their native language. The distinction between repetition and formula may be sought in the nature of an expression. That formulae are organised in such a way as to form repeating patterns is integral to this mode of expression. Parry referred to such patterns as 'systems' defined as 'a group of phrases which have the same metrical value and which are so alike in thought and words to leave no doubt that the poet who used them knew them not only as single formulas but also as formulas of a certain type'.[153] Such a procedure is not dependent on any concept of a fixed text: 'Each performance is the specific song, and at the same time it is the generic song. The song we are listening to is "the song"; for each performance is more than performance: it is a recreation'.[154]

[152] Milman Parry, 'Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. I. Homer and Homeric Style', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 41 (1930), pp. 73-147; repr. in Adam Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 266-324, at p. 272.
[153] Parry, 'Homer and Homeric Style, p. 304.
[154] Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature 24 (Harvard, 1960), p. 101. See Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition*, pp. 42-3.

The second major traditional unit of oral-formulaic composition is the theme.[155] In 1951, Lord differentiated between the compositional units of formula and theme, defining the latter as 'a recurrent element of narrative description in traditional oral poetry. It is not restricted, as is the formula, to metrical considerations'.[156] He later modified this definition of a theme in his seminal publication *The Singer of Tales* as 'the group of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song'.[157] This work remains the single most important contribution to the field of oral-formulaic theory. Here, Lord applied his first-hand experience of a living oral tradition to earlier literatures. Though Lord was not concerned with the application of these findings to textual criticism, this work confronts many issues with which the current study is concerned – in particular Chapter Five, 'Songs and the Song', and the sixth chapter, 'Writing and Oral Tradition'.

The former chapter questions the modern literary concept of a song as a fixed text: 'Our real difficulty arises from the fact that, unlike the oral poet, we are not accustomed to thinking in terms of fluidity. We find it difficult to grasp something that is multiform. It seems to us necessary to construct an ideal text or to seek an original'. Lord continues that once we understand the facts of oral composition 'we must cease trying to find an original of any traditional song'.[158] Whilst Lord acknowledges the existence of an original performance, he argues that it is impossible to retrace the processes of compositional change which may have persisted through generations of singers, and thus we must satisfy ourselves with the

[155] Albert Lord, 'Composition by Theme in Homer and Southslavic Epos', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 84 (1951), pp. 71-80, at p. 73.
[156] Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, p. 60.
[157] Ibid., p. 68.
[158] Ibid., p. 100.

texts that we have rather than creating an hypothetical original. In light of this, Lord argues that to speak of a text 'variant' is also incorrect as there is no original to be varied. Each singing is a multi-form of the first singing and yet, this first singing cannot be considered the original because of the peculiar relationship between the first performance and all other singing. Utilising examples from the Parry material and from his own fieldwork, Lord confronts the contentious concepts of change and stability in an oral text. The modes of variation illustrated by Lord include expansions, omissions, shifts in the sequence of events, substitution and differing endings of songs. Thus, just as in Slotkin's example, stability from performance to performance does not consist of the faithfulness of the verbal text but rather lies at the level of thematic structure. Given these examples of transmission, Lord concludes that 'it would be a fruitless task to attempt to reconstruct the text of a song purporting to be the model for any other given text'.[159]

The sixth chapter examines the interactions between literary culture and the oral text. Here, Lord addresses the problematic issue of the existence or non-existence of transitional texts – a text which is transitional between the oral and literary traditions. Lord concludes that the existence of such a text is not possible as 'the two by their very nature are mutually exclusive'.[160] That is not to suggest that the texts which survive in manuscripts are purely literary, but rather that any given text will be either a product of oral composition or of literary composition. The

[159] Ibid., p. 113.

[160] Ibid., p. 120. More recently, scholars have argued in favour of a transition period between orality and literary. For a concise bibliography of insights into what is commonly referred to as the 'oral-written interface', see David Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of the Scripture and Literature* (Oxford, 2005), p. 7, n. 15. At p. 7, Carr concludes that, '[o]rality and writing technology are joint means for accomplishing a common goal: accurate recall of the treasured tradition'.

question then becomes one of identifying an oral composition recorded through the written medium. Regarding this, Lord writes that:

> Formula analysis providing, of course, that one has sufficient material for significant results, is therefore, able to indicate whether any given text is oral or 'literary.' An oral text will yield a predominance of clearly demonstrable formulas, with the bulk of the remainder 'formulaic,' and a small number of non-formulaic expressions. A literary text will show a predominance of non-formulaic expressions, with some formulaic expressions, and very few clear formulas.[161]

The element of enjambment, defined as continuation of a sentence beyond the end of a line of verse, is also a useful indicator of orality, though it cannot be used as the sole criterion in determining whether or not a text was composed in the oral style. Non-periodic enjambment is characteristic of oral composition, whereas periodic enjambment is characteristic of literary style. However, the most important aspect of a work to be considered in determining whether a text is of literary or oral provenance is the poet's use of thematic composition: the literary epic poet is not constrained by the necessity for well-established themes as is his oral counterpart.

Thematic analysis plays a significant role in Slotkin's assessment of *Fled Bricrenn*. The text has survived in part in five manuscripts: **LU**, **Eg**, **L, Ed** and **T**.[162] Two scribes are responsible for the text of **LU**, the original scribe Mael Muire (**M**), who lived *c.* 1100 and a later interpolator known as **H**. In previous analyses of the *Fled Bricrenn* tradition, Thurneysen distinguished three recensions: **A** comprising

[161] Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, p. 130.

[162] Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, MS 23 E 25 (*Lebor na hUidre*) (fo. 99b-112, written *c.* A.D. 1100) ('**LU**'); British Museum, London, MS. Egerton 93 (fo. 23r-25v, early-sixteenth century) ('**Eg**'); Leiden, MS *Codex Vossianus* (fo. 3r-9v, sixteenth century) ('**L**'); National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, MS ed. XL, p. 69-76 ('**Ed**'); Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 1336 (olim. H. 3. 17) (pp. 683-710, sixteenth century) ('**T**'). In addition to these five manuscripts, there are also glossed extracts of the tale contained in Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 1337 (H. 3. 18) (p. 607, fifteenth and sixteenth century).

LU; **B** comprising **Eg** and **L**; and **C** comprising **T**.[163] In contrast, Slotkin contends that there is a single recension of the work which has been subject to the types of scribal variants outlined above.[164] In light of this, he argues that 'although there certainly existed a text common to each scribe and which each scribe wished to preserve, each scribe also felt free to add and reorder episodes'.[165] Slotkin differentiates between two types of scribal variants: the first group results from the specific technical difficulties encountered by the **LU** interpolator and, therefore, can be seen as 'mechanical problems'.[166] The second group is described as 'a function of scribal creativity'.[167] Once more, Slotkin is referring to the kind of thematic variations characteristic of oral composition. Thus, he concludes that the differences in the manuscript versions of *Fled Bricrenn* are explicable not in terms of separate recensions but rather by viewing each manuscript as a distinct performance of the tale. It is on this point that an understanding of the early development of the medieval Irish vernacular narrative written tradition such as that outlined in the opening section of the current chapter comes to the fore: 'It will not be hard to

[163] Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Zu irischen Texten. Die Überlieferung der Fled Bricrenn', *ZCP* 4 (1903), pp. 193-206 and idem, *Die irische Helden-und Königsage*, pp. 447-67.
[164] Slotkin, 'Evidence for Oral Composition', p. 80.
[165] Ibid., p. 89.
[166] One of the great difficulties facing editors of *Feld Bricrenn* is the often radically different sequence of events present in the four witnesses, particularly **LU**. This is generally considered to be the best text as it is the earliest manuscript and there is a tendency to privilege the order of themes which it preserves. However, **H** made considerable inroads into **M**'s text which Slotkin discusses in great detail. He posits a number of explanations for the differences in **H**'s text and concludes that the specific technical problems encountered by **H** can account for the discrepancies ('Evidence for Oral Composition', p. 102).
[167] Slotkin, 'Evidence for Oral Composition', pp. 102-4. Carney has also differentiated between mechanical and creative scribal variations. As we have seen in Chapter Two (pp. 79-80), Carney was a proponent of the geneaological method and his definitions are concerned with the literary nature of Irish manuscript material. However, given that Slotkin and Carney represent extreme ends of the oral-literary spectrum, the similarities of their views of the activities of medieval scribes are particularly noteworthy: Cf. Chapter Four, p. x, n. 58.

imagine manuscripts as performances', writes Slotkin, 'if we think of scribal traditions flourishing within a continuing context of oral tradition'.[168]

Included in his analysis of the text are various recommendations for future editors of *Fled Bricrenn* in particular, and for editors of Irish saga material in general. Regarding the former, he writes that future editors of the text will have to take the specific nature of the **LU** manuscript into account particularly when arriving at an order of themes. More importantly, from the point of view of the current study, are his observations for the editing of Irish saga material in general. These comments remain grounded in his study of the *Fled Bricrenn* tradition. In light of the importance of metrical consistency as a criterion for the early development of medieval Irish textual criticism (cf. Chapter Two, p. 67, p. 77, pp. 81-2), Slotkin's section entitled 'Verse and Formulas' is especially pertinent. *Fled Bricrenn* is a text written largely in prose. Moreover, it contains no stanzaic verse; rather, the verse is in archaic metre though none of the relevant passages have been printed as such by modern editors. In order to test a particular passage for formula content, we must be able to distinguish the poetic line. Slotkin remarks that editing these passages may prove to be difficult as they tend to reflect metrical irregularity, a distinctive feature of oral composition. Noting examples from Serbo-Croatian oral epic, Slotkin demonstrates that not only do singers generate lines with extra-metrical elements but they may also generate lines that, although they are constructed of formulas, cannot be given any verse form. He posits two possibilities to account for these irregularities: firstly, they may be a result of dictation. Alternatively, the singer and the scribe may have been one and the same person, thus the use of writing in setting down the oral text may have disrupted the normal compositional and/or performative

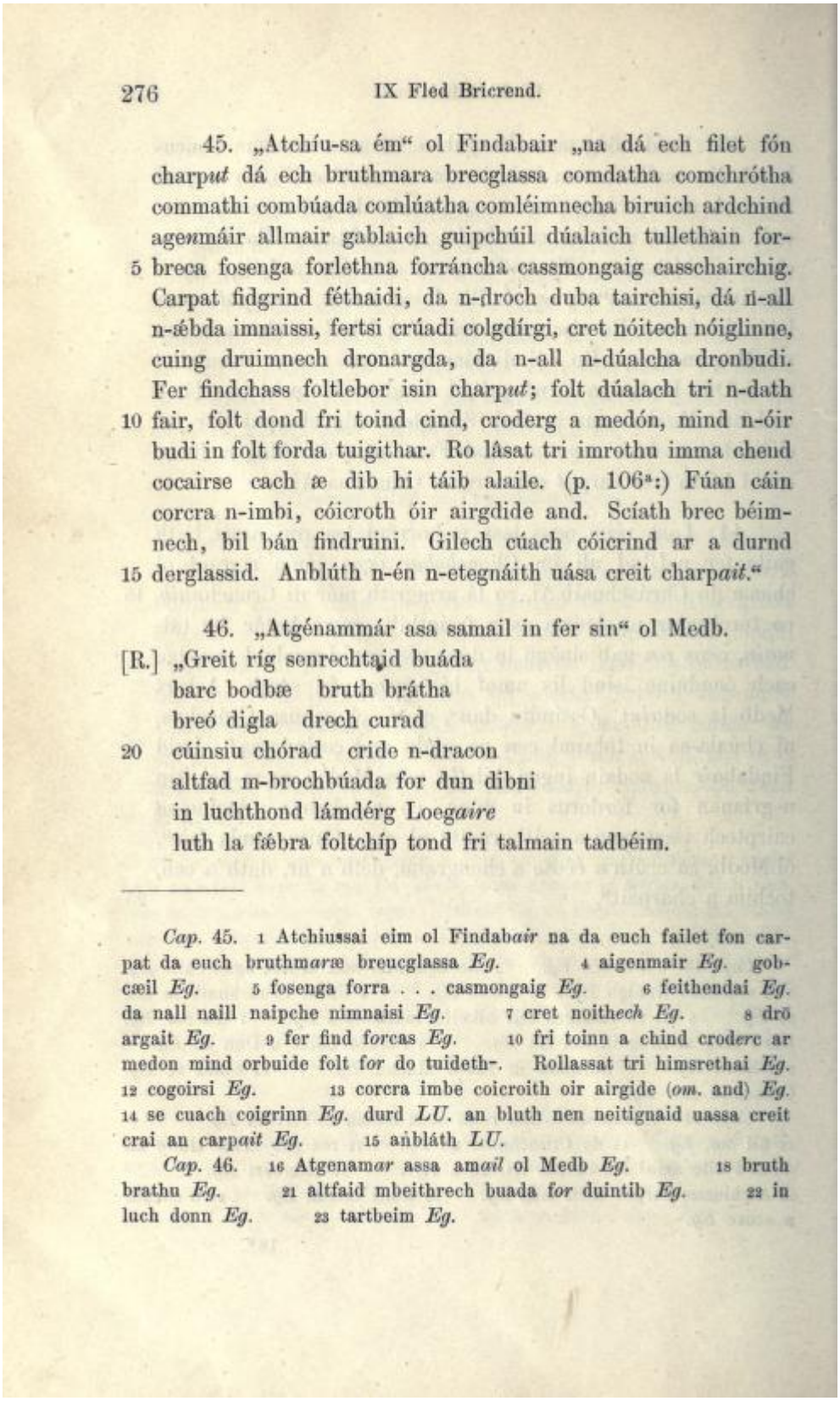
[168] Slotkin, 'Evidence for Oral Composition', p. 104.

process. The reality is we do not know the nature of early Irish oral performance, though there can be no doubt that an oral tradition certainly did exist.[169] Slotkin concludes that 'a saga text preserved in manuscript does not preserve a normal performance of an oral composition. Therefore, we may expect difficulties resolving the text into clear poetic lines'.[170]

In his thesis, Slotkin presents an edited text of the *Tochim Ulad* passage of the *LU* text *of Fled Bricrenn* (ll. 8585-8717), the aim of which is to 'expose the system of formula creation involved'.[171] Slotkin's edition is 182 lines long and the following is an extract from his rearrangement of the text (ll. 7-43).[172] In 1880, *Fled Bricrenn* was edited by Ernst Windisch from **LU** with readings from **Eg** and **T** (Fig. 3.1).[173] Later, it was edited and translated by George Henderson with readings from the remaining three manuscripts and with the conclusion supplied from **Ed** (Fig. 3.2).[174] Both editions are paragraphed identically and the extract from Slotkin's edition corresponds with their paragraph forty-five. Regarding their editions, Slotkin writes: 'As our perception of *Fled Bricrenn* has been largely determined by these editors, the excellence of the tale has not been fully appreciated'.[175] In Slotkin's presentation, the text is underlined with a broken line for formulaic expressions of half-lines and whole lines; here the latter are in italics. Furthermore, Slotkin underlines with a solid line formulae of half-lines and whole lines: here, the latter are

[169] For a discussion of the interaction between performance and law in early Irish law, see Robin Chapman Stacey, *Dark Speech: The Performance of Law in Early Ireland* (Philadelphia, 2007).
[170] Slotkin, 'Evidence for Oral Composition', p. 170.
[171] Ibid., p. 174.
[172] Ibid., pp. 176-7.
[173] Ernst Windisch, 'Fled Bricrend, "Das Fest des Bricriu"', in *Irische Texte*, ed. Stokes and Windisch, pp. 235-311 and pp. 330-6.
[174] George Henderson, *Fled Bricend*, ITS 2 (London, 1899).
[175] Slotkin, 'Evidence for Oral Composition', p. 93.

highlighted. With the exception of these changes, I have kept as close as possible to the layout of the original thesis.



276 IX Fled Bricrend.

45. „Atchíu-sa ém“ ol Findabair „na dá ech filet fón charp*ut* dá ech bruthmara brecglassa comdatha comchrótha commathi combúada comlúatha comléimnecha biruich ardchind age*n*máir allmair gablaich guipchúil dúalaich tullethain forbreca fosenga forlethna forráncha cassmongaig casschairchig. Carpat fidgrind féthaidi, da n-droch duba tairchisi, dá n-all n-ébda imnaissi, fertsi crúadi colgdírgi, cret nóitech nóiglinne, cuing druimnech dronargda, da n-all n-dúalcha dronbudi. Fer findchass foltlebor isin charp*ut*; folt dúalach tri n-dath fair, folt dond fri toind cind, croderg a medón, mind n-óir budi in folt forda tuigithar. Ro lâsat tri imrothu imma cheud cocairse cach æ dib hi táib alaile. (p. 106ª:) Fúan cáin corcra n-imbi, cóicroth óir airgdide and. Scíath brec béimnech, bil bán findruini. Gilech cúach cóicrind ar a durnd derglassid. Anblúth n-én n-etegnáith uása creit charp*ait*.“

46. „Atgénammár asa samail in fer sin“ ol Medb.

[R.] „Greit ríg senrechtaid buáda
barc bodbæ bruth brátha
breó digla drech curad
cúinsiu chórad cride n-dracon
altfad m-brochbúada for dun dibni
in luchthond lámdérg Loeg*aire*
luth la fébra foltchíp tond fri talmain tadbéim.

Cap. 45. 1 Atchiussai eim ol Findab*air* na da euch failet fon carpat da euch bruthm*aræ* breucglassa *Eg.* 4 aigenmair *Eg.* gobcæil *Eg.* 5 fosenga forra . . . casmongaig *Eg.* 6 feithendai *Eg.* da nall naill naipche nimnaisi *Eg.* 7 cret noith*ech* *Eg.* 8 drō argait *Eg.* 9 fer find for*cas* *Eg.* 10 fri toinn a chind crod*erc* ar medon mind orbuide folt f*or* do tuideth-. Rollassat tri himsrethai *Eg.* 12 cogoirsi *Eg.* 13 corcra imbe coicroith oir airgide (*om.* and) *Eg.* 14 se cuach coigrinn *Eg.* durd *LU.* an bluth nen neitignaid uassa creit crai an carp*ait* *Eg.* 15 anbláth *LU.*

Cap. 46. 16 Atgenam*ar* assa am*ail* ol Medb *Eg.* 18 bruth brathu *Eg.* 21 altfaid mbeithrech buada f*or* duintib *Eg.* 22 in luch donn *Eg.* 23 tartbeim *Eg.*

FIGURE 3.1: §45 WINDISCH'S 1880 EDITION OF FLED BRICRENN

45. "Atchíu-sa ém" ol Findabair "na dá ech filet fón charput dá ech bruthmara brecglassa comdatha comchrótha commathi combúada comlúatha comléimnecha biruich ardchind agenmáir allmair gablaich guipchúil dúalaich tullethain forbreca fosenga forlethna forráncha cassmongaig casschairchig. Carpat fidgrind féthaidi, da n-droch duba tairchisi, dá n-all

[3] conid se, *Eg.* Cruachna Aoi, *Eg.*
[5] Lasodain lasa reim ocus lassan m-borrfad, *Eg.*
[6] uli *om.*, *Eg.* [7] do Cruachnaib æi, *Eg.* [9] rosgab crith sluag an dunaid uile amal bis curcas fri sruth, *Eg.* [11] Esmbert, *Eg.* [12] odogabusa, *H.* [13] ann anosa, *H.* [16] Atchiussæ carpat issin mag, *Eg;* cairpthech, *H.* [17] Cuiri samlai, *Eg;* cuire, *LU*, but *cf.* § 49. [17] a chruth a ecosc, *Eg.*
[20] Atchiussai eim ol Findabair na da euch failet fon carpat da euch bruthmaræ breucglassa, *Eg.* [21] comdathæ comcroda, *Eg.* [22] combuada combuana comluatha, *H.* [23] aigenmair, *Eg.* [24] gobcæil, *Eg.* [25] fosenga forra . . . casmongaig, *Eg;* forranach, *H.* [26] feithendai, *Eg.* da nall naill naipche nimnaisi, *Eg;* fethandai . . . doirchisi, *H.*

n-ǽbda imnaissi, fertsi crúadi colgdírgi, cret nóitech nóiglinne, cuing druimnech dronargda, da n-all n-dúalcha dronbudi. Fer find forchass foltlebor isin charput; folt dúalach tri n-dath fair, folt dond fri toind cind, croderg a medón, mind n-óir budi in folt fordatuigithar. Rolásat tri imrothu imma chend
106a. cocairse cach æ dib hi táib alaile. Fúan cáin corcra n-imbi, cóicroth óir airgdide and. Scíath brec béimnech, bil bán findruini. Gilech cúach cóicrind ar a durnd derglassid. Anblúth n-én n-ete ingnáith uása creit charpait."

[1] cret noithech, *Eg.* [2] drō argait, *Eg;* dronairgit, *H.* [3] fer find forcas, *Eg;* find forchas . . . datha, *H;* findchass, *LU.* [4] fri toinn a chind crodere ar medon mind orbuide folt for do tuideth-. Rollassat tri himsrethai, *Eg;* himsrotha, *H.* [7] cogoirsi, *Eg.*
[8] corcra imbe coicroith oir airgide (*om.* and) *Eg;* cain coir corcra, *H.* [9] se cuach coigrinn, *Eg;* sleg chuach, *H;* durd, *LU;* an bluth nen neitignaid uassa creit crai an carpait, *Eg;* n-eteg-náith, *LU.* [10] anbláth, *LU.* [12] Atgenamar assa amail ol Medb, *Eg;* atgenamar saml-an fir sin, *H.* [14] bruth brathu, *Eg.*

FIGURE 3.4: §45 OF HENDERSON'S 1899 EDITION OF FLED BRICRENN

Edgar Slotkin's edition of the *Tochim Ulad* passage of the LU text *of Fled Bricrenn* (ll. 8585-8717)

7	Atchiúsa ém		(ol Findabair)
8	na dá ech		
9	filet fón charput		
10	da ech bruthmara	brecglassa	
11	comdatha	comchrótha	
12	commathi	combúada	
13	comlúatha	comléimnecha	
14	biruich ardchind	agenmáir	
15	allmair gablaich	guipchúil	
16	dúalaich	tullethin	
17	forbreca	forsenga	
18	forlethna	forráncha	
19	cassmongaig	casschairchig.	
20	Carpat fidgrind	féthaidi.	
21	Da ndroch duba	tairchisi.	
22	*Dá n-al náebda*	*imaissi*.	
23	Fertsi crúagi	colgdírgi.	
24	*Cret noitech*	*noiglinne*.	
25	*Cuing druimnech*	*dronargda*.	
26	Dá n-all ndúalcha	dronbudi.	
27	Fer findchass	foltlebor	(isin charput.)
28	Folt dúalach tri ndath		(fair.)
29	Folt dond fri toind cind.		
30	croderg a medón.		
31	Mind n-óir budi		
32	*In folt forda-*	*tuigithar*.	
33	Ro lásat tri	imrothu	
34	imna chend	cocairse	
35	cach ae díb he taib	alaile.	
36	Fúan cain	corcra	(n-imbi.)
37	Cóicroth óir	airgdide	(and.)
38	Sciáth brec	béimnech.	
39	*bil bán*	*findruini*.	
40	Gilech cúach	cóicrind	
41	ar a dur[n]d	derglassid.	
42	Anblúth n-en	n-etegnáith	
43	*úasa creit*	*charpait*.	

In addition to the edited text proper, we might also compare the textual notes set forth by Slotkin to those presented by Windisch and Henderson. The following is a sample of Slotkin's commentary on his line 10 which corresponds to Windisch's line 2 and Henderson's line 21. In contrast to the editions of his predecessors, Slotkin's unsurprisingly focuses on formulaic expressions.

- Line 10. The first half-line (a) is formulaic.

  a. TE24 dá ech commóra
  SCC 9253-4 in dá ech commóra

  Obviously the above is the more common formula. Bruthmar is a traditional compound in verse, however:

  Saltair na Rann 2642 bruthmar, breccbárc

  b. Brecglassa occurs in its singular form in an Old Irish stanzaic poem.

  However, compounds with brec are frequent.

CF 774	mbreachlasrach
TBDD 1165	brat breclígda
MR 104	mbreclinnteach
TTr 1403	bána breccbudi

  Glas also occurs as the second element in compounds:

SCC 9269	lethanglas

  The br phoneme of the first half-line evidently generated the use of brecc in the second half.[176]

It is clear then, that application of the oral-formulaic theory has certain repercussions for the textual critic who wishes to present a text as bearing witness to an earlier oral composition, or those elements of a text which he/she believes to be of oral provenance. In contrast to the editions of Windisch and Henderson, Slotkin's approach leads to a text in poetic lines, with the use of indentations to indicate

[176] Slotkin, 'Evidence for Oral Composition in Early Irish Saga', p. 189.

pauses and other rhetorical structures, and with the consequent deletion of most punctuation. Moreover, his critical apparatus extends far beyond the traditional task of listing the variant readings, to a demonstration of the presence of formulae within the tale, formulae which are paralleled elsewhere in the medieval Irish narrative tradition.

The initial unqualified acceptance accorded to the principles of the Parry-Lord methodology as indisputable evidence of the orality of a text faded towards the close of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, we should remember that the criteria on which Slotkin based his judgements have gained great prominence. As John Miles Foley puts it, '[s]uch units emphasised the protean nature of the work in question, or, if we put it the other way round, they reminded us that the text or even the performance we encounter can never be definitive or authoritative'.[177]

I wish to suggest that the underlying principles of the oral-formulaic theory also have much to offer textual criticism. Setting aside momentarily the issue of oral provenance, let us consider the similarities between the oral-formulaic approach and the recent developments in textual critical studies outlined in the opening section of this chapter. Lord's claim that 'we must cease trying to find an original of any traditional song' appears to rest on three considerations: the oral poet unlike the modern critic was accustomed to thinking in terms of fluidity, the impossibility of retracing the processes of compositional change, and the overarching relationship between each performance of a song and all other singing.

In voicing his scepticism about the idea of an original text, Parker describes the text of the Gospels as 'a free, or perhaps, a living text' which suggests a fluidity

[177] John Miles Foley, 'Folk Literature', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, pp. 600-626, at p. 607.

of treatment on behalf of the scribes and copyists.[178] The theories of *mouvance* and New Philology place special emphasis on the concept of dynamic texts. Many Middle English textual scholars have suggested that attempts to establish *the* authorial text are not consonant with Middle English literary culture and the discussion surrounding the transmission of medieval Irish historical narrative texts implies a similar fluidity of treatment. Certain scholars within each of these disciplines have acknowledged that the traditional critical edition potentially inhibits our understanding of the fluidity of manuscript transmission.

One of Parker's primary objections to the recovery of a single original text is the difficulty of distinguishing between authorial and scribal activity. We have noted that Pearsall has likewise argued in terms of scribal 'recomposition' rather than decomposition and has suggested that those texts discarded as unoriginal are often the most informative. The medieval Irish material demonstrates that in certain instances the scribe appropriates earlier material and thus, becomes an author in his own right. In such cases literary interest falls on the activities of the final redactor. It has been argued by Murray that, 'one of the principal reasons why medieval scribes reworked earlier compositions is because it was the accepted literary convention', he continues that, '[i]t is possible to make the case that this was the convention because it was the norm in the oral non-literate society which preceded it'.[179]

The oral-formulaic theory is only one example of more recent theories from outside the discipline which have a lot to offer students of medieval Irish texts; other popular movements include *ethnopoetics,* the *ethnography of speaking* approach and

[178] Parker, *The Living Text*, p. 200.
[179] Murray, 'The Reworking of Old-Irish Texts in the Middle Irish Period', p. 291.

the *performance* approach.[180] Such approaches to textual analysis are closely related to insights about reader response and the critical concept of intertextuality described in the opening sections. A number of prominent medieval Irish scholars have recently begun to produce studies using such contemporary critical tools; however, the full critical potential of these and many other approaches to textual analysis requires further exploration. As Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe has argued in her groundbreaking study of transitional literacy in Old English verse: 'Examining a work from the perspective of its transmission and its reception admits into evidence manuscript, readers, textual variance and textual fixity, and situates the work in its proper historical context'.[181]

One of the implications of integrating such concepts into medieval Irish studies is that it will almost inevitably produce challenges to current practices of editing medieval Irish texts. In light of these recent modes of textual analysis, textual meaning can be seen to be as multifarious as the underlying goals of textual criticism. My main concern here has been with the validity of the continued production of putative original texts in the editorial treatment of (pseudo-) historical narratives in light of recent scholarly responses concerning the function of these texts within their cultural contexts – and it needs to be stressed that there are significant differences here with regard to the concepts of the authorial text and the original text. Regarding the former, Mary Carruthers reminds us that when considering medieval concepts of textual authority 'one needs always to keep in mind that *auctores* were, first of all, texts, not people … There *is* no extra-textual authorial intention – whatever *intentio* there is contained in the textual signs alone. All meaning develops

[180] For a summary of each of these approaches, see Foley, 'Folk Literature', pp. 607-614.
[181] Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 14

from there'.[182] The latter, it would appear from the foregoing examination, does not seem to have occupied the minds of the medieval Irish writers of this material. That is not to say that original texts did not exist within medieval Irish literary culture. However, it does suggest that the prevailing methods of textual criticism do not respond well to the processes of transmission and adaptation that shaped much of medieval Irish literature; it would be valuable to see the capabilities of other kinds of editions.

One of the characteristic difficultiess of editing medieval Irish (pseudo-) historical prose narratives is the rather fundamental one of defining what constitutes a text and its boundaries. The manuscripts of medieval Irish have a tradition that spans over five centuries and are often far in time from the 'original' composition (however one might define it). Many of the composite texts discussed here present a challenge to the traditional models of the 'original' or the 'authorial' text. However, the focus on variants does not denigrate the author(s) and his/her original composition, any more than the attention to oral tradition in medieval texts denies their literary nature. As we navigate these texts, we find ways of providing a richer and more precise language to discuss such concepts as 'originality'. One of the primary editorial contributions of medieval Irish scholarship to the wider scholarly editing community may come from a further understanding of such composite texts; future editors will in many cases have to go beyond the traditional goal of establishing a text and attempt to establish a context in which to better understand the contributions and motivations of later adapters. A further area in which medieval

[182] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 190.

Irish scholars may contriute to the wider textual critical community is by attempted to address the problems posed by the ‘fusion of the oral and literary cultures’.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEORY INTO PRACTICE I: THE APPLICATION OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM TO BAILE BINNBÉRLACH MAC BÚAIN[1]

In the previous chapter, we saw that the emergence of the theories and methodologies of recent modes of textual criticism have encouraged a retrospective approach to the ideologies underlying the discipline. I have attempted elsewhere to sketch the development and pervasiveness of a number of the critical commitments associated with the practice of textual criticism within the field of Old and Middle Irish.[2] I propose here to examine the applicability of several textual critical methodologies to a specific medieval Irish text in light of the arguments advanced in the opening chapters of this thesis concerning the theoretical difficulties associated with critical editions of medieval vernacular texts. The introduction begins with a synopsis of the tale together with an overview of the manuscript evidence, language and dating, and previous scholarship. Then, we will cover a number of the theoretical options available to an editor, moving on to the actual editorial practices which may be adopted and the connection between these practices and the theoretical options. To avoid repetition of material covered in earlier chapters, the practical account of the actual editorial methodologies will be kept as brief as possible, while still (I trust) being comprehensible, my purpose being to place the editorial theory and methodology within the broader context of both medieval and modern textual criticism.

[1] An earlier version of this chapter entitled 'Editing Medieval Texts from Britain in the Twenty-First Century' was given on 21 May 2010 at a conference hosted by the EETS at St. Anne's College, Oxford. It was subsequently published as a part of the Texts and Transitions series. See Michelle Doran, 'Textual Criticism and *Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain*', in *Probable Truth*, eds Gillespie and Hudson, pp. 345-54.

[2] Cf. Chapter Two, in particular pp. 57-87.

For the most part, the focus will be on the creation of a traditional print edition as employed by the editors of medieval vernacular, classical and Biblical texts. However, we will also have grounds to consider the more recent approaches set forth by New Philologists and social textual theorists. Following the example of Greetham's study of Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*, the discussion will first consider those methodologies regarded as most faithful to the documentary state of the text.[3] The text in question is the short medieval Irish tale detailing the tragic deaths of two potential lovers, Baile and Aillenn, *Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain* 'Baile the Sweet-spoken, son of Búan' (hereafter *BBmB*). The tale is preserved in four late manuscripts:

- Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Rawlinson B. 512 (fo. 122vb16-36, 15th/16th century).
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 N 10 (pp. 129-30, late 16th century).
- British Library, MS Harleian 5280 (fo. 48a, 16th century).
- Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 1337, olim. H. 3. 18 (p. 47-8, 16th century).

The copy preserved in Rawl. B. 512 contains only the opening lines of the tale; the prose narrative of the other three copies are complete. For ease of referencing, a new diplomatic edition of each of the relevant texts has been prepared, together with a semi-diplomatic edition and literal translation of 23 N 10.

Synopsis

The story is as follows: Though they have never met, Baile son of Búan from Ulster and Aillenn daughter of Lugaid, son of Fergus of the Sea, king of Leinster,[4] arrange a tryst at the banks of the Boyne. However, on his way to the meeting Baile is

[3] David C. Greetham, 'Challenges of Theory and Practice in the Editing of Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*', in *Textual Transgressions: Essays Towards the Construction of a Bibliography*, ed. David C. Greetham (New York, 1998), pp. 165-97.
[4] Alternatively, Aillenn daughter of Eoin, son of Dathí.

intercepted by a supernatural being at Tráig Baili and falsely informed of Aillenn's death, as it has been prophesised that the two lovers should never meet in this life but will become inseparable in death. On receipt of the treacherous news, Baile is overcome with grief and dies as a result. The same apparition then travels southwards and tells Aillenn that he has witnessed the burial of Baile. Aillenn dies in a similar fashion to Baile. They are buried separately. A yew tree grows over the tomb of Baile and an apple tree from Aillenn's. Some years later, the sages of Ulster and Leinster cut the trees down to make poetic tablets, inscribing on them tales from their respective provinces. At his request, these are brought before Art mac Cuinn, the high-king of Ireland; and when he holds them facing one another, they leap together and cannot be separated. They remain like this in the treasury of Tara until Dúnlaing, son of Énna burns it when slaying the maidens. At this point in the story as testified by the complete manuscript witnesses, a poem is recited recounting the tale of the two lovers.

Manuscripts and Previous Editions

Rawlinson B. 512 (R): A composite vellum manuscript written in double columns and consisting of five parts, each the work of a different scribe. The fragment of *BBmB* occupies approximately the bottom third of the second column of folio 122. This is the last folio of the second section of **R**, dated to the later fifteenth century.[5] Loss of the following leaf has reduced the text of *BBmB* to the opening few lines, down to the point where the Ulstermen unyoke their chariots at Tráig Baili; and it is followed directly in the codex as it now stands by a fragment of the Early Modern Irish Arthurian tale *Lorgaireacht an tSoidhigh Naomhtha* ('The Quest for the Holy

[5] Brian Ó Cuív, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries. Part 1: Descriptions* (Dublin, 2001), p. 223.

Grail'). The text of **R** supplies the best readings (defined here as those readings which conform most regularly to the proposed date for the text of the eleventh century) of any of the four witnesses, though its fragmentary nature poses obvious difficulties for any editor.

23 N 10 (N): This manuscript was compiled in 1575 at Baile in Chuimíne by three scribes, with a fourth hand identifiable in the manuscript.[6] This text of *BBmB* contains many shortcomings summarised by Vernam Hull as follows:

> Compared to the other two complete copies, that in 23.N.10 affords a distinctly inferior and partially modernized text. Indeed, it may be said to be the work of a slovenly copyist who does not seem always to have understood his source. At all events, in his copy he has introduced a number of corrupt forms. Then, too, he omits final lenited *d*'s. But his worst fault is to leave out words and sentences even when they absolutely are required in order that the meaning may be clear ... Yet despite these omissions and despite the introduction of numerous corruptions, his transcript is not without distinct value, for sometimes he has preserved a more correct or a more archaic reading than is to be found in either Harleian 5280 or H.3.18.[7]

N contains fewer quatrains at the close of the tale than either of the other two complete copies of the prose narrative, supplying only three quatrains of the four fully attested in Harley 5280 and MS 1337.

Harley 5280 (H): This sixteenth-century vellum manuscript was primarily the work of a single scribe, well known for his penchant for peculiar orthography. The version of the text in this manuscript has hitherto received the most attention because of its redactor's somewhat peculiar use of *bérla na filed*, 'the language of the poets', which Kuno Meyer defines as comprising 'obscure modes of diction', encompassing

[6] Richard Irvine Best, *Ms 23 N 10 (formerly Betham 145) in the Royal Irish Academy*, Facsimiles in Collotype of Irish Manuscripts 6 (Dublin, 1954), pp. vi-vii.
[7] Vernam Hull, 'The Text of Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain from MS 23.N.10 of the Royal Irish Academy', *Journal of Celtic Studies* 1 (1950), pp. 94-7, at pp. 94-5.

'kennings, extinct forms of language, antiquated native, and lastly even foreign words'.[8] Meyer notes forty-seven instances of 'old and rare words' in the prose portion of the Harleian version of the tale, the majority of which are substantives.[9] For example, in the opening section the word *maic*, the common Irish genitive singular for 'son', has been replaced by *bein*, evidently a contrived genitive singular derived from the Hebrew *ben.* In the following line, the Irish accusative plural *firu* ('men') has been replaced by a similarly contrived inflection derived from Hebrew *ish*, and later the nominative singular *fer* is replaced by Latin *uir*. Other examples of such substitutions include Latin *amor* ('love') for *serc* and the regular Irish word *talam* 'earth' has been replaced by the more obscure *trogan*.

The abstruse language is not found in any of the other manuscript copies and it appears to be a later addition to the text by the Harleian scribe. The fact that the substituted words are all substantives, together with their artificial and unsystematic insertion into an otherwise relatively straightforward text, indicates the scribe's use of a word-list such as those exemplified in the Middle Irish *Book of Leinster*.[10] It is difficult to imagine the scribe's motivation for inserting these words. Regarding the use of *bérla na filed* in general, John Carey asserts that 'the dominance of such features as convoluted syntax and rare or unique vocabulary strongly suggests that obscurity was a deliberate goal on the part of the author'.[11] In the case of the

[8] Kuno Meyer, 'Scél Baili Binnbérlaig', *Revue Celtique* 13 (1892), pp. 220-27, at pp. 220-1.
[9] Ibid., p. 221 (glossary at pp. 226-7).
[10] Cf. John Carey, 'Obscure Styles in Medieval Ireland', *Mediaevalia* 19 (1996), pp. 23-39, at p. 34: 'In such texts as the curious anecdote *Togail Síde Truim* ('The Sack of Síd Truim'), the only stylistic peculiarity complicating the admittedly puzzling story-line is a series of otherwise unattested words, nearly all of them substantives'. Carey later uses *Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain* as a further example of the insertion of obscure vocabulary; See *The Book of Leinster*, vol. 4 (Dublin, 1965) eds Richard I. Best and Michael A. O'Brien, pp. 1004-5 for examples of lists of *dubhfhocla* ('dark words').
[11] Carey, 'Obscure Styles in Medieval Ireland', pp. 23-4.

Harleian text, its use appears to be a deliberate attempt at archaism and a demonstration of learning.

H. 3. 18 (T): a composite vellum manuscript which dates to the sixteenth century. Of particular importance with regard to this final manuscript is its close genealogical filiation with **N** (to be discussed in detail presently). It is also important to note that considering the unusual nature of some of the forms utilised in **H** (rare words, pseudo-archaisms and foreign words), and because of the non-standard spelling and orthography employed by the scribe of that manuscript along with the shortcomings of **N** (summarised above), **T** supplies the better readings of the three complete manuscript witnesses. Furthermore, **T** presents the most complete version of the poem at the end of the tale by including the opening line of a fifth quatrain.

All four versions of the narrative are long in print. In 1861, Eugene O'Curry published the version contained in **T** alongside a 'literal translation' of the tale.[12] Kuno Meyer then published his edition and translation of the **H** text in 1892 (with corrigenda in 1896) and this was followed by his edition of the **R** fragment in 1894.[13] Lastly, Vernan Hull edited the **N** version in 1950.[14] Each of these texts is edited according to a semi-diplomatic methodology, adding punctuation, paragraphing and capitals according to modern usage. O'Curry's edition was printed in a Gaelic typeface and consequently not all expansions are not indicated as such. Both Meyer and Hull italicise expansions within their texts, with the latter doing so more consistently. In his 1950 edition of **N**, Hull noted the requirement for a critical

[12] Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Early Irish History* (Dublin, 1861; repr. Dublin, 1995), pp. 472-5 (cf. also pp. 465-7).
[13] Meyer, 'Scél Baili Binnbérlaig', pp. 220-7; corrigenda in *Revue Celtique* 17 (1896), p. 319; idem, 'Fragment of the Story of Baile Binnbérlach', *Hibernica Minora* (Oxford, 1894), p. 84.
[14] Hull, 'The Text of *Baile Binnbérlach mac Buain*', pp. 94-7.

text edition of 'the original version'.[15] In his edition, Hull inserts missing material from the **H** and **T** copies in square brackets. Hull does not offer a translation of the text, 'for a translation which will faithfully mirror the original version cannot be attempted until a critical text has been established'.[16] In addition to the translations cited above, the tale has been translated, summarised and analysed on a number of occasions.[17] To date, no critical edition of the tale has been published.[18] This chapter is intended as a precursor to such an edition.

Before continuing, something further must be said of the poetry contained in the concluding section of *BBmB*. The manuscript descriptions above demonstrate that each of the complete prose versions of the tale supplies the poetic text in varying degrees. The extent to which this poetic material has been traditionally considered to form part of the original text can be demonstrated by the editorial treatment of the relevant manuscripts. In the first version to appear in print, O'Curry drew attention to the preservation of the opening two stanzas, attested in all three complete manuscript copies of *BBmB*, in the late Old Irish poem *Úar in Lathe do Lum Laine*, 'Cold the Day for Lom Laine', which consists of nine stanzas and is uniquely attested in the twelfth-century Book of Leinster. The relevant quatrains in *BBmB* read:

[15] Ibid., p. 94.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Douglas Hyde, *A Literary History of Ireland* (New York, 1899), pp. 117-19; Eleanor Hull, *A Text Book of Irish Literature*, vol. 1 (Dublin, 1906), p. 84; Myles Dillon, *The Cycles of the Kings*, pp. 27-8; idem, *Early Irish Literature* (Chicago, 1948; repr. Dublin, 1994), pp. 85-6; Carney, *Studies in Early Irish Literature and History*, pp. 223-4; Joseph F. Nagy, 'Review of H. Pryce (ed.), *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*', *Peritia* 16 (2002) pp. 520-3. at p. 520-1; Kevin Murray, 'Some Thoughts on *Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain*', in *Essays on the Early Irish King Tales*, ed. Dan M. Wiley (Dublin, 2008), pp. 84-90, at p. 86.
[18] In this context, the term 'critical edition' refers to an edition of a singular text compiled through the collation of all four manuscript witnesses.

Abald Aill*inne* a*r*da.	The appletree of noble Aillenn
iba*r* Baile, beg a orba.	The yew of Baile, small its inheritance
cia dob*er*ait a laighaibh	Though they were brought into poems,
ni tuicit daoine borba.	Unlearned people do not understand [them].
IS f*r*is sa*m*lai*m* Aluime.	What I liken Aluime to
f*r*i hiubha*r* Ratha Baili.	Is the yew of Ráith Baile.
f*r*is *co*mbairuim a*raile*	What I liken the other to,
f*r*isan abhaill Aillinde.[19]	Is the apple tree of Aillinn.

The poem in the Book of Leinster is attributed to 'Ailbhé', the daughter of Cormac mac Airt and takes the form of a dialogue between another of Cormac's daughters, Tethna, and her lover, Lom Laine. Here, the tale of Baile and Aillenn is referred to on two separate occasions. Firstly, in stanza two, the love between Tethna and Lom Laine is compared to that between Baile and Aillenn. The second and fourth lines of this quatrain correspond with the second and the fourth lines of the second quatrain in the closing section of *BBmB* quoted above:

Is fris samlaim Lom Laine	To this I liken Lom Laine —
fri ibar Rātha Baili;	to the yew-tree of Ráth Baile;
fritot ṡamlur, a Thethna,	I liken you, Tethna,
frisin [n-]abaill a hA[i]li.[20]	to the apple-tree of Aile.

Similarly, the third quatrain of *Úar in Lathe do Lum Laine* corresponds with the first stanza of the poem in *BBmB* and also appears in the Rennes Dindshenchas of Aillend, §17.[21]

Aball Ailinne arda[e]	The apple of noble Alenn
ibar Baili, bec ṅ-orbba[i]	Baile's yew, small the heritage;
Ce dobertar llaīde	If they be put into poems,
nís tucat daíne borbba[i][22]	Ignorant people do not understand them

[19] Semi-diplomatic edition of 23 N 10 (see Appendix One).
[20] Máirín O Daly, 'Úar in Lathe do Lum Laine', *Celtic Studies: Essays in Memory of Angus Matheson*, eds James Carney and David Greene (London, 1968), pp. 99-108, at p. 101.
[21] Whitley Stokes, 'The Prose Tales of the Rennes Dindshenchas', *Revue Celtique* 15 (1894), pp. 227-336, at p. 310.
[22] Ibid., p. 102.

Baile is mentioned once more in quatrain 7. The poem's editor, Máirín O Daly, notes that §3 is not in keeping with the phrasing in §§2, 4, 5 and whilst the metre is identical with the other quatrains, she thinks that it may be a later interpolation into the poem. Setting aside the issue of provenance, this verse which O Daly dates to 'no later than the ninth century' provides indisputable evidence that at this date there existed an exemplar, containing at the very least certain sections of the poetic text.[23] However, as we will see in the next section, the apparent age of these quatrains did not influence opinions concerning the dating of *BBmB*.

Language and Dating

The language of the text belongs to the Middle Irish period. Gerard Murphy refers to the survival of the tale 'in its eleventh-century form'.[24] James Carney dates the composition of the tale to either the tenth or eleventh centuries.[25] Similarly, Myles Dillon places the language of **H** no later than the tenth or eleventh centuries.[26] The most comprehensive linguistic analysis of the tale to date is that set forth by Kevin Murray in his recent study of the tale. Here, Murray lists a number of linguistic features from the various witnesses which indicate a date of composition in the eleventh century.[27] These are as follows:

- infixed pronoun objects have not been replaced by independent pronouns in the accusative case.
- *ro*- forms of the verbal prefix have not given way to *do*- forms.
- there is non-inflection of the copula with a plural independent pronoun.

[23] Ibid., p. 101.
[24] Gerard Murphy, *Saga and Myth in Ancient Ireland* (Dublin, 1955), p. 53.
[25] Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, pp. 223-4.
[26] Myles Dillon, *The Cycles of the Kings*, p. 27.
[27] Murray, 'Some Thoughts of *Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain*', p. 85. Note that Murray says that he is giving 'just a few examples' and that his discussion is not intended to be a 'comprehensive linguistic analysis'.

Historical, Literary and Cultural Content

According to modern categorisations of medieval Irish narratives, *BBmB* belongs to the Cycles of the Kings or the Historical Cycle.[28] In his recent study of the tale, Murray notes that the assignment of *BBmB* to this cycle is tenuously based on the reference to Art mac Cuinn and his celebration of the *feis Samna* and the details of the destruction of the tablets during the reign of his son Cormac towards the end of the tale. Accordingly, Murray remarks that '[t]his lack of a strong link throughout the story between the reign of Art mac Cuinn and the details of the narrative serves to undermine any attempt to rigidly categorize the tale'. He later adds that whilst modern categorisation of texts according to shared narrative personnel and/or common geographical settings may be beneficial, the example of *BBmB* and the many 'different prisms' through which it can be viewed serves to undermine this approach to a certain extent.[29] This section will consider a number of the different historical, literary and cultural matters observed by Murray and other scholars in relation to *BBmB*.

In Chapter Three, we saw that a large proportion of medieval Irish literature had a quasi-historical function: *dinnshenchas* 'the lore of places' and genealogical information, together with the details of actual historical events often constitute much of the subject matter and *BBmB* is no exception. Regarding the former, James Carney has described *BBmB* as a 'literary tale with an onomastic purpose'.[30] The first half of the tale places considerable emphasis on the etymology of the place-name Tráig Baili, 'Baile's Strand', and the origin of Dál mBúain. Regarding the

[28] For more on the subject of modern classifications of medieval Irish literature, see Chapter Three, p. 110, n. 4.
[29] Murray, 'Some Thoughts on *Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain*', p. 87, p. 90.
[30] Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, p. 224.

latter, Gerard Murphy has referred to *BBmB* as 'the origin tale of the sept known as the Dál mBúain'.[31] This assertion is based on the detailing of Baile's lineage in the opening lines of the tale:

> Tri hui Chapa m*ai*c Ci*n*ga m*ai*c Rosa m*ai*c Rudraighi: Mo*n*ach ⁊ Buan ⁊ Fer Corb, a quib*us* D*a*il mBuai*n* ⁊ D*a*il Cuirb ⁊ Mo*n*aigh Aradh.[32]
>
> Capa, son of Cinga, son of Ros, son of Rugraide had three grandsons: Monach and Buan and Fer Corb, *a quibus* Dál mBuain and Dál Cuirb and Monaig of Arad.

However, Murray objects to Murphy's classification of *BBmB* as an 'origin tale', writing that it is 'too large a claim for this slight reference to support'. He draws attention to a number of other literary references to the origin of Dál mBúain including an alternative genealogy detailed in *Aided Echdach maic Maireda*, 'The Death of Eochu mac Maireda', which has nowhere been construed as an origin tale, and he recommends that textual scholars apply the same caution to interpretations of *BBmB*.[33]

The genealogical information contained in the text is not the only section of the narrative attested in other literary sources. We have already noted the links between the poetry contained in *BBmB* and *Úar in Lathe do Lom Laine*. Further, the closing section of the prose contains one of numerous references to the slaughter of the princesses of Tara which is said to have occurred *c.* AD 241 during the reign of

[31] Murphy, *Saga and Myth in Ancient Ireland*, p. 53.
[32] Text from semi-diplomatic edition of MS. 23 N 10, see Appendix Two.
[33] Murray, 'Some Thoughts on *Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain*', p. 88. In addition to the example in *Aided Echdach maic Maireda*, Murray lists the other examples as: '*Cath Leitreach Ruibe*' (Margaret C. Dobbs, '*La Bataille de Leitir Ruibe*', *Revue Celtic* 39 (1922), pp. 1-32, at p. 8) '*Monach ⁊ Buan ⁊ Fear Corb tri mic Cinge m. Rosa m. Rughraige* (*a quo Monaigh Aradh ⁊ Dal mBuain, a quo Baile Bindberlach m. Bind, a quo Traigh Baile m. Buain*)'; John Carey, 'An Old Irish Poem about Mug Ruith', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 110 (2005), pp. 113-34, at p. 130 where Búan and Fer Corb are referred to as sons of Mug Ruith who descends from Fergus mac Róich / mac Rossa; Best and Bergin, *Lebor na hUidre*, ll. 2925-3134, at ll. 2959-60: *Is ón Chonaing sin dano ro chinset Dál mBúain*.

Cormac son of Art. The event in question forms part of the story *Bóroma Laigen*, 'The Cattle Tribute of the Leinstermen', among various other literary sources and is included in the *Annals of Tigernach* (ATig.), the *Annals of Ulster* (AU) and the *Annals of the Four Masters* (AFM).[34] Whilst there are obviously no contemporary references to the event, its presence in the annals together with the aforementioned literary references strongly indicate that the massacre was an actual historical event or at the very least the medieval Irish considered the massacre to be a part of their history.[35]

In his study of the Irish affinities of Tristan, James Carney has argued that the story of Baile and Aillenn is so closely related to six other tales – five Irish, one Icelandic – 'that no demonstration should be needed'.[36] In his estimation, 'the union of the poet's tablets in *Baile and Ailinn* is an adaption of an incident found in its primary form in Tristan' and he later writes the tale is 'so close to the primitive Tristan that it is unnecessary to assume any intermediary version'.[37] He identifies four specifically 'Tristan' motifs in the tale and compares the twining of the vine about the rosebush in the tale of Tristan and Isolde with the fusing of the tablets in our tale 'like the honey-suckle about a branch'.[38] In his summary of the alternate approaches to *BBmB,* Murray points to the various scholarly objections to Carney's position on the origin of the Tristan legend.[39] However, Carney's interpretation of the tale and its relationships, not only to the primitive Tristan but also to the other

[34] Annals of the Four Masters s.a. 241.3: *Orgain na hingenraighe, isin Claoinferta hi tTemraigh la Dunlaing, mac Enna Niadh, rí Laigen*, 'The massacre of the girls at *Cloenferta*, at *Temhair*, by Dunlang son of Énna Niadh, king of Leinster'.
[35] Cf. Chapter Three, p. 155-6.
[36] Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, p. 190. The eight stories are: *Tochmarc Treblainne, Scéla Cano meic Gartnáin, Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghrainne, Comracc Liadaine ocus Cuirithir, Tochmarc Becfhola, Ingen Ríg Gréc, Longas mac nUislenn* and *Kormákr* (Icelandic).
[37] Ibid., p. 189, p. 195.
[38] Ibid., pp. 224-5.
[39] Murray, 'Some Thoughts on *Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain*', p. 84.

tales in his analysis, points to the amount of comparative literary analysis which has yet to be attempted.

Although *BBmB* is a compact tale, it nonetheless concerns itself with some significant social issues, foremost among them the concept of literacy. Various scholars have commented on the role of the written word within the narrative. For O'Curry, the value of the tale lay in the evidence it supplies of the existence of a very ancient book and the existence of letters at the time of Art, son of Conn of the Hundred Battles.[40] In her article detailing the beginnings of early Irish literacy, Jane Stevenson draws attention to the reference of the use of wooden tablets in the narrative; referring to Eric Havelock's ideas concerning the early interactions between orality and literary, Stevenson writes that the concept of the 'poet's tablets' in the tale is indicative of the association of writing with the use of wood.[41] Murray also places particular emphasis on the inscriptions on the wooden tablets, suggesting that the categorisation of the tales they contain 'points towards a sophisticated organisation of literature'.[42]

Similarly, Nagy has drawn attention to the theme of literacy. However, his analysis of the tale focuses on the loss of orality rather than the adoption of literacy. He describes the tale thus:

> This 'metanarrative', with its extraordinary account of the origins and subsequent loss of vernacular literature (in the oral sense of written-down word), veritably bristles with observations on the nature of the spoken word (which pertains to the living, can build bridges and bring provinces together, but is also treacherously

[40] O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Early Irish History*, p. 466.
[41] Jane Stevenson, 'The Beginnings of Literacy in Ireland', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 98 C 6 (1989), pp. 127-65, at pp. 137-8.
[42] Murray, 'Some Thoughts on *Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain*', p. 87. Cf. Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland*, p. 99.

> unreliable), and the written word (which pertains to the dead, in the wrong hands becomes inaccessible, and is nothing if not faithful).[43]

Nagy has elsewhere drawn a similar conclusion regarding *Acallam na Sénorach*, 'The Colloquy of the Ancients', noting that 'there are very few other medieval European works that maintain this conceit of oral provenance in such a sustained and analytic manner'.[44] While these conclusions are stimulating, it is important to keep in mind what Joan Radner calls the 'two pitfalls of interpretation': 'The misuse of what contextual information (literary and otherwise cultural) is available, and the misapplication of those near-conscious assumptions about literature which we hold simply because we are university-trained members of our own society'.[45] As twenty-first century readers we must be mindful not to bring preconceptions to our reading which may not fit early texts.

Having thus established the textual conditions and the literary and historical contexts of *BBmB*, let us now move to consider the theoretical options available to an editor. As Tanselle notes in his survey of the varieties of editorial experience, whilst textual critical debates have traditionally been between those who favour strictly limited editorial alteration of textual material and those who are open to more extensive intervention, the fundamental dichotomy is actually between those whose goal it is to present specific texts without alteration and editors who incorporate changes, regardless of how many or to what extent. The former approach results in

[43] Nagy, 'Review of Pryce, *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*', p. 522. I would like to suggest an alternative interpretation. Like Nagy, I believe that the tale offers an insight into the role of orality in medieval Ireland. However, my understanding of it is based on a more literal evaluation (similar to that put forward by Stevenson). It is, therefore, my opinion that part of the cultural significance of the tale is its demonstration of the recording of oral narratives on wooden tablets which may serve to further strengthen the case for the preservation of aspects of orality within medieval Irish literature.

[44] Joseph F. Nagy, 'Oral Tradition in the *Acallam na Sénorach*', in *Oral Tradition in the Middle Ages*, ed. Wilhelm F. H. Nicolaisen (Binghampton, 1995) pp. 77-95, at p. 84.

[45] Joan Radner, 'Interpreting Irony and Medieval Celtic Narrative: The Case of *Culhwch ac Olwen*', *CMCS* 16 (1988), pp. 41-59, at p. 42.

photographic facsimiles or diplomatic transcriptions; the latter results in what are generally referred to as 'critical' editions.[46] Regarding critical editing, he further notes that for post-Gregorian textual theorists the traditional goal of establishing the authorial text (whether final or original) is no longer a foregone conclusion. Furthermore, the production of facsimiles or diplomatic transcriptions is no longer considered sufficient for those scholars who aim to study the context of variant forms and the transmission of the text.[47] In ascending degrees of editorial intervention to the documentary evidence and history of the work, the possible approaches to *BBmB* might be arranged as follows:

1) The Facsimile Reprint

The first option available to the editor is the photographic facsimile, which can be applied to any text surviving in one or more manuscripts. Facsimile reprints are particularly useful when making certain documentary textual material more widely accessible, and serve the purposes of those editors who aim to emphasise the bibliographical nature of a particular work. In the production of traditional text-centric critical editions, extra-textual features are often omitted from the edition proper. This is not limited to the physical characteristics of the documentary evidence but also pertains to text considered by the editor to be extraneous to the text or work being dealt with. Let us consider the example of the Harleian 5280 version of *BBmB* where the scribe has inserted the following note at the end of the folio:

[46] For my use of the term 'critical edition', see Chapter Two, pp. 56-7.
[47] Tanselle, 'The Varieties of Scholarly Editing', p. 17 and p. 23.

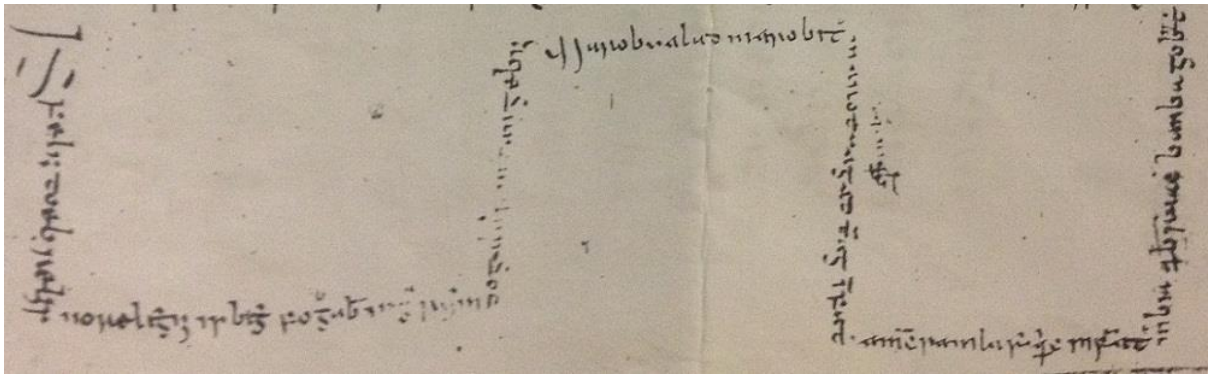


FIGURE 4.1: BRITISH LIBRARY, HARL. 5280, FO. 48A

Diplomatic Transcription

1) IS feli*us* toeb relu*s*s
2) no relegi*us* is beg fogab*ad* in ghreim
3) do falar in tan gebi*us*
    4) Maro bualad maro bith
    5) Maro tuagad (.i. mar*b*a*d*) t*r*uaig in fath
    6) a macsamlasa airc in s[-]ath
    7) ni bia a*r* bruach banba go b*r*ath

The presence of this note is not observed in Meyer's 1892 semi-diplomatic edition of the Harleian text. Given that the annotation does not seem to be connected to the text under investigation, it is easy to see how its inclusion was not deemed necessary. Taking into account the unusual characteristics of the note, a detailed description might be considered cumbersome and its inclusion *in situ* in a reset modern edition might prove challenging. However, when we consider that the Harleian scribe is responsible for a number of perculiarly arranged glosses, omission of this textual feature may lead to important information regarding the *usus scribendi* of the scribe being overlooked.[48] A photographic facsimile of Harl. 5280 itself, or at the very least of this portion of the text, would meet most scholarly needs.

[48] See, for example, fo. 22a, fo. 46b and fo. 47a.

However, the value of such a reproduction to a textual analysis of *BBmB* is tenuous at best particularly if one's aim is to move beyond the text of an individual manuscript. Facsimiles only represent one aspect of the textual tradition: they show what actually emerged from the transcription process.[49] As Greetham points out in his study of Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes*, 'the facsimile would preserve *scribal* rather than auctorial intention, and … would not represent either a *textus receptus* or a state of textual transmission interesting in its own right'.[50] Such editions do not serve in place of a critical edition; none of the four manuscript witnesses to *BBmB* has a codicological value or a transmissional status to justify being the sole representative of the text. Furthermore, whilst the primary purpose of a facsimile reprint is to make readily available the text present in a manuscript, preparation of a transcription from a facsimile for the purposes of constructing a critical edition remains secondary to a personal examination of the manuscript itself. In preparing a critical edition, Tanselle points out photographic reproductions are no substitutes for the originals, 'because every physical detail of the original documents is potentially relevant for interpreting the texts they contain'.[51]

The publication of manuscripts in facsimile form is not regularly regarded as producing an edition. Let us consider the example of David Greetham's *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*, a collaborative treatment of the field of scholarly editing consisting of twenty-four diverse contributions. Less than one quarter of the thirty-three direct references to facsimiles in this lengthy book describe them as editions: other descriptions include facsimile reprints (the term adopted for the

[49] Cf. Tanselle's arguments in 'Textual Criticism at the Millennium', p. 77.
[50] Greetham, 'Challenges of Theory and Practice', p. 169.
[51] Tanselle, 'The Varieties of Scholarly Editing', p. 18. Cf. John R. Hall, 'Old English Literature', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, pp. 149-84, at p. 164.

purposes of the present discussion) and facsimile reproductions. Other commentators go further still, referring to a facsimile as 'a necessary adjunct to any critical activity' and an 'editorial aid'.[52]

My intention is not to suggest that facsimile reprints do not have a place in the study of medieval Irish textual criticism and they remain a viable option to an editor of a text, even if facsimiles themselves do not constitute an edition. Critical editing is by its very nature dependent on editorial judgment and, therefore, capable of introducing at least minor errors into the transmission of the text. According to Philip Gaskell, the only way of avoiding new transmissional error is to reproduce a photographic facsimile of 'a good early version of the text'.[53] Traditional arguments against the production of facsimile reprints have focused on the cost associated with printing them. As we will see in a forthcoming chapter, the advances in digital technology in recent decades now counteract many of these arguments, and in a world of digitised images the codex-based facsimile reprint is arguably becoming obsolescent.

2) The Diplomatic Edition

The next method in line of fidelity to the documentary state and history of the work would be the diplomatic edition, also commonly referred to as the transcription edition or diplomatic transcript. The primary responsibility of editors involved in the creation of a diplomatic edition is to retain as many physical features of the

[52] Francis I. Andersen, 'The Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, pp. 33-59, at p. 48; Hall, 'Old English Literature', p. 163.

[53] Philip Gaskell, *From Writer to Reader: Studies in Editorial Method* (Delaware, 1999), p. 7. Cf. the comments by Eric Gerald Stanley ('Unideal Principles of Editing Old English Verse', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 70 (1984), pp. 231-73, at p. 269) regarding the editorial treatment of Old English verse: 'Consistency in treating the text is an editorial virtue difficult to achieve, unless the policy is consistently not to emend' (cf. Hall, 'Old English Literature', p. 170).

manuscript as a printed text can furnish whilst rendering the text readable to those unversed in palaeography. This editorial approach is widely used in medieval Irish studies and is particularly beneficial to the linguist. Like the photographic facsimile, this method can be applied to any text attested in one or multiple witnesses; its primary function is to make textual evidence more widely accessible.

We have previously noted that the tendency in other fields is to uphold abbreviations within the diplomatic transcript.[54] However, the nature of medieval Irish manuscript material and its incompatibility with modern typesetting often necessitates the inclusion of expansions in italics. A truly diplomatic edition preserves both the 'substantives' and the 'accidentals' of the manuscript text and adheres to the manuscript 'line for line, and page for page throughout'.[55] For reasons of practicality, it may not always be feasible for an editor to follow the manuscript lineation, pagination or column layout and in such instances the editor should indicate to the reader where changes occur in the manuscript text. If an editor decides to make alterations within the text, these should be recorded in the footnotes. However, Tanselle argues that an editor whose goal it is to reproduce the text of a specific manuscript is focusing on the text of the document, rather than on the work; an editor who incorporates alterations, however few, can no longer claim to be presenting the text of a document. In his estimation, the primary editorial contributions of what he terms diplomatic transcripts rest in the decipherment of the

[54] Cf. Chapter Two, pp. 56-7.
[55] Stanley Rypins, *Three Old English Prose Texts in MS. Cotton Vitellius A xv*, EETS, os 161 (London, 1924), p. xlix (cf. Hall, 'Old English Literature', p. 160).

script and whilst the resulting editions are not strictly considered 'critical', the preparation of a diplomatic transcript remains a critical activity.[56]

Such a conservative approach inevitably raises questions regarding the intended audience of the edition. The production of a diplomatic transcription may be of limited usefulness to the general reader not in possession of the necessary skills to interact fully with the edited text. Such editions are often targeted at fellow scholars for whom 'intelligibility is not a mandatory criterion of an edition', an audience 'who will be prepared to see [the editor's] text as a series of complex textual problems to which they will add their own scholia of commentary, exegesis, and (perhaps) speculative emendation on the grounds of sense and metre'.[57] Here the form of the edition determines the audience mostly likely to benefit from its publication and to engage with the text.[58]

It is axiomatic that the publication of the evidence of one select manuscript is different from publishing a critical edition of a text.[59] Greetham has argued that when dealing with a text attested by multiple witnesses, such as *BBmB*, the value of diplomatic editions becomes much less when compared with critical editions with a complete record of variant readings.[60] To an editor interested in studying the context of variant forms and/or textual transmission, this may be considered grounds for the

[56] Cf. Greetham, 'Challenges of Theory and Practice in Hoccleve's Regement of Princes ', at p. 171: 'there is no such moral security as a perfect loyalty to a document, for even the act of transcription (especially into a modern type-face) involves editorial intervention'.
[57] Anthony Edwards, 'Editing and the Teaching of Alliterative Verse', in *A Guide to Editing Middle English*, eds McCarren and Moffat, pp. 216-236, at p. 97.
[58] For expression of a similar view regarding the publication of Middle English texts, see Grattan's introduction to his parallel text edition of *The Owl and the Nightingale* where he acknowledges that it may be possible to construct a single reading of the text for the general reader who would not be served by a diplomatic edition: John H.G. Grattan and George F. Sykes, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, EETS, e.s. 119 (London, 1936; rpt 1959), pp. ix-x (cf. Norman F. Blake, 'Reflections on the Editing of Middle English Texts', in *A Guide to Editing Middle English*, eds McCarren and Moffat, p. 69).
[59] For my use of the term critical edition in this discussion, see n. 18.
[60] Greetham, 'Normalisation of Hoccleve', pp. 169-70.

preparation of a diplomatic edition of each of the four witnesses, either in parallel or in sequence (to be discussed presently).

Considering that the principal justification for the publication of a diplomatic edition is to make the content of hitherto unavailable textual evidence more readily available, it is noteworthy that none of the aforementioned editions of the various manuscript texts of *BBmB* are diplomatic transcriptions. Further justification for printing texts in a diplomatic format is usually recognition of the paucity or intractability of the surviving materials; or, where there are multiple copies of the same text, the consideration that each may be a distinct version: neither scenario applies to the documentary evidence for *BBmB*. The rationale for the inclusion of a diplomatic edition of each of the four witnesses of the text in the present study is twofold: firstly, the othographic peculiarity of **H** is sufficient grounds for the presentation of this particular version of the work as a diplomatic transcript. Secondly, such transcripts serve to highlight the differences between the presentation of a diplomatic edition and the next option to be discussed; the semi-diplomatic edition. We might also add that diplomatic transcripts of each of theses texts are not readily accessible as each of the four manuscript texts have been published as semi-diplomatic editions. It will be seen presently that in order to establish the nature of variations of a text, whether they are scribal or editorial, we must have at least a basic understanding of what constitutes the norm.

3) The Semi-Diplomatic Edition

The next method on the list is not discussed in Greetham's study of the *Regiment*. The semi-diplomatic edition occupies a place in the editorial spectrum between 'documentary' editing and what is generally referred to as 'critical editing': whilst

the primary subject of the edition remains the text of a single document, the editor is willing to introduce minor alterations to this text. Semi-diplomatic editions augment diplomatic transcripts by the addition of punctuation, capitalisation and word-division together with the removal of obvious error. Often, editors justify these alterations by referencing the needs of the modern audience. However, when one considers that much medieval literature was produced largely or wholly without punctuation, such modernisation of the text will inevitably impinge upon the way it is interpreted by its contemporary readers. As regards medieval Irish editorial practice, Murray points out that the application of the term 'semi-diplomatic' is regularly extended in the field: for example, when Clodagh Downey labels her recent edition of *Trí Croind Éirenn Oiregdha* as 'semi-diplomatic', 'this allows for the addition of length marks, the removal of superfluous diacritics, and the use of square and round brackets to indicate added or redundant letters'.[61] This moves the methodology a step beyond 'semi-diplomatic' as traditionally defined, and is a more accurate description of semi-diplomatic editions as they have been produced in the field of medieval Irish studies.

The editor of such an edition may continue to preserve manuscript orthography, common abbreviations and accents. Let us consider the example of Meyer's semi-diplomatic edition of **H**. Here, Meyer upholds the unusual orthography and vocabulary employed by the scribe whilst making the punctuation, paragraphing and use of capitals conform to modern practice. Editors dealing with highly irregular base texts must decide to what extent, if any, they will regularise their documents – whether to refrain altogether from alteration, to alter the text lightly, or to impose alterations to such an extent that the irregular nature of the text

[61] Murray, 'Reviews, Reviewers and Critical Texts', p. 56.

is no longer evident. The solution may rest in a compromise similar to the one worked out by Meyer for the **H** text.

Certain schools of editing continue to categorise the semi-diplomatic methodology as non-critical. Indeed, the present study identifies it as half-way between documentary and critical editing: a semi-diplomatic edition is in essence a critical edition of the text of a single document. However, the methodology falls short of a fully critical or 'resolutely' critical approach (discussed below), particularly in the case of a work which exists in multiple manuscripts where editorial interventions of this type raise the question of how the versions relate to one another, of whether to attempt a reconstructed text, and what to do about the variants. In relation to Middle English textual criticism, Ralph Hanna has identified four criteria which define a work as 'critical', first and foremost being a full evidentiary display including thorough collations of the relevant materials.[62] Semi-diplomatic editions often do not make this information available to their readers.

Let us consider Hull's semi-diplomatic edition of **N**. It would appear from Hull's introductory remarks that his primary goal in publishing his edition of *BBmB* was to make a fuller record of the manuscript witnesses available prior to any attempt to reconstruct the 'original text'.[63] That being said, his edition moves beyond a presentation of the documentary evidence of **N**. We have previously noted that Hull supplemented his text with additions from **H** and **T** within square brackets and his aim in doing so appears to be to present a more complete text given the

[62] Ralph Hanna, 'Producing Manuscripts and Editions', in *Crux and Controversy in Middle English Textual Criticism*, eds Minnis and Brewer, pp. 109-30, at p. 127. The other three criteria are: a critique of the available witnesses; that such editions are predicated on the theory of copy-text; and lastly, the practice of intervention in the text. It is evident from the discussion that follows that the present writer agrees with Jacob's definition of the term 'critical' with the exception of one criterion – his over-prescriptive endorsement of the copy-text methodology.
[63] Hull, 'The Text of Baile Binnbérlach mac Buain', p. 94.

presence of obvious scribal omissions in **N**. His edition includes seven such instances of added material in square brackets. However, with the exception of one, the reader in nowhere informed as to whether the source of these additions is editorial or documentary.[64] Furthermore, Hull's edition lacks the traditional *apparatus criticus* of a critical edition of a multi-text work. It is notable that the establishment of the relationships between the various witnesses does not fall under the purview of editors concerned with the production of semi-diplomatic editions which generally focus on the text of a single manuscript. Whilst in his introduction Hull includes a tentative description of how the three complete copies of the tale relate to one another, he is not theoretically obligated to do so. The production of a semi-diplomatic edition, insofar as editorial alterations are concerned, must be held to the same rigours as all other 'critical' editions and offer its readers an open presentation of the editorial decisions involved before it can be defined as fully 'critical'.

4) The Parallel-Text Edition

The parallel-text edition has, to date, received limited use in medieval Irish studies.[65] At its most basic, this method presents in parallel either diplomatic or semi-diplomatic transcripts of some or all of the manuscript witnesses to a text, the aim of which is generally to represent the developmental stages of a work.[66] However, it can be used in conjunction with other editorial methods and may be employed in the production of both 'documentary' and/or 'critical' editions. The method has recently been employed by editors of Middle English romance, and has found increasing

[64] The exception in question is the insertion of '*do·radsad a taibli leo*' from **H**.
[65] See the examples listed by Murray, 'Reviews, Reviewers, and Critical Texts', pp. 56-57.
[66] For a practical account of this methodology and its application to medieval Irish poetic texts see Chapter Four pp. 288-295 and Appendix Two.

favour by those dealing with 'uneditable' texts.[67] The approach is also favoured by those non-intentionalist editors who wish to present their texts as dynamic social constructs. As Pearsall notes, it is often those witnesses dismissed by editors whose objective is the recreation of the authorial text which best inform us of contemporaneous readings of a text and of the literary tastes and expectations of its readers.[68]

The method does, however, have some obvious disadvantages. Firstly, there are the pragmatic difficulties of space and the expense of printing, particularly in the presentation of an edition in codex format (as opposed to digital format). The more manuscript witnesses there are, and the more complex the textual tradition is, the less feasible it becomes to present in print an edition in parallel. Secondly, there is the issue of which text the reader is to follow. Hussey has offered a potential solution to the first two difficulties which may serve as a means of accurately presenting the reader with the multiple versions of the text without necessarily having to make available the text of each of the multiple manuscripts which tesitfy to the work: 'given the impracticability of citing all variant readings from all the manuscripts in a modern edition, it should be sufficient to cite the 'best' manuscript from each group, plus any variations of significance from within the group'.[69] Consequently this would allow the reader to view the text as a sequence of versions and perhaps more accurately represent its textual tradition.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, is the matter of theoretical justification. Let us return to consider Liam Breatnach and Jürgen Uhlich's critical

[67] See Fellows, '*Author, Author, Author*', pp. 21-2, for just a few examples of the application of this method by editors of Middle English romances.
[68] Pearsall, 'Editing Medieval Texts', p. 103.
[69] Hussey, 'Editing the Scale of Perfection', p. 105

reviews of Kevin Murray's 2004 edition of *Baile in Scáil*, and the latter's subsequent defense of his methodology. That such a decision needs to be defended is suggested partly by the relative absence of similar editions in medieval Irish studies, and partly by Breatnach and Uhlich's characterisation of any edition which falls short of a fully reconstructed original as somehow lacking or incomplete.[70] Similar theoretical criticisms have been directed at the parallel-text approach: for example, whilst the methodology has gained increasing currency in the field of Middle English, the idea of an edition which presents the reader with all variant readings but prefers none has often been regarded as the work of a slovenly editor, lacking in judgment.[71]

Fellows has addressed these criticisms in her recent advocacy of the methodology in the editing of Middle English romance. Thus, she remarks that:

> If the decision to present two or more texts of a work in parallel is an informed one based on careful editorial assessment of the manuscript evidence and its nature … then editorial judgment has not been suspended even if it does not manifest itself so clearly on the printed page, in the form of square brackets and all the baggage of the traditional apparatus criticus, as would be the case in a critical edition.[72]

Fellow believes that a fundamental part of a parallel-text edition should be the editorial *apologia* as this approach is not wholly appropriate for all medieval texts. However, this is the case for every editorial methodology and the argument follows logically that an important part of any edition should be a clear statement of its rationale and of the textual features that are held to justify the procedure adopted.

The question emerges as to what editorial methodology should be applied to the various texts within the parallel-text edition. Fellows argues that the ideal

[70] For references, see Chapter Two, p. 103, n. 125.
[71] Fellows, 'Author, Author, Author', p. 22.
[72] Ibid., pp. 22-3.

editorial aim in the presentation of parallel texts 'is correction rather than improvement, the identification and elimination of obvious error, the clarification of obvious nonsense, the establishment of the "right" reading for that particular text or redaction', suggesting that the editor should intervene only in instances where the various texts are obviously erroneous.[73] Fellows' recommendations point towards the use of a semi-diplomatic approach to the texts presented in parallel. However, a plethora of approaches can be applied to those texts represented in parallel.

Douglas Moffat opines that this approach is most applicable in circumstances where the editor feels that the original text is unrecoverable or where the existence of a number of exemplars is posited.[74] The primary theoretical justification for the presentation of texts in parallel is that scribal activity should be accorded similar authority to a putative authorial text, whether named or anonymous. However, the salient characteristics of the versions of a text cannot be identified without establishing the norm. Furthermore, as Tanselle has argued, 'the presence of a thorough record of variants … does not eliminate the need to decide whether a critical text (or more than one) should be prepared'.[75] The existence of discreet versions of a text can only be established through the editor making a judgment concerning the form and content of the underlying original, however one chooses to define it. For this reason, the presentation of texts in parallel is often accompanied by one of the various types of traditional 'critical' edition described below which

[73] Ibid., pp. 23-4.
[74] Moffat with McCarren, 'A Bibliographical Essay', at p. 42.
[75] Tanselle, 'The Varieties of Scholarly Editing', p. 26. Cf. Hanna, 'Producing Manuscripts and Editions', p. 125: 'For one cannot distinguish "intelligent, meddling, and improving scribes" without some knowledge of their archetypes, without in fact full collation and construction of a stemma. For only through such means might one decide that such variation constituted a motivated commentary, what we would call "criticism". And similarly, discussions of authorial activities require some traditional editorial consideration of manuscript variation, some theorization which might distinguish the "authorial" from any other evidence which a manuscript provides'.

acts as a standard of comparison from which scribal recomposition and revision is perceptible.

One special category of material may also be appropriate for parallel editions: that is, when damage to a manuscript has resulted in the substantial loss of what would otherwise have been considered the best version.[76] As we have seen, this is the case for the manuscripts of *BBmB* and the fragmentary text of **R**. With regard to the presentation of the four texts in parallel, either diplomatic transcriptions or semi-diplomatic editions would be best and in making this decision the editor will need to consider the requirements of his/her intended audience. This is particularly relevant for *BBmB* because of the intrinsic interest of the orthographic evidence contained in **H**. However, the applicability of this methodology does not preclude the production of other editions of the work directed to other goals. The texts are similar enough to suggest a common underlying exemplar and it is for this reason that the editor can and should consider presenting a critical edition of the work.

Both Fellows and Moffat suggest that the critical edition should remain as the first choice for editors of medieval texts.[77] Fellows argues that a parallel-text edition provides a practical option available to editors when a single authorial text cannot be recovered.[78] Furthermore, the production of a parallel-text edition does not necessarily mean the abandonment of the pursuit of the archetype. Recent scholarship has begun to recognize the importance of the study of the individual manuscripts of a text alongside an attempt to reconstruct the archetype. There are no theoretical or practical reasons why an eclectic edition of the tale of *BBmB* could not

[76] Tanselle, 'The Varieties of Scholarly Editing', p. 41.
[77] Moffat and McCarren, 'A Bibliographical Essay', p. 41; Fellows, 'Author, Author, Author', p. 23.
[78] Fellows, 'Author, Author, Author', p. 23.

form part of a parallel-text edition which also presents all four witnesses in diplomatic transcription.

From a practical and a theoretical perspective, the parallel-text edition will not be suitable for every medieval Irish text. The brevity of the narrative combined with the fact that it is preserved in a relatively small number of manuscript witnesses means that it is a realistic option for an editor of *BBmB*.

5) The Best-Text Edition

In this approach, the best surviving text is selected as default, emending it against the other witnesses only for strong reasons (or not at all). Such an edition is usually accompanied by an apparatus of variant readings. With this approach, the central issue is the choice of the *codex optimus* and the criteria for selecting the best text have often been called into question. Ideally, the choice should be based on an orthographically coherent and consistent text requiring minimum editorial intervention and the editor must be able to justify his decision in the editorial annotation.[79]

The 'best-text' approach has been extensively used in medieval Irish studies and the method of presentation typically follows the semi-diplomatic model. Let us consider the example of the second recension of the Irish apocryphal text *In Tenga Bithnua*, 'The Ever-New Tongue', which is preserved in four manuscripts: **Q**, **Y**, **O** and **M**. This was edited by Úna Ni Énrí and Gearóid Mac Niocaill in 1971 and more recently by John Carey (2009).[80] Both editions could be viewed as best-texts or

[79] Mary B. Speer, 'Old French Literature', at p. 395.

[80] Bibliothéque nationale de France, Paris, *Fonds celtique no. 1*, fol. 24^{r}-27^{v} (**Q**); Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS. 1318, olim. H. 2. 16, pp. 81^{a}-86^{b} (**Y**); Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 23 O 48 a-b (476), (*Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*) (**O**); Bibliothéque municipal, Rennes, 598/15489, fol. 70^{r}-74^{r} (**M**).

editions in the form of a specific witness. On the basis of patterns of shared agreement and divergence, the following stemma for the text can be constructed:

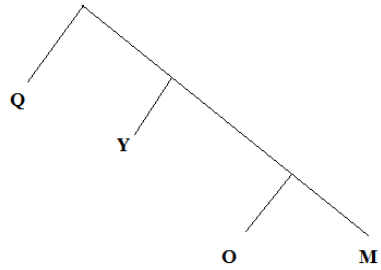


FIGURE 4.2 CAREY, *IN TENGA BITHNUA*, P. 42.

The earlier editors of the text elected to adopt orthographically eccentric **Y** as the basis for their edition, as opposed to the preferable text preserved in **Q** because the latter was incomplete.[81] Carey, on the other hand, presents an edition of **Q**, employing **Y** to take the place of **Q** where the latter is defective with an apparatus detailing the variants in the other manuscripts.

If we apply this logic to *BBmB*, the following may be observed: firstly, the fragmentary nature of **R** need not be a hindrance to the editor as the best text is not necessarily the text containing the superior readings, nor is it necessarily the extant manuscript deemed closest to the archetype. Should an editor be guided by the example of Nic Énrí and Mac Niocaill and opt to discount **R** as a base text because it is incomplete, he/she would select the *codex optimus* from among the remaining witness: **T**, **N** and **H**. In light of Hull's reservations regarding **N**, it is unlikely that an editor would consider it as the best text. What remains then is a choice between two manuscripts: **T** and **H**. With regard to these witnesses, the superior — defined

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The relevant editions are Úna Nic Énrí and Gearóid Mac Niocaill, 'The Second Rencension of the *Evernew Tongue*', *Celtica* 9 (1971), pp. 1-60 and John Carey, *In Tenga Bithnua: The Ever-New Tongue* (Turnhout, 2009). The sigla refer to those employed in Carey's edition.

[81] Nic Énri and Mac Niocaill, 'The Second Rencension of the *Evernew Tongue*', pp. 2-3.

here as the more conservative — readings are contained in **H**.[82] However, we have already observed that this manuscript presents the editor with particular linguistic difficulties: the scribe's peculiar use of *bérla na filed*, and the manuscript's unusual orthography.[83] Additionally, if the aim of the editor is to present readers with a normalised edition, the particular forms contained within the **H** manuscript would require a large amount of editorial intervention when compared to the alternative of **T**. Therefore, the most likely choice for the production of a best-text edition would be **T**.

Secondly, the presentation of a best-text edition need not automatically eliminate the presentation of **R**. Following a method such as that employed by Carey, an editor may choose to present the text of **R** in the opening section of his/her edition, using **T** as a substitute at the point that **R** ends. Thus, the apparatus for the opening section would comprise a list of variant readings from **T**, **N** and **H**, with the remainder detailing the variants contained in **H** and **N**. This brings us to a further consideration which any editor must deal with when attempting to construct an edition based on the evidence of multiple witnesses: the record of variant readings. We have seen that Greg has distinguished between 'accidental' and 'substantive' variants.[84] Regarding the former, Nic Énrí and Mac Niocaill remark that 'such variants as the addition or omission of *ocus* at the beginning of the sentence, of *.i.* before enumerations, of demonstrative particles and the like, are too dependent on scribal whims … to be of any indicative value'.[85] Similarly, Carey does not include

[82] Murray, 'Some Thoughts on *Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain*', p. 85.
[83] However, we should note that the early editors of *In Tenga Bithnua* adopted **Y** as their base text, 'orthographical eccentricities included': Nic Énrí and Mac Niocaill, 'The Second Rencension of the *Evernew Tongue*', at p. 2.
[84] See Chapter One, n. 100.
[85] Nic Énrí and Mac Niocaill, 'The Second Rencension of the *Evernew Tongue*', p. 2.

purely orthographic variants (with the exception of proper names) in his apparatus. Lastly, whilst the best-text method was originally devised to replace the classical method, the existence of such an edition is not incompatible with an attempt to construct a stemma.[86]

By definition, this approach is applicable in instances where there are two or more manuscript witnesses. However, that is not to suggest that this approach is wholly appropriate in all such instances. As opposed to the parallel-text approach, the best text may not be the most suitable editorial method in circumstances where multiple sources may be posited. Similarly, where scribal innovation results in a widely divergent text (or texts), the selection of a single representative would result in an overly simplistic representation of textual transmission. In instances such as these the editor should consider presenting editions of the best manuscripts from each group. We see an example of just such a situation in Carey's edition of *In Tenga Bithnua*. The primary subject of Carey's study is the first recension of the text attested in the *Book of Lismore* (**L**) and his edition of the second recension is presented in parallel to a semi-diplomatic edition of **L** '[s]ince the second recension does … provide some readings which are preferable to L's – or which, in conjunction with L's testimony, point towards forms which stood in their shared exemplar'.[87] Thus, in presenting his edition, Carey employs three distinct methodologies to great effect.

[86] Cf. Carey's *stemma codicum* of the second recension of *In Tenga Bithnua* (fig. 6.1). As a further example, McCone refers to Edward Gwynn's best-text edition of *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, the final volume of which contains a stemmatic evaluation of the manuscript tradition: see McCone, 'Prehistoric, Old and Middle Irish', p. 28.
[87] Carey, *In Tenga Bithnua*, p. 93.

The advantages of a best-text edition where a substantial number of manuscript witnesses exist are obvious.[88] In the case of *BBmB*, however, editorial methodology need not be limited by the number of textual witnesses and, once again, a desire to demonstrate the linguistic peculiarities of **H** may lead an editor to seek an alternative method of presentation.

6) The Genealogical Edition

With the production of a genealogical edition, we move from the creation of a critical edition to what Ralph Hanna defines as a 'resolutely "critical"' edition: that is, 'the editor is committed to offering as clear a separation as possible between what has accrued in the transmission of the text and what its author had originally provided'.[89] The method for doing this is the geneaological method which consists of four stages – *recensio*, *examinatio*, *selectio* and *divinatio*. The emphasis here will be on the first of these stages. The initial step laid out by Paul Maas for recension is to establish what may be considered as transmitted.[90] Utilising a working premise that all four manuscript copies derive ultimately from a shared source text, the next step is to determine their relationships to one another. As already noted, the text of **N** supplies an inferior version of the tale as material is omitted throughout. Hull suggests that the copyist of **N** may have used **T** as his immediate source, or that 'he employed a source which was the direct ancestor of his copy and the one in H.3.18'.[91] He bases the latter supposition on the fact that there are additional verses

[88] In her edition of the Irish Life of Colum Cille, Máire Herbert has pointed to a further benefit of this approach (Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 216). Cf. p. 98.
[89] Ralph Hanna, 'Editing Texts with Extensive Manuscript Traditions', in *Probable Truth*, ed. Gillespie and Hudson, pp. 111-29, at p. 113.
[90] Maas, *Textual Criticism*, p. 1
[91] Hull, 'The Text of Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain', pp. 94-95.

contained at the end of **T** which do not occur in **N**.[92] Evidence presented elsewhere, including the omission of the sentence *do·radsad a taibli leo* ('they brought their tablets with them') in both **N** and **T**, would also indicate a closer affinity between these two manuscripts than with **H**, which is the remaining complete version of the tale.[93] The present discussion follows Hull's latter suggestion – that both **N** and **T** derive from the same source. According to the theory of recension, the readings of the common exemplar of **N** and **T**, which I will refer to as **Ω**, may be reconstructed where both manuscripts agree.[94]

The fragmentary nature of the **R** version means that it is difficult to establish with any real certainty its relationship to the other manuscripts. However, it should be noted that **R** and **H** both contain unique variants. For example, **H** reads *Corrusdáilset coir dala i n-dormainecht* ('and they agreed to meet in a love-tryst'), in the opening paragraph; this is unsupported by the other manuscript witnesses. In the genealogical list, **R** reads *Monach ⁊ Buan ⁊ Fercorb*. The other three manuscripts read *Monac[h] ⁊ Baili ⁊ Fercorb* (reading taken from **H**). In **R**, the lines beginning *Bá / ba sainserc* ('he was / he was the special love'), are in reverse order and there is also an additional line beginning *Corongraidach o cach brígh*. Furthermore, no manuscript has all the readings contained in the other surviving witnesses. However, the texts are similar enough to suggest that they are derivatives of one common exemplar, though reconstructed **Ω** will regularly differ in form from the remaining two manuscript witnesses. Thus, it seems likely that the extant witnesses of the text can be divided into three groupings – **Ω**, **R** and **H** – the ideal for reconstructing the

[92] Ibid., n. 9.
[93] Murray, 'Some Thoughts on Baile Binnbérlach mac Búain', p. 85.
[94] Maas, *Textual Criticism*, p. 4.

archetype of the text (α). On the basis of this analysis, it is possible to construct the following stemma for the four manuscripts of the tale:

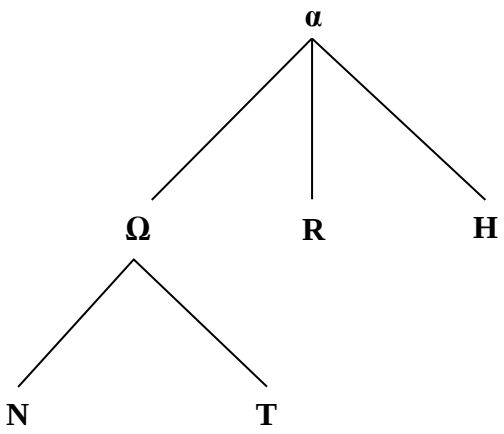

FIGURE 4.2: *BBmB*: A SAMPLE STEMMA

However, the case is not as straightforward as it may first appear. Due to the fragmentary nature of **R**, only in the opening section of the tale can the archetype be reconstructed on the basis of all witnesses. Thereafter, the editor will be left with a choice of two variants where **Ω** and **H** disagree. In such circumstances, the preferred practice of medievalists is to select the text with the superior readings as the base text for the edition. However, in the case of *BBmB* the superior readings are preserved in **R**. Thus, an editor is left with two options: either use an inferior manuscript as the base text for the whole tale or employ it after the **R** fragment ends. Alternatively, an editor may choose not to privilege any manuscript as base text. Any subsequent decisions made between textual variants will, therefore, be the result of applying a defined editorial methodology.

7) The Eclectic Edition

The existence of substantive variants does not rule out the legitimacy of the aim of reconstructing the archetype.[95] However, their presence indicates that an alternative method for editing the text may be more suitable. One such alternative is the creation of an 'eclectic' edition containing readings from the various manuscript witnesses. Jacobs identifies three qualifications to prevent an arbitrary selection of variants as follows:

> The general principle on which variants are to be selected should be made clear at the outset, the evidence on which the conclusions are based should be set out in full, and any conjectural emendation should be clearly signalled as such and explained.

He also adds that 'where all readings are clearly corrupt and no correct reading suggests itself, the editor should not be ashamed to admit perplexity'.[96]

Through the application of eclectic methodology, the editor would no longer be constrained by the missing section from **R** or by the linguistic difficulties of **H**. Regarding the use of this method as a means of reconstructing the common archetype, once again one could follow Jacobs who argues that:

> where, on the basis of a comparison of the readings of existing versions and an understanding of the known habits of scribes, it is possible to assert with some plausibility what the reading from which the variants derive is likely to have been, it is an abdication of editorial duty to refrain from suggesting it.[97]

Such is the case for *BBmB*: although all four manuscripts contain individual variations, it does not seem impossible for an editor to attempt a plausible reconstruction of the archetype. Various scribal styles may be identified and

[95] Jacobs, 'Kindly Light or Foxfire?', p. 12.
[96] Ibid., p. 13.
[97] Ibid.

differentiated from one another and, through a comparison of the evidence, the editor can draw certain conclusions about the nature of the archetype. Therefore, with regard to *BBmB*, the production of an eclectic edition with the aim of establishing the common archetype remains a feasible option. It is not intended to suggest that eclectic editions are to be the preferred type of critical edition for all medieval Irish texts. Each text presents a unique set of circumstances and the kind of critical edition (if any) to be produced will depend on the nature of those circumstances.

8) Normalisation

Elsewhere, we have seen that McCone has divided the corpus of Old and Middle Irish edited texts into four primary groupings capable of a certain degree of overlap: diplomatic, best-text, critical and normalised.[98] The first three approaches have received attention in the preceding analysis. The last of McCone's examples is particularly interesting as its use in the discipline has become somewhat contentious.

In the field of Old and Middle Irish, it is not uncommon for earlier texts to be preserved only in manuscripts of a much later date, as is the case for *BBmB*. The Irish language was in a constant state of development and many texts carry within them the linguistic evidence of having been modernised, emended, copied or redacted once or on a number of occasions during the preceding centuries. Normalisation is the practice of replacing certain linguistic forms (generally later ones) with more standard ones (generally earlier in date) in order to arrive at consistent usage within a text. At times, a normalised approach may be incorporated into a critical one. The editor attempts to date the 'original' text or underlying

[98] See Chapter Two, pp. 100-1.

archetype taking into account historical and linguistic evidence, and then aims to create an edition of the text which accords with this date.

The primary objection to this practice is that the resultant edition is often a misrepresentation of documentary evidence as the editor commonly finds himself/herself emending against the testimony of all the extant manuscript witnesses. As Bédier says of the *Chanson de Roland*:

> It struck me ... that the Oxford manuscript is our only real and tangible asset; that in attempting to recover the language of the archetype manuscript, one left oneself open to lumping together features of French spoken by Louis the Fat with those spoken by Hugh Capet; that, moreover, it's not sufficient to be able to ascertain two or three or ten of the features constituting our poet's usage, because such usage is not made up of two or three or even ten features, but of hundreds of them, and every last one needs to be integrated into a picture of the poet's language as a whole – something which is impossible in this case; in short that [the quest for the archetype] only succeeds in making the author of the *Chanson de Roland* speak the language of a grammarian – a very refined language to be sure, but exactly as such, a troubling language, one too refined to have ever been spoken anywhere.[99]

There is also the obvious danger that over-zealous normalisation may obscure potentially valuable linguistic evidence. It is this extension of editorial license to which Greetham refers when he writes: 'I have to admit, however, that once editors have got a whiff of normalisation, they are often tempted to take off with abandon, casting off all constraints, so heady is the power given!'[100]

[99] Joseph Bédier, 'De L'édition princeps de la *Chanson de Roland* aux editions les plus récentes ... troisième article', *Romania* 63 (1937), pp. 433-69, at p. 492 (Machan's translation, cf. *Textual Criticism and Middle English*, p. 27.

[100] Greetham, 'Challenges of Theory and Practice', p. 75. Here, Greetham describes an editorial flow-chart for normalisation which demonstrates the 'actual process whereby a normalised form is created with reference to the documentary evidence'. Greetham suggests that the flow-chart may be employed in instances where normalisation on the basis of a standard lexicon is attempted, as 'the system has sufficient safeguards ... to prevent a too-licentious editorial enthusiasm' (pp. 73-5).

When presenting normalised texts, editors often refer to the pedagogical justification for opting in favour of this method.[101] In his edition of *Cath Almaine*, Pádraig Ó Riain admits in his introduction that the presentation of a normalised text is 'very much an "academic" exercise, the sole purpose of which is to provide a readable text for students'.[102] McCone cites the example of Bergin's revised edition of Strachan's selection of stories from the *Táin*, whose preface states: 'My object has been to produce a plain text for beginners, not to make a critical restoration of the original'.[103] In fact, the pedagogical justification for normalisation has recently been called into question. In his contribution to *A Guide to Editing Middle English*, Norman Blake stresses the need for editors to be constantly aware of their audience, yet warns against practices such as normalisation and regularisation.[104] As we have seen, both Murphy and Herbert contend that the incorporation of 'normalised' or 'standardised' forms within medieval Irish texts is fraught with difficulty. Furthermore, Murray points to the problems inherent in editing medieval Irish narratives according to proposed dating. He cites the example of the final recension of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már* which has been dated to no earlier than the twelfth century, to the early-eighth-century, and most recently, to the ninth century. He also refers to the viability of the provision of an edition which accords with the date of the text when dealing with a composite text with sections written in different time periods. Referring to his edition of *Baile in Scáil*, 'an Old Irish composition reused and reworked in the Middle Irish period',[105] Murray poses the question: 'Which date is chosen, that of the underlying Old Irish composition or

[101] McCone, 'Prehistoric, Old and Middle Irish', p. 29.
[102] Pádraig Ó Riain, *Cath Almaine*, MMIS 25 (Dublin, 1978), p. xxxviii; cf. Murray, 'Reviews, Reviewers, and Critical Texts', p. 54.
[103] John Strachan, *Stories from the Táin* [3rd edn., revised by Osborn Bergin] (Dublin, 1944), p. vi.
[104] Blake, 'Reflections on the Editing of Middle English Texts', pp. 67-8.
[105] Murray, 'Reviews, Reviewers, and Critical Texts', p. 58.

the Middle Irish re-working?' He concludes that such an approach is 'neither logical nor feasible in this situation'.[106]

Similar arguments may be set forth regarding a normalised text of *BBmB*. It has previously been noted that the majority of the text can be dated to the eleventh century. However, for two of the stanzas at the conclusion of the tale, a date of the ninth century or earlier can be posited. How then is a normalised edition of this text to be created? Which date should the editor follow? There is, to my mind, no satisfactory answer. Furthermore, given the inconsistent orthographical treatment of **H** and the more general inconsistencies of Middle Irish, the editor will in all probability be forced to suppress much of this philological evidence in his/her endeavour to create a linguistically consistent text.

Though modern scholars are increasingly wary of the use of normalisation, we must continue to bear in mind the significant role it has played (and continues to play) in the creation of many of those editions which remain as scholarly standards, particularly in the classroom. There are many examples of laudible and thoughtful editions designed for student use and the success of these editions may be measured by how well the editor has managed to interact with a specifically imagined audience. In this regard, we might note the example of Francis Shaw's edition of *Aislinge Óengusso*. In his introduction, Shaw draws attention to the difficulties inherent in producing a critically edited text suitable for students. Whilst Shaw's aim is to edit the text as critically as possible, he recognises that as a constrained option in student-friendly edition and his methodological discussion describes an

[106] Ibid., p. 59.

editorial flexibility that would not be utilised if the his sole intention were the critical restoration of the text.[107]

9) The Copy-Text Theory

Whilst the remaining methods to be discussed here are yet to be employed in the practice of medieval Irish textual criticism, they ought properly to be considered by an editor, since they could be of greater value to other medieval Irish editorial projects than they will prove to be for the present study. The copy-text theory has often been compared to the best-text methodology detailed above. However, they represent two quite different approaches to textual criticism: the best-text approach traditionally dispenses with the notion of constructing an authorial or archetypal text and aims to present the most orthographically coherent and consistent manuscript throughout, referring to the remaining witnesses only in instances where the base text is obviously erroneous. The theory of copy-text, on the other hand, is firmly grounded in the Greg-Bowers school of textual criticism and the primary aim of this approach remains the establishment of the 'putative authorial usage out of the collation of multiple witnesses'. Let us recall, Greg's description of the 'true theory' of copy-text: 'the copy-text should govern (generally) in that matter of accidentals, but that the choice between substantive reading belongs to the general theory of

[107] Francis Shaw, *The Dream of Óengus: Aislinge Óenguso* (London, 1934), p. 6; pp. 38-9. We might further cite Vernam Hull's edition of *Longes Mac nUislenn* (*Longes mac n-Uislenn: The exile of the sons of Uisliu*, The Modern Language Association of America 16, New York, 1949) and Kim McCone's edition of *Echtrae Chonnlai* (*Echtrae Chonnlai and the beginnings of vernacular narrative writing in Ireland*, Maynooth Medieval Irish Texts 1, Maynooth, 2000) as further examples of normalised editions motivated by both pedagogical aims, as well as a desire to critically restore the text.

textual criticism and lies altogether beyond the narrow principle of the copy-text'. [108] The resultant copy-text edition is therefore an eclectic one.

The distinction drawn by Greg between 'accidentals' and 'substantives' often seems to be of little or no relevance to the documentary evidence studied by medievalists. If one is approaching the subject from the perspective that there existed an authorial text, the lengthy and often arduous process of manuscript redaction by which such texts have come before us inevitably deprives the editor of essential information concerning the author's preferences (particularly in accidentals). In his detailed analysis of the normalisation of accidentals in Hoccleve's *The Regement of Princes*, Greetham informs his reader that the editors of the texts were attempting to address the question:

> is it possible, considering the peculiar conditions of Hoccleve's texts, to combine orthodox 'classical' base-text theory (stemmatics) with orthodox 'modern' copytext theory to produce for the first time an edition of the text of the substantives and auctorial accidentals of a mediaeval work which survives only in scribal copies?[109]

According to Greetham, one would intuitively respond no to this question. However, for the writings of Hoccleve the *Regement of Princes* is the exception rather than the rule as almost all of Hoccleve's other works survive in holograph. Therefore, the editors of the *Regement* were able to look to these manuscripts to determine the pattern of authorial usage for the reconstruction of accidentals.

Greetham's analysis of the value of the theory of copy-text in a medieval context points to the requirement of a 'control group' for the effective application of the copy-text method. For the editors of Hoccleve's text, existing Hocclevean

[108] Greg, 'The Rationale of Copy-Text', p. 26; see Chapter One, p. 44-5.
[109] Greetham, 'Normalisation of Accidentals in Middle English Texts', at p. 123.

holographs serve as a control. Greetham attempts to extend the applicability of the approach to medieval texts with no control group or authorial holographs to consult. However, he fails to offer a working alternative and Greetham himself admits that it is precisely because the conditions of Hoccleve's text are so different from those encountered elsewhere in Middle English literature that the editors were in a position to consider normalisation of the accidentals with reference to authorially derived paradigms.[110] Returning to our text, the preceding analysis of the relationships between the existing manuscripts demonstrates that they each have a close affinity with the others and appear to derive from a common exemplar. However, we do not know who is responsible for this exemplar and we lack the requisite 'control group'.

10) 'Direct' Editing[111]

Direct editing has essentially two aims: first, to identify mechanical and unconscious error and hence to uncover the direction of variation in the scribal copies; second, to distinguish between the *usus scribendi* of the author and the scribes. There are a number of fundamental criteria which the textual evidence must adhere to for the method to remain valid:

- The text needs to survive in multiple copies to allow the editor to establish the distinction between authorial and scribal writing.
- For the same reason, the text must be of considerable length.
- Lastly, the author must be one of significant literary merit. This criterion obviously necessitates a literary judgement on the part of the modern critic regarding the techniques and motivations of medieval authors.[112]

[110] Ibid, p. 128-30.
[111] Cf. Chapter One, pp. 38-40.
[112] Moffat, 'A Bibliographical Essay', p. 37. Antony Edwards, 'Middle English Literature', in *Scholarly Editing*, ed. Greetham, p. 194: 'there must be sufficient evidence to permit the drawing of valid conclusions about the probable form of the original reading and processes of scribal error that have obscured it. Second, the evidence of the circumstances of transmission must tend to support the hypothesis of a single authorial intention'.

The text of *BBmB* does not appear in many copies, nor is it particularly lengthy. Regarding the last criterion, whilst the text of **H** is of considerable philological interest, we have seen the scribe's use of *bérla na filed* is not particularly sophisticated. Furthermore, direct editing is concerned with establishing the authorial text; the idiosyncrasies of the **H** text are purely scribal.

11) 'Social' Textual Theory

Proponents of social textual theory advocate an approach to editing which emphasises its reception in the social mileu and the ongoing and various social life of the work. Moffat has attempted to address the issue of the applicability of this approach to medieval textual material writing, asserting that 'the social textual approach is best carried out on the basis of a vast amount of quite tightly integrated data having to do with not only authorial revision but publication history and reception of which the medievalist can only be envious'.[113] Relative lack of evidence precludes its application in the creation of an edition of *BBmB*. The adoption of a parallel-text procedure in the editing of *BBmB* could appear to be a concession to this approach to textual criticism. However, in this instance, the presentation of the various witnesses in parallel is based on the nature of the manuscript evidence rather than an attempt to demonstrate a social textual theory.

That is not to suggest that social textual theory is not applicable to the text. As already noted, the primary advocate of the social approach to textual criticism – Jerome J. McGann – has argued that a true theory of textual criticism would encompass more than the creation of an edition, and sets forth an approach to texts which combines both textual criticism and literary interpretation. Let us recall:

[113] Moffat, 'A Bibliographical Essay', p. 44.

> [a] proper theory of textual criticism ought to make it clear that we may perform a comprehensive textual and bibliographical study of a work with different ends in view; as part of an editorial operation that will result in the production of an edition; as part of a critical operation for studying the character of that edition; as part of an interpretive operation for incorporating the meaning of the (past) work into a present context. No one of these practical operations is more fundamental than another, and all three depend for their existence on a prior scholarly discipline: textual criticism.[114]

Whilst the application of the social textual methodology to the current text may not result in the production of an edition, much of this chapter has been informed by the theories of social textual criticism.

In all of this, there remains the question of editorial conjecture. In the opening chapter, we saw that much of the development of the theory and practice of textual criticism in the modern period has been defined by attempts to establish a scientific methodology with the intention of minimising the role of editorial judgement. However, such scientific approaches are ultimately as thoroughly conjectural as their eclectic counterparts, relying at every step on human judgement. Chapters Two and Three have served to highlight a number of pervasive epistemological and ideological premises perpetuated by the theories and practices of traditional textual criticism. Many of the decisions regarding the kind of text presented and the extent of emendation are often foregone conclusions, based as they are on the editor's critical perspective together with the requirements of his/her intended audience. The foregoing survey reveals a rich variety among editions. As John R. Hall has pointed out in relation to the practice of editing Old English literature: '[a] variety of texts invites a variety of approaches' and a variety in

[114] McGann, 'The Monks and the Giants', at p. 189.

treatment is beneficial for any discipline.[115] But some approaches will be more valuable than others when dealing with specific texts, or categories of texts.

Throughout the preceding discussion, we have noted that the brevity of *BBmB*, together with the fact that survives in a relatively narrow textual tradition, means that it may be more or less suited to certain editorial approaches than a longer text testified to by a greater number of manuscripts. In this regard, we might consider the example of the historiographical text (or texts) now known as *Lebor Gabála Érenn* 'the Book of the Taking of Ireland' (hereafter *LGÉ*). *LGÉ* is a composite text attested to by at least twelve manuscripts as well as four fragmentary manuscripts and a sister text of one of the main witnesses. The complete text was edited Robert A. S. Macalister for the Irish Texts Society in five volumes, which were published between 1938 and 1956.[116] Macalister's edition is highly problematic and has received a great deal of criticism on numerous fronts which we will return to presently.[117]

Earlier in the century Rudolf Thurneysen and Anton Gerard Van Hamel had attempted to disentangle the textual tradition.[118] Regarding the work of Van Hamel, Richard Mark Scowcroft writes that his study is flawed by a misapplication of a classical principle of editing.

> the very quest for an "original" LG – the ancestor of all extant versions, and a close approximation to a single author's work – is misguided. We find that the oldest copy (LL) is eccentric, the

[115] Hall, 'Old English Literature', p. 162.
[116] Robert A. S. McAlister, *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, Irish Texts Society, Vols 34, 35, 39, 41, 44 (Dublin, 1938-1956).
[117] For a summary of these criticisms, see John Carey, 'A New Introduction to *Lebor Gabála Érenn*', *Irish Texts Subsidiary Series* 1 (1993), pp. 13-16.
[118] Rudolf Thurneysen, *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, Philologisch-historische Klasse, Neue Folge, Bd. 14 (1913), pp. 3-9. Anton Gerard van Hamel, 'On *Lebor Gabála*', *ZCP* 10 (1915), p. 97-197.

> "best" (Y) not at all "original", and the fullest (Ó Cléirigh) the youngest.

Regarding the construction of what he refers to as 'the most appropriate stemma for LG', Scowcroft writes that it 'would be the reverse of the classical stemma: scores of sources, tracts, poems and postulated versions would converge and sift together, in recension after recension – the work of generations of authors – until at the bottom would stand omega'.[119] Through a detailed analysis of *LGÉ*'s textual history, Scowcroft constructs the following stemma:

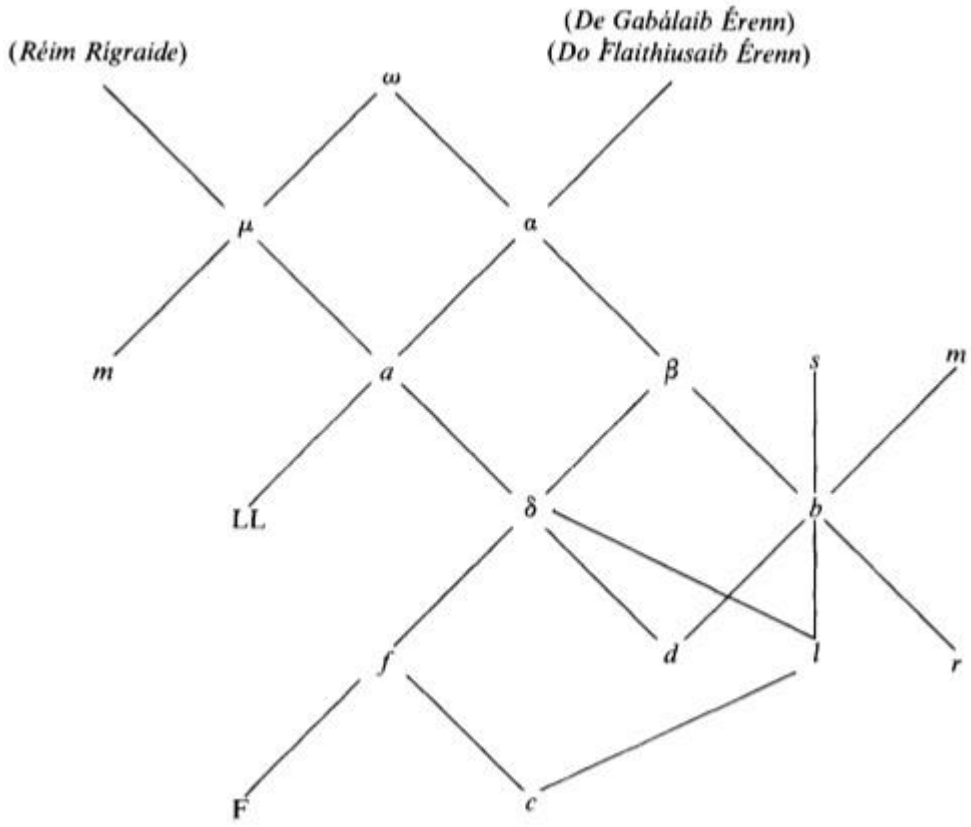

FIGURE 4.4: SCOWCROFT'S STEMMA OF THE RECENSIONS OF *LGÉ*.

Scowcroft concludes that the less a textual tradition adheres to the basic rules of the genealogical method, the less an editor can rely on them. The editorial problems with Macalister's edition emerge from his attempts to accommodate all of the

[119] Scowcroft, '*Leabhar Gabhála* – Part 1', at p. 88.

recensions and textual witnesses in a single edition and the result has been described as a 'typographical nightmare'.[120] However, Scowcroft maintains that an edition of the archetype (or '(hyp)archetypes') is still achievable and offers a number of guidelines for such a presentation of *LGÉ*. These recommendations are based on the creation of a 'multi-recensional edition', the primary aims of which are 1) to treat the recensions individually and 2) to clarify the modes of presentation and the procedures followed. He therefore suggests that future editors employ analytical paragraph-numbering, concordance tables, the numbering of lines by page and by recension. He advocates an approach whereby recensions are edited continuously rather than as part of other recensions and where the poetry is afforded the same treatment. He further envisages the use of parallel texts in instances where the witnesses to a recension are verbally disparate, noting that 'an editor forced to print separate versions must still attempt to reconstruct the recension'.[121]

Scowcroft's comments serve to highlight the potential challenges faced by editors of texts with extensive manuscript traditions. Ultimately, the editor must judge what the evidence will allow in the way of method rather than impose a method on the evidence. An important part of any edition should be a clear statement of its rationale and of the textual features that are held to justify the procedures adopted.

Conclusions

How then is this text to be edited? There is, to my mind, no one satisfactory answer. The approach taken will depend largely on the various editorial perspectives, ambitions and principles. If, on the one hand, the editor in interested in establishing

[120] Scowcroft, 'Leabhar Gabhála – Part I', p. 82.
[121] Ibid., p. 137.

the authorial or archetypal text, he/she may adopt a genealogical or eclectic methodology. If, on the other hand, the editor opts for a procedure designed to highlight the peculiarities of the **H** text, then he/she is acknowledging that the role of the editor extends beyond the traditional task of establishing the original text, and consequently, a diplomatic or semi-diplomatic approach may be favoured. Furthermore, attempts to demonstrate the context of variant forms and the manuscript transmission of the text may result in a parallel-text edition. Due to the fragmentary nature of **R**, a best-text edition will entail a certain degree of compromise. However, the approach remains viable. It is important to note that we are not dealing in absolutes – each of the above methodologies is capable of a certain degree of overlap.

The main methods for editing medieval texts have developed on the assumption that at one stage there existed a single original of the work to be edited. The methodology to be employed by the editor will depend largely on whether the extant witnesses support an attempt to reconstruct such an archetype. Modern notions of authorial intention, *mouvance* and the socialisation of texts have served to broaden the activity of editors of medieval materials. However, this should not imply that there must be a choice between the hypothetical original and the actual surviving texts. Instead, the ideal approach would be one of compromise, such as that advocated by Jacobs or Fellows, as the proposed archetype of a text still has authority. It is here that the definite written tradition of any work begins. The question then becomes how best to present these choices to a modern audience.

In the case of *BBmB*, my preferred choice is that of presenting the material in parallel accompanied by a critical edition; the utilisation not of one method but of a

combination of methods. In this way, the editor fulfils his/her primary duty, that of making available as much reliable information about a text as possible in a user-friendly format. Only armed with such information can the work of textual and literary critics begin in earnest. Finally it should be stressed that every textual situation is unique and should be approached without editorial preconceptions or ideological commitments. There is rarely, if ever, only one correct way of editing a text.

There is one final issue that needs to be addressed: how to treat the poetic text at the close of the tale, and to what extent should it influence the editor of the prose text? The following chapter describes in detail the modern practice of editing medieval Irish poetic and prosimetric texts. The intention is to emphasise the presence of a *de facto* model of editing this material and to discuss the possibility of alternative methods of edition and presentation.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORY INTO PRACTICE II: THE APPLICATION OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM TO MEDIEVAL IRISH POETRY

The May-day poem beginning *Cettemain cain ree* (hereafter *Cétemain*) which forms part of the twelfth-century saga *Macgnímartha Finn* ('The Boyhood Deeds of Finn') is preserved in a single fifteenth-century witness, Bodleian Library (Oxford) MS Laud 610, *f.* 120*r*a-b.[1] The poem itself dates to much earlier than other parts of the *Macgnímartha*. Supposedly composed by Finn upon learning the art of poetry from Finn Éces, so that he might prove his poetic skill, *Cétemain* is markedly different from the other poetic examples contained in the *Macgnímartha*.[2] It is written in an obscure style; there is no line division of the stanzas and, as Gerard Murphy remarked is his 1955 edition, at first sight it appears to be an example of an Early Irish alliterative 'rhetoric' or *rosc*(*ad*).[3] It presents many linguistic challenges and has been edited and translated on a number of occasions.

Part of the poem was printed together with a tentative translation by John O'Donovan in his incomplete edition of the *Macgnímartha*, contained in the fourth

[1] James Carney contends that as a result of the similarities between the *Cétemain* poem and two other poems associated with Finn in the section of the Bodleian MS. Rawlinson B 502 dated to *c*. 1125 'the date of the original compilation of *Macgnímartha Finn* [is] an unsettled question'. See, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', *Ériu* 22 (1971), pp. 23-80, at p. 34, n. 1: 'If, as would seem possible, the same hand is behind *Macgnímartha Finn* and the Fionn anecdote in Rawl. B 502 ... we may have to put back the date of the compilation of *Macgnímartha Finn* considerably'.

[2] See Kenneth Jackson, *Early Celtic Nature Poetry* (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 41-2: 'There is nothing distinctively Fenian about the poem, and there would not be the slightest ground for supposing there were, but for the attribution [to Finn]'.

[3] Gerard Murphy, 'Finn's Poem on May-Day', *Ériu* 17 (1955), pp. 86-99, at p. 86. Perhaps the most succinct explanation of *rosc*(*ad*) is that put forward by Liam Breatnach, 'Canon Law and Secular Law in Early Ireland: The Significance of *Bretha Nemed*', *Peritia* 3 (1984), pp. 439-59, at pp. 452-3: 'Old Irish texts appear in three forms: prose, rhyming syllabic verse, and *rosc*. The simplest definition of *rosc* is that it is neither of the other two ... Furthermore, *rosc* is characterised by various linguistic features, usually referred to "Archaic Irish", which are not found in prose, but are found in Old Irish rhyming syllabic verse'.

volume of the Ossianic Society's Transactions (1859).[4] It was first published in full in 1882 (with corrigenda in 1900) by Kuno Meyer as part of his edition of *Macgnímartha Finn*.[5] Meyer later re-edited the poem, independently of the rest of the saga, alongside a diplomatic transcription and translation in 1903.[6] A slightly altered version was given in his translation of the *Macgnímartha* published in the first volume of *Ériu*.[7] A further revision of the translation was offered by Meyer in 1911.[8] In 1935, Jackson published his translation of the poem together with a useful discussion of some of its more problematic features.[9]

Two decades later, Murphy attempted to resolve some of the difficulties of Meyer's 1903 treatment of the poem in his 1955 edition and translation published in *Ériu* and reprinted in his anthology of medieval Irish lyrical poetry (but without the editorial notes) the following year.[10] References to Murphy hereafter are to the former publication. The next effort to deal with the problems in the text was made by James Carney in his study of Old Irish accentual poetry published in 1971.[11] More recently, Maria Tymoczko published a translation of the poem based on Carney's edition in her 1983 study of Irish seasonal poetry and in 1985 Joseph Nagy

[4] O'Donovan's edition of the saga finishes with the first word (*Beraid*) of the fifth stanza of the poem. '*Macgnimartha Finn Inn So Sís*', *Transactions of the Ossianic Society* 4 (Dublin, 1859), pp. 288-304, at p. 304: 'the remaining portion of the manuscript is so defaced as to render it totally illegible'.
[5] Kuno Meyer, '*Macgnimartha Find*', *Revue Celtique* 5 (1882), pp. 195-204; Kuno Meyer, 'Corrigenda', *Archiv für celtische Lexikographie* 1 (1900), p. 482.
[6] Kuno Meyer, *Four Old Irish Songs of Summer and Winter* (London, 1903), pp. 5-13.
[7] Kuno Meyer, 'The Boyish Exploits of Finn', *Ériu* 1 (1904), pp. 180-90.
[8] Kuno Meyer, *Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry* (London, 1911), pp. 54-5.
[9] Jackson, *Early Celtic Nature Poetry*, pp. 23-4, with notes at pp. 41-2.
[10] Murphy, 'Finn's Poem on May-Day', pp. 86-99; idem, *Early Irish Lyrics*, pp. 157-8, with notes at pp. 233-4.
[11] Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', pp. 23-80, at pp. 41-3.

published his translation of the saga and its poetry, guided by the work of both Meyer and Carney.[12]

The primary focus of this chapter will be on the edited materials and their translations, beginning with Meyer's 1882 diplomatic edition and giving specific attention to the subsequent stanzaic editions of Meyer and Murphy together with Carney's accentual treatment of the poem. Furthermore, reference will be made to the scholarly translations of Jackson, Tymoczko and Nagy. The discussion is divided into three main sections. The first describes in detail the various editions and translations of *Cétemain* which have been produced to date. Specific attention is paid to such issues as the metrical qualities attributed to the poem by different commentators, suggested editorial emendations, and the various dates of composition put forward by the individual editors. Also included in this section is a discussion of the editorial approaches espoused by Murphy and Carney as demonstrated by their various, though limited, theoretical writings regarding the editing of medieval Irish verse. It is useful to compare the resultant editions of the May-day poem with one another and to the readings of the sole manuscript employed as the basis of these editions. Therefore, the second section presents the 1903, 1955 and 1971 editions and translations of the poem alongside one another, together with a freshly prepared rigorously diplomatic transcription from MS Laud 610. Utilising the issues which arise upon a detailed examination of the *Cétemain* material, and the approaches advocated by its various editors, the final section offers a discussion of how best to apply theory to the practice of editing medieval Irish poetry.

[12] Maria Tymoczko, '"Cétamon"': Vision in Early Irish Seasonal Poetry', *Éire-Ireland* 18/4 (1983), pp. 17-39; Joseph Falaky Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw: The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 290-304.

Scholarly Editions and Translations

In Meyer's initial treatment (1882), the poem is presented almost exactly as it appears in the manuscript. His subsequent edition (1903) was printed as rhyming stanzas of four lines, each printed line constituting what Meyer called a 'half-line' of poetry. To achieve this, he had to rearrange the order of the words in the second line of the first verse and again in the first line of the fourth verse.[13] In total, Meyer notes thirty-seven instances where his edition differs from the manuscript witness. Even with these emendations, a number of difficulties remain in Meyer's text. Most notable is its lack of a consistent metrical pattern.[14] Commenting on the poem's metre, Meyer observes that 'the half-lines vary in length very freely, and often in the same stanza, from four to seven syllables'; he continues: 'the last word of the second half-line and the first word of the third alliterate (except in stanzas 1, 7, 8, 10 and 12). There is a tendency towards threefold alliteration'.[15]

Meyer published his 1903 edition along with two medieval Irish seasonal poems incorporated into an anecdote concerned with Finn and contained in the early twelfth-century portion of the Bodleian MS Rawlinson B 502 – *Fuitt co bráth* and *Tánic sam* – together with the poem on winter attributed to Finn, *Scél lemm dúib*. He dates all four poems in his booklet to the late-ninth, possibly early-tenth century.

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[13] Note, however, Carney's observances that following Meyer's restructuring of the second line it still remained metrically irregular: 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', p. 32.

[14] Cf. Murphy, 'Finn's Poem on May-Day', p. 86: 'Most of the lines in his (Meyer's) emended version conform to the syllabic pattern 5^1. ALMOST always there are at least three alliterating words in every line. The stanzas are always bound to one another by alliteration of the last stressed word of a stanza with the first stressed word of the stanza which follows it. There is always rhyme between the end words of b and d; and ALMOST always there is either *aicill* or interior rhyme or assonance (*amus*), binding *a* to *b* and *c* to *d*. Though freedom to use alternative types of ornament (...) is normal in Old Irish poetry, it is not normal to have variation in the number of syllables in corresponding lines, nor is it normal for a poem to have a pattern which can be formulated in words only by use of terms such as ALMOST'.

[15] Meyer, *Four Old Irish Songs*, pp. 2-3; see Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', p. 30, n. 4: 'It is important to note that Meyer, apart from dividing the stanzas into four printed lines, made no effort to interfere with or to regularize the syllabic length of the lines'.

He further noted that *Cétemain* and *Tánic sam* share exactly the same metre, and thought that all four poems were either the work of a single poet or composed according to the same pattern.[16]

Jackson utilised Meyer's 1903 edition as the base text for his 1935 translation of *Cétemain* which closely resembles the work of his predecessor: he agrees with the date Meyer ascribed to the poem and retains many of his emendations, including the new word-order of the opening verse. Nevertheless, Jackson's approach was more conservative than that employed by Meyer and the notes accompanying his translation highlight some of the similarities and differences in the methodologies of the two scholars. Meyer, for example, employed the structure of the poem as an aid to emending the text.[17] Thus, at v. 2*a*, he suggests *denn* (translated as 'dust-coloured' from *denn* 'dust, smoke') for manuscript *dean* ('hardy') to rhyme with *foche*(*n*)*n*. By contrast, Jackson remarks that 'the internal rhyme is not to be pressed, as it is absent in some of the other verses' and adopts the reading *den* 'hardy'.[18] This is particularly interesting given that in the second half of the same quatrain, Jackson observes that while the interpretation of *cerbb* 'sharp, prickly' would fit well for the manuscript reading *cerb*, which both he and Meyer were unable to translate, it cannot be so emended due to internal rhyme with *serb* in the previous line.

[16] Meyer, *Four Old Irish Songs*, p. 2. Cf. Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', p. 35, who notes that important differences between the two poems emerge in the way is which they link successive phrases: 'in the former the couplets are usually linked by alliteration ... but this linking is not present in III [*Tánic sam*]; *fidrad freccomail*, invariable in II [*Cétemain*], is absent in III, the single instance ... being no more than would be accounted for by chance. In III every phrase ends in a monosyllable; this is usual in II, but far from invariable'.
[17] Meyer, *Four Old Irish Songs*, p. 2.
[18] Jackson, *Studies in Early Celtic Nature Poetry*, p. 42.

In his translation, Jackson tends not to attempt to extract a meaning where he considers the text to be corrupt or obscure.[19] Meyer marks three words in his edition for which he is uncertain of the translation (v. 2*a* *denn* 'dust-coloured'; v. 9*d* *gedg* 'bound'; v. 12*c* *buirither* 'rustles'). In the footnotes to his translation, he draws attention to two further instances which he was unable to construe (v. 2*d* *cerb* and v. 14*b* *aird ucht*).[20] Jackson notes six instances where he believes a reading cannot be convincingly restored, only three of which (v. 2*d*, v. 9*d*, v. 12*c*) correspond to those encountered by Meyer. For one of the six, Jackson suggests a tentative translation (v. 9*a*: Jackson's version reads 'black bog' rather than Meyer's 'peat-bog'), for another, he attempts a partial translation leaving the second half of the line blank (v. 12*b*: 'in the midst ...' for Meyer's 'in the midst of meadows'), whilst leaving the remaining four untranslated (v. 2*d*; v. 4*a*, v. 9*d*, v. 12*c*). Jackson disagreed with Meyer on one further occasion: at v. 3*b*, Jackson translates 'water' (*linn*, i.e. *li*(*o*)*nn* rhyming with *fi*(*o*)*nn*, 'soft') for Meyer's *linn* 'pool' with a palatal final consonant cluster. Like Meyer, Jackson was unable to construe *aird ucht*. However, both editors concluded that the meaning of the phrase was 'at the top of his voice' and translated it accordingly.

Though they are not explicitly stated, certain attitudes regarding editorial policy may be inferred from Jackson's translation and commentary. Firstly, his objection to emendation on the basis of unsystematic rhyme poses a fundamental question regarding the importance of rhyme in the editing of medieval Irish verse. This point will be expanded upon later in this chapter. Suffice it to say that, in this instance, Jackson concluded that an edition of the poem did not necessitate adhering

[19] As is evident throughout his translation on pp. 23-4.
[20] Jackson, *Early Celtic Nature Poetry*, p. 42.

to a metrical pattern which was not consistently attested in the text. However, he also objected to emendation which interfered with established rhyme even where a reading could not otherwise be ascertained. With regard to Jackson's translation, it has already been noted that he opted to leave blank those passages which he considered to be corrupt, thus not providing a complete translation. Yet Jackson's effort more accurately represents the difficult and obscure nature of the manuscript witness.[21] On the whole, Jackson's notes are contributions to, rather than criticisms of, Meyer's edition. Though metrical considerations inevitably played a role in both their approaches, neither scholar argued for the production of a metrically uniform text. This point is particularly remarkable when one considers the subsequent editions of Murphy and Carney.

Murphy's edition of *Cétemain* was first printed in 1955. He proposes a date for the original in the Old Irish period, perhaps the ninth century.[22] Commenting on Meyer's stanzaic treatment of the poem, Murphy opines that although he was on the right road 'he hardly went far enough'.[23] He observes that in Meyer's emended version the majority of the lines are written in the syllabic pattern 5^1.[24] Thus, Murphy concluded that the original text was composed in the metre of *lethrannaigecht mór* (5^1, 5^1, 5^1, 5^1).[25] By postulating the misplacing of certain

[21] Likewise, Meyer opted not to fully translate the poem as he was unable to supply a reading for *cerb* (v. 2*d*). However, rather than leaving part of the translated text blank, he chose to indicate his difficulty in the footnotes. Therefore, Meyer translates the relevant line as 'The boughs of wood are a thicket': *Four Old Irish Songs*, p. 9.

[22] Murphy 'Finn's Poem on May-Day', pp. 87-8: 'The language of the poem as reconstructed indicates that the original was composed in the Early Irish period. Forms such as *labraid* (: *canaid*), 4 (for older *labrithir*), and the reduction of the originally disyllabic *scíach* and *té*, to one syllable, in 4 and 7, suggest, however, that it is not older than the ninth'.

[23] Ibid., p. 86.

[24] Ibid. See Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', p. 31: 'If we examine Meyer's text, what Murphy referred to as his "emended version", we find that of the 56 lines of the poem, 6 consist of 4 syllables, 29 of 5, and 6 of 7 ... the proportion varying from the "norm" is suspiciously high, indeed almost half the total'.

[25] Described by Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Metrics* (Dublin, 1961; repr. 1973), p. 57, §33.

words, the incorporation of glosses, and 'a number of the ordinary corruptions which mar late copies of an early text' by a series of scribes, glossators and copyists, Murphy reconstructed a text in accordance with this metre.[26] He was so confident in his edition that he proclaimed: 'the result can hardly fail to convince the readers that the reconstructed text of *Cétemain* ... is more like the poem as originally composed than the text presented by the scribe of Laud 610'.[27]

In his 1971 edition of the poem, Carney points out that whilst Murphy's observations regarding the predominance of the syllabic pattern 5^1 were technically correct, the proportion of lines conforming to this pattern is far less convincing than Murphy would lead his reader to believe (cf. n. 26). Carney rejects Murphy's reconstruction of the poem, describing it as 'an extreme example of "over-edition"' which in many lines necessitated the removal of words which undermined the poetic imagery.[28] On both metrical and linguistic grounds, Carney suggests a much earlier date than previously considered for the poem, that of the late-sixth to early-seventh century, or possibly even earlier.[29] Carney prefers to view the poem as Old Irish

[26] Murphy, 'Finn's Poem on May-Day', p. 87: 'In the text so reconstructed: ALL lines except 13*c* have the pattern 5^1; the stanzas are ALL bound to one another by alliteration of their last stressed word with the first stressed word of the following stanza; at least three alliterating words ALWAYS occur in every line, except under special circumstances; there is ALWAYS rhyme between the end words of *b* and *d* and ALWAYS either *aicill* or interior rhyme or vowel assonance (*amus*), binding *a* to *b* and *c* to *d*'. Compare with Murphy's assessment of Meyer's 1903 edition contained in note 14 (above).

[27] Ibid., p. 87.

[28] Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', p. 31: 'In the editing of early poetry from manuscripts of five or six centuries later than the date of composition a very common fault is what might be called "over-edition"... Murphy's presentation of this poem involves ... more extensive interference with the manuscript text than has ever been thought necessary by a modern Irish scholar in a similar case'. He cites for example, v. 7*a* which reads *Labraid tragna trén bard* and which Carney translates as 'The corncrake utters – powerful bard'. Here, Murphy rejects the final word despite it having both a metrical and metaphorical function and proposes instead *Labraid tragna trén* 'The strenuous corncrake speaks'.

[29] Cf. Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', p. 37, where he identifies a number of archaic linguistic features. However, Carney's tendency to date poems earlier than other scholars has not received general support in the interim. See, for example, Kevin Murray's remarks in his review of James Carney's 'Language and Literature, 1169-1534' in *A New History of Ireland* 1, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford, 2005), pp. 451-510, in *Classics Ireland* 14 (2007), pp. 77-88, at p. 80.

accentual verse,[30] and in the introductory discussion to his edition he describes the metre thus:

> The stanza in [this poem] may be regarded as consisting of couplets with monosyllabic end-rhyme. Each line has four phrases, the couplets eight, and hence is taken here as belonging to the *ochtfhoclach* ('eight-phrased'?) type. Apart from the final monosyllabic rhyme there is no syllable count, and we find in practice that the number of syllables may vary considerably.[31]

By editing the poem according to this system, Carney succeeds in reconstructing a text remarkably close to the original manuscript witness.

Editorial Approaches Espoused by Murphy and Carney

Before continuing with a more detailed examination of the editions of the May-day poem by Murphy and Carney (presented in parallel below), it might be useful to compare the editorial approaches espoused by the two scholars. In 1956, Murphy published his anthology of Early Irish verse – *Early Irish Lyrics* (hereafter *EIL*) – which received much praise; despite the subsequent publication of similar anthologies, it remains the standard collection of medieval Irish lyric verse for students and scholars today. The anthology consists of fifty-eight poems dated to between the eighth and the end of the twelfth century. Murphy believed that all the poems were composed in the new metres (*núa-chrutha*), which he defined as: 'rhymed stanzaic metres based on syllable-counting, with rhythm fixed only in the last foot of each line'. Murphy further notes that this kind of verse was the 'normal metre of the educated class' and that it was 'undoubtedly modelled on early

[30] 'The commonest basic line had four stresses: the line was divided into two parts by a caesura, and there is alliterative linking between the two parts of the line. Furthermore, the lines and quatrains are similarly linked by alliteration; and the last word or words of a poem should echo the opening, so that the whole is a mnemonic unit': Carney, 'Language and Literature', pp. 454-5.
[31] Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', p. 35.

continental Latin hymn-metres'.[32] The anthology is divided into two sections. The first section contains poems concerned mainly with religious themes. The second section is, for the most part, made up of poetry from saga texts.[33] Murphy regarded poetry of the former type as having been transmitted from its beginning in writing, whereas he contended that what he termed secular poems were normally preserved orally and only committed to writing at a later date. Therefore, he believed that the manuscripts containing secular poetry were, from the beginning, marred by 'faulty memory, unconscious alteration, and interpolation', and thus that 'to obtain a text understandable in almost all its details, and linguistically and metrically uniform, is today impossible'.[34] In the 'Foreword' to the 1998 reprint of *EIL*, Tomás Ó Cathasaigh remarks that Murphy's perception of how secular poetic material was transmitted occasionally leads to 'extravagant emendation'.[35] Murphy himself acknowledged that the extent of his emendation in two poems (no. 34 *Aithbe damsa bés mora* and no. 52 *Cétemain*) might shock readers.[36]

Despite the differences in transmission which he envisages, the editorial process advocated by Murphy is the same for both monastic and secular poetry. In his introduction to *EIL*, he dismisses the validity of the application of the mechanical Latinist approach – i.e. the 'genealogical method' – to editing medieval Irish poetry attested only in much later manuscripts. Instead, he proposes the following system:

[32] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. xiv. It will be seen that Carney disagreed with this description of the metre of two poems in particular – *Cétemain* and *Tánic sam*.
[33] It is noteworthy that whilst Murphy considered Irish lyric verse to be clearly influenced by monastic Latin hymns, he elsewhere writes that the Irish saga material constituted 'a rich mass of tales depicting a West-European barbaric civilisation as yet uninfluenced by the mighty sister civilisation of Graeco-Roman lands': Gerard Murphy, *Saga and Myth in Ancient Ireland*, p. 55 (cited by Tomás Ó Cathasaigh in the 'Foreword' to the 1998 reprint of *Early Irish Lyrics* (p. vi)).
[34] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. xvii.
[35] Ibid., p. vi.
[36] Ibid., p. xix.

> first decide on the date of the poem. Then, using our knowledge of the language and metre current at that date, and altering the manuscript texts as little as possible, we must try to construct a text which at least would not shock the original author so greatly as the scribes' texts certainly would. That is about as near as we can come to establishing an original text. Emendation, which the Latinist rightly avoids, must, therefore, only too often be relied on by the editor of an anthology such as this.[37]

Murphy's primary reason for arriving at this methodology is the change evident in the Irish language over a number of centuries as scribes of Irish texts regularly modernised and emended the language of their sources. Furthermore, these scribes acted as more than mere copyists and it was not uncommon for them to alter the content of the texts they were transcribing. It is all too often overlooked – and therefore worth repeating – that Murphy's comments applied specifically to the editing of early poems preserved in manuscripts of a much later date.

In order to achieve a better understanding of Murphy's editorial methodology, we might examine in detail the process whereby he reconstructed the text of a specific poem attested in multiple manuscripts. *Aithbe damsa bés mora* (*EIL* no. 34), more commonly known as 'The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare', is preserved in five manuscripts: **H**, **N**, **h**, **B** and **b**.[38] In 1899, Meyer published the first edition of the poem based on the only two manuscript witnesses then known to him – **H** and **h**.[39] In 1953, Murphy published a normalised and emended edition of the poem based on all five manuscript witnesses.[40] He then presented a revised

[37] Ibid., p. xix. For Hull's objections to Murphy's editorial methodology see Chapter Two, pp. 96-8.
[38] Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 1337, olim. H. 3. 18, p. 42, col. 2, (sixteenth century) ('**H**'); National Library of Ireland, Gaelic MS 7, col. 23 (sixteenth century) ('**N**'); Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS. 1337, olim. H. 3. 18, p. 764 (seventeenth century) ('**h**'); Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 1363, olim. H. 4. 22, p. 46 (sixteenth century) ('**B**'); Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS. 1337, olim. H. 5. 6, p. 187 (seventeenth century) ('**b**').
[39] Kuno Meyer, 'Stories and Songs from Irish MSS.', *Otia Merseiana* 1 (London, 1899), pp. 119-28.
[40] Gerard Murphy, 'The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 55C (1952-3), pp. 83-109.

version of this edition in *EIL*.[41] The poem was subsequently edited and translated by Carney in his *Medieval Irish Lyrics*, by David Greene and Frank O'Connor in their *Golden Treasury of Irish Poetry*, and by Donncha Ó hAodha, who has pointed out that each of these editions 'has been beholden to the work of Murphy'.[42] The following remarks are based primarily on Murphy's earlier work which, in addition to the emended text, supplies the corresponding verses of the two manuscripts Murphy considered to be the principal witnesses to the tradition, **H** and **N**, in parallel at the foot of each page together with *variae lectiones* from the remaining three manuscripts (**h**, **B**, **b**).

Murphy regarded *Aithbe damsa bés mora* as a 'secular' poem. When we consider his aforementioned opinions regarding the impossibility of reconstructing such poetic texts, we must ask the question: what is the aim of Murphy's edition? In his introduction to the poem, he echoes the sentiment expressed in the opening remarks of his 1955 edition of *Cétemain* and in the introduction to *EIL* that he hopes to have produced a text which at least would not shock its original author as he believed the texts presented by the manuscripts surely would.[43] Whilst this statement appears to be deliberately vague, it is clear that Murphy was attempting to get beyond the textual archetype. Though he did not presume to be establishing the authorial text, he did believe that his edition came closer to it than the texts presented by the manuscripts. The method whereby he attempted to reconstruct such a text is essentially that set forth in the introduction to *EIL*.

[41] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, pp 75-83, with notes at pp. 206-8.
[42] James Carney, *Medieval Irish Lyrics: Selected and Translated* (Portlaoise, 1967; repr. with *The Irish Bardic Poet*, 1985), pp. 28-41; David Greene and Frank O'Connor, *A Golden Treasury of Irish Peotry* (London, 1967), pp. 48-55; Donncha Ó hAodha, 'The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare', in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers*, eds Ó Corráin, Breatnach and McCone, pp. 308-331, at p. 309.
[43] Murphy, 'The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare', p. x; idem, 'Finn's Poem on May-Day', p. 87; idem, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. xix.

Firstly, Murphy proposes a date in the eighth or early ninth century for the original composition of the poem. He then emends the text in accordance with this proposed date. Therefore, in establishing the normalised edition, he regularly alters Middle Irish forms to conform to Old Irish usage.[44] Where the manuscript readings cannot be 'restored' to the language of the Old Irish period without affecting the metre of the poem, Murphy concludes that such quatrains must contain corruptions or interpolations (i.e. vv. 22, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35).[45] Readings of the normalised text considered to be supported by the manuscript evidence are passed over silently. Where emendations are less straightforward, they are discussed in full. An examination of the notes accompanying the edition reveals that his process of selection between variant readings is thoroughly eclectic (and at times inconsistent),[46] despite the fact that Murphy's analysis of the sources clearly illustrates the existence of a common fixed core with two lines of descent.

[44] In addition to linguistic evidence, Murphy maintains that the metre of the poem which combines various forms of *rannaigecht* and *deibide* would support a date of composition during the Early Irish period. However, this combination of various metres is not unique to the Early Irish period and, therefore, this argument does not seem sustainable. See Brian Ó Cuív, 'Some Developments in Irish Metrics', *Éigse* 12 (1968), pp. 273-90, who states that 'the bulk of verse extant from the Old and Middle Irish periods is in a limited range of metres, principally *deibhidhe* and *rannaigheacht*' (p. 276) and that a survey of lengthy formal poems which utilises the primary metrical requirements of *dán dírech* as a basis for comparison conclusively demonstrates that the same is true of the Modern Irish period (p. 277). Murphy further observes that, as a rule, restoration of Early Irish forms does not affect the metre. For the purposes of the present discussion, it is assumed that Murphy's dating of the poem is correct.

[45] In order for this point to remain valid, we must assume that the metre of the original Early Irish poem was uniformly consistent and without fault and we must also accept the date of *c.* 800 AD which Murphy assigned to the poem. Ó hAodha ('The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare', Notes, pp. 317-31, at p. xxx) has expressed considerable doubt regarding Murphy's dating of the poem and argues for the originality of all but one (v. 27) of the stanzas which Murphy believed may have been interpolated. It is widely accepted that this stanza did not form part of the original poem as it belongs to a *dindshenchas* poem on Ard Ruide.

[46] For example, in v. 19*b* ('The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare', p. 99) the manuscript readings suggest the preterite *do-muilt*; however, Murphy emends the text to read perfect *ro muilt* to suit the context. Compare this to his approach to v. 5 (Ibid. p. 91) where he notes that 'on the whole, though the context ... suggests the 2nd pers. pl., the MS. spellings seem to point to 3d pers. pl. forms: these have, therefore, been preferred' (it should be noted that in the *EIL* edition, he emends the readings to 2nd pl). In contrast, at v. 1*a* Murphy omits the preposition *cen* on the basis of shared readings as it interferes with the metre of the poem.

The number of verses, and the order in which they appear in each of the manuscripts, allows Murphy to arrive at a number of conclusions regarding the transmission of the poem. As already noted, two separate strata are distinguishable. The first of these, referred to in *EIL* as **X**, consists of manuscript **H** which contains thirty-five quatrains. Murphy refers to **H** as the 'best manuscript' of the poem on two separate occasions.[47] Unfortunately, he does not specify his reasons for privileging the **H** witness. The second branch is made up of the remaining four witnesses – **N**, **h**, **B** and **b** – and is referred to by Murphy as **Y**. Within the latter group, **N** and **h**, which also preserve all thirty-five quatrains, are closely related; **B** and **b**, which consist of thirteen and twelve quatrains respectively, descend from a lost manuscript which presumably did not contain the concluding twenty-two quatrains of the **Nh** tradition.[48] Despite the alternate arrangement of the verses suggested by the **Y** tradition, Murphy presents the thirty-five quatrains in the order in which they appear in the **H** version.[49] This includes two (possibly three) verses which he believed to be tenth-century interpolations, at least one of which is attested by all of the manuscript witnesses.

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[47] Murphy, 'The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare', p. 85; idem, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. 207.

[48] Murphy provides a concordance table based on the ordering and numbering of the thirty-five quatrains contained in **H**.

N	*H*	*B*	*b*
1-9	1-9	1-9	1-4, 6-9
11-12	11-12	11-12	11-12
27	27	27	27
23	23	23	23
10	10	wanting	wanting
13-22	13-22	”	”
24-26	24-26	”	”
28-35	28-35	”	”

Cf. Ó hAodha's assessment of the manuscript tradition: 'The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare', p. 309.

[49] Murphy pointed out that v. 27 (see n. 50), opening *Tri thuile*, was introduced into the poem because the following three stanzas in **H** begin with the phrase *Tonn tuili*. According to Ó hAodha, 'The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare', p. 328, this is clear evidence that the order of the stanzas in **H** is superior.

An examination of Murphy's analysis of the textual tradition allows the following stemma to be drawn, with ω representing the Middle Irish archetype of the two branches, and α representing the Old Irish original.

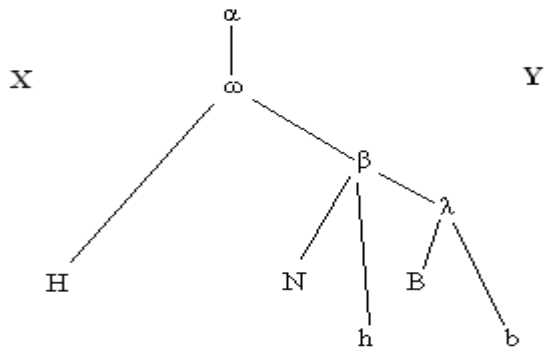

FIGURE 4.5: STEMMA OF *EIL* NO. 34 MIDDLE IRISH ARCHETYPE

That ω was composed during the Middle Irish period is supported by the presence of at least one of the tenth- or eleventh-century interpolations – as posited by Murphy – in all of the five manuscript witnesses. Therefore, it would appear that the shared witness of all versions of the text enables reconstruction of the Middle Irish archetype. Murphy is undeniably aware of the genetic relationships shared between the manuscripts. However, he does not attempt the construction of a *stemma codicum*, nor does he utilise general recensionist principles in order to establish the text. According to the conventions of the classical method, readings common to both branches of the tradition may be used to establish the text of ω. Once ω has been reconstructed, the putative Old Irish original (α) might be created by replacing Middle Irish forms with their Old Irish counterparts and eliminating later interpolations. Thus, the production of a *stemma codicum* yields substantial results which may be employed to achieve Murphy's editorial goals, that is to get beyond the archetype and to establish a text closer to the authorial original than that

contained in the existing manuscript witnesses. Murphy ignores these potential benefits and employs his preferred editorial procedure in the teeth of the manuscript evidence. Consequently, this edition demonstrates a serious weakness in his method and highlights the dangers of inflexible adherence to a single methodology which does not reflect the state of the individual textual tradition.

In the 1969-70 volume of *Éigse*, James Carney challenged the applicability of Murphy's editorial methodology.[50] He argued that it entails the 'pre-judgement of the date of a poem, an eclectic method involving a considerable degree of subjectivity, and a licence to emend which in practice may become a license to recreate'; furthermore, he contends that the basis of Murphy's methodology is an exaggeration of the difficulties posed by the manuscript material.[51] Carney suggests that better results may be achieved by altering the classical procedure of editing texts in response to the specifics of the Irish tradition together with the avoidance of superfluous emendation. He outlines his understanding of the classical method as 'a preliminary grouping of manuscripts into families and, then, a mechanical production of the text'.[52]

Carney employs the example of *EIL* poem no. 30, *Robad mellach, a meic mo Dé,* in an attempt to illustrate his recommendations regarding editorial practice. In 1967, Carney published a version of the poem in his anthology, *Medieval Irish*

[50] Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', *Éigse* 13 (1969-70), pp. 291-312.
[51] Ibid., p. 294. For an alternative view, see Binchy's review of *Early Irish Lyrics* where he states that Murphy 'rightly deprecates the idea that these problems [i.e. the difficulties facing editors of Irish poems] can be solved with the machinery devised by classical scholars for establishing the received text': p. 293.
[52] Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', p. 294. Note, however, that the proposed alterations to the classical system are not defined further and a close analysis of Carney's observations demonstrates that the editorial procedure which he recommends is, for the most part, that of classical philologists.

Lyrics, which was largely based on the text printed in *EIL*.[53] However, for reasons to be discussed presently, he contended that the poem required re-editing. Murphy assigns *Robad mellach* to the late tenth or early eleventh century and emends the text accordingly; it is ascribed to Colum Cille and depicts his imagined return home from exile. It exists in three manuscripts, **N**, **B** and **R**.[54] Carney describes the textual tradition thus: **R** was produced by the deliberate re-writing of the text represented by **N** and **B** which are closely related, and as such constitutes a 'secondary creative act'.[55]

Though not overtly articulated, it is clear that the desired outcome of Carney's proposed classical edition would be to establish the text of the exemplar of the **NB** tradition through the application of certain principles intended to minimise editorial subjectivity. He states that in establishing this text all instances of rewriting would be dismissed and, therefore, **R** would be consulted only where it might resolve differences between **N** and **B** or where there might be a 'legitimate minor variant'.[56] Carney leads his reader to believe that Murphy was in complete agreement with the aforementioned assessment of the manuscript filiation and consequently that the latter's decision to combine both versions of the poem in the edition – that is **R** and **NB** – was counter-intuitive. However, when we examine Murphy's commentary on the sources we see that whilst he attributes some of the differences between the **R** and **NB** traditions to an attempt to make the poem more intelligible to a later audience, he does not believe that this accounts for all of the

[53] Carney, *Medieval Irish Lyrics*, pp. 82-6.
[54] Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, MS 23 N 10, p. 91 ('**N**'); Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, MS B iv 2, f. 141a ('**B**'); Bibliothéque Royale, Brussels, MS 5100-4, p. 41 ('**R**').
[55] For Carney's differentiation between mechanical scribal variants and 'secondary creative acts' see p. 82, n.79.
[56] Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', p. 295.

variations.[57] Therefore, contrary to Carney's objections, if we follow Murphy's argument, **R** may still contribute to establishing the archetype of **NB**.[58]

Each scholar's understanding of the origins of the **R** tradition has a significant influence on their resultant editions. For example, in the opening line of quatrain three, Colum Cille envisions the scene of his arrival at Port na Ferg on Lough Foyle. The text of **NB** reads *slúag na feblán roptis faíltig*, **R** reads *slúag na faílenn roptis faíltech*. Murphy suggests a reading which incorporates both **NB** and **R**: *slúag na faílenn robtis faíltig* 'the flocked seagulls would rejoice'. Carney contends that the reading of **NB** is the original as it is the *lectio difficilior* and thus that an edition should read *slúag na Feblán, roptis faíltig* 'The Foyle-folk would be welcoming'.[59] According to Carney, the original author of the poem wrote *Feblán*, 'of the Foyle folk', a *hapax legomenon* which was altered by a subsequent medieval scribe who did not understand the term. It is noteworthy that Murphy also refers to

[57] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. 202: 'N and B present a text that is essentially the same. R often differs from them, and *some of the differences* seem to be due to the desire to make the poem more intelligible to readers of a period later than that of the original poet' (my emphasis).

[58] It is difficult to say with any degree of certainty what the aim of Murphy's edition was as he admits to including lines in his anthology version which he did not consider to be part of the original. See Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. 203: 'The principle that the more difficult reading is to be preferred renders it unlikely that the simple reading suggested by R and adopted in this anthology in 9a was really that of the original poem'. **NB** reads *Mad mod-rot-gen, a maic mo Dé* which Carney translates as 'Happily were you born, Son of my God'. However, Murphy's reconstructed text supplies **R** *Do grádaiges íatha Éirenn*, 'I have loved the lands of Ireland'. Murphy's reasons for including the **R** reading in his anthology are not clear. Perhaps he considered neither version to be part of the original and that **R** supplied a better reading; however, this is merely speculation as he offers no explanation. The insertion of readings which Murphy did not consider to be part of the original poem is not unique to *Robad mellach*; see, for example, v. 3*cd* of *Aithbe damsa bés mora*: Murphy's edition reads *sinni, ind inbaid marsimme* / *batar doíni carsaimme* and although he expressed doubts regarding the insertion of *sinni* at the beginning of the line ('The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare', p. 89), he retained the reading in his revised edition of the poem; again at v. 8*c* he states that the reading adopted in his edition 'may not be the original one' (p. 93).

[59] This is not an alteration of the classical approach and features in Paul Maas' exposition of the method, in *Textual Criticism*, p. 13: 'Where several conjectures are available we should choose in the first instance that which is best in style and matter, in the second that which makes it easiest to see how the corruption arose. In guessing at how the corruption arose we must take into account: (a) what mistakes are most likely to occur on psychological grounds (e.g. the tendency for an uncommon expression to be replaced by a common one, 'trivialisation'; this is why it is right to prefer as a rule the '*lectio difficilior*')'.

the principle of *lectio difficilior* in his discussion of v. 9*a*. Thus, it seems likely that he considered the reading of v. 3*a*, supplied by **NB**, to be incorrect rather than merely more difficult. Subsequent scholarship has favoured Murphy's interpretation of this line.[60] Therefore, we may observe that while the application of certain mechanical principles may appear to remove editorial subjectivity, it is not guaranteed to provide the correct reading of the exemplar of the **NB** tradition which is the desired result of Carney's proposed edition.

Carney attempts further to substantiate his proposed editorial approach through a comparison of the editions of the sixth quatrain produced by the application of the eclectic method, represented by Murphy's work, with the principles of the classical method. Once again, Murphy's text is a conflation of both versions and the second half of the quatrain is based largely on **R**. As reconstructed by Murphy, the quatrain reads:

Ba ma-ngénar do mac Dímma
'na chill chredlaig,
airm i gcluinfinn tíar i nDurmaig
mían dom menmain.

'Happy for Dímma's son in his holy abbey, where I might hear what would delight my mind in Durrow in the west'.[61]

[60] In her discussion of medieval Irish exile poetry, Máire Herbert employs the editions and translations of both Murphy and Carney and selects the reading which she believes most accurately portrays the original. In this instance she supports Murphy's translation. At p. 132, Herbert initially cites both interpretations of the v. 3*a*. However, in her subsequent examination of the text, she refers to the seabirds of Lough Foyle and thus it may be inferred that she believes that Murphy's reading is to be preferred: 'Becoming an Exile: Colum Cille in Middle-Irish Poetry', in *CSANA Yearbook* 3-4, *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition. A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford*, eds Joseph Falaky Nagy and Leslie Jones (Dublin, 2005), pp. 131-40.

[61] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. 66. The reading of **NB** established by Carney is cited below. **R** reads: *Fa ma-ngénar do mac Dímma* / *don chill chredlaig,* / *airm i cluinfider i nDurmaig,* / *mían le menmain*, 'Happy for the son of Dímma from the holy church; the place where he will be heard in Durrow is what mind desires': Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', p. 295.

Carney argues that 'no legitimate editorial method ... will mould the variant stanzas into one'.[62] Alternatively, if we accept that **R** is secondary and derivative of **NB**, an edition produced by the classical method would employ **NB** to establish the text. The editor could then provide the complete stanza of **R** in a note. The end product is one which differs greatly from the eclectic edition contained in *EIL*. Carney gives the following text and translation of **NB**:

Mad mo-ngénar do mac Dimma
'na chill chredlaig,
mían dom anmain con-[id n-]aicinn
thíar i nDermaig.

'Happy for the son of Dímma in his holy church; it were a desire of my soul that I should see him in Durrow in the west'.[63]

Carney relies on a single emendation (the insertion of the Old Irish 3 sg. masc. Class C infixed pronoun *-id n-*) to give the above text of **NB**. He states the emendation can be 'amply justified' as the line is syllabically irregular and *co n-aicinn* requires an object.[64]

Carney continues his discussion by making suggestions regarding editions of three more poems in *EIL*, intended further to illustrate the differences between the application of the classical method and an eclectic approach. A number of general recommendations regarding the editing of medieval Irish poetry emerge from Carney's criticisms. The first poem, *A ben, bennacht fort – ná ráid* (*EIL*, no. 7), is preserved in two independent, but closely related, manuscript witnesses – **LL** and **H**.[65] The existence of a common source earlier than **LL** is assumed and, for this

[62] Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', p. 296.
[63] Ibid., p. 296.
[64] Ibid., n. 1.
[65] Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 1339, p. 278 (*Book of Leinster*, olim H. 2. 18) ('**LL**'); Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS 1337, 731 (olim H. 3. 18) ('**H**').

reason, Carney recommends that shared readings should not be dismissed easily, nor should they be subjected to anything other than the most basic of emendations.[66] The poem is attributed to a ninth-century cleric and both Murphy and Carney agree that the language of the poem is consistent with this date. The aim of Murphy's edition is to establish the poem 'in the exact form in which it was composed by the poet'.[67] Similarly, Carney appears to be attempting to determine the text as composed by the original poet.[68] His criticisms of Murphy's edition are, therefore, based on the manner in which Murphy reconstructed his text rather than his editorial goal. Murphy's text is normalised to an Old Irish standard from the text of **LL** following collation with **H**. Carney also regularises the spelling to correspond with Old Irish forms; however, he objects to emendations made with the sole intention of the bringing the language of the text into line with the glosses. Linke Jackson's criticisms of Meyer's 1903 edition of *Cétemain*, Murphy's emendations on the basis of internal rhyme, which is not consistently attested by the manuscript sources are rejected as are emendations which interfere with established rhyme.[69]

The next text to be scrutinised, *Tuc dam, a Dé móir* (*EIL*, no. 27), is contained in four manuscripts **Y**, **A**, **E** and **B**.[70] Murphy was unaware of the existence of **B** and his text was constructed from the remaining three witnesses. He dated the poem to the twelfth century or later, and the spelling in his edition is normalised from the text of **A** following collation with **Y** and **E**; Carney describes

[66] Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', p. 297.
[67] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. 175.
[68] This may be inferred through Carney's comments regarding v. 6*b* ('Notes of Early Irish Verse', p. 299): 'It is possible ... that for *fiado, fiadhae* of MSS. the original poet wrote *fiadat*'.
[69] Ibid., p. 297.
[70] London, British Library, Add. 30512, f. 30b ('**A**'); Trinity College Library, Dublin, *Yellow Book of Lecan*, MS 1318 (olim. H. 2. 16), col. 400 ('**Y**'); British Library, Egerton 92, f. 6b ('**E**'); Brussels MS 20978-9 ('**B**').

the manuscript tradition as unsatisfactory as each manuscript supplies a different number of quatrains and **E** is largely illegible. He suggests that all four witnesses are descended from a single faulty copy.[71] It may be inferred that the intention of Carney's edition is the recreation of the source of this erroneous copy. Once again, Carney proposes a date earlier than that set forth by Murphy, arguing for the tenth century or possibly the late ninth. He recommends (for reasons unspecified) that an anthology edition should be based on **B**, that readings attested by the majority of the manuscripts should be privileged and, as there is evidence of rewriting, in instances where no shared reading exists that the original may be sought in the *lectio difficillima*, 'the most difficult reading'.[72]

Carney's comments regarding the final poem to be considered in this section, 'The Queen of Ireland's Goose' (*EIL*, no. 37), are largely concerned with Murphy's historical contextualisation (or lack thereof) and linguistic analysis of the original poetic composition and their impact upon his editorial methodology and, consequently, upon his edition.[73] Whilst establishing the historical context in which a text was composed is undoubtedly an important task, an examination of Carney's objections to the editions of Murphy and Meyer shows that the main issue which separates his work from the earlier interpretations is a desire to retain readings attested by the manuscript (as far as possible).

Some conclusions regarding Carney's editorial procedures can be drawn from the above discussion. First and foremost, his primary editorial goal is to

[71] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, pp. 62 -5 (notes at pp. 200-1); Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', p. 300.
[72] Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', p. 301.
[73] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, pp. 88-91 (notes at pp. 12-5); Carney 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', pp 304-310, with suggested emendations of Murphy's text on pp. 311-2.

uphold manuscript readings. Emendation is to be employed sparingly and, where it cannot be avoided, the editor must cite as its justification the direction of scribal error. In the production of a critical edition, Carney believes that the genealogical method best supports these objectives. It is, therefore, unsurprising that it is the method which Carney advocates. As the discussion concerning the genealogical method contained in the opening chapter highlighted, in order for the method to remain valid the manuscript evidence must conform to certain patterns, i.e. that all extant witnesses derive from a single archetype and that the textual tradition be closed, without horizontal transmission or cross-contamination.[74] Where this model fails, Carney reduces or simplifies the tradition of a text so that it might be better suited to his predefined methodology.[75] For example, in assessing the manuscript evidence for *Robad mellach*, Carney dismisses the possibility that **R** might contain an alternative source of the tradition and thus denies that it holds any independent value in establishing the reading of the archetype. Bearing in mind the famous aphorism of Housman that we should neglect no safeguard lying within our reach,[76] Carney's dismissive approach to rewriting and reworking is a hazardous one as it involves the wholesale rejection of potentially correct readings without appraising their individual merits. As Carney himself notes, in textual traditions where rewriting has occurred, there tends to be a great deal of manuscript diversity and different scribes will draw on the source text to a greater or lesser degree.[77]

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[74] See Chapter One, pp. 26-7.

[75] Timpanaro (*The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, pp. 123-4): 'In the face of these difficulties [cross-contamination and scribal innovation], some scholars followed a tendency that ... had its first representative in Lachmann himself: they preferred to cut the knot rather than untie it. They tried to eliminate as many manuscripts as they could, as suspected in general of being interpolated or *descripti* [i.e. sister texts or copies]. Once the manuscript tradition had been reduced to one or two manuscripts, every genealogical difficulty conveniently vanished'.

[76] Housman, 'The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism (1921)', p. 138.

[77] Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', p. 293.

There are two further considerations pertinent to Carney's recommendations concerning the treatment of medieval Irish verse. Firstly, one of the chief criteria employed by Carney in choosing between variant readings is the maxim *lectio difficilior potior* 'the more difficult reading is the better one'. As Hussey warns in his discussion of the methodology employed by Kane and Donaldson in their edition of *Piers Plowman*, '*lectio difficilior* is a fine principle, but is it universally applicable? Did a medieval author never write a *lectio facilior* which, through a copyist's carelessness or inattention, became corrupted into something which we find more difficult?'[78] Secondly, Carney's acceptance of the primacy of shared readings may also lead to the incorporation of incorrect material, as to believe that wherever readings are shared they are correct is to completely deny the possibility of the dissemination of corrupt readings. This is not to suggest that Carney did not understand medieval Irish poetry; few have understood it better. However, as we have seen, he was editing according to a very specific agenda, i.e. to prove the accuracy of manuscript readings, and his methodology was selected in order to support this objective.[79]

A comparison of the two scholar's methodologies reveals that their regard for the applicability of the recensionary method had a direct influence on the extent to which they employed editorial emendation. Whilst Murphy discounts the applicability of the classical approach, he contends that emendation is a necessity for

[78] Hussey, 'The Scale of Perfection', p. 100. See also Pearsall, 'Editing Medieval Texts', at p. 95: 'The editor who accepts the principle of *lectio difficilior* and who accepts also the associated principle of economy in the hypothesis of the generation of variants – who accepts, that is, any limitation on the operation of subjective judgment – will sometimes find himself constrained to adopt "worse" readings simple because they are harder to explain as scribal given the ubiquity of editorialising improvement'.
[79] Another point on which Carney found himself to be at variance with the general consensus was the issue of dating. Carney believed that the date of a number of medieval Irish poems could be pushed back considerably. It might be suggested, therefore, that in addition to validating his preferred editorial method and supporting manuscript readings, Carney's approach was also guided by a desire to demonstrate the accuracy of his linguistic observations.

the editor of medieval Irish verse. As we have seen, Murphy believed that the majority of secular poetry originated in the oral tradition and therefore maintained that the hypothetical textual archetypes of existing manuscripts of secular poetry were from their beginning corrupt. Consequently, he assigns very little significance to shared readings. Carney's approach, on the other hand, is guided by a desire to demonstrate the accuracy of the manuscript evidence and naturally, therefore, he concludes that commonly attested readings are to be afforded primacy. Both scholars agree that the production of medieval Irish poetry was not mechanical, that is to say that it was subject to human error and/or variance.[80] This was the principal reason for Murphy's dismissal of the genealogical approach to editing poetic texts preserved in later manuscripts. Yet, if we examine Carney's definition of the genealogical method, and the subsequent editorial recommendations set forth in his critique of Murphy, we find that he was of the opinion that poetic texts, though not produced mechanically, could still be best reconstructed by mechanical means.

The preceding discussion of the methodologies set forth by Murphy and Carney reveals two disparate approaches to editing medieval Irish verse. Elsewhere, Carney commented upon the differences which separate his treatment of certain poetic material from that of Murphy. His understanding of these differences is worth quoting in full:

> [They] seem to rest ultimately on our general approach to early Irish literature, a matter, perhaps, of a difference of emphasis, rather than one of diametric opposition. I would agree with Murphy that there is, generally speaking, an oral background to early Irish literature. But from the earliest period there is always the possibility that a given tale is a new literary creation, with only a minimal basis in oral tradition. Even in cases where a tale has an oral basis, in the transference of the tale from the oral to the

[80] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. xix; Carney, 'Linking Alliteration ('Fidrad Freccomail')', *Éigse* 17 (1981), pp. 251-62, at p. 251

> manuscript level, there may be such changes and additions that the first writer must be considered to a certain degree an author. Murphy makes less allowance for the strictly literary element in any given tale than do I.[81]

Thus, Carney himself recognised that the basis of the dissimilarities separating their approaches were primarily theoretical rather than methodological. Their preferred editorial procedures were a consequence of their perception of the historical transmission of such verse. This point is of particular relevance when considering both scholars' editorial response to the 'May-day' poem.

Cétemain Revisited

If we turn again to examining Murphy's and Carney's versions of the poem, we find that their understanding of the original text and its transmission had a significant impact upon their editorial approaches. Murphy considered *Cétemain* to be an example of secular poetry and held that the written evidence was accordingly corrupt from its beginning. In his introduction to *EIL*, he argues that the type of verse to which *Cétemain* belongs (*núa-chrutha*) shows the influence of Irish 'makers of Latin hymns ... on the metre of vernacular poetry'.[82] By contrast, Carney asserts that *Cétemain* is 'a type of nature poetry belonging exclusively to the native tradition, and would appear to owe nothing to Christian influences'.[83] Elsewhere, Carney has stated that 'the dependence of Irish metres upon Latin hymns has been gravely

[81] James Carney, 'Two Poems from Acallam na Senórach', in *Celtic Studies Essays in Memory of Angus Matheson*, eds James Carney and David Greene (London, 1968), pp. 22-32, at p. 30, n. 2.
[82] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. xv. Tymoczko, 'Vision in Early Irish Seasonal Poetry', p. 18, points out that there is a certain degree of circular reasoning involved in Murphy's assessment of the poem's origin. The poem lacks a regular syllabic pattern in the manuscript. However, Murphy edited the poem according the metre of *lethrannaigecht mór*. The presence of this metre was in turn used to support his theory of the monastic influence on the metre of vernacular poetry. These comments may be compared to Carney's remarks in his 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems' (p. 31) that 'the fact that this [Murphy's] reconstruction "worked" was the best possible demonstration of the truth of his theory'.
[83] Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', p. 41.

exaggerated' and he cites a 1963 article by Calvert Watkins to support his position. Carney recommends that Murphy's *EIL* should be read in light of this article which concludes that '[w]e can now add Irish to the list of languages ... which have preserved the metrical form of Indo-European poetry'. [84]

Murphy's perception of the unreliable nature of manuscripts as witnesses to secular poetry enabled him to emend the text of *Cétemain* extensively in order to construct a poem which conforms to the syllabic pattern of *lethrannaigecht mór*. To achieve this, he departed from the manuscript text on over sixty separate occasions.[85] The extent of his emendations varies considerably and includes, for example: normalising verbal forms from Middle to Old Irish (v. 3*c* and v. 8*c* read *for-beir* for MS *forbrid*); the omission or insertion of words (v. 5*c* *berid slabrai slíab* for manuscript *berid buarslaib resliab* and v. 11*cd* *gel ros*; *toirthech tonn*; *oll síd*; *subach sam* for manuscript *gel cach ros toirtech sidh subach samh*); and the complete reworking of lines and phrases (v. 3*cd* *lethaid fot fraích; for-beir folt fann finn* for manuscript *lethaid folt foda fraích forbrid canach fannfinn*).[86] Murphy indicates seven instances where he considers his text to be 'drastically emended' (v. 1*d*, v. 7*c*, v. 8*b*, v. 11*b*, v. 11*c*, v. 11*d*, v. 12*b*).[87] He cites syllabic regularity or the restoration of alliteration as the basis for six of these emendations. At v. 11*b*, the insertion of *ro-fáith* was suggested by Meyer by analogy with *Tánic sam*, and Murphy retains this reading. It is difficult to discern why Murphy qualifies an emendation as 'drastic', though it appears that the phrase is reserved for those

[84] See Carney, *Medieval Irish Lyrics*, pp. ix-x; Calvert Watkins, 'Indo-European Metrics and Archaic Irish Verse', *Celtica* 6 (1963), pp. 194-249, at p. 249.
[85] This figure includes differences in spelling between the text of the manuscript and Murphy's edition.
[86] All of the manuscript readings cited in the discussion of Murphy's edition of *Cétemain* are taken from his diplomatic transcription of the poem included in the 1955 edition.
[87] Murphy, 'Finn's Poem on May-Day', p. 88; I have not thought it necessary to supply these examples as Murphy's edition is given in its entirety below, see pp. 261-8.

emendations which, on the basis of the manuscript evidence, are difficult to justify. For example, at v. 11*cd* Murphy admits that his insertion of *tonn* 'water' and *oll* 'immense' is 'purely conjectural' and 'an unsatisfactory method of obtaining the syllabic regularity, alliteration, and rhyme wanting in the scribe's version of this half-quatrain'.[88]

Carney cites three further examples in Murphy's edition of serious reconstruction, which he claims interfere with the poetic imagery; none of these were considered as drastic by Murphy. These are: v. 3*d* (cf. *supra* p. 255), v. 5*d* where *seng* 'ant' is omitted from MS *feraid seng saidbir saith* 'the ant fetches a rich sufficiency' and v. 7*a* (cf. *supra* n. 28). However, Carney's edition is not without its own major emendations: we might note, for example, v. 1*d*. The opening lines of the poem are problematic and both Meyer and Murphy proposed rearranging the word order. Carney, on the other hand, asserts that 'the metre of the poem shows that a monosyllabic word has been dropped between *cucht* and *canait*' and suggests *crann* 'tree' which supplies the necessary rhyme and alliteration.[89] On the whole, however, Carney's edition is remarkably similar to the text as it stands in the manuscript.[90]

Murphy acknowledged the 'similarities in phrasing' between *Cétemain* and the poems *Fuitt co bráth* and *Tánic sam* and, like Meyer, employed the similarities as a basis for emending his text on two occasions, v. 8*b* and v. 11*b*.[91] Murphy also draws attention to similar difficulties in the following instances: v. 8*d innisid loth*

[88] Ibid., p. 96.
[89] Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', p. 47.
[90] In addition to the aforementioned 'drastic emendations', Murphy indicates four instances where he considers the text to be corrupt (vv. 8*d*, 9*a*, 9*b* and 9*d*) and he does not attempt a translation of these passages. Only one of these examples (v. 9*d*) corresponds to those passages which Meyer was unable to translate with certainty and two (v. 9*a* and v. 9*d*) correspond to the readings which Jackson believed could not be convincingly restored. In comparison, Carney noted three examples of corruption (vv. 4*a*, 8*d*, 12*b*); he too leaves these passages untranslated.
[91] Murphy, 'Finn's Poem on May-Day', p. 88.

loíth and v. 9*a Leig lath fath feig*, and with v. 5*c meit cuithi cach lattrach léig* 'Summer has come, winter has gone' in *Tánic sam*.[92] Carney has pointed out that the metrical agreements shared between *Cétemain* and *Tánic sam* create a problem for Murphy's thesis regarding the original syllabic pattern of the May-day poem, arguing that it is highly unlikely that two seasonal poems ascribed to Finn would have developed the same unusual metrical pattern independently; consequently, *Tánic sam* should be subjected to the same editorial treatment as *Cétemain*.[93] Carney himself believed that both *Cétemain* and *Tánic sam* were examples of accentual poetry. Unlike Meyer who thought that there was sufficient evidence to-warrant the suggestion that both poems were composed by the one poet, Carney maintained that the *Tánic sam* was composed in imitation of *Cétemain* up to two centuries later. He also believed that it was a legitimate editorial methodology to employ both poems in establishing the text of the other, but criticised both Meyer and Murphy for not clarifying the basis of their procedures.[94]

This section has focused on the differences between the editions of Murphy and Carney. The primary distinction between their editorial procedures lies in their understanding of the textual tradition and the importance they attach to the reliability of manuscript evidence. However, there are certain principles common to both editions and these similarities will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

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[92] At v. 8*b*, Murphy's edition reads *im-said crúas cíuil cróich* 'vigour of music surrounds the hill' which he compares with *Tánic sam* v. 2*cd*, *lengait eoin ciuin cruaich. ocus daim luaith leith* 'Gentle birds leap upon the hill, and swift grey stags', providing some justification for reading *cróich* as an archaic form of *crúaich*, acc. sg. of *crúach* 'a hill' (p. 88). The translation is from Meyer, *Four Old Irish Songs*, p. 21.

[93] Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', pp. 33-4: 'each poem presents the editor with the same type of problem. The "lines" (in Meyer's terms, half-lines) are of different length. *Tánic sam* is much shorter than *Cétemon*, consisting of only 28 lines. As edited by Meyer it has 2 lines of 4 syllables, 17 of 5, and 9 of 6. Taking 5 as the norm *Cétemon* has 29 "normal" against 27 "corrupt" lines; *Tánic sam* has 17 "normal", 11 "corrupt"'.

[94] Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', p. 39.

Compared to the two other critical editions of the poem, Murphy's edition is markedly dissimilar to the manuscript witness which raises certain questions regarding the reliability of his reconstructed text. Carney, on the other hand, has successfully established a text which is remarkably close to the manuscript evidence. Following the publication of Carney's edition in 1971, there have been no further attempts to edit the poem. Moreover, his work has guided the two subsequent scholarly translations of Tymoczko and Nagy.

In 1983, Maria Tymoczko published a 'literary' translation of the poem alongside the Irish text (which was largely based on Carney's version) as a part of her study of the function of Irish nature poetry. Tymoczko accepts the early date and native metrical structure proposed by Carney. Where her translation differs, she supplies his readings in the notes appended to the conclusion of the article. However, she does implement a number of notable changes to Carney's text. In the first stanza, Tymoczko rejects Carney's insertion of *crann* at the end of the second line and follows Murphy's (originally Meyer's) suggestion in positioning *cucht* at the end of the first line 'so that it participates in the *dúnad* of the poem'.[95] Similarly, her translation of v. 4*a* follows Murphy's suggested emendation and tentatively reads 'Hawthorn buds burst open'.[96] In the third line of the same verse, Tymoczko describes Carney's text which reads *ré i cuirither* for the manuscript *rena cuirither* as a 'radical emendation' and suggests that *rena* reflects *renu* with the scribe mistaking the *u* as an open *a*. On three occasions (vv. 7*cd*, 11, 14*ab*), Tymoczko criticises Carney for unnecessarily interfering with the manuscript readings for the

[95] Tymoczko, 'Vision in Early Irish Seasonal Poetry', p. 37.
[96] Ibid., p. 23.

sake of metrics, particularly as there continue to be metrical inconsistencies in the final version of the poem as edited by Carney.

Nagy's translation of the poem is based on the work of Meyer and Carney. His text is accompanied by a single note which includes a brief description of the edited and translated material. He also cites Carney's description of the poem's date and metre, and states that in his own translation he has kept emendation to a minimum.[97] There is no further discussion of the differences which separate his work from those of Meyer and Carney. Nagy does not divide the poem into stanzas and v. 12*b* – one of the poem's more difficult lines – is not fully translated.

The initial section of this chapter has focused on the various editions and translations of *Cétemain*, the 'May-day' poem which forms part of the *Macgnímartha Finn* saga. The following section presents the three editions and translations of the poem in parallel in order to further contextualise the preceding examination of the editorial procedures utilised by Meyer, Murphy and Carney in establishing their texts, and to aid a clearer understanding of the differences which separate them. In presenting the editions, I have kept as close as possible to the layout of the original publications. Meyer's 1903 translation is given in full. Significant variant readings from his 1904 and 1913 translations are supplied in the footnotes; this does not include differences in punctuation. The translations of Jackson, Tymoczko and Nagy have not been included.[98] Meyer's 1903 edition and translation are supplied and, as in his text, asterisks indicate where he considered his translation to be doubtful. Murphy's 1955 edition and translation are given, along

[97] Nagy, *Wisdom of the Outlaw*, p. 304.
[98] However, influential changes in Meyer's translation made by Jackson, and incorporated into the work of subsequent scholars, have been noted in the above discussion.

with his asterisks and daggers which mark where he believed the text was corrupt or drastically emended. Finally, Carney's 1971 edition is presented next to those of Meyer and Murphy as it was originally published. A fresh diplomatic reading of the text is presented at the bottom of each page. An examination of the three editions shows that, even at the stage of transcription, editorial choices with regard to word-division were being made: for example, at v. 1*d*, Meyer's transcription reads 'Fuabair osgell scill shigi*n*e', Murphy's reads 'Fuabair osg**ell**sceillshigie*ch*' and Carney writes 'Furabair osgell sceill s*h*igie*n*'. In my transcription, where no clear gap between words in the manuscript can be distinguished, they remain together even in instances where they would be separated in any edited text. Italics mark the expansion of abbreviations where such expansion is entirely unambiguous. In instances where the expansion is not entirely clear (regularly reflected in disagreement between the editions: for example, v. 1*d*; v. 6*a*; v 7*a*), the contraction remains in the transcription. Line numbers have been added for the readers' convenience.

Meyer's 1903 Edition:

I Cēttemain cāin rē!
rosāir cucht and:
canait luin lāid lāin
dīa mbeith lāi gāi gann.

2 Gairid cāi crūaid den,
is fochen sam sāir:
suidid sīne serb,
imme cerb caill crāib.

3 Cerbaid sam sūaill sruth,
saigid graig lūath linn,
lethaid folt fota frāich,
forbrid canach fann finn.

4 Fūabair boscell sidin scēill,
imrid rēid rīan rith,
rē 'na cuirither sāl sūan,
tuigither blāth bith.

Murphy's 1955 Edition:

I Cétemain, cain cucht,
rée rosaír ran;
canait luin laíd láin
día laí gríanꝉ ngann.

2 Gairid cúi chrúaid den;
Is fo-chen sam saír:
suidid sine serb
i mbi cerb caill chraíb.

3 Cerbaid sam súaill sruth;
saigid graig lúath linn;
lethaid fota fraích;
for-beir folt fann finn.

4 Fúapair sceith scell scíach;
im-reith réid rían rith;
cuirithis sál súan;
tuigithir bláth bith.

Carney's 1971 Edition:

I Cétamon
caín rée,
rosaír and
cucht [crann];
canait luin
laid láin
díambi laí
gaí gann.

2 Gairid caí
c[h]rúaid den:
'Is fo-c[h]en
sam saír';
suidig[thir]
síne serb
imme-c[h]erb
caill craíb.

3 Cerbaid sam
súaill sruth,
saidid graig
lúath linn;
lethaid folt
fota fraích,
for-beir canach
fann finn.

4 Fúabair osgell
scéill shigien,
imm-reith réid
rían rith;
ré i cuirither
sál súan,
tuigithir
bláth bith.

Text of Laud 610, *f*. 120*r*., *col*. I

1. Cettemain cain ree rosairand cucht canait luin laid lain dia mbeith laigaigan*n*
2. Gairid cai c*r*uaid dean isfocensámh sair suidig sine s*er*b imme cerb caill c*rai*b
3. Cearbuid sám suaillsruth saigid graig luath lin*n*. lethaid folt foda f*rai*ch forbrid canach fan*n*fin*n*
4. Fuabair osgellsceillshigie— imrid reid riaenrith renacuirither salsuan tu*i*githir blath inbith.

Meyer's 1903 Edition:

5 Berait beich – bec a nert –
bert bond bochta blāith,
berid būar slaib fri slīab,
feraid seng saidbir sáith.

6 Seinnid crot caille céol,
*con*grenn sēol sīd slán,
siadair den do cach din,
dé do loch linn lán.

7 Labraid tradna trén bard,
canaid ess n-ard n-úa[g]
fáilti do linn tē.
tānic lūachra lūad.

8 Lingit fainnle fanna fūas,
imasoich crūas ciūil crōich,
foirbrid mess māeth mēth,
innisid loth lōith.

Murphy's 1955 Edition:

5 Berait beich (bec nert)
bert bonn bochtair bláith;
berid slabrai slíab:
feraid saidbir saith.

6 Seinnid caille céol;
con-greinn séol síd slán;
síatair den do din,
dé do loch linn lán.

7 Labraid tragna trén;
canaid ess n-ard n-úag
fáilte do thoinn† té;
táinic lúachra lúad.

8 Lengait fainnle fúas;
im-said crúas cíuil cróich†
for-beir mes máeth meth;
*in*nisid loth loíth*

Carney's 1971 Edition:

5 Berait beich
(becc a nert)
bert bond,
bochta[i] bláith;
berid búar
slaibre slíab,
feraid seng
saidbir saith.

6 Seinim crot
caille céol
con-gre[i]nn séol
síd slán;
sétair den
do cach dinn,
dé do loch
linn lán.

7 Labraid tragna,
trén bard,
canaid ess
n-ard n-úa[r];
fáilte dó
[ó] linn té
tánic lúach
fria lúad.

8 Lengait faindle
fanna súas;
imma-s[h]oich crúas
cíuil cróich;
for-beir mes
máeth med
innisid
loth lóith.

5. Beraid beich beg an*er*t b*er*tbond bocht blaith b*er*id buarslaib resliabh feraid seng saidbirsaith
6. Sein— crot caille céol *con*gren*n* seolsidslán siadair dean*n* dacach din*n* de dolochlín*n* lai*n*
7. Labr— tragnatrénbard canaid eas nard nua failti dolin*n*te tanic luachra luad
8. Lingid fain*n*lefan*n*afuas imasoich c*ru*as ciuill croich foirbrid mes maethmed in*n*isid loth loíth

Meyer's 1903 Edition:

9 Lēig lath fath fēig,
ferthair cāin cāi chrūaid,
cuirither īasc brecc bedc,
is balc gedc lāith lūaith.

10 Losaid fer, foirbrid ōg
ina būaid breg brass,
cāin cach caill ō inn co clār,
cāin cach mag már mass.

11 Meldach rēë rūan,
rofāith garb gam,
gel cach ross toirthech,
sīd subach sam.

12 Suidither īall ēn
immedōn len,
buirither gort glass
i mbī brass glass gel.

Murphy's 1955 Edition:

9 *Leig lath fath feig*;
Fert* ar-cain cúi chrúaid;
cuirithir brecc bedc;
is balc gedc* láith lúaith

10 Losaid foirbríg fer;
óg a mbúaid mbreg mbras;
caín cach caille clár;
caín cach mag már mas.

11 Melldach rée rann:
†ro fáith† gaíth garb gam;
gel ros; toirthech tonn†;
oll† síd; subach sam.

12 Suidigthir íall én
†i n-íath i mbí ben;
búirithis gort glas
i mbí bras glas gel.

Carney's 1971 Edition:

9 Léig lath,
fath fég,
fér tar caín
caí crúaid;
cuirithir
íasc brecc bedc,
is balc gedc,
láith lúaith.

10 Losaid fér,
for-beir óg,
má bód
mBreg mbras;
cain cach caille
caindlech clár,
cain cach mag
már mas.

11 Mell dag rée,
Ru-an gáith
Garb gam;
Gel cach ros,
Ruirthech síd,
Subach sam.

12 Suidi[g]thir
íall én
Amil en;
Buirrithir
Gort glas
I mbí bras
Glas gel

9. Leig lath fathfeig fertar caincai c*ru*aid cuirither iasg mbrecc mbedg isbalc gedg laithluaith
10. Losaid fer foirbrig ogh mabuaid mbreg mbras caín cach caille c*oinn*le clar cáin cach mag mármas
11. Mell dagreeruan gaith garb gam gel cach ros toirtech sidh subach samh
12. Suidither ialen a*m*ilea*n* buitither gort glas ambi bras glas geal

Meyer's 1903 Edition:

13 Greit mer ort imrim ech,
imasernar sreth slūag,
rosāerad crand gel is tīr;
conid ōr eilestar ūad.

14 Ecal fer fann fedil
focain aird ucht,
uissi ūs men imacain,
cēttaman cāin cucht. C

Murphy's 1955 Edition:

13 Greit mer, imrim ech;
im-sernar sreth slúaig;
rosáer rath geilestar,
ór eilestar úaid.

14 Ecal aird fer fann;
fedil fochain ucht;
uisse ima-cain
'Cétemain, cain cucht!'

Carney's 1971 Edition:

13 Greith mer [f]ort
Imrimm ech
Imam-sernar
Sreth slúag;
Ro-sáerad crann
Gel is-tír
Co ní di ór
Eilestrair úad.

14 Ecal fer
Fann fet
Il fo-cain
Ard ucht;
Uisse ús menn
Imam-c[h]ain:
'Cetamon cain
Cíuin cucht'.

13. Greid merort imrim each imaser*nar* sreth sluaig rosaerad crand gealistir*con*idór eilestar uad
14. Egal ferfann fedil focaín aird ucht uisi us men*n* i*m*aco*in* cette*m*an caín ciu*in* cucht .c

	Meyer's 1903 Translation:	**Murphy's Translation:**	**Carney's Translation:**
1	May-day, season surpassing! Splendid is colour then. Blackbirds sing a full lay, If there be a slender shaft of day.	May-day, fair aspect, perfect season; blackbirds sing a full lay when the sun casts a slender beam.	Lovely season of May! Most noble then is the colour of trees: Blackbirds sing a full lay, When the shaft of day is slender.
2	The *dust-coloured cuckoo calls aloud: Welcome, splendid summer! The bitter bad weather is past, The boughs of the wood are a thicket.	The hardy vigorous cuckoo calls. Welcome to noble summer: it abates the bitterness of storm during which the branchy wood is lacerated.	The vigorous harsh cuckoo calls: 'Welcome to noble Summer'; Subdues is the bitter weather that caused the branching wood to dwindle.
3	Summer cuts the river down,[i] The swift herd of horses seeks the pool, The long hair of the heather is outspread, The soft white wild-cotton blows.[ii]	Summer cuts the stream small; Swift horses seek water; tall heather spreads; delicate fair foliage flourishes.	Summer causes the tiny stream to dwindle; The speedy horses seek a pool; The long tresses of heather spread out; Delicate white bog-cotton flourishes.
4	Panic startles the heart of the deer, The smooth sea runs apace, Season when ocean sinks asleep, Blossom covers the world.	Sprouting comes to the bud of the hawthorn; the ocean flows a smooth course; [summer] sends the sea to sleep; blossom covers the world.	... the sea runs smoothly; at a time when sea sleeps, blossom covers the world.

[i]This verse is not included in Meyer's 1913 translation.
[ii]1904: 'the soft white bog-down grows'

	Meyer's 1903 Translation:	**Murphy's Translation:**	**Carney's Translation:**
5	Bees with puny strength carry A goodly burden, the harvest of blossoms: Up the mountain-side kine take with them mud, The ant makes a rich meal.	Bees of small strength carry bundles in their feet, blossoms having been reaped; the mountain, supplying rich sufficiency, carries off the cattle.	Bees of little strength carry a foot-load – Flowers were reaped; The mountain-pasture takes the cattle; The ant fetches a rich sufficiency.
6	The harp of the forest sounds music, The sail gathers – perfect peace, Colour has settled on every height, Haze on the lake full of waters.	Woodland music plays; melody provides perfect peace; dust is blown from dwelling-place and haze from lake full of water.	The music of the woodland is like the playing of harps; The melody brings perfect peace; A haze rises from every hill fortress, A mist from the full-pooled lake.
7	The corncrake, a strenuous bard, discourses, The lofty virgin[iii] waterfall sings A welcome to the warm pool, The talk of rushes is come	The strenuous corncrake speaks; the high pure cataract sings of joy from the warm water; rustling of rushes has come.	The corncrake utters – powerful bard! The cool high waterfall sings; There is a welcome to him (Summer) from the warm pool; Reward has come for their praise.
8	Light swallows dart aloft, Loud melody reaches the round hill,[iv] The soft rich mast buds, The stuttering quagmire rehearses.[v]	Swallows dart aloft; vigour of music surrounds the hill (?); soft rich fruit flourishes;	Graceful swallows fly upwards; Harsh music plays about the height; Fruit increases, soft weight ....

[iii] 1913: 'The lofty cold waterfall sings'.
[iv] 1903: 'Loud melody reaches round the hill'; 1913: 'Loud melody encircles the hill'.
[v] 1913: 'The stuttering quagmire prattles'.

	Meyer's 1903 Translation:	**Murphy's Translation:**	**Carney's Translation:**
	The peat-bog is as the raven's coat, The loud cuckoo bids welcome, The speckled fish leaps Strong in the *bound of the swift warrior.	...; ... the hardy cuckoo signs; the trout leaps; strong in the swift warrior's	The marsh is beautiful, see the covering: There is grass growing across a fine hard path; The speckled fish jumps, stout is the fly – swift warriors.
10	Man flourishes, the maiden buds In her fair strong pride. Perfect each forest from top to ground, Perfect each great stately plain.	Men's vigour thrives; the excellence of great hills is complete; fair is every spreading wood, and great goodly plain.	Grass abounds, fullness flourishes, Brega is still more excellent: Beautiful the luminous expanse of every woodland, Lovely every great beautiful plain.
11	Delightful in the season's splendour, Rough winter has gone, White is every fruitful wood, A joyous peace is summer.	Delightful the season: winter's harsh wind has departed; woodland is bright; water fruitful; peace is immense; summer is joyous.	Fine time of delights: The rough wind of winter has ceased; Every wood is bright, Peace abounds, summer is full of joy.
12	A flock of birds settle In the midst of meadows, The green field *rustles, Wherein is a brawling white stream .	A flock of birds settles on land where a woman walks; there is noise in every green field through which a swift bright rivulet flows.	A bird-flock settles ... A green field, With a bright strong stream, burgeons.

	Meyer's 1903 Translation:	**Murphy's Translation:**	**Carney's Translation:**
13	A wild longing is on you to race horses, The ranked host is ranged around: A bright shaft has been shot into the land, So that the water-flag is gold beneath it.	Fierce ardour and riding of horses; the serried host is ranged around; the pond is noble in bounty and turns the iris gold.	A wild ardour comes on you for horse-racing where a great crowd is stretched out in a line; the white tree has been ennobled in the land, receiving from him (Summer) something of the gold flag-iris.
14	A timorous tiny persistent little fellow Sings at the top of his voice, The lark sings clear tidings: — Surpassing May-day of delicate colours!	The frail man fears loudness; the constant man sings with a heart rightly does he sing out 'May-day, fair aspect!'	The timid lad of weak whistles (now) sings a paean of triumph with puffed-out breast; fitting are the tidings that he announces clearly: 'Beautiful and quiet is the colour of May'.

Discussion and Analysis

The primary focus of this chapter thus far has been the published scholarly editions of the May-day poem. To summarise: *Cétemain* is attested in a single fifteenth-century manuscript. To date, it has been edited fully on four separate occasions. Initially, Meyer printed a diplomatic edition of the text. Subsequently, he edited it as rhymed stanzas of four lines and emended the poem on a number of occasions to achieve this formatting. However, he made no attempt to alter the metrical pattern which remains faulty throughout his edition. Meyer dated the text to the late ninth, possibly early-tenth century, and drew attention to the similarities between it and the three medieval Irish seasonal poems *Fuitt co bráth*, *Tánic sam* and *Scél lemm dúib*. He further noted that the metres of *Cétemain* and *Tánic sam* are identical, and that many of the poetic images of the former are reflected in the latter. He regarded the four poems as being the work of an individual poet, or at the very least composed in the same pattern. Next, Murphy edited the poem eclectically according to what he considered to be its original metre, *lethrannaigecht mór* (5^1, 5^1, 5^1, 5^1). His emendation of the poem has been described as extensive. Whilst he acknowledged the similarities between *Cétemain* and the poems *Fuitt co bráth* and *Tánic sam*, he did not discuss the issue in any great detail. According to Murphy, the language of the poem indicates a date within the Old Irish period, but not later than the ninth century. Carney argued against this and reconstructed the poem in a stressed *ochtfhoclach* metre. He suggested that the poem is unlikely to be later than the seventh century and that it may belong to the sixth. He considered *Tánic sam* to be a poetic imitation composed up to two centuries later and edited it alongside his version of *Cétemain*.

Attention has also been paid to several other editions of medieval Irish lyrical poetry, most notably Murphy's 1953 edition of *Aithbe damsa bés mora* and Carney's comments regarding Murphy's approach to four other poetic texts: *Robad mellach, a meic mo Dé* (*EIL*, no. 30), *A ben bennacht fort – ná raid* (*EIL*, no. 7), *Tuc dam, a Dé móir* (*EIL*, no. 27), and 'The Queen of Ireland's Goose' (*EIL*, no. 37). Furthermore, *Tánic sam* has been discussed specifically in relation to the various editorial responses to *Cétemain*.

The intention of this section is to determine how best to apply theory to the editing of medieval Irish poetry in light of the editorial issues highlighted in the preceding discussion. Liam Breatnach summarises the corpus of medieval Irish poetic material thus:

> The variety of material in verse form in Old and Middle Irish is nearly as extensive as that in prose, and includes genealogy, history and pseudo-history, prophecy, didactic verse, topography, law, metrics, satire, praise-poetry, lyrics, hymns, devotional poems, calendars, monastic rules, and translation of Scripture and apocrypha.[99]

Out of this vast body of material, the issues to be considered will be restricted primarily to those 'lyrical' poems detailed in the opening section of this chapter. The present discussion is divided into three parts. The initial part examines the criteria upon which the reconstruction of medieval Irish poetic texts is generally based. Specific attention is paid to the influence of metrical patterning which has, hitherto, been the dominant consideration for the editors of these texts. The focus then proceeds to various methods of editing and presenting medieval Irish poetry. Five of the options available to editors will be considered in detail. These are: the

[99] Liam Breatnach, 'Poets and Poetry', in *Progress in Medieval Irish Studies*, eds McCone and Simms, pp. 65-77, at p. 65.

diplomatic edition, the semi-diplomatic edition, the creation of an eclectic edition, the classical edition and, lastly, the parallel-text edition. With the exception of the last-named option, the editions of *Cétemain* will be used to exemplify much of what follows. The section concludes with an examination of the various editorial responses to prosimetrum, a very common literary form in Irish tales in which prose and poetry are combined in individual texts. As will be apparent, much of what is said here has an applicability that extends beyond the editing of verse.

Before continuing, it may be observed that although it is not explicitly articulated, there is indeed a *de facto* model for the editing of medieval Irish poetic texts. A comparison of the methodologies espoused by each of the scholars discussed in the initial section of this chapter reveals certain common assumptions regarding the nature of the manuscript evidence, the role of scribes, the concept of the author and the idea of the authoritative text which is usually considered to be synonymous with an original one. These theories of textual tradition in turn influence the manner in which editors of medieval Irish poetry approach their task. The intention of the current discussion is not to call into question the validity of this model. Rather, the aim is to draw attention to the concepts which comprise the implicit model for the editing of medieval Irish poetic texts and to the impact they have upon editorial activity.

Carney highlighted a number of these editorial precepts in his 'Notes on Early Irish Verse'.[100] Of particular relevance to the present discussion are Carney's comments regarding the highly critical attitudes of his contemporaries to medieval

[100] The first matter which Carney found himself to be at variance with most other scholars is the question of dating. This does not immediately concern us here. Suffice it to say that Carney dated many poetic texts to significantly earlier than the general consensus.

Irish manuscripts, which he argues resulted in the belief that 'the manuscript may be by-passed and the text recreated as it was originally written'.[101] Carney suggests that this distrust of the documentary evidence was the cause of extensive indulgence in editorial emendation evidenced in the work of Murphy. Of course, the fact that texts have been altered during their transmission is the fundamental principle upon which textual criticism exists. The point here is that from this fact emerges an attitude whereby scholars freely cry corruption in order to justify their editorial emendations, or lack thereof.

The impact of such a scholarly mindset can be witnessed in the various editorial responses to *Cétemain*. For example, both Meyer and Jackson explain away certain difficult passages in the poem as being corrupt. Many postulated instances of faulty word-order, incorporations of glosses, and more pedestrian corruptions are the basis upon which Murphy constructs his edition of the poem. Whilst Carney himself is cautious not to use such condemnatory language, his emendations are predicated upon the notion that the manuscript contains a significant number of 'faulty readings', though he often attempts to demonstrate the accuracy of his changes by referring back to the manuscript source.[102] It is worth reiterating that *Cétemain* is preserved in a single manuscript, and the dates and metrical patterns upon which corruptions are asserted vary considerably according to the opinions of the scholar editing the poem.[103] Therefore, passages explained by Meyer and Murphy are discounted as indecipherable by Carney as they do not conform to his understanding

[101] Carney, 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', p. 292: 'scholars who indulge in extensive emendation tend to gain confidence, and by almost imperceptible progressions arrived at a stage where they are composing Old and Middle Irish verse'.
[102] Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', p. 34.
[103] Norman F. Blake, 'Geoffrey Chaucer: Textual Transmission and Editing', in *Crux and Controversy*, eds Minnis and Brewer, pp. 19-38, at pp. 26-7, cautions that 'to dismiss something as a scribal corruption is simply a way of justifying one's own reading of the text'.

of the text.[104] Thus, difficulties of interpretation may often be editorial rather than documentary.

Clearly, it is not the artefacts themselves which are the objects of this mistrust: a manuscript is, after all, not capable of producing mistakes. Rather, scholars direct their suspicions towards the scribes by whose hands the texts have been transmitted. Scribal reworking of the source text is generally viewed as an act of decomposition from the authoritative text (which may in itself have been imperfect). The possibility that scribal alterations may present an improvement of the original text, and therefore a 'better' reading, is seldom considered. Underpinning this assumption is the clear distinction which modern scholars assign to the activities of medieval vernacular scribes and to those of the original poet, even if such differentiation did not exist within medieval culture. Scribal reworking of the archetype is generally considered to be derivative rather than original, and variations are often consigned to lists of *varia* at the foot of the printed page; these often do not do full justice to the complexity of the manuscript tradition. This is despite the fact that these acts of recomposition were often executed 'at a level of intellectual and imaginative engagement not inferior to and little different from the putative original act of composition'.[105] Machan has discussed this issue with regards to the editorial responses to Middle English poetry: 'the point of contention is the conceptual validity both of the distinction between medieval vernacular scribe and author and the notion of an authoritative text, which necessarily precedes this distinction'.[106]

[104] See, for example, Carney's comments regarding v. 8*b*: 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', pp. 49-50.
[105] Pearsall, 'Editing Medieval Texts', p. 101.
[106] Machan, 'Middle English Text Production and Modern Textual Criticism', in *Crux and Controversy*, eds Minnis and Brewer, pp. 1-18, at p. 5.

The examination of the disparate editorial approaches of Murphy and Carney in the initial section of this chapter reveals precisely such notions regarding the form and existence of the authoritative text. Firstly, both scholars regard the authoritative text as authorial.[107] Secondly, both accept that extant manuscripts reflect the authorial text with greater or lesser fidelity depending on the attitudes and behaviours of successive scribes responsible for the copying of the various manuscripts, both lost and extant. Thus, lying behind both editors' general goals is the assumption that there once existed a single cohesive authoritative text from which all the extant manuscripts descend, even if such a text has become corrupted in its transmission. Although their methodologies differ, the common aim of Murphy and Carney is to construct a traditional 'critical', i.e. author-centred, edition through the removal of the layers of scribal distortions which obscure the original poetic text. In order to achieve this, both editors emend their base manuscripts on metrical grounds. This practice is predicated on the questionable idea that the authorial text was metrically uniform throughout and that any imperfections in the metre must be scribal.

This approach is justified to a certain extent as there exists an abundance of primary source material concerning metrics to guide editors in making emendations or choosing between variants on metrical grounds.[108] Editors of medieval Irish poetry have continually made use of emendation *metri causa*. This can perhaps be explained by the fixation on the original text which has dominated medieval Irish studies in general. We might consider Stokes' introduction to his 1880 edition of

[107] Murphy refers specifically to the poem as 'originally composed': 'Finn's Poem on May-Day', p. 87 and Carney speaks of the text 'as it was originally written': 'Notes on Early Irish Verse', p. 292.
[108] For a discussion of the various editions of the Irish metrical tracts, see Breatnach, 'Poets and Poetry', pp. 66-70.

Félire Óenguso as an early endorsement of this practice where he states that 'nothing is more important for restoring the corrupt text of a poem... than a right understanding of the metrical rules by which the author was guided'.[109] Stokes is, of course, correct: if one's intention is to attempt to restore verse as originally composed then an awareness of the rules of metricality which guided the poets is indispensable. However, the various editions of *Cétemain*, in particular those of Murphy and Carney, demonstrate clearly the fact that just because reconstruction on the basis of the application of a specific metre works (i.e. the text can be shown to fit a metrical pattern with little or no inconsistencies) this does not necessarily demonstrate the accuracy of the edition. Furthermore, the work of Carney regarding certain prosimetric texts shows that the creation of author-centred editions must also take into consideration questions of authorial intention, the editorial interpretation of which may be highly subjective.

Carney produced a large body of work concerned with the literary analysis of medieval Irish poetry. Included in this corpus are a number of articles concerning the relationship between the poetry and prose of certain prosimetric texts and the effect that differences of interpretation regarding a poem's original compositional context may have for resultant editions.[110] We might consider the example of the poem *It é saigte gona súain*, otherwise known as 'The Lament of Créidhe', as representative of these views. Leaving aside for the moment the issues involved in editing prosimetrum (to be considered later in this section), Carney's arguments

[109] Stokes, 'On the Calendar of Oengus', p. 356.

[110] Carney, 'Two Poems from Acallam na Senórach', pp. 22-32, which discusses the interpretation of two of the poems included in the *Acallam*: *Turus acam Día hAíne* and *Géisid Cúan* and alludes to a possible similar interpretation of a third, *Na hocht caire chollaide*. In 'The So-Called "Lament of Créidhe"' (*Éigse* 8 (1970), pp. 227-242), Carney discusses the literary interpretation of *It é saigte gona súain* and *Aithbe damsa bés mora*.

show clearly that accurate literary understanding cannot be divorced from questions of textual criticism. *It é saigte gona súain* had always been interpreted in the light of its prose setting as a lament uttered by Créidhe on the death of her beloved Dínertach and Murphy's edition conforms to this interpretation. Carney, on the other hand, interprets the poem as an example of the conceit by which a bardic poet can represent himself as the wife or mistress of his patron, which was later integrated into an inferior prose setting.[111] This difference in opinion, once again, results in the production of two very different editions of the same poetic text.[112] For example, Murphy gives the following text and translation of the opening quatrain:

It é saigte gona súain
cech thrátha i n-aidchi adúair
serccoí lia gnása, íar ndé,
fir a tóeb thíre Roigne.

> The arrows that murder sleep, at every hour in the cold night, are love-lamenting, by reason of times spent, after day, in the company of one from beside the land of Roigne.[113]

By contrast, Carney emends the final two lines of the quatrain in light of his analysis of the original compositional context as follows:

lía gnása sercae, íar ndé,
fir a tóeb thíre Roigne.

He tentatively translates the quatrain as: 'These are the arrows that slay sleep at every hour in the cold night (more frequent the visitations of love when day has gone): the men from the land of Roigne'. Regarding his interpretation of these lines,

[111] For a discussion of this theme, see Katherine Simms, 'The Poet as Chieftain's Widow: Bardic Elegies' in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers*, eds Ó Corráin, Breatnach and McCone, pp. 400-11. See also, the subsequent discussion by Proinsias MacCana, 'The Poet as Spouse of his Patron', *Ériu* 39 (1988), pp. 75-85.
[112] It is important to note that both editors share the same goals and, therefore, that editorial differences cannot be explained by divergent intentions.
[113] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. 86.

Carney notes 'the poet, in the opening quatrain, is regretting the departure of the whole company of the Uí Fhidgente who came as allies of Gúaire and have now departed. These men are the arrows that slay sleep'.[114] Carney's reconstruction of this quatrain depends largely upon his interpretation of the original compositional intent, reflecting once more his preoccupation with the authorial text. An examination of the remainder of his notes reveals that metre is cited as secondary evidence for his emendations.[115]

The many differences in the editions of Carney and Murphy are testimony to the all-too-often highly subjective nature of 'critical' editions. When considering factors such as metrical patterning and authorial intention, we must always be aware of the role of editorial interpretation. In the end, any construction of a putatively original text can at best be a highly informed academic exercise. That is not to suggest that the creation of such editions is redundant as the proposed archetype (whether authorial or otherwise) of a text still has authority. It is here that the definite written tradition of any work begins. However, a comparative analysis of the works of both scholars does go some way towards discrediting the certainty which seems to accompany much of the critical editing of medieval Irish poetry: metricality is not a guarantee of accuracy and the application of one interpretation does not necessarily preclude application of another.

[114] Carney, 'The So-Called "Lament of Créidhe"', p. 240.

[115] For example, regarding the second line of the fifth quatrain, Carney remarks: 'It seems to me that what has happened to the line is as follows: the poet wrote *ni biinn fri dul dodál* "I was not wont to go upon (sexually) evil assignations", treating *biinn* as a disyllable; a Middle Irish scribe quite naturally read *biinn* as a monosyllable, and "corrected" the line syllabically by reading the early Mid. Ir. form *dula* for older *dul*'(Ibid., p. 242). Thus, Murphy's rendering of the lines as *Imsa naídiu robsa náir, ní bínn fri dúla dodáil*, 'When I was a child I was modest: I used not to engage on the evil business of lust' (cited Ibid. p. 241), is in Carney's view incorrect.

The preceding discussion is based upon the assumption that there once existed a single archetype or authorial original from which all other copies of a text derive. But what of the construction of those editions which do not hold the authorial text as their end result? When it comes to the creation of such editions, questions of metrical patterning and authorial intention must take a back seat to considerations of manuscript context and functionality.

The critical principle that the literary meaning of a text cannot be sought in isolation from its manuscript context has received relatively little attention in the discipline of medieval Irish studies. In 1957, Maartje Draak, commenting on the way we study Old Irish glosses, argued that 'the systematic tearing apart of the glosses in Irish from the Latin ones and from the complicated system of signs which together constitute the commentary on difficult Latin texts shows a continuous lack of respect'.[116] Almost forty year later, Patrick K. Ford reasserted the same principle in his study of the much anthologised poem in two quatrains beginning *Dom-fharcai fidbaide fál*, more commonly known as 'Writing-Out-of-Doors', which occurs in a single source, St Gall Stiftsbibliotek, MS 904, a copy of the Latin grammar of Priscian Caesariensis. The poem was traditionally regarded as one of the finest examples of Irish hermit lyrical poetry.[117] However, Ford has convincingly argued

[116] Maartje Draak, 'Construe Marks in Hiberno-Latin Manuscripts', in *Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademis van Wetenshappen, afdelin Letterkunde*, n.s. 20 (1957), no. 10, pp. 261-82, at p. 261. Cited by Patrick K. Ford, 'Blackbirds, Cuckoos, and Infixed Pronouns: Another Context for Early Irish Nature Poetry', in *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Celtic Congress: Volume One, Language, Literature, History, Culture*, eds Ronald Black, William Gillies and Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (East Linton, East Lothian, 1997) pp. 162-70, at p. 167.

[117] For an explication of this commonly held view, see Robin Flower's lecture 'Exiles and Hermits' published in *The Irish Tradition* (Oxford, 1947), pp. 24-66, where subsequent to the presentation of these two quatrains Flower remarks: 'The anchorite was indeed the characteristic figure of the time, summing up in his person the ideals which inspired the whole movement. Many of the most beautiful poems of the age were clearly born of these anchoritish conditions' (p. 43). Donnchadh Ó Corráin later countered Flower's anchoritic view of the poem, regarding it to be the work of a 'professional scholar on vacation ... the poet is likely to be the master of the monastic school and head of the scriptorium, a scholar whose work may be fairly represented by the manuscript in which the poem

that the primary interpretation of the verse is to be found in the text as it occurs in the manuscript.[118] Ford's thesis is that regardless of any hypothetical prior existence as nature or anchoritic poetry, the fact remains that this poem with its predilection for infixed pronouns – a distinctive feature of Old Irish – appears in a section of Priscian's grammar discussing the ways in which the pronoun entered into composition in Latin. To wit, its insertion into this manuscript was effected to implicitly compare the pronominal systems of Latin and Irish and, therefore, the primary context of the poem is linguistic and grammatical rather than lyrical.

The literary approaches espoused by Ford and Carney present two very different ways of editing medieval Irish poetry: the focus of Ford's discussion is the text as it appears in the manuscript; in contrast, Carney's primary concern is the underlying archetypal or original text. Arguments denigrating one approach or another are not productive as each represents a legitimate method of editing. Recent scholarship in other disciplines has begun to recognise the importance of the study of the individual manuscripts of a text alongside an attempt to reconstruct the archetype. All of this suggests the need for a re-examination of the editorial goals by which medieval Irish poetic texts are produced to include a greater focus on the manuscripts in which the texts are contained.

In his recent study of the prominent Middle English lyric beginning *Wyth was hys nakede brest*, Ralph Hanna explores the impact of such critical principles on

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occurs' ('Early Irish Hermit Poetry?', in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers*, eds Ó Corráin, Breatnach and McCone, pp. 251-267, at. p. 257). However, as Ford points out, determining whether the poem was originally composed by hermit or scholar is largely irrelevant when it comes to understanding its place in the manuscript: 'Blackbirds, Cuckoos, and Infixed Pronouns', in particular pp. 167-70.

[118] In many ways, Carney is arguing the opposite of Ford: in order to understand fully these poems one must reject completely the prose framework (i.e. manuscript context) into which they are set. This is surprising considering Carney's primary editorial goal was to uphold manuscript readings. However, unlike Ford who is concerned with the text of the manuscript, Carney's concern is to reconstruct the text of the archetype whilst upholding the manuscript readings.

editorial activity.[119] The verse in question is attested in numerous manuscript sources and the issue, as Hanna puts it 'is the discovery of a way of reducing irreducibly plural manuscript manifestations to a single text column'.[120] Unlike various other Middle English textual critics, Hanna does not object to the creation of author-centred critical editions. Rather, he demonstrates that when one expands the textual boundaries into which a poem is set to include its manuscript context, other options might suggest themselves. The range of alternatives will be determined by the intended function of an edition and the editor's desired audience.

Having set the various critical principles into context, the intention in what follows is to discuss a number of options available to an editor of medieval Irish verse. The focus will be on the four methods of editing employed by the various editors of *Cétemain*: diplomatic and semi-diplomatic editing as represented by the texts of Meyer; the eclectic methodology set forth by Murphy, and the classically-derived approach employed by Carney. A fifth option will also be considered; that is, the parallel-text edition which, to date, has received relatively little attention within the discipline.[121] These five methods, of course, do not constitute an exhaustive list of the editorial options available. As Hanna notes, the range of presentational possibilities is 'only limited by the audiences with whom the editor

[119] Ralph Hanna, 'Editing "Middle English Lyrics": The Case of *Candet Nudatum Pectus*', *Medium Ævum* 80 (2011), pp. 189-200, at p. 191: 'whilst it is linguistically beyond debate that the lines are English, prioritizing the transmitted text as 'English Lyric verse' obscures the fact that the lines are always embedded in Latin, and that English words never exist apart from the contextualization thus provided. Thus, the 'Englishness' of 'Candet' / 'Wyth was', in one form or another, relies upon the learned medieval Englishness of being bi- or trilingual. In some respect, that very feature – an early bit of English verse – that has always drawn the poem to critical attention distorts the nature of the text, part of a broader linguistic continuum. As rhetorical *inventio*, the poem exists because, in it, English provides an acceptable approximation of a popular Latin *sententia*, a fact that can only be readily perceived by ensuring their mutual transmission'.

[120] Ibid., p. 196.

[121] See Murray's comments regarding the use of the parallel-text method in 'Reviews, Reviewers, and Critical Texts', pp. 56-7.

hopes to make contact'.[122] But the existence of alternate approaches does not invalidate the usefulness of an examination of specific methodologies and it is hoped that the subsequent discussion will provide a framework into which further considerations may be set.

The production of a diplomatic text edition (or diplomatic transcript) represents one of the most basic editorial choices and has long been a tradition in classical scholarship. Let us recall from the preceding chapter: the primary responsibility of editors involved in the creation of such an edition is to maintain as many physical features of the *diploma* as possible whilst rendering the text readable to those unversed in palaeography. The diplomatic transcript concentrates primarily on the textual content of the manuscript, reproducing the lineation (in the case of verse), spelling, punctuation and capitalisation of the original document. The resultant edition is non-critical as by definition it does not involve any criticism of the text. Thus, editors engaged in the production of a diplomatic edition are, to some degree, free from concerns of establishing the definitive text but these questions impinge on their task as well.

Meyer's initial treatment of the May-day poem was included as part of his edition of *Macgnímartha Finn* which he presented in semi-diplomatic format. His decision to include *Cétemain* but to present it as a diplomatic transcription was a default position arrived at as a result of his inability to decipher a number of textual difficulties: and his introduction to the edition suggests that he was not entirely at

[122] Hanna, 'Editing "Middle English Lyrics"', p. 198. We might add as an addendum to Hanna's remarks that the nature of the manuscript evidence should also play a significant role in decisions regarding editorial methodology.

ease in his own mind with regard to the methodology he had adopted.[123] It is not difficult to identify the source of Meyer's unease. All too often the diplomatic editor is seen as neglecting his/her editorial duties; as Fellows puts it, 'the primary function of an editor is, after all, to edit and to provide readers with a readable text or texts'.[124] In contrast, Meyer's edition upholds all of the poem's inconsistencies and informs his reader of little other than the extent of the indeterminacy of the text. However, there is undoubtedly a place for diplomatic editions in medieval Irish scholarship, especially in instances such as that encountered by Meyer where the manuscript witness offers a great many difficulties which the individual editor may not be able to overcome. This position is supported by Moffat in his bibliographical essay on Middle English editing methods: 'faced with a particularly inscrutable or badly damaged text, editors may defensibly conclude that a purely transcriptional, that is, diplomatic, edition is their only option'.[125] Additionally, it has been seen that there is significant merit in studying texts as they occur in their manuscripts and the creation of diplomatic editions is not, as certain scholars suggest, analogous to ceasing to edit.

Meyer's second edition of *Cétemain* occupies a part of the editorial spectrum somewhere between the semi-diplomatic approach and the eclectic methodology. Though not entirely eclectic, as it leaves outstanding many issues of which he was undeniably aware, his alteration of the manuscript evidence at times entails emendation of the text beyond the extent permitted within the accepted limits of the

[123] Meyer does not publish the precise lineation of the verse in the manuscript – perhaps indicating that he was not entirely sure of the exact nature of the text – nor does he impose an artificial line division. Rather, he presents it as though it were prose and upon first glance one is unable to differentiate the poem from the text which surrounds it.
[124] Fellow, 'Author, Author, Author', p. 23.
[125] Moffat (with McCarren), 'A Bibliographical Essay on Editing Methods', pp. 35-6.

semi-diplomatic methodology. As noted in Chapter Four, it is the addition of punctuation, capitalisation and word-division which sets semi-diplomatic editions apart from strict diplomatic transcriptions. We further noted that scholars of medieval Irish have tended to adopt a more broadly defined semi-diplomatic approach, and Meyer's 1903 edition is in line with this broader semi-diplomatic methodology employed within the discipline.

A further consideration for editors of semi-diplomatic editions is the issue of line division. This point becomes particularly pertinent when editing verse, as line division plays an integral role in presenting the poem and in shaping our understanding of how the poem was originally composed. Certain questions – in particular, those of syllable count and end rhyme – hinge on how the editor decides to arrange the text. As a result, the production of a semi-diplomatic edition of verse may be more critical than its prose equivalent, as the editor will ultimately have to make decisions regarding the form of the original composition which will inevitably influence readers' interpretations. For example, Carney presents his reconstruction of *Cétemain* in eight-line stanzas, corresponding with the *ochtfhoclach* metrical form which he assigns to the poem. As Tymoczko notes, there are benefits and drawbacks in this method of presentation as it highlights certain ornamental features of the verse whilst minimising the syntactic links between phrases.[126] Aesthetically, Carney's edition of the poem stands in stark contrast to the quatrains produced by both Meyer and Murphy, and it is the difference in line division which sets it apart.[127]

[126] Tymoczko, 'Vision in Early Irish Seasonal Poetry', p. 36

[127] A further example of the variability of line division is Thurneysen's edition of *Immram Snédgusa ocus Maic Ríagla* where he chooses to divide the stanzas into two lines rather than the traditional four to accommodate the often irregular metre: 'Zwei Versionen der Mittelirischen Legende von Snedgus und Mac Riagla', *Program zur Feier des Geburtstages seiner Königlichen Hoheit de Grossherzogs Friedrich des Durchlauchtigen Rector Magnificus der Albert-Ludwig-Universität zu Freiburg i. Br.*

Murphy's edition of *Cétemain* is, if you like, the opposite extreme to Meyer's initial conservatism. According to Murphy, the complexity of Irish manuscript transmission means that the individual editor's judgement has to be placed above applications of overly simplistic systems such as those set forth by the classical method. Eclecticism enables the textual scholar both to distinguish the authorial from the non-authorial through collation (in instances where there are more than one manuscript witness) and to reconstruct (or create) an authoritative reading where none of the readings in the extant documents seem suitable. The method does not necessitate, as Murphy's approach to *Aithbe damsa bés mora* would suggest, the abandonment of the creation of a stemma, though such an analysis will play a far less pivotal role in determining the form of the original text. Regarding the overall applicability of the approach, Greetham succinctly states that:

> Obviously, this method can, in the hands of an able critic, produce a sensitive and discriminating text responsive to authorial intention – and can certainly take the reader much closer to this intention than could a reliance upon any one of the corrupt 'remaniements' or surviving documents. But it is equally obvious that in the hands of an enthusiastic perfecter of an author's work, a critic who values 'smoothness,' 'consistency,' and 'correctness' more than documentary 'authority,' the analogy method [that is, the eclectic method] can result in extreme eclecticism, subjectivism, and normalization according to the esthetic dictates of the critic, not the author.[128]

It is probably not unjust to assert that, in his reconstruction of the May-day poem, Murphy falls into the latter group. We see in this work a willingness to pursue the logic of an argument to a point where the text has to be created to fit the hypothesis.

(Halle, 1904), repr. *Gesammelte Schriften*, i-iii, ed. Patricia de Bernardo Stempel and Rolf Ködderitzsch (Tübingen, 1991), ii, pp. 538-85.

[128] Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, p. 299.

Murphy's 'restoration' of the metre involves more extensive interference with the poem than any scholar before or since has deemed necessary.

Much of this chapter may appear to attempt to discredit the editorial methods advocated by Murphy, one of the great Irish scholars of the twentieth century. This is not my intention. In creating his anthology of medieval Irish lyrical poetry, Murphy imagined his audience as being the general reader of Irish verse; and given the intended audience of his work it is difficult to fault his procedures. Most users of such a volume are likely to be put off by anything other than the presentation of a homogenous text. However, it is not a requirement that one present solely eclectic versions in the production of anthologised selections intended for student use. Hanna suggests a 'best-text' edition or the possibility of the presentation of a 'representative text' – that is, 'one which strikes a mean among a range of different manuscript presentations' – as two alternative types of edition which may be arguably directed at a general audience (though neither of those options are applicable to the *Cétemain* material).[129] What is being highlighted here is Murphy's complete rejection of recension and the inconsistent manner in which he applied his methodology; as we have seen, however, this latter failing was not uniquely Murphy's.

Carney was also guilty of applying his preferred editorial approach, i.e. the genealogical method, without taking due consideration of the manuscript contexts. Exponents of the genealogical method maintain that the archetypal text is recoverable through the application of certain mechanical principles. Although ideally formulation of recension does not necessitate the abandonment of conjectural

[129] Hanna, 'Editing "Middle English Lyrics"', pp. 196-7.

emendation, the method is predicated upon the notion that the text can be established through the application of scientific principles. Carried to its extreme, this approach would suggest that those texts which exist in a single witness would never be susceptible to editorial emendation. Similarly, texts which are only found in two manuscripts might be subjected to minimal change. However, that is not to suggest that the method is without value. It is useful when the evidence adheres to the specific criteria which it requires and when those who would opt in favour of its application realise that the methodology should allow for something of the flexible nature of the manuscript material being edited. In an article concerning the application of recension to Middle English texts, Hanna extols both the practical and theoretical virtues of recension:

> no other method provides a way to historicise textual generation and to liken this behaviour to specific human work. And Kane-Donaldson's total rejection of the value of attestation – the stemmatic discovery that multitudinous shared readings may represent in the last analysis only a single, historicizable production decision – seems to me less than compelling. Not only do they reject as impossible any historically plausible construction of the evidence by attending to potential vertical descent of readings, but they surrender any interest in the historical development of the text and thus tend to remove it from history altogether.[130]

Once more, the criticism of the genealogical approach here is not of the method but of the critic and his/her uncompromising application of his/her preferred procedure. It is not unreasonable that an editor may resort to certain recensionary principles in deciding between *variae lectiones*, and indeed this is indispensable as a means of establishing the historicity of a text. However, the textual critic must be guided not only by rules but also by a keen sense of style and an understanding of the material

[130] Hanna, 'Producing Manuscripts and Editions', p. 126 (cf. Moffat, 'A Bibliographical Essay on Editing Methods', p. 31).

under investigation, particularly as certain original readings – if restoration of the original is the desired outcome of the edition – may not necessarily be contained in any of the manuscript witnesses.

The over-zealous application of the methods of eclecticism and recension can be seen as examples of two extreme reactions to textual criticism. One extreme maintains that the correct readings can only be discovered through a deep understanding of context rather than text, so that the editor knows their author 'with the marrow of their bones, which is the same stuff as his',[131] and the other extreme believes that the evidence of the documents must be placed above considerations of editorial conjecturalism. As the analysis of the editions of Murphy and Carney demonstrates, the two approaches may result in very different editions. However, the fault does not lie with the method but rather with each editor's insistence on the applicability and accuracy of his chosen procedure without giving due consideration to individual textual traditions, preferring to view the production of medieval Irish poetry in more general terms.[132] Despite the differences in approach, each editor holds as his primary goal the restoration of the authorial text. But what of those materials which, either because sufficient textual evidence for the reconstruction of the archetype is lacking, or because scribes have taken upon themselves the role of author, may not be amenable to these approaches? How then is such a text to be handled?

[131] Housman, *Belli Civilis, libri decem*, p. vi.

[132] As Machan ('Middle English Text Production and Modern Textual Criticism', at p. 12) notes, 'it would seem that the key point – the issue which logically precedes all others – is not whether one follows a best-text method [or the classical method in our case] or an eclectic one. It is, rather, how one conceives a text and its transmission'. Cf. the comment made by Patterson ('The Logic of Textual Criticism and the Way of Genius' p. 80) that 'one axiom of textual criticism is that each instance must be assessed in its own terms'.

We have noted in the preceding chapter that the parallel text method presents, in parallel, either diplomatic or semi-diplomatic transcripts of all the manuscript witnesses of a text, the aim of this being generally to represent the developmental stages of a work. Though it may initially appear that the majority of texts attested in more than one witness are susceptible to such treatment, a closer analysis of the method reveals that only a limited number of texts will be suited to such an approach. For example, if the textual transmission of a text is relatively straightforward, it may not be considered necessary, and a list of variants supplied as part of a textual apparatus may be regarded as sufficient by both editor and reader.

To illustrate this point, we might consider *EIL* no. 38, which Murphy titled 'Ungenerous Payment'. The poem is contained in the eleventh-century metrical tracts published by Thurneysen under the title *Mittelirische Verslehren* where it is cited as an example of *deibide baise fri tóin* ('slap-on-the-buttocks *deibide*').[133] Murphy's text is an eclectic edition incorporating readings from the three early-fifteenth-century manuscript witnesses **H**, **B** and **M**.[134] In his notes, Murphy refers his reader to Thurneysen for the exact texts of **H** and **B** as the spelling of the text in the anthology has been normalised to correspond more closely to the language of the ninth century, with only those 'MS. differences worthy of consideration being indicated at the foot of the page'.[135] The poem's single quatrain as printed by Murphy reads:

[133] Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Mittelirische Verslehren', in *Irishe Texte* 3, eds. Whitley Stokes and Ernst Windisch (Leipzig, 1891), pp. 1-182, at p. 67 ff. This poem has recently been re-edited by Eoin Mac Cárthaigh in *The Art of Bardic Poetry: A New Edition of Irish Grammatical Tracts* (Dublin, 2014).
[134] T.C.D. MS., H.2.12, p. 15b ('**H**'); R.I.A. MS 23 P 12 (Book of Ballymote) ('**B**'), p. 289; R.I.A. MS D ii 1 (the Book of Uí Maine), f. 133 r, col. b ('**M**').
[135] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. 215, n. 2.

Ro-cúala
ní tabair eochu ar dúana;
do-beir a n-í as dúthaig dó,
bó.

I have heard that he gives no steeds for poems; he gives what is native to him, a cow.[136]

In the footnotes accompanying his edition, Murphy notes ten instances of manuscript variants 'worthy of consideration'.[137] However, this list is not exhaustive as Murphy does not include minor spelling variants within the manuscript texts.

Presented as semi-diplomatic transcriptions with line division, a parallel-text edition of the poem might take the following format:[138]

[**H**]	[**B**]	[**M**]
Docuala.	Rochuala	Rocúala
nítabair eocha araduana	nithobhaír eochu arduana	nitabair eochu *ar*duana
dob*er* aníí isdual do bó	dober i*n*di isduthaigh do bo	dob*er* ini is duthaig*h* do bo

If the editor chooses, he/she may then include a critical edition with accompanying translation, as the parallel-text method does not contradict the production of other more traditional editorial options. This would be highly advisable in the present instance as even the most cursory examination of the extant witnesses demonstrates the presence of an underlying archetype. Let us recall Jacobs assertion that, 'where ... it is possible to assert with some plausibility what the reading from which the variants derive is likely to have been, it is an abdication of editorial judgement to

[136] Ibid., pp. 90-1.
[137] The list of variants supplied in the apparatus reads: Docuala **H**, Rochuala **B M** nítabair **H**, nithobaír **B**, nita bair **M**; araduana **H**, arduana **B M** aníí isdual **H**, i*n*di isduthaigh **B**, ini isduthaigh **M**: Murphy, *EIL*, p. 91.
[138] The readings of **H** and **B** have been taken from Thurneysen, 'Mittelirische Verslehren', p. 67. **M** has been transcribed from the manuscript.

refrain from suggesting it'.[139] The question emerges what form any accompanying critical text should take.

The benefits of presenting this poem in parallel are not readily apparent. Whilst Murphy's critical edition is eclectic, the textual tradition is not particularly complicated and the readings of each of the source texts can be easily discerned from the textual apparatus at the foot of the page. One might argue that the facility with which we can read variants in context, and move back and forth between corresponding passages of different sources, is hampered by Murphy's edition. One of the benefits of presenting the texts in parallel is that these difficulties are immediately remedied: one can more readily study the textual variants for themselves. This is indeed the case when one is confronted with a relatively small number of textual witnesses, such as the example of 'Ungenerous Payment'. However, for texts with a more extensive manuscript tradition, the parallel-text edition itself is often cumbersome to use, and ease of reference should not be the foremost consideration in presenting such an edition.

Just as it is not the intention to suggest that parallel editing is universally applicable, neither is it desirable to suggest that it has no place in the editing of medieval Irish verse. Objections to the method here are largely pragmatic rather than theoretical. Though there are instances where it may be awkward to publish all of the versions of a text, sometimes it might be preferable. For example, the production of a parallel-text edition might be justified by the loss of some or all of what would otherwise be a preferable version of a text.[140] Another situation where parallel-text editing might prove to be a good option is when scribal changes

[139] Jacobs, 'Kindly Light or Foxfire', p. 13.
[140] Cf. Chapter Four, p. 209.

wrought to the putative original are placed on a footing (nearly) equal to those of the author (if they can be distinguished). The text to be considered in this respect is 'Gráinne Speaks of Díarmait' (*EIL*, no. 54) supposedly spoken by Gráinne to Finn and possibly the earliest reference to Gráinne's love for Díarmait.[141] The quatrain is preserved in six manuscripts as a gloss to the word *díuterc*.[142] In each of these, it forms part of the Middle Irish commentary on the early Old Irish *Amra Coluim Chille*. Murphy's edition is based on the text of **R** with collation of the other five manuscripts. Divergences from **R**'s text in the other manuscripts (excluding a number of minor spelling mistakes) are noted in the footnotes. Murphy suggests that the quatrain dates to not later than the tenth century. As edited by Murphy it reads:

Fil duine
frismad buide lemm díuterc,
día tibrinn in mbith mbuide,
huile, huile, cid díupert.

There is one on whom I should gladly gaze, to whom I would give the bright world, all of it, all of it, though it be an unequal bargain.[143]

Regarding the transmission of the poem, Murphy notes: 'It will be seen that **R** and **U²** agree against **U H C** in giving the anthology version of lines 3-4. This version is more forcible than the **U H C** version. The **Y E** version agrees with the **R U²** for line

[141] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. 236.
[142] Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, *Lebor na hUidre* (fo. 7v, written *c*. A.D. 1100) ('**U**') (Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. 236 differentiates between '**U**' and '**U²**' the latter of which 'indicates variants added to the text by the original scribe of **U**'); Trinity College Library, Dublin, *Liber Hymnorum*, MS 1441, olim. E. 4. 2 (fo. 26, col. 1, written c. A.D. 1100) ('**H**'); Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Rawlinson B 502 (fo. 56r, col. 2, l. 28, early to mid-twelfth-century) ('**R'**); Trinity College Library, Dublin, *Yellow Book of Lecan*, MS1318, olim. H. 2. 16 (col. 686, l. 39, fourteenth century) ('**Y**'); British Museum, London, MS. Egerton 1782 (fo. 6v, col. 2, l. 13, early sixteenth century) ('**E**'); and Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, MS. C. 3. 2 (fo. 7r, col. 2, l. 42, written c. A.D. 1552) ('**C**').
[143] Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics*, p. 160.

3, with **U H C** for line 4'.[144] It is difficult to discern the manuscript tradition from the variants supplied in the critical apparatus.[145]

As it stands, Murphy's anthology presents the reader with reconstructed texts together with incomplete depictions of the source materials. This is perhaps symptomatic of an editorial approach which holds as its primary goal the recovery of the lost archetype. 'Gráinne Speaks of Díarmait' would appear to be the ideal candidate for presentation in parallel: it is a short poem attested in multiple manuscripts, bearing witness to the existence of a number of legitimate textual variants and secondary creative acts. The presentation of such a text in parallel more readily enables a better understanding of the complexity of the text and its textual tradition (cf. Appendix Two). In such an edition, the editor neither suppresses nor privileges certain readings, and the user is not left with the illusion that the six manuscript versions constitute a single fixed text.

This kind of edition raises the issue of the ordering of texts which, as Hanna notes, tends to control the way in which readers interact with them.[146] In his study of the best way of arranging poems in a collected edition, Ian Jack comments that for modern scholarship the chronological ordering of verses could be described as orthodox. Though Jack is referring specifically to works of a single poet, his observation that 'the attempt at chronological arrangement often impels an editor toward a decision for which there is insufficient evidence' remains applicable to the

[144] Ibid., p. 237.
[145] Ibid., p. 161 presents a convoluted range of variants in the *apparatus criticus* at the foot of the page which reads: 2 f**r**ismad **R**, Rismad **H U**, ris budh **Y**, f*r*iss bud **E**, frisbud **C**; díuterc **H**, diuderc **U Y** (**E C**) (*illegible* **R**) 3 diatribri*n*d **U²**, ara (...) bri*n*n **R**, aratibri*n*d **H**, ar atribri*n*d **U**, aratibrai*n*d **Y** (**E C**); in **H U E C** (*illegible* R), an **Y**; mbi h **R H**, bith **U Y E C**; mbuide **R**, mbude **U²**, buidhe **Y E**, ule U H, uil*e* **C** 4 huile huile **R**, hule hule **U²**, ameicc maire **U** (*and* **H**, *but with* '*nō* u' *over the* 'a' *of* maire), ameicmaire **Y**, am*ei*cmauire **E** (**C**); diuper(t) **H**, d(iub)ert **R**, diúbert **U**, diubeirt **Y**, diub*e*r**t E C**.
[146] Hanna, 'Editing "Middle English Lyrics"', p. 197.

presentation of variant readings of individual poetic texts.[147] Such an arrangement of the verses may be misleading, and might potentially hamper the reader's interpretation of the textual tradition. Ultimately, there can be no simple solution; advantages of one mode of presentation are accompanied by corresponding disadvantages. However, in the compilation of a parallel-text edition the editor must always bear in mind the influence his/her arrangement of the material will have on the reader. As Jack puts it, 'the human mind naturally desires order; but order tends toward oversimplification, so that a choice of orders has a great deal to be said for it'.[148]

The case in favour of parallel-text presentation may be further illustrated by Murphy's 1953 edition of *Aithbe damsa bés mora*. As the preceding discussion regarding the transmission of the poem demonstrates, there are two identifiable strands in the textual tradition – **H** on the one hand, and the remaining four manuscripts (**N**, **h**, **B**, **b**) on the other (cf. *supra* pp. 239-244). Murphy's text is an eclectic edition which utilises all five manuscripts and presents the thirty-five quatrains in the order in which they appear in **H**. In his detailed literary criticism of the poem, Martin draws attention to many of the difficulties and uncertainties surrounding its composition, including scholarly disagreements regarding its date, the original number and order of the verses, and questions of genre and literary interpretation.[149] In another study of the poem, this time Murdoch's survey of its various translations, the author remarks that 'the question of what constitutes the text

[147] Ian Jack, 'A Choice of Orders: The Arrangement of "The Poetical Works"', in *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. McGann, pp. 127-43, 224-7, at p. 128.
[148] Ibid., p. 143.
[149] Bernard K. Martin, 'The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare: A Critical Evaluation', *Medium Aevum* 38 (1969), pp. 245-61.

is a difficult one'.[150] The two recensions vary considerably from one another, both in the order and in the content of their stanzas. The order in all editions follows that in **H**. However, an examination of the divergent stanza sequences in the manuscripts reveals a preoccupation with differing motifs. Therefore, it would appear that there is sufficient justification for the presentation of a parallel-text edition.[151]

An editor who opts in favour of this methodology will find himself/herself presented with a number of challenges which the compiler of a critical edition will not have to face. Firstly, there is the pragmatic issue of space. Secondly, the similarities of the texts in the second recension will result in much repetition. Thirdly, as both recensions present the stanzas in a different order, how does one present the stanzas in parallel whilst accurately representing the order of the second recension? Hussey has offered a potential solution to the first two difficulties which may serve as a means of accurately presenting the reader with the multiple versions of the text without necessarily having to make available the multiples of textual evidence in full: 'given the impracticability of citing all variant readings from all the manuscripts in a modern edition, it should be sufficient to cite the 'best' manuscript from each group, plus any variations of significance from within the group'.[152] Consequently this would allow the reader to view the text as a sequence of versions and perhaps more accurately represent its textual tradition. For example, a scholar might choose to follow a procedure such as that adopted by the editors of *The Simonie* in which they print 'corresponding stanzas on the same page, occasionally repeating (in boxes) stanzas out of their MS order to permit comparison with the

[150] Brian Murdoch, 'In Pursuit of the *Caillech Bérre*: an Early Irish Poem and the Medievalist at Large', *ZCP* 44 (1991), pp. 80-127.
[151] Cf. the discussion of Katja Ritari, 'Images of Aging in the Early Irish Poem Caillech Bérri', *SCF* 3 (2006), pp. 34-56.
[152] Hussey, 'Editing the Scale of Perfection', p. 105

differently ordered versions. Thus each version can be read in its own order'.[153] Printing such materials in parallel would be the most advantageous for editor, reader and publisher alike.

One consideration which has repeatedly come to the fore throughout the preceding discussion is that the editor must judge what the evidence will allow in the way of method rather than imposing a method on the evidence. When we consider the applicability of the parallel-text method, the situation is no different. At first, the approach may appear to offer a solution to many of the issues of authorial versus sociological editing raised throughout the present discussion. However, applicability does not dictate suitability and the parallel text is simply one of a range of options available to an editor of medieval Irish verse. With the exception of diplomatic transcriptions, each of these approaches will inevitably contain emendation, and every one of them will inevitably entail some level of critical conjecture based on one's perception of the material to be edited. Having established that no one methodology is universal, the question becomes: what system or what rationale may one use to facilitate making the correct decisions?

Jacobs has offered a formulation for assessing the status of derivative versions, referred to as the 'six degrees of alteration', which may be applied to both prose and poetry. Aside from questions of authorial revision and collaborative authorship, issues which occupy Middle English textual critics more than their medieval Irish counterparts, Jacobs identifies various other possibilities ranging from 'the reproduction *literatim* of the exemplar to the creation of an entirely new

[153] Embree and Urquhart, '*The Simonie*: The Case for a Parallel-Text Edition', p. 58.

composition only loosely based on it'.[154] Firstly, there is a redactor responsible for producing a new version of an existing text; then, there is a copyist who, motivated by personal interests or prejudices, tidies up textual inconsistencies or performs systematic alterations. Next, there is a scribe responsible for unsystematic alterations resulting from an inability to identify with what is being copied, or a desire to impose his personality on the text. Finally, there is the scribe who produces an inaccurate text as a result of carelessness. Each of these cases will not necessarily be clear cut, and decisions regarding where on the spectrum a particular variant belongs may be as conjectural as selecting between variant readings. However, treatment of the source in a manner such as Jacobs suggests allows the textual scholar to resolve the perceived polarity between authors and scribes 'not by blurring the distinction between the two but by recognizing it as a question less of persons than of functions, which can in some cases be exercised simultaneously'.[155] He argues that a scribe can be differentiated from an author when the intention to communicate is lacking and the activity is purely scribal. By applying this definition of authorship to the alterations made by scribes and redactors, Jacobs differentiates six degrees of scribal activity and justifies the compilation of a critical edition of both the original and any versions which are the result of a conscious revision of the original.

Before concluding, it remains to discuss the matter of the editing and presentation of prosimetric texts. The combination of poetry and prose is attested in some of the earliest extant manuscript witnesses to Irish literary tradition. The Middle Irish period saw a surge in the frequency with which that narrative medium

[154] Jacobs, 'Kindly Light or Foxfire?', p. 11.
[155] Ibid., p. 13.

was employed, one which continued in usage through to the modern period.[156] Prosimetrum takes a range of forms, and the relationships between the poetry and prose vary across a range of texts. Thus, in discussing editorial approaches to prosimetric texts, it is not intended to suggest that the following remarks constitute a prescriptive methodology. General statements must be made cautiously and, ultimately, final determinations should be arrived at based on a text by text analysis.

Carney has discussed the relationship of poetry and prose in prosimetric texts specifically with regard to two of the poems contained in *Acallam na Senórach*, *Géisid Cúan* and *Turus acam Día hAíne*.[157] His observations concerning the composition of prosimetrum are particularly relevant to the present discussion and deserve to be quoted in full:

> We cannot always assume that prose and verse were a unity from the beginning, although this, of course, may often be so. But there are many other possibilities: a redactor may compose poems, and insert them in an older prose tale; a saga writer may compose poems and write a saga around them; a late 'editor' may add an introductory passage to an early poem, purporting to state the circumstances under which it was originally composed.

If we accept Carney's conclusions regarding these relationships – and one sees no reason to reject them – we must consider how best to edit a text which may present two distinct strata of a textual tradition as a single unit.[158]

Prior to examining the wider editorial issues, we must first address the question of what constitutes a prosimetric text: can one, as Carney's comments

[156] Gregory Toner, 'Authority, Verse and the Transmission of *Senchas*', *Eriú* 55 (2005), pp. 59-84, at p. 59: 'The increased use of prosimetrical form may be due, at least in part, to the authoritative and authenticative uses of verse'.
[157] Carney, 'Two Poems from *Acallam na Senórach*', pp. 22-32.
[158] It is also important to bear in mind whilst considering the editorial approach to prosimetric texts that the editor may be faced with a number of different linguistic strata within both prose and poetry being presented as a unified whole.

suggest, equate a brief introductory passage to a poem with a longer saga in which the scribal author has integrated the poetry into the prose text? This matter might be best answered by considering the sociological function of the manuscript text. Regarding audience experience, Proinsias Mac Cana has remarked that 'our late medieval predecessors read these tales as if each in its totality, both prose and verse, had been written by the same hand at the same time'.[159] Mac Cana is speaking specifically of reiterative verse, that is, poetry inserted after the prose with the intention of testifying to the authenticity of the preceding prose account. Geraldine Parsons has expressed similar sentiments in her study of the poetry of *Acallam na Senórach*, this time from the perspective of the scribal author.[160] However, Parsons goes a step further than Mac Cana in suggesting 'a general principle that should be adopted in reading prosimetric texts: the poetry – whether or not composed specifically for the context in question – and the prose are intended to be read as a single unit'.[161] This, the present author believes, is a good starting point for the editor of prosimetrum, whether the prose takes the form of brief introductory remarks or saga. However, any consideration of the two ranges of texts together must take into consideration the gulf in presentation and narrative technique which separates them. Moreover, the arguments presented in Chapter Three concerning the fluidity inherent in much of medieval Irish narrative further complicates the editorial

[159] Mac Cana, 'Notes on the Combination of Prose and Verse in Early Irish Narrative', p. 137. Cf. idem, 'Prosimetrum in Insular Celtic Literature', in *Prosimetrum: Crosscultural Perspectives on Narrative in Prose and Verse*, eds Joseph Harris and Karl Reichl, pp. 99-130, at p. 112: 'Furthermore, when the main object of the verse in each instance is to set the seal of authenticity of what has been recounted in the preceding prose, it becomes in fact a résumé of it. At least this is how it appears when we – as it was obviously intended that our late medieval predecessors should do – read these tales in a synchronic perspective, in other words as if each of them in its totality, prose and verse'.

[160] Throughout this section the terms 'scribe', 'scribal editor', 'scribal author', 'scribal compiler' and 'redactor' have been used interchangeably as it is often difficult to discern where one role ends and the other begins.

[161] Parsons, '*Acallam na Senórach* as Prosimetrum', p. 87.

situation as neither poetry nor prose is guaranteed as a fixed element within a specific prosimetric text.

Mac Cana has drawn attention to the example of *Aided Con Culainn* which exemplifies the kind of variation in poetry which may occur from one recension to another of the same prosimetric narreme; the poetry in the earlier recension is composed primarily of *roscada*; while the later version, which dates from approximately the fifteenth century, contains none of the *roscada* but is liberally interspersed with more modern poems. Mac Cana further comments that the earliest manuscript of the later tradition omits all but one of the poems 'even though they appear to have been in the archetype'. He continues that since this manuscript is the basis of van Hamel's edition of this version, 'the result is that the published text gives the impression of an unbroken prose narrative and to that extent understates the role of prosimetrum'.[162] We may also consider the example of *Cétemain* which, as previously remarked, differs from the other poetic examples contained in *Macgnímartha Finn* in function, form and date of composition. This, perhaps, goes some way to explaining why in all but one of the scholarly editions of *Cétemain* the poem has been edited independently of its original manuscript context.

As regards the use of linguistic dating in determining the relationship between poetry and prose, the evidence can often be unreliable. Mac Cana points out that poetic texts are more conservative than their prose counterparts, i.e. that their poetic forms lend themselves less readily to scribal intervention. This sentiment is echoed by the words of Gregory Toner when he writes of the implied endurance and

[162] Mac Cana, 'Prosimetrum in Insular Celtic Literature', p. 110.

reliability of verse, in contrast to prose.[163] This may go some way to accounting for the apparent lateness of much of the prose settings. Moreover, in his recent analysis of the language of *Duanaire Finn*, John Carey has convincingly demonstrated that certain pieces of the *Duanaire* have been extensively modernised, thus concluding that 'any estimate as to date must take into account the possibility that a poem's first composition may have taken place even earlier than the surviving evidence attests'.[164] This complicates matters even further as it would tend to undermine somewhat Mac Cana's comments about the persistence of the poetic form.

Returning to Carney's observations regarding *Géisid Cúan* and *Turus acam Día hAíne*, he argued that the two poems were independent compositions later incorporated into the prose setting of the *Acallam*. For that reason, he criticises other scholarship that would interpret the poetry in light of this prose backdrop. According to the prose, the poem was a lament spoken by the newly-wed Créd/Créide for her husband Cáel, on his being drowned on the final day of the battle of Ventry. As we have seen, Carney maintains that it is in fact an example of the *topos* by which a bardic poet can represent himself as his patron's lover and cites numerous other examples to substantiate his claim. In his recent re-examination of Carney's interpretation of *Géisid Cúan*, however, Ó Coileáin stresses an obvious point: such an interpretation of the poetry necessitates the support of historical and contextual evidence which is absent from Carney's analysis.[165] Ó Coileáin has convincingly argued that the evidence offered by Carney is insufficient to

[163] Toner, 'Authority, Verse and the Transmission of Senchas', p. 60.
[164] John Carey, 'Remarks on Dating', in *Dunaire Finn*: *Reassessments*, ed. John Carey (Dublin, 2005) pp. 1-18, at p. 18.
[165] Séan Ó Coileáin, 'The Setting of *Géisid Cúan*', in *Cín Chille Cúile:* Texts, eds Carey, Herbert, and Murray, pp. 234-248. Ó Coileáin points out that the same might also be said of Carney's analysis of *Turas acam Día hAíne*, though he does not endeavour to discuss this topic in any length.

disestablish the link between the poetry and prose which, prior to Carney, had been unquestioningly accepted. However, his primary difficulty is not with Carney's insufficient evidence but with his 'overly deterministic approach'.[166]

Commenting on Murphy's edition of *Turus acam Día hAíne*, Carney maintains that difficulties within Murphy's text emerge as a result of the latter's understanding of the poetry and prose as 'an original unity'.[167] He goes on to state that, as it stands, the poem is 'in need of re-editing, for, in the process of edition, secondary readings have been adopted by the editor, and words and phrases essential to the proper understanding have been excluded'.[168] I would strongly disagree with Carney's assessment of Murphy's text, and in particular his use of the phrase 're-edit' which implies that Murphy's understanding of the relationship between the poetry and prose was inaccurate. Carney's analysis of the original composition may be correct; however, as the rebuttal by Ó Coileáin demonstrates, it is not a foregone conclusion. Furthermore, it is worth reiterating that within their manuscript context both poetry and prose are presented as a homogeneous unity and that is undoubtedly how they were understood by their medieval reader. Any re-interpretation of the poetry as an independent composition may necessitate a further edition independent of the prose setting. However, it does not render the prose text redundant. No one edition of a text is definitive and, as previously outlined in the analysis of the *Cétemain* material, the formulation of one type of edition does not preclude the creation of another.

[166] Ibid., p. 248.
[167] Carney, 'Two Poems from the Acallam na Senórach', p. 26.
[168] Ibid., p. 27.

Carney argues in conclusion that in order for both poems to be properly understood and edited, they must be interpreted independently of their prose contexts.[169] We are once more faced with the dichotomy between authorial and sociological approaches to editing. Carney's evaluation of the material is based upon a desire to return to the poetry as it was originally composed whilst discounting the act of creation involved when the compiler assembled the *Acallam*. The implication here is that this medieval mind did not fully understand the material it was working with. In this assessment, Carney is perhaps guilty of the distrust in manuscript materials against which he, on other occasions, has so fervently argued. As Ó Coileáin points out, 'in the manner of providing a frame of reference a twelfth-century editor must also continue to have a considerable advantage over a twentieth-century critic'.[170] That is not to discount Carney's general principle that the poem itself must continue to be the thing which determines its own interpretation, and in an edition which consists solely of the poetry this will remain be the case. In the case of a prosimetric text where it can be convincingly argued that the poem had an existence previous to its incorporation into its prose setting, it is a legitimate editorial goal to attempt to recover the original poetic text. However, in the production of any edition, the editor must be guided by the text as it stands in the manuscript(s), and the manuscript context of the *Acallam* consists of poetry and prose fully integrated, poorly or otherwise, to provide the reader with a homogenous tale.

To counsel perfection then: the ideal to be aimed at in the production of a critical edition of medieval Irish verse (and prose for that matter) unsurprisingly lies in a compromise between the polarities represented by the editorial approaches of

[169] Ibid., p. 29.
[170] Ó Coileáin, 'The Setting of *Géisid Cúan*', p. 235.

Murphy and Carney: a greater acknowledgement of the manuscript context, the establishment of the transmission and historicity of the text, together with a keen understanding of styles (including metrical patterns) which may have guided the author. Furthermore, the editor must make allowances for the existence of parallel versions of a text and must be able to present them to a reader as an alternative to (or in addition to) an attempt to reconstruct the authorial original; he/she must also demonstrate an acceptance that not all texts are 'editable' in the traditional author-centric sense of the word. The question then becomes: how best to present this latter material? One solution may be to present these sources in parallel, though this will not always be feasible. A further possibility when dealing with divergent traditions would be an amalgam of two methodologies: multiple 'representative texts' set forth in parallel. Ultimately, as in the case of prosimetric texts, the solution may not rest in a single edition but in the creation of multiple editions, each one reflecting different strata of the textual tradition and each directed primarily at a different audience.

CHAPTER SIX

DIGITAL EDITING: 'NEW LIFE FOR AN OLD FORM'[1]

The contemporary scholarly climate is one in which such basic issues as authorship, originality and textual stability are often fiercely debated and greatly influenced by a multiplicity of ideological and critical commitments. In the face of current editorial trends, the definitive critical edition seems to be an increasingly unrealisable goal. In light of this, the theoretical concerns regarding the role and effect of computer technologies in textual criticism have become more pressing. In recent years, much attention has been paid to the use of computers in the humanities and the terms 'electronic edition' and 'digital edition' have achieved fairly widespread use. The intention of this chapter is to begin by offering a brief description of the role to date of the computer in scholarly editing, before continuing to explore the implications of the new digital medium for editors and the editorial process. In order to situate this analysis within its proper contexts, however, it is necessary here briefly to revisit some of the conclusions which have been reached thus far.

Chapter One detailed the origins of modern textual critical theory and methodology. It explored the consequences of the age of printing and the programme of humanists and reformers for textual critical practice. We saw that the Renaissance was the birthplace of modern textual criticism and that the recognition of an original form of a text as the product of an individual author was formulated within the epistemological and intellectual frameworks developed during this period. We further observed that the physical characteristics of the printed codex edition

[1] This phrase is from Parker, *The Living Text*, p. 192.

were a fundamental contributor to the character of modern textual criticism. The uniformity and stability of the printed edition led to the concept of a singular authoritative text, a concept which remains current in the theory and practice of textual criticism in the modern critical period.

The examination in Chapter Two of the development of the theory and practice of editing medieval Irish manuscripts from the late-nineteenth century to the present day resulted in a number of conclusions. Firstly, we saw that the early development of medieval Irish textual criticism was closely associated with and influenced by comparative philology, 'the central discipline of the long nineteenth century'.[2] Furthermore, we noted that it is a procedure which sustains the inherited positions of humanist textual criticism – the equation of author with the authoritative text and the privileging of the verbal text – and testifies to the modern concern for consistency in morphology and orthography. The editorial contributions of Stokes, Binchy and Carney highlight the presence of a number of pervasive and fundamental editorial assumptions regarding the traditional goal of medieval Irish textual criticism. In summary, these are: (1) that extant (and, by extension, lost) manuscripts all descend from a single authorial copy or archetypal text and (2) that the primary purpose of the critical editing of medieval Irish texts is seen as an attempt to recover the work of the original author. Modern textual theorists within the discipline have begun to question the legitimacy of this approach. Nevertheless, there remains little recognition of the ideological commitments that have shaped the traditional view of medieval Irish textual criticism and the definition of its goal.

[2] Kabir, 'Reading Between the Lines', p. 79. Cf. Chapter Two, p. 58.

The next chapter explored in greater detail a number of the epistemological and ideological premises perpetuated by the inherited practices of medieval Irish textual criticism. Chapter Three focused specifically on the idea of an original text: it examined the increasing scepticism about the concept in biblical and medieval textual criticism generally and asks whether it is appropriate to continue to speak of an ‘original text’ in a medieval Irish context. Examples were taken from secular (pseudo-) historical prose narrative, to illustrate how the construction of putative original texts in the editorial treatment of this material may potentially erect barriers to its reception by modern readers. In particular, the role of the audience in determining textual meaning was brought to the fore and in this regard we saw that theories of reader reception have a great deal to offer the textual critic of medieval Irish narrative.

What followed in Chapter Four was an analysis of the applicability of the various forms of scholarly editing to a specific Middle Irish text. Here, the focus was on the creation of traditional print-based editions and it was observed that just as editorial endeavour has come to have more than one aim, so too the outcome (that is, the edited text) can be constructed according to more than one methodology. When dealing with a specific text, not every approach will be suitable and the editor must allow the manuscript evidence to determine which approach will work best. Chapter Five illustrated the presence of a *de facto* model of editing medieval Irish poetry, the foundation of which again is the recovery of the original text. Once more, the focus of this discussion was codex based scholarly editions. We saw that one of the primary ideological perspectives is that the original text was metrically uniform throughout and by comparing editions of various prominent scholars we went some way towards showing the limitations of this editorial paradigm.

There are two principal conclusions to be drawn from these investigations. Firstly, the theory and practice of modern textual criticism did not develop ahistorically: as Holmes points out, those scholars who challenge the ideological commitments of contemporary practitioners are raising issues not only about methodology but also about epistemology.[3] The second point concerns the nature and scope of contemporary ideological commitments and the summary at the beginning of this chapter touched on the importance of these ideological perspectives to textual criticism generally, and specifically with regard to the editing of medieval Irish manuscript material. We have seen that the search for '*the* original text' which formed such a central part of the humanist agenda, together with the technological developments achieved during the age of printing, were fundamental contributors to the shape of the modern scholarly edition.

In the same way that modern textual criticism has been shaped by the physical characteristics of the print codex edition, the printed text has also placed certain limitations on the text and form of scholarly editions. In his study of Middle English textual criticism, Machan identifies three primary constraints of traditional print codex editions: the typographical limitations imposed upon the editor by modern print technology; the fact that each edition is an interpretation of the original manuscript source; and the interrelated demands of cost and pedagogical usefulness. We might also add to this list the physical limitations of the dimensions of the book. Traditional print editions are essentially an exercise in utility: our choice of text and the variants thereof depends on the questions we want to answer.[4] To a great extent,

[3] Holmes, 'From "Original Text" to "Initial Text"', p. 33.

[4] With regard to the textual tradition of *Chaucer's Boecce*, Machan (*Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, pp. 187-8) writes that: 'To define a work or works among these authorities any edition must cut across categories like layout, manuscript contexts, presentation, and reception as well as text,

this is a situation imposed on the editor by the realities of book production. In theory, the digital edition by contrast encounters no such limitations.

As we have observed, there is a move in contemporary textual criticism to establish the study of variant readings of a text as a legitimate scholarly goal in its own right. The potential that computing technology offers for the simultaneous presentation of multiple texts, together with other forms of media, has not been overlooked by those scholars who aim to explore and represent textual tradition. From its inception, the electronic scholarly edition has been considered to be synonymous with editions of non-intentionalist or social textual critics. As early as 1989, Bernard Cerquiglini had anticipated the union between new technology and New Philology, arguing that the production of electronic texts affords a more precise comparison with the medieval manuscript tradition: 'electronic writing, by its mobility, reproduces the medieval work in its actual variance'.[5] To understand how this perception of the digital edition has come about, we may consider the course of textually focused humanities computing and literary text encoding in general and how it relates to the areas of traditional textual criticism in the humanities.

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prioritizing some factors, suppressing others'. Cf. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, 'The Architecture of Old English Editions', in *Probable Truth*, ed. Gillespie and Hudson, pp. 73-90, at p. 87: 'the codex is an exercise in selection and relative importance of information'. Parker (*The Living Text*, p, 193) makes a similar point when he writes concerning Greeven's text of Mark 10.11f. that 'there are five manuscript forms of the text read by various groups of witnesses. But what was printed is a sixth, one for whose existence there is no attestation, and which is provided on the authority of the editor. While each *half* of the saying is attested in ancient witnesses, the *two halves together* are not. It is by this selection of reading that the editor creates a text'. In his influential article 'The Rationale of Hypertext' to be discussed in detail presently (available at <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/public/jjm2f/rationale.html> [accessed September 1, 2011]) – Jerome McGann addresses the limits of the book as a tool to study another book form: 'So far as editing and textual studies are concerned, codex tools present serious difficulties. To make a new edition one has to duplicate the entire productive process, and then add to or modify the work as necessary. Furthermore, the historical process of documentary descent generates an increasingly complex textual network'.

[5] Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la variante*, p. 116, (cited in translation by Millett, 'What is *mouvance*?' Cf. Chapter Three, p. 125-6).

At this point, it is important to set forth exactly what is meant here by the term 'digital scholarly edition' and by that aspect of literary text encoding with which we are most concerned, descriptive markup language. The term 'digital edition' has been deliberately employed to describe an edition purposely created to be used on a computer and available online as opposed to 'closed' content available via media such as CD-ROM. The digital edition is still in its infancy and it is difficult to define the changes that the computer has brought about in the perception and the study of texts. The establishment of the digital text as a distinct type of edition remains debatable, with various scholars calling for a digital equivalent of textual theory.[6] Patrick Sahle contends that:

> Digital scholarly editions are not just scholarly editions in digital media. I distinguish between digital and digitized. A digitized print edition is not a 'digital edition' in the strict sense used here. A digital edition cannot be printed without a loss of information and/or functionality. The digital edition is guided by a different paradigm. If the paradigm of an edition is limited to the two-dimensional space of the 'page' and to typographic means of information representation, then it's not a digital edition.[7]

Sahle differentiates between digitised or scanned print editions and digital editions. Undoubtedly, the former may replicate some of the features of digital editions – such as searchability – but they do not themselves constitute digital scholarly editions.

Prior to being studied using computers, textual material must first be encoded in a machine readable form. A scholarly digital edition would most likely be

[6] Cf. the contributions of Kathryn Sutherland ('Being Critical: Paper-based Editing and the Digital Environment', pp. 13-25) and Mats Dahlström ('The Compleat Edition', pp. 27-44) in *Text Editing, Print and the Digital World*, eds Marilyn Deegan and Kathryn Sutherland (Ashgate, 2009).

[7] Patrick Sahle, 'Defintion of "Digital Scholarly Edition"', available at <http://www.digitale-edition.de/vlet-about.html> [accessed 03 November 2014]. Cf. Kenneth M. Price, 'Electronic Scholarly Editions', in *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, eds Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth (Oxford, 2007) (online version available at <http://www.digitalhumanities .org/companionDLS/> [accessed 30 June 2012]): 'mere digitizing produces information; in contrast, scholarly editing produces knowledge'.

prepared in Extensible Markup Language (XML) under the auspices of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) *Guidelines for Electronic Text and Encoding Interchange*.[8] Markup allows editors to determine which aspects of their texts are of interest to their projects and 'tag' or label them. Allen H. Renear provisionally defines markup as 'information formally distinct from the character sequence of the digital transcription of a text, which serves to identify logical or physical features or to control later processing'.[9]

Digital Humanities: Early Developments

The use of computers in the humanities has its origins in 1949, when Father Roberto Busa, an Italian Jesuit priest, began work on his monumental project to produce a lemmatised concordance of all the words in the works of St Thomas Aquinas and related authors, totalling approximately eleven million words of Medieval Latin. Whilst early work concentrated on the production of concordances and indices, by the 1960s researchers had begun to recognise the potential uses of the computer for textual editing. During this period, attempts were made to write various collation programmes such as OCCULT and the programmes written by Vinton Dearing.[10] Work continued in this area throughout the following two decades and programmes were developed by scholars such as Penny Gilbert, Wilhelm Ott, Hans Gabler, Gian Piero Zarri, John Griffith, Peter Robinson and Peter Shillingsburg which enabled the textual critic to analyse variant readings in addition to collating the source texts.[11]

[8] Available at http://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/
[9] Allen H. Renear, 'Text Encoding', in *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, eds Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth (Oxford, 2007), pp. 218-349, at p. 219.
[10] Cf. Chapter One, pp. 41.
[11] This list is drawn from Susan Hockey, 'Creating and Using Electronic Editions', in *The Literary Text in the Digital Age*, ed. Richard J. Finnerman (Ann Arbor, 1996), pp. 1-22, at pp. 1-2.

During the late 1960s, a series of events in the publishing industry led to an effort to develop a standard descriptive markup language for digital publishing and text processing. This work culminated in the development of Standard Generalised Markup Language (SGML), 'a standard for machine-readable definitions of descriptive markup languages' by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).[12] Compared to other markup languages, SGML has several advantages for textual criticism. 'The principle of SGML is descriptive not prescriptive ... The markup indicates what a particular component within a text is, not what a programme is to do with that object'.[13] It is more flexible than other markup schemes and can handle many different types of texts. In addition to information regarding the structure of the source text, SGML enables editors to include detailed analytic material and to cross-reference to other places within the text. Furthermore, SGML is not dependent on any particular hardware or software, making the encoded text more transferable and, thus, helping to ensure the longevity of a project.

In November 1987, a meeting convened by the Association for Computers in the Humanities (ACH) was held at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, to examine the possibility of creating a standard encoding scheme for digital texts in the humanities. The resulting 'Poughkeepsie Principles' laid the basis for developing a new scheme for encoding texts and the responsibility for building these guidelines was entrusted to a Steering Committee made up of representatives from a number of interested parties. Recognising the potential advantages of SGML for the compilation of scholarly editions, the Text Encoding Initiative *Guidelines* were developed. In May

[12] In 1986, ANSI, together with the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) published *ISO 8879: Information Processing – Text and Office Systems – Standard Generalised Markup Language (SGML) ISO 8879-1986 (E)* (Geneva, 1986).
[13] Hockey, 'Creating and Using Electronic Editions', p. 6.

1994, the first official version of the TEI *Guidelines* ('P3') was published in print and electronic format. The importance of the TEI cannot be overstated: 'It was the first systematic attempt to categorize and define all the features within humanities texts that might interest scholars'.[14] Today, the TEI has become the *de facto* standard for serious digital humanities projects around the world.

The defining feature in digital humanities of the past two decades is the arrival of the internet and, in particular, the World Wide Web and the emergence of Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), the markup language used for creating documents on the Web which we will discuss in greater detail presently. HTML allows direct links to related textual and non-textual data exterior to the electronic text. In 1989, Tim Berners-Lee produced his initial proposal for what would later become the World Wide Web. This document was intended to persuade the management of the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, CERN, of the benefits of a global hypertext management system. Here, he identified two different perceptions of the term 'hypertext'. Firstly, he addressed the concept of 'Hyper*text*' which he defined as 'Human-readable information linked together in an unconstrained way'; he also briefly noted the idea of 'Hyper*media*' – that is, the idea that 'one is not bound to text' through the incorporation of 'multimedia documents which include graphics, speech and video'.[15] The first website at CERN – the first in the world – was dedicated to the World Wide Web project itself.

Initially, the delivery of SGML-encoded texts on the web required prior coordination between software and content developers. This led to the production of

[14] Susan Hockey, 'The History of Humanities Computing', in *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, eds Schreibman, Siemens, and Unsworth, pp. 3-19, at p. 12.
[15] Tim Berners-Lee, 'Information Management: A Proposal', CERN, March 1989, available at <http://www.w3.org/ History/ 1989/proposal.html> [accessed 27 September 2014].

XML, a markup language designed specifically with use on the Web in mind. In 2002, the TEI consortium released 'P4', a revision of the SGML guidelines into XML.[16]

'The Marriage of New Technology and the New Philology'[17]

Many academic institutions saw the internet as their opportunity to become involved in humanities computing for the first time. In the early to mid-1990s, various new and innovative projects were announced, particularly in the area of scholarly editing. In her history of the digital humanities, Susan Hockey notes that the publication of the TEI *Guidelines* ('P3') 'coincided with a fundamental shift in textual theory, away from the notion of a single-text "definitive edition"'.[18] With reference to the use of computers in the compilation of editions prior to the widespread use of the internet, Hockey notes that the earlier methodologies employed computing technology to reproduce the layout of the printed text on screen.[19] With the launch of the World Wide Web in 1993, editorial theorists interested in the text as a physical object were no longer constrained by the confines of the codex form. Editors could now include non-textual data relating to the electronic text, including high-quality images of all primary source documents. Furthermore, they could navigate between texts (and other non-textual data), thus removing the necessity to present the textual witnesses in a hierarchic format. As early as 1994, Machan wrote: 'In linking blocks of electronic text and allowing for their assembly in any number of sequential orders,

[16] Available at <http://www.tei-c.org/Vault/P4/>. The TEI Guidelines were updated once more with the release of P5 in November 2007; for further information, see <http://www.teic.org /Vault/P4/migrate.html>.
[17] Bella Millett, 'Whatever Happened to Electronic Editing?', in *Probable Truth*, eds Gillespie and Hudson, pp. 39-54, at p. 41.
[18] Hockey, 'The History of Humanities Computing', p. 12.
[19] Hockey, 'Creating and Using Electronic Editions', p. 6.

hypertext subverts not only the linearity of conventional texts but, when joined by hypermedia with nontextual blocks … their very textuality as well'.[20]

Digital presentation offers advantages that could not have been imagined by the editors of previous generations. One of the major advantages that hypertext editions have over print is that they are fully searchable. This has benefits beyond mere convenience: Thorlac Turville-Petre has recently argued with regard to the study of Middle English texts through the digital medium that searchable texts and electronic concordances serve as powerful aids to full and accurate analyses of the language – a point that has not been overlooked by scholars of Medieval Irish, as we shall see presently.[21] As previously noted, a digital edition offers unlimited space in which the editor may potentially deliver any or all styles of edition. Furthermore, the textual critic is no longer limited by the constraints of the print codex edition: the hypermedia capacity of a digital edition means that the editor can, theoretically, add other forms of media to supplement the edited text. Digitally edited texts are more readily updatable and by publishing them on the internet their accessibility and potential readership are both greatly increased. O'Brien O'Keefe notes that the ability to create links both inside and outside the confines of the individual electronic text means that the digital edition is 'the radial text par excellence'.[22]

Given the nature of the digital edition, it is perhaps unsurprising that one of the most prominent advocates for creating computerised texts is Jerome J. McGann whose influential article 'The Rationale of Hyper-Text' first appeared on the internet in 1995. The article's title derives from Greg's seminal essay 'The Rationale of

[20] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 190.
[21] Thorlac Turville-Petre, 'Editing Electonic Texts', in *Probable Truth*, eds Gillespie and Hudson, pp, 55-70, at pp. 61-2.
[22] O'Brien O'Keefe, 'The Architecture of Old English Editions', pp. 87-8.

Copy-Text' and the author states that his treatment of the subject was written with a view to extending the applicability of Greg's work. The primary focus of McGann's essay is the physical character of literary works, their importance from a literary perspective and the digital tools available to analyse these textual features. He begins by addressing the limits of the book as a tool in literary study. In McGann's estimation, the limitations of employing a book form to study another book form become apparent when readers seek information beyond the primary textual materials, and in this way the critical edition has been superseded by the digital text. Of paramount importance is the capacity of digital editions to incorporate media into the editing process to offer a more accurate reflection of the literary work: 'Texts are language visible, auditional and intellectual'.

For McGann, the advantages of multimedia HyperEditing for the textual critic extend beyond the technological. The decentralised form of hypertext editions enables the editor to work outside the ideological commitments of the traditional print format:

> When the hypertext is used to manage study of and navigation through complex bodies of (hard copy) documentary materials – the kinds that traditional scholarly editors deal with – a special type of 'decentralism' appears. The exigencies of the book form forced editorial scholars to develop fixed points of relation – the 'definitive text', 'copy text', 'ideal text', 'Ur text', 'standard text', and so forth – in order to conduct a book-bound navigation (by coded forms) through large bodies of documentary materials. Such fixed points no longer have to govern the ordering of the documents.

In his estimation, an edition is considered 'hyper' because it does not privilege any one particular text or set of texts. This description of the decentred text is based on two considerations. Firstly, unlike the contents of a traditional codex edition, the contents of a hypertext edition are open to manipulation. Theoretically, such an

edition can continue to develop indefinitely. Secondly, the structure of a hypertext edition is not organised to focus attention solely on any particular manifestation of the text. Such an edition may or may not employ a 'central text' to organise the hypertext of documents. What is important is that the hypertext is organised in accordance with 'some initial set of design plans that are keyed to the specific materials in the HyperText, and the imagined needs of the users of those materials'. McGann concludes by stating that traditional goals of textual criticism need no longer define the form and ordering of documentary materials.[23]

Although digital editing has become most closely associated with the ideals of New Philology, there are also scholars who advocate the new technology but do not share McGann's vision of a new kind of editing. In the foreword to *Electronic Digital Editing*, Tanselle writes that 'the computer is a tool, and tools are facilitators; they may create strong breaks with the past in the methods for doing things, but … they do not change the issues that we have to cope with'.[24] Digital editions continue to call on the traditional skills of the editor as well as on newer skills required by computing technology. Edward Vanhoutte distinguishes between what he terms *minimal* and *maximal* scholarly editions. The first option refers to a reading edition, that is, a singular established text which may or may not be accompanied by annotations. The second option is the product of historical-critical or variorum

[23] McGann remarks that proponents of hypertext are sometimes guilty of making 'extravagant philosophical claims' regarding the potential impact of new technology. He may be considered guilty of such extravagance himself when he claims that 'electronic tools in literary studies don't simply provide a new point of view on the materials, they lift one's attention to a higher order' ('The Rationale of Hyper-Text'). In a review of McGann's essay, Tanselle ('Textual Criticism at the Millennium', p. 35) writes that whilst his practical advice is worthwhile, the theoretical principles which he applies often come close to being an example of the hyperbole characteristic of early theoretical writings associated with electronic textual criticism.

[24] Gerard Thomas Tanselle, Foreword to *Electronic Textual Editing*, eds Lou Burnard, Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, and John Unsworth (New York, 2006), pp. 1-6, at p. 3. Cf. Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 191: 'Hypertext, like any textual critical theory or practice, by no means offers unambiguous solutions to all editorial issues'.

editing and draws the readers' attention to the fluidity of the text.[25] The digital medium in scholarly editing has almost exclusively focused on the latter type of edition. Vanhoutte suggests that the digital edition is the ideal medium to integrate the maximal scholarly edition with the minimal scholarly reading edition, and the 'recentering' of the printed edition.[26] Whilst both Tanselle and Vanhoutte acknowledge the practical advantages the digital text offers the editor, both scholars separate the textual data from the digital application and from the more revolutionary aspects of New Philology.

Indeed, the compiler of a digital edition, in addition to the challenges faced by all editors, must confront different problems to those who choose to present their texts in the codex format. In his discussion of electronic scholarly editions, Price identifies two key issues for editors of electronic texts: preservation and aggregation.[27] The two are obviously interrelated. Regarding the former, Abby Smith writes, 'the common perception that digital creations are not permanent is among the chief obstacles to the widespread adoption of digital publishing, and few scholars are rewarded and promoted for their work in this area'.[28] Therefore, the consistant maintenance and updating required for the long-term preservation and sustainability of humanities computing projects not only threatens the integrity of such projects but also impacts upon the scholarly value assigned to them. Smith

[25] Edward Vanhoutte, 'Every Reader his own Bibliographer – An Absurdity?', in *Text Editing, Print and the Digital World*, eds Deegan and Sutherland, pp. 99-110, at p. 100.
[26] Ibid., p. 110.
[27] Price, 'Electronic Scholarly Editions'.
[28] Abby Smith, 'Preservation', in *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, eds Schreibman, Siemens, and Unsworth, pp. 576-91. In a recent paper entitled 'Editorial Techniques: Possibilities and Challenges in a Digitized Age', presented as part of the expert meeting Manuscript Transmission of Apocryphal and Related Texts in the Latin Middle Ages, held at Utrecht University, 19-20 January 2012, Mariken Teewen expressed similar sentiments when she listed the main downsides of the digital edition as the necessity for continual maintenance of the project, the rapidity of changes in technology, in addition to a lack of accreditation for digital editions from within the scholarly community. I would like to thank Dr Caitríona Ó Dochartaigh for bringing this to my attention.

identifies the two salient challenges to digital preservation as media degradation, that is, maintenance of the bits, the binary code which makes up digital objects, and hardware/software dependencies and the prevention of the loss of data resulting from the hardware/software they are stored on or written in becoming obsolete. Consider, for example, the method of referencing online sources: the MLA no longer requires the use of URL's in citations as web addresses are not considered static. The MLA is also necessary to list your date of access because web postings are often updated, and information available on one date may no longer be available later. The MLA further recommends that personal copies of electronic information are maintained for future referencing, as it is not uncommon for information to disappear with advances in technology, or to be changed so drastically that citations no longer have any meaning and/or context.[29]

Within a digital environment, an edition is only one aspect of wider corpora of cultural material. The digital world has no borders and every digital project can potentially interact with every other. As Gregory Crane has pointed out regarding his work on the texts of the Greek historian Thuycdides, the more recombinant the work, the better its chance of not only surviving but evolving.[30] The preservation of digital data requires standard file formats and metadata schemas (such as the TEI *Guidelines*). This begs the question of who will finance the development and implementation of such standards. Additionally, in order to optimise the future use of digital objects, they must be continually maintained over time. In recent years,

[29] 'MLA Works Cited: Electronic Sources (Web Publications)', available at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/ owl/resource/747/08/> [accessed 12 December 2014].

[30] Gregory Crane, 'Give us Editors! Re-Inventing the Edition and Re-Thinking the Humanities', in *Online Humanities Scholarship: The Shape of Things to Come*, OpenStax CNX. May 14 2010, available at <http://cnx.org/contents/5df82a16-bb60-4ab2-8277-a61894c801ab@2@2> [accessed 07 February 2012].

sustainability has become a major problem. In fact, in 2010, McGann himself wrote of the Rossetti Project, a hypermedia archive of the complete writings and drawings of Gabriel Dante Rossetti: 'no one knows how the project or projects like it will be or could be sustained ... I am now thinking that, to preserve what I have come to see as the permanent core of its scholarly materials, I shall have to print it out'.[31] Thus, the central issues upon which the future of digital editing pivots are who will preserve the data once the project is complete; and at what cost?

As academic institutes are faced with ever more constrained budgets, the issues of project longevity and security come increasingly to the fore. Turville-Petre has argued that most of the difficulties are 'teething problems', to be expected with the introduction of any new concept; and there are those scholars such as McGann and Hockey who regard the digital medium as the replacement of the codex form.[32] Correct as their assertions ultimately may be, it is clear that until the long-term preservation of digital objects can be better guaranteed the codex book remains as 'one of our most powerful tools for developing, storing and disseminating information'.[33]

Medieval Irish Studies and the Digital Humanities

The opening years of the twenty-first century have witnessed an increasing interest in making medieval Irish literary and historical documents available online. During this period, a number of ambitious digital editing projects have come to fruition. In this section, I shall be focusing on three in particular, one Latin, two medieval Irish. The first is the *Saint Patrick's Confessio Hyperstack Project* (2008-2011), overseen

[31] Jerome McGann, 'Sustainability: The Elephant in the Room', available at <http://shapeofthings.org/papers /JMcGann.docx> [accessed 18 April 2012]
[32] Turville-Petre, 'Editing Electonic Texts', p. 70.
[33] McGann, 'The Rationale of Hypertext', p. 1.

by Anthony Harvey.[34] The project aims to provide a comprehensive digital research environment for all textual aspects of St. Patrick's *Confessio* through the reproduction and transcription of the eight manuscript witnesses and of the most relevant editions – from the *editio princeps* of 1656 to the canonical version of the critical text, established in the scholarly edition by Ludwig Bieler in 1950. The second is the *Early Irish Glossaries Database* (2006–) as part of the *Early Irish Glossaries Project*, directed by Paul Russell, with Sharon Arbuthnot and Pádraic Moran, the intended outcome of which is a set of editions of three inter-related Irish glossaries cumulatively attested in ten manuscripts together with five fragments.[35] The third is the *Corpus of Electronic Texts* (CELT) (1992–), funded by the School of History, University College Cork, directed by Donnchadh Ó Corráin until his retirement in 2007, and currently project managed by Beatrix Faerber. The aim of CELT is to produce a searchable online database of Irish contemporary and historical sources.[36]

I have included the *Saint Patrick's Confessio Hyperstack Project*, even though its linguistic content falls outside the purview of this thesis, because it offers the closest approximation to the digital editions envisaged by the New Philologists.[37] The HyperStack is a multi-layered multimedia digital edition of a single text.

[34] See *St. Patrick's Confessio Hyperstack Project* <http://www.confessio.ie/#> [accessed 01 October 2014].
[35] See the *Early Irish Glossaries Database* <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/irishglossaries/> [accessed 01 October 2014].
[36] See the *Corpus of Electronic Texts* <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/index.html> [accessed 01 October 2014].
[37] We might also add that the corpus of textual material pertaining to Irish literary and historical culture exists in a number of languages and as Poppe ('Reconstructing Medieval Irish Literary Theory', p. 33) points out, the dichotomy implied between texts written in Irish and Latin respectively is deceptive since vernacular and Hiberno-Latin texts are the products of a shared cultural background. Cf. Elizabeth Boyle and Deborah Hayden, 'Introduction', in *Authorities and Adaptations*, eds Boyle and Hayden, pp. xvii-xlvii, at p. xxiv: 'Medieval Irish literary culture was bilingual, and the links between Latin and vernacular literatures are inextricable'.

Regarding the organisational structure of the HyperStack edition, the project's principal researcher, Franz Fischer, writes that the most fundamental aspect of such an edition is not the text itself, but rather the structure the editor imposes on the text in order to enable him/her to align all the textual components of the work in its totality.[38] In contrast to McGann's 'decentred text', the HyperStack employs a central text for organising the hypertext of documents. The text in question is Bieler's 1950 scholarly edition of the *Confessio*.[39] Bieler's edition established a canonical structure among scholars for analysing the text of the *Confessio*, and the editors of the digital edition continue this tradition by placing it at the centre of the HyperStack architecture. The features and functionalities of Bieler's edition have been transposed into the digital text version in order to make the entire academic framework (that is, the *apparatus criticus*, the *apparatus fontium* and the *apparatus biblicus*) of the print edition machine-readable. The textual data is encoded as XML files following the TEI schema with a unique identification number assigned to each word of the *Confessio*. This model facilitates word-by-word analysis of the various layers of text. It enables those readers who are concerned with the transmission of the text to check the choices made in the established critical edition by way of access

[38] Franz Fischer, 'HyperStack Architecture; available at <http://www.confessio.ie /about/hyperstack#dig_phil> [accessed 01 October 2014].

[39] Ludwig Bieler, '*Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopi*', *Classica et Mediaevalia* 11 (Copenhagen, 1950), re-issued by the Irish Manuscripts Comission (Dublin, 1952) and reprinted by the Royal Irish Academy as *Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopi, Clavis Patricii* II (Dublin, 1993). The reader is offered two further practical reasons for the selection of Bieler's edition: Firstly, the Royal Irish Academy, the project's primary hosting institution, already possessed the copyright for this particular edition and secondly, a digital text version was already available as part of the Royal Irish Academy *Archive of Celtic Latin Literature* (ACLL), an online subscription full-text database published by Brepols in 2010 at <http://www.brepolis.net/>. The reader is informed that Bieler's edition is 'an excellent attempt to reconstruct an approximate original of the *Confessio*'. Although this is accompanied by the proviso that 'there is no such thing as a "definitive" edition, and every edition results from a certain editorial creed, an attitude or approach towards textuality', the term 'original' as a description of Bieler's edition remains pervasive and may lead the reader to conclude that they are reading 'what Patrick actually wrote, in his own words', as the website itself states. I highlight this not as a criticism of the digital edition itself, but rather to demonstrate the continued use of the traditional language of textual criticism even in a new modern edition such as this one.

to the textual archive. Furthermore, the project provides its users with clear reading editions of all of its texts in the form of printable PDF packages.

The HyperStack project is first and foremost concerned with making the writings of the historical Patrick accessible to the wider public. However, Fischer states that it is also intended as a case study 'of how to deal with text transmission and how to deal with the academic heritage of the print era, since that constitutes so much a part of the transmission of historical texts'. To the question, '[i]s the book any longer really the appropriate medium for exploring and representing such a highly complex thing as textual tradition?', Fischer unsurprisingly replies in the negative. In his estimation, there is no possibility of returning to the older technology. His reason for arriving at this conclusion is straightforward and brings to mind McGann's 'The Rationale of HyperText': the constraints imposed on the editor by traditional print-based publication make it impossible to produce 'a *comprehensive* scholarly edition' such as that exemplified by the HyperStack project.[40]

The other two projects discussed here do not address themselves to the ideals of digital philology and are each in their own way heavily reliant on traditional scholarly print editions. The aims of the *Early Irish Glossaries Project* are twofold: firstly, to produce modern critical print editions of *Sanas Cormaic* (Cormac's Glossary), O'Mulconry's Glossary and *Dúil Dromma Cetta* (*DDC*) comprising a combined total of over 2800 entries. To date, there exists no critical edition based on the textual evidence of all the extant manuscript witnesses. The intended outcome of this aspect of the project is the publication of editions of each glossary together with

[40] Fischer, 'Digital Philology' (my emphasis), available at <http://www.confessio.ie/about/hyperstack#dig_phil> [accessed 01 October 2014].

translations and commentary, and the vehicle for publication remains the traditional print medium. Secondly, the project aims to produce a digital edition containing diplomatic texts of all the above glossaries. The digital edition is envisioned as a resource to supplement the forthcoming print editions. In contrast to the hard-copy editions which will focus on the specifics of individual entries, the digital text offers its users a more comprehensive and flexible resource. The database includes the full text of all glossary versions marked up according to TEI guidelines, and contains links to lexicographical resources and manuscript images. It is fully searchable and provides the reader/user with tools to generate concordances. It will be interesting to see the capabilities of the database once the print editions have been published. However, Pádraic Moran notes that the scale of editing involved is such that the print editions are still in progress.[41] As it stands, the digital edition makes an important and hitherto neglected resource of medieval Irish literature and culture freely available online.

Founded in 1992, the *Corpus of Electronic Texts* is Ireland's longest running Humanities Computing project. Initially, the project was intended to promote a better understanding of medieval Irish history through the provision of reliable online sources of works which, at the time, were difficult to access. It currently constitutes 1433 documents from the medieval through to the modern period in Irish, Latin, Anglo-Norman French and English. These texts may be read online and are also available in HTML, SGML and XML formats. The SGML/XML files are encoded following the TEI Guidelines. The majority of the encoded texts are taken from existing print editions. The electronic text represents the main body of the edited text and many of those features which establish traditional print editions as

[41] <http://www.pmoran.ie/research>, [accessed 01 October 2014].

scholarly (such as the apparatus, list of variants and textual notes) have been removed. This is unsurprising given that the project's primary concern is not with digital scholarly editing, but rather with the incorporation of the whole corpus of Irish literary and historical culture into a searchable and user-friendly format.

In the preceding section, we saw that the major challenge currently facing digital humanities projects is their sustainability. Given the economic downturn of recent years, one aspect in particular has come to the fore: the financial requirements of these projects. Two of the three projects discussed here, the *Saint Patrick's Confessio Hyperstack Project* and the *Corpus of Electronic Texts*, benefited from funding from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) under the Irish Government Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PTRLI) Cycle 4. The Hyperstack project is part of the Humanities Serving Irish Society (HSIS) initiative by the HEA, funded by PTRLI 4 to develop 'an inter-institutional research infrastructure for the humanities'.[42] The cornerstone of the HSIS initiative was the Digital Humanities Observatory (DHO), a resource aimed at enhancing the level of digital humanities scholarship among Irish scholars and promoting Irish digital humanities within an international context. In August 2013, the activities of the DHO ceased due to a lack of funding and its assets (including the *Saint Patrick's Confessio Hyperstack Project*) are currently being maintained by the Royal Irish Academy.

The situation in Ireland is not unique. In the United Kingdom, the *Early Irish Glossaries Database* was funded by the Art and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). In her recent discussion of the fate of the digital humanities over the past

[42] Quotation from the Humanities Serving Irish Society homepage <http://www.ria.ie/research /hsis.aspx> [accessed 13 October 2014].

twenty-five years, Bella Millet notes that between the years 2000 and 2006 the AHRC invested almost forty million pounds sterling into projects with digital output.[43] In 2007, the AHRC announced that it was no longer willing to fund the Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) – the body charged with managing the sustainability of projects completed with the support of the AHRC – and in March 2008 the AHDS was shut down.

The rapid advance of computing technology necessitates the ongoing maintenance of digital editing projects. With government funding waning and no major publishing house currently offering to publish them, scholars involved in producing digital scholarly editions are often forced to rely on support from their own institutions. Accordingly, Fischer remarks that institutional support is crucial to ensuring the continued preservation of digital resources.[44] The three projects discussed here are currently maintained by their hosting institutions; but can a university or any other funding authority be reasonably expected to sustain such projects indefinitely? A recent report on the financial sustainability of online academic resources criticised scholars for not approaching their task with a more 'entrepreneurial' mind-set, and Peter Robinson has set forth an argument in favour of institutional subscription models to finance the maintenance and extension of scholarly digital editions. [45] There are some large-scale digital editing projects within the field which have gone this route, such as the Royal Irish Academy's

[43] Millett, 'Whatever Happened to Electronic Editing?', p. 45; citing David Robey, 'Sustainability of Digital Outputs from AHRC Resource Enhancement Projects' (December, 2008), p. 2, available at <http://www.ahrcict.rdg.ac.uk /activities/review /sustainability08.pdf> [accessed 13 October 2014].
[44] Fischer, 'What is HyperStack About?', available at < http://www.confessio.ie/about/hyperstack#> [accessed 01 October 2014].
[45] Kevin Guthrie, Rebecca Griffiths, and Nancy Maron, 'Sustainability and Revenue Models for Online Academic Resources: An ITHAKA report (May 2008)', p. 11, available at <http://www.sr.ithaka.org.research-publications/sustainability-and-revenue-models-online-academic-resources> [accessed 10 November 2014].

Archive of Celtic-Latin Literature (ACLL). Given that the primary justification for the continued support of online resources, such as the three projects discussed here, is that they make valuable resources freely available to the general public, an expensive subscription based model may not be the most appropriate way forward.

For over a decade, researchers have increasingly looked towards Open Access as a means of disseminating their scholarship to the public. When it comes to the Open Access agenda, certain scientific disciplines have tended to dominate how we understand the movement. However, as Gary Hall, one of the founding members of Open Humanities Press, has pointed out: 'open access as it has been championed in the [Science, Technology and Medicines], can't simply be rolled out unproblematically into the humanities'. He continues: 'any attempt to develop [open access] in the humanities *also* needs to recognise that the humanities, in turn, are going to impact on open access'.[46] Open Access offers editors the opportunity to reassess their publishing practices and experiment with new methodologies and theories of text. It also raises issues regarding the intended audience of scholarly digital editions and traditional print editions for that matter.

Questions regarding who and what constitute the public remain at the heart of the digital humanities. There is a fundamental difference between giving the general public (as well as other researchers) access to scholarship online and making online scholarship accessible to the general public. As we have previously observed, Vanhoutte has called for a distinction to be made between two kinds of edition. The first is for students and general readers who are primarily concerned with possessing

[46] Gary Hall, '"Follow the Money": The Political Economy of Open Access in the Humanities', <http://www.garyhall.info/journal/2010/11/10/follow-the-money-the-political-economy-of-open-access-in-the.html> [accessed 10 November 2014]; cited by Lindsay Thomas, 'Open Access and the Digital Humanities', <http://dhpoco.org/blog/2013/12/16/open-access-and-the-digital-humanities/> [accessed 07 November 2014].

a reliable readable text. The latter kind of edition is for scholars who require information concerning the complete corpus of variants and contextual data pertaining to a particular text. Scholarly digital editions can easily facilitate both types. However, if Open Access is to remain at the heart of digital scholarly editing, then financially feasible models of publication will need to be adopted.

Setting aside the financial concerns, there are other issues of long-term management and sustainability which the compilers of digital editions must address. Questions remain within the digital scholarly editing community regarding what exactly constitutes a scholarly digital edition. There is a general consensus that a purpose-built digital edition is distinctly different from digitisation of manuscript images and of existing print editions. Of the three projects discussed here, only one, the *St. Patrick's Confessio Hyperstack Project*, constitutes the kind of multitext, multimedia digital edition envisioned by McGann in 1995. That is not to suggest that *Early Irish Glossaries Database* and the *Corpus of Electronic Texts* do not comprise digital editions. Utilising Sahle's differentiation between digitised print editions and digital editions – '[a] digital edition cannot be printed without a loss of information and/or functionality'[47] – each of these projects may be considered as repositories of scholarly digital editions.

Sahle's definition of a digital edition serves to draw attention to a further challenge facing the widespread adoption of digital editing projects within the scholarly community. As we have observed, various scholars have argued that there is a serious issue regarding credit for those who focus their efforts on creating digital editions. This is both caused by and contributes to the perceived instability of digital

[47] See n. 7.

editing projects. Dot Porter has suggested that this may be attributed to a lack of understanding about what exactly a digital edition is. More specifically, she argues that the rise of Google Books and other such online initiatives has led to scanned print editions being equated with scholarly digital editions. Porter has suggested that we require a shared vocabulary, with shared definitions about what exactly we mean by 'digital edition'.[48] A scholarly digital edition is a discrete method of presentation and, as such, it is subject to the same theoretical scrutiny as that faced by scholars who present their editions in more traditional formats.

Perhaps the greatest challenges to the recognition of the value of digital editions are the multiplicity of ideological and critical commitments regarding the role of the editor and the scholarly critical edition. We are still thinking in terms of establishing a text. Digital tools allow us to establish a context. We can encode the textual data in machine-readable forms that facilitate the analysis of variants with greater precision. We can link existing editions to modern language translations, either produced for the edition or already published elsewhere. We can add as much explanatory material as we have the time to produce and as we consider useful, including visual and textual explanations as well as static and dynamic visualisations. We can align our primary sources with the material record, not simply as a source for illustrations but to provide contrasting views of the lived world on which the textual and material records shed light.

Thus far, the primary focus has been on specific projects. We have seen that in order to help secure the future preservation of digital resources, standard file

[48] Dot Porter, 'Medievalists and the Scholarly Digital Edition', *Scholarly Editing the Annual Association for Documentary Editing* 34 (2013), available at <http://www.scholarlyediting .org/2013/essays/essay.porter.html> [accessed 13 October 2014].

formats and meta schemas are required. All three of the digital projects described in this section maintain the TEI Guideline's standard for the encoding of humanities texts in a digital form. The incorporation of shared structures such as the TEI Guidelines goes a long way towards guaranteeing the long-term stability of this material. This is an encouraging sign for the future conservation of the textual data of each of these projects. As for the technological applications themselves, however, the way forward remains very uncertain.

To date, the course of digital humanities computing in medieval Irish scholarly editing demonstrates the willingness of certain scholars to engage with the theories, methodologies and technologies of contemporary textual criticism. However, it seems somewhat premature to adopt new technologies and practices of textual criticism without first interrogating the *habitus* of medieval Irish studies.[49] As Crane has pointed out, '[d]igital environments only exert long-term change if they first address the well-understood problems and aspirations of scholarship'.[50] Perhaps most importantly from the perspective of the current thesis, the history of digital editing in the field of medieval Irish shows that the discipline is not isolated from the cultural or the epistemological frameworks of the humanities in the twenty-first century. Digital scholarly publishing challenges the social conventions surrounding print publishing. Editors of Old and Middle Irish texts have, for the most part, focused on the question of reconstructing an original text. Digital tools

[49] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, 1997) defines the 'habitus' as 'a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions* and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks', pp. 82-3 (original emphasis); cited by Tymoczko, 'What Questions Should We Ask?', p. 28.

[50] See n. 35. Similarly, Tymoczko ('What Questions Should We Ask?', pp. 15-16) has argued with regard to Celtic Studies more generally that we cannot establish a new contemporary framework without first understanding and challenging the ideological underpinnings of the discipline as it has been historically practised.

change what is possible and challenge us to redefine the goals of editing. Once viewed from outside the perspective of traditional print editions, questions concerning what constitutes a work or a text intensify enormously, and the importance of dedicated studies of the topic comes to the fore.

CONCLUSION

The impact of printing on the character of the modern scholarly edition has become increasingly apparent with the introduction of newer technologies into the discourse on and practice of textual criticism. The physical characteristics of the codex are fundamental contributors to the way in which the text is understood and there is a growing realisation that manuscript texts do not quite fit into the printed codex format. One outcome of this realisation is that many of the newer approaches to texts, medieval and modern, have gained currency with both textual and literary scholars across disciplines. A further consequence is that textual critics have begun further to question the goals of textual criticism and in doing so, are raising questions not just about methodology but also about epistemology. In voicing their scepticism about many of the hitherto patent assumptions of textual-critical activity, these scholars are challenging the discipline and its practitioners to acknowledge the ideological commitments involved in the practice of textual criticism.

At the outset, I stressed that this thesis is intended as a pragmatic study concerned with the development of current editorial theory and practice within the field of medieval Irish studies. In doing so, I stated that my aims were twofold. Firstly, to identify the underlying ideological and epistemological perspectives which have informed many of the ways in which medieval Irish documents and texts are rendered into modern editions. Secondly, to begin to place the editorial theory and methodology of medieval Irish studies within the broader context of Biblical, medieval and modern textual criticism.

I began by exploring the origins of contemporary textual criticism with the arrival of the printing press in Rome during the humanist period. We saw that the activities of certain distinguished scholars and publishers during this period shaped many of the precepts which define the traditional parameters of textual-critical studies. To employ Machan's terminology once more, these precepts are: 'the equation of the authoritative text with an authorial one, the valorization of an idealist, lexical conception of the work, a moral orientation, and an ambivalent sense of historicity'.[1] The printing press proved an invaluable ally in furthering the humanist agenda: '[it] was the conduit which brought the waters to all who thirsted'.[2] In many ways the early history of modern textual criticism emphasises the common ground shared by all practitioners of textual criticism.

A study of the history of textual criticism within the field of medieval Irish studies provides an understanding of the historical and cultural contexts of the nineteenth century which continue to leave their mark on the discipline. It is evident that modern textual-critical theory and practice did not develop ahistorically. The editing of medieval Irish texts in general was, and to a large extent continues to be, deeply influenced by the ideologies of nineteenth-century philological enquiry: '[philology] motivated the recovery of a lexical work without awkwardly imputing aesthetic value to the work, and its methodological advancements facilitated the objectives of traditional textual criticism'.[3] In Chapter Three we saw that Máire Herbert has drawn attention to the tendency of both textual commentary and philology to focus on 'an "insular" text, detached from social, historical, and literary

[1] See Chapter Two, p. 54, n. 1.
[2] Parker, *The Living Text*, p. 189.
[3] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 178.

contexts'.[4] Much the same can be said for the engagement of textual scholars within medieval Irish studies with the ongoing debates in textual criticism across related disciplines. That is to say, traditionally a great deal of medieval Irish editorial work has been approached at a remove from the wider textual critical scholarly community.

Many of the long-held orthodoxies concerning the traditional goals of textual criticism have recently been called into question. The very definitions of such fundamental concepts as *work*, *text* and *original* have given rise to extensive scholarly debate. Moreover, our notion of the medieval author has become more complicated in recent years. Questions have emerged regarding the point at which scribal activity constitutes authorial intention, with many arguing that this is a differentiation that cannot be sustained in medieval studies. Such questioning goes to the very heart of the study of the humanities at the turn of the twenty-first century. The latter half of the last century witnessed a series of paradigm shifts in the conception of knowledge away from the collection of 'observable' data, including the ideal of establishing an 'original' text.[5]

But where then does all of this leave the traditional author-centric scholarly edition? I want to reiterate here that my intention in this thesis has not been to discredit the practice of traditional textual criticism within the discipline and no displacement of the range of current critical editions is envisioned. As I have already argued, the reconstruction of the earliest surviving text(s) in a tradition, however one might define it/them, remains as a legitimate goal of textual critical activity for a variety of reasons, foremost among which is the undeniable fact that

[4] Herbert, 'The World, The Text and the Critic', p. 5.
[5] For the phrase 'observable' data see Chapter Two, p. 107.

without the recovery of earlier text forms, nothing further can be understood.[6] I am simply suggesting that we must begin to integrate into standard academic practice the theories, methodologies and tools developed in the last century that have proved their value and have become established in closely related disciplines. Although a number of textual scholars in the field have begun to incorporate such insights into their work, the overall academic environment remains resistant to change.

It seems to me that the knowledge and energy that go into producing editions of medieval Irish texts should be matched by thorough and ongoing engagement with the wider textual-critical discourse. In this regard, the introductions to editions could be put to excellent use. Such introductions could discuss in more open terms the editor's rationale for employing his/her chosen methodology together with demonstrating an awareness of the alternative options available to him/her. Peter Smith's introduction to his *Three Historical Poems ascribed to Gilla Cóemáin* is a laudatory example of an attempt at such an editorial statement.[7] It is hoped that Chapters Four and Five might provide future editors with a further model of how such statements could be structured. Moreover, I would hope that such engagement with the wider discipline of textual criticism would become the scholarly standard within our field. Faced with such a challenge, I wonder how many textual critics would openly justify their editorial procedure on the grounds that 'that is how we have always done it'. Not many, I imagine.

The applicability of any given methodology does not preclude the production of other editions of a work or text according to other goals. As Machan has argued in relation to Middle English textual criticism: 'We have ample indications of the

[6] Cf. Parker, *The Living Text*, p. 211.
[7] See Chapter Two, p. 101-3.

strengths and weaknesses of traditional methods and theories; it would be valuable to see the capabilities of other kinds of editions'.[8] Although, Jacobs has suggested that the practical implications of more recent social textual theories are that the editor would effectively cease to edit, a more balanced response has come from Pearsall who has pointed out that the theory of textual criticism need not be so closely entwined with the practical business of scholarly editing. Pearsall's approach is not synonymous with ceasing to edit. Rather, it is recognising the realities of textual criticism in the twenty-first century: it is possible to argue that the theorising of textual criticism has become as important as the practice of editing the text.

The solution to many of the challenges facing the modern textual critic ultimately may be pedagogical rather than theoretical or practical. Given the central importance of the modern scholarly edition to the study of almost every aspect of the medieval Irish period, it is essential that the users of such editions understand what they are, and what they are not. Peter Shillingsburg believes that critics 'will learn how to use scholarly editions when they stop mistaking the clear reading text of a scholarly edition for the work itself and when they stop regarding the textual apparatus as a repository of discarded and superseded variants preserved by pompous pedants'.[9] Harsh though his assessment of the 'pompous pedants' of textual criticism might be, his point remains a valid one: in order to fully utilise scholarly editions, their readers must be aware of the limitations of the edition and the cultural and historical contexts which have informed their creation. Discussion within the classroom would inevitably lead to both questions and solutions far more complex than the select sample I have been able to include here.

[8] Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*, p. 192.
[9] Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age*, p. 93.

It would be misleading to finish this thesis with the suggestion that the solution to the challenges facing textual critics within the field of medieval Irish studies is singular. I shall therefore conclude these observations by underlining three points concerning where we were, where we are and where we might like to be. First, practitioners of textual criticism within the field of medieval Irish studies have disenfranchised both themselves and the discipline by failing to engage with the wider discourse regarding the subject. As Tanselle argues, '[e]diting ancient texts and editing modern ones are not simply related fields; they are essentially the same field. The differences between them are in details; the similarities are in fundamentals'.[10] Whilst the application of certain modern textual methodologies may be hindered by a relative lack of evidence pertaining to the authorial text available to scholars working with medieval materials, the underlying textual theory remains relevant to textual critics in all disciplines.[11]

Second, this thesis has not been concerned with a process that has now concluded. Although many of the precepts of modern textual criticism were born over a half a millennium ago, scholars continue to find new and exciting ways to approach the documentary remains of the past. Textual criticism continues to be a dynamic discipline. Therefore, it is not too late for scholars of medieval Irish to begin to participate in the textual-critical dialogue of the twenty-first century. However, such meaningful conversation can only begin with greater editorial and interpretive self-awareness.

[10] Gerard Thomas Tanselle, 'Classical, Biblical and Medieval Textual Criticism and Modern Editing', *Studies in Bibliography*, 36 (1983), pp. 21-68, at p. 68.

[11] For example, Greetham ('Textual and Literary Theory', p. 13) has argued that the classical textual theory of *lectio difficilior potior* 'the more difficult reading is the better one' can be approximated to the idea that authorial intention can be identified in the least familiar of the available variants. Similarly, the editorial approach to medieval texts known as the 'parallel-text' method operates under many of the same assumptions as the multiple-text model discussed above.

Lastly, it appears to me that many promising avenues of interdisciplinary research have been opened up by these recent and current viewpoints; in addition to having much to gain, medieval Irish textual criticism also has much to contribute to the understanding of medieval literary culture, the means by which it was transmitted and the methods by which textual critics represent it. In this challenging task it is essential that the approaches and frameworks discussed during the course of this thesis are interrogated with the same critical awareness that would be expected of any disciplined scholarly study. To quote the closing comments of O'Brien O'Keefe in her *Visible Song*: 'To do so is to recognize the time-bound nature of perception which, even as it divides us from the past, allows us to claim kinship with it'.[12]

[12] O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song*, p. 194.

APPENDIX ONE

THEORY INTO PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM TO BAILE BINNBÉRLACH MAC BÚAIN

The focus of the present section is on the editorial representation of the various manuscript witnesses to *BBmB*. A rigorously diplomatic transcript of each of the four manuscripts, discussed in detail in Chapter Six, is presented here. Furthermore, a semi-diplomatic edition of 23 N 10 together with a translation of this text, have also been supplied. I have attempted to make this translation as literal as possible.

Regarding the diplomatic editions, as far as possible the text is reproduced as it stands in the manuscript, though word breaks (which are not always clear in the manuscripts) are inserted according to sense and regular usage.[1] With the exception of Rawlinson B. 512, where there is an excellent copy available online,[2] I have utilised the existing manuscripts in preparing the texts. The lineation is as per the individual manuscripts. Line numbers have been added for the reader's convenience. Marks of length have not been supplied if absent in the manuscripts. The mark of lenition has been silently expanded in all cases with the *puntum delens* marked on f̊ and ṡ: all other abbreviations are expanded in italics. At l. 44 of 23 N 10 there is a slight tear on the left-hand side of the folio. The subsequent lacuna in the text is marked using square brackets.

In preparing the semi-diplomatic edition, the text has been reformatted in accordance with modern usage, i.e. lineation, capitalisation and punctuation. Furthermore, the poetic text has been divided into stanzas. Emendations have been supplied on the grounds of sense only. Where an alternative reading is suggested, it has been supplied in the footnotes.

[1] The note inserted at the bottom of Harl. 5280, fo. 48a has been omitted from my diplomatic transcript. For further discussion, see Chapter Four, pp. 195-7.
[2] Available at, http://image.ox.ac.uk/images/bodleian/msrawlb512/122v.jpg.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. B. 512, fo. 122v, col. b, ll. 16-36.
Diplomatic Transcript

1. BAile bindbérlach m*a*c búai*n* .*7* rl-.

2. Trí hui chapa m*ai*c ci*n*ga

3. m*ai*c rossa m*ai*c rud*r*aighi .i. mon

4. ach *7* buan *7* fer corb a q*u*ib*us*

5. dál mbuai*n* *7* dal cuirb *7* mo*n*aich

6. arad. Aenm*a*c buain .i. baile

7. bindb*er*lach. Bá sainṡercsom

8. do cech óen at chídh *7* no clui*n*ed i*n*t

9. f̃ir *7* mnaí ara aurscélaibh

10. Ba sainṡ*er*cso*m* da*no* do aillin*n* inghi*n*

11. lugdach m*ai*c ferg*us*a fairrgi *nó*

12. do inghin eoghai*n* m*ai*c dathí coron

13. g*r*adaich o cach brígh co ni*m*tigtíss

14. fessa *7* techta eturra *7* bá sa*m*

15. laid o baile coro dálsat coir

16. coin*n*e hi r*us* na rígh oc laind

17. maelduib ar brú bóine bregh

18. Táinic di*diu* an fer atúaidh día

19. tor*acht*ainisi o emai*n* macha ta*r* sl*íab*

20. fuaít dar muirte*m*ne co tráig

21. mbaili. Ro turnait a ca*r*pait.

British Library, MS Harleian 5280, fo. 48
Diplomatic Transcript

[fo. 48 a, ll. 18-37]

1. Baili binnberluch m*a*c buai*n* tri hui cabha m*ai*c cinga m*ai*c rosa m*ai*c ru

2. graid*i* .i. Monac ⁊ baili ⁊ fer corb de q*ui*b*us* dal mbuain ⁊ dal cuirb ⁊ mon

3. aig a*r*ad. Oenmac buain .i. baili ba saincaisseom di allild filia lugach

4. bein ferg*us*ai goo no di deir eog*ain* m*ai*c *da*thi ⁊ ba sainamor do cech oen at

5. qid ⁊ di cechlad et*er* issai ⁊ genai ar aurriseib Corr*us* dailset coir dala

6. in dormain*echt* ic ros na turidin occ laind moelduib ar bru boin*ne* br*eg*

7. Dogene anuir atuaid d*i*a torr*acht*oin o eomuin machi t*ar* sliauh fuaid ⁊

8. t*ar* tememuiri co t*r*aig mbaili Ro turnaid a ndrubai ⁊ r*us* scuirid a *n*

9. gabrai f*or*an rindiuc dia gleth digensad aini*us* ⁊ oibni*us*. A mbot*ar* ann *co n*ac

10. at*ar* elpoid uathmor aennóe cugo in des ba hudmall a rem ⁊ a ascn*am*h

11. meti les no raited in trogain sín sighi seg di aild no clo do glasrén

12. a clipio f*r*i tir. A*r*a cind ol ailbe *co n*atcomai*r*cter nde cid ted no can*us* ta*n*

13. uic no qia fat a cudnoidh. Di tuaig inbir tiagoi*m* ⁊ t*ar*ais budthuaid

14. an*us*sai co slioab suidiu laigeon ⁊ nint*h*a do imtecht*ar* lium*m* *acht* i*ngen* lug*ach*

15. m*ai*c ferg*us*ai tuc g*r*ad do baili m*a*c buain ⁊ tainic d*i*a dal co rucsat oic lai

16. geu*n* fuirri 7 bathaid amail r*us*gellsad d*r*ai de 7 degfaidi doib na com*r*aic

17. dis a mb*eth*a*id* et *con*ricfaidis iarna nás 7 nach scerdais tre bithu sir. IS

18. *S*iad si*n* mo scelai 7 m*us*teti uaib iermo 7 nipt*ar* cuimgech a fostad

19. Ot cechlai ailin an ni sin crinniur marb cin anema 7 clandt*ar* a fert

20. 7 a raith 7 saitir a airne 7 dognith*er* a oenuc*h* guba la hullto 7 lossaig

[fo. 48b, ll. 1-28].

21. eo t*r*ian lige comboroil 7 fuait capaid baili fora ind unde dixid t*r*aig

22. mbaili iar*om* m*us*la buddes in fer cetno co forad a mbai an ing*en* aildin*n*

23. 7 docing isan g*r*ianan. Can tic ant i nat aitghenam*ar* ol ind ing*en*. a fo

24. chlai erend o tuaig inbir 7 secha so co sliab ṡuidi laig*en*. Scelai lat

25. ol in i*ngen* ni fuil sceloi is cointi sund *acht* ad*con*norc ultai ac oenuc*h* guba

26. et oc cloidi ratha 7 ic sagad lia 7 ac g*r*aifn*et* a an*m*a baili m*ai*c buai*n* rigda*m*

27. noi ul*ad* dothir t*r*a go baili et se ic torr*acht*ain lennain 7 mna s*er*ce dia t

28. ard tal ar ni fuil a scoth doib co ristais a mbetaig no nech dib dfai

29. roscin aroili ina mbiu. Dobidg amach i*ar* nindiuld an misceoil. difuit

30. aill*inn* marb cin a*n*moin 7 claite*r* a fe*r*t 7rl. Et assaid abhold t*ri*an lidhe 7 ba

31. gesco mor a cind septi*m*o an*n*o 7 fethol chind allinne fora uacht*ar*.

32. a cind *secht* mblia*dnae* da*no* tescait mail ⁊ faidi ⁊ fisidi int eó boi os baili ⁊ m*us*

33. gniet tauhull filiud nde ⁊ scrib*aid* fise ⁊ fese ⁊ *ser*co ⁊ tocm*ar*co ul*ad* in*ti*

34. Fon fiu cetni sc*ri*ut*ar* toc*mar*co laig*en* intisi. Doruac*ht* ant samhuin iar

35. suidi ⁊ dognit*her* a fes la hart m*a*c quind Tolotat*ar* dil ⁊ aes cacha da

36. nai fon fer sin am*ail* ba bes ⁊ doradsad a taibli leo ⁊ d*us*ci art ⁊ ot

37. *con*nairc m*us*comairc et tuc*ad* cuce in di tabald co mbat*ar* ina lam

38. oib eneuch a ninchoib. IM*us*ling an tabold for araili dib cor i*m*nai

39. sced am*ail* fetlind im urslait et ni tual*aing* a nimscar*ad* ⁊ bat*ar* am*ail* g*a*ch

40. sed isan taisc*ed* i temr*aig* c*urus* loisc dunl*aing* mac diar ort an ingenr*aid* un*de* d*ix*i*t*

41. Aboll aildinde *ar*dai. ibor baili becc forboi. cia dobert*ar* au laidhib

42. ni tuicid daine borba Et am*ail* adb*er*t ingen corm*aic* ui quin*n* .i. aillbi

43. ES f*r*is samlaim aluime. fri hibor traga baili. fris *com*baroim

44. a*r*oili. frisan abaild a hailli. fland m*a*c lonain d*ix*i*t*

45. Desid corm*a*c im cel coir. conid f*r*is f*or*mat ant śluaig. tabr*aid*

46. dia airi noeb n*ár*. in c*r*aeb do t*r*ag baili buai*n* // caid fir. aml*aid*

47. F*or* buirr bili buidnip reb. rolaa a delb t*r*uimi tor. dia*r* celgad ro cel

48. sin ro celgaid cor. Corm*a*c d*ix*i*t*

Trinity College Library, Dublin, MS 1337, olim. H. 3. 18, p. 47-8
Diplomatic Transcript

[col. a, ll. 13-24]

1. baile binnberlach mac buain tri huí capha

2. maic cinga maic rosa maic rudruighe. mon

3. ach ⁊ baile ⁊ fer corb a quibus dail mbuain

4. ⁊ dail cuirb ⁊ monaig arad aonmac bu

5. ain baile ba sainserc sum di aillinn ingin lugh

6. ach maic fergusa fairge no dingin eoghain maic

7. dathi ⁊ ba sainserc dó gach aon atcidh ⁊

8. do cluined etir firu ⁊ mná ar aurs

9. gelaib coro dailset coir coinde ag ros

10. na righ occ loinn maolduib ar bru boinne

11. bregh. Tainic in fer atuaig dia torachtain

12. o emain macha tar sliab fuaet tar muirtemne

13. co traig mbaili. Ro turnait a carpat ro cuirit

14. a neich for fer ingeilt dogniset aines

15. 7 aibhnes. ambatar ann conacatur elpait

16. uathm*ur* enduin*e* cuctha andes ba dian

17. a cei*m* ⁊ c*r*uaidh i*m*th*echt* meite lais na rai

18. ted in talm*ain* am*ail* sighe séigh di aill *nó* g

19. aoth di glasmuir a cle f*r*i tir a*r*a cind

20. a*r* bail*e* c*on*f̓ia*r*faige de cid t*et nó* can

21. as tai*n*ic *no* cia fath a tin*n*enuis. di tuaigh

22. inbir teighim ⁊ a*r* ais uathuaigh ano

23. sa co sliab suidhe laighen ⁊ ni fuil do

24. sgél*aib* lium *acht* i*ngen* lughdach m*ai*c ferg*us*a t*u*c gr*a*dh

[p. 47, col. b, ll. 1-37]

25. di bail*e* m*a*c buai*n* ⁊ tainic dia coi*n*de

26. co r*u*csat oígh laigen f*ur*ri ⁊ mar*r*ba

27. it inro fost*a* am*ail* ro gellsat dr*a*i

28. ⁊ degfaidhe doib na co*m*raicdis a m

29. b*et*haig ⁊ c*on*ricfadis ia*r*na mbás

30. ⁊ nach sgerdais t*r*ia bithu sír is iat

31. si*n* mo scela 7 m*us*teide uaib ma*r*

32. sighe gaite t*ar* glasmuir 7 nip*a*t cui*m*

33. gech a fost*ad*. Ot cual*a* baile ann sin do

34. fuit mar*b* ci*n* an*m*ai*n* 7 cl*ai*t*er* a f*er*t 7 a r

35. aith 7 sait*er* a lia 7 dignith*er* a ao*n*ach

36. gubha la hultu 7 asaig iph*ur* t*r*iana

37. lige co*m*baroil 7 delbh cind baili f*or*

38. a bar*r* un*de* t*r*aigh mbaili ia*rum* m*us*la bo

39. des in f*er* c*et*na co ha*irm* a mbi an i*ngen*

40. ailden*n* 7 dicing isin g*r*ianan can tic

41. i*n*ti na genu*m*a*r* ar in i*ngen* a tuaisc*er*t

42. l*et*he e*renn* o tuaigh inb*ir* 7 seacho seo co

43. sliaph //laig*en*// suidhe. Sgel*a* let a*r* in i*ngen*

44. ni fuil*et* scel*a* as cainte sun*n*a *acht*

45. atc*on*narc //aonach// ulltu ag . gubha 7

46. ac cl*aid*i ratha 7 ic saghad lia 7 ag sg*r*i

47. bhad a an*m*a baili m*a*ic b*uain* righdamna ul*ad*

48. do taob tr*a*tha bail*i* is e ag tor*acht*ain

49. len*n*ai*n* ⁊ mna s*er*ce dia tuc g*r*adh a*r* ni f

50. uil a ndan doib co ristais a mb*et*haig

51. *no* nech dibh dḟaicsin di a*raile* i*n*a mbiu

52. dili*n*g amach ia*r* ni*n*dill i*n* mísceoil

53. dofuit aill*enn* mar*b* ci*n* an*m*ui*n* ⁊ claite*r* a f

54. ert ⁊rl- ⁊ asaid aphall t*r*iana lige

55. ba gesga mor i cin*n* *sech*t mbl*iadan* ⁊ de

56. alb cin*n* aill*inne* fo*r*a u*acht*a*r* i cin*n* *sech*t mb

57. l*iadan* tesc*ait* fil*id* ⁊ faide ⁊ fisidh int ib*ur* boí

58. os baile ⁊ m*us*gníit taball file*d* de

59. ⁊ sgr*i*boit físe ⁊ fese ⁊ s*er*ca ⁊ toch

60. mar*c*a ul*ad* inti fo*n* c*ét*na sgr*i*bt*ar* toch

61. mar*c*a laig*en* intisi. Daru*acht* int

[p. 48, col. a, ll. 1-29]

62. samoi*n* ia*r* suithe ⁊ dognítha*r* a

63. feis la har*t* m*a*c cuin*n*. tancat*ur* fil*id*

64. ₇ aos gacha dana fon don feis

65. si*n* am*ail* ba bes ₇ tiagats*um* ₇ d*us*cí

66. a*r*t ₇ ot *con*dair*c* m*us*comair*c* ₇ tuc*ad*

67. cuige ind athabold combat*ur* i*n*a

68. lamoib aghaid f*r*i haig*aid* im*us*ling

69. in tapold f*er* a*r*ail*e* dib c*ur* imnais

70. ced am*ail* ḟeithlin*n* im urslait ₇

71. nis c*um*g*e*th a ni*m*sga*r*a*d* ₇ bat*ar* am*ail* ca*ch*

72. s*ét* asin taisc*ed* hi temr*aig* c*urus* loisc

73. dunlaing m*a*c enda .i. dia*r* ort i*n*

74. ni*n*genr*aid* i temr*aig* .ut d*icitur*

75. Abhall aill*inn*i a*r*da iba*r* baili bec f*or*

76. ba cia dob*er*ait i laighib nis tui

77. cit doeine borba. Et atb*er*t i*ngen*

78. corm*ai*c hi .c*uind*//. ratha baili f*r*is

79. IS f*r*is samlai*m* aluime. f*r*i hibu*r* ratha

80. c*on* ba*r*aim a*raile* f*r*isin abaill

81. aaille. fland m*a*c lonain d*ix*i*t*

82. Deisid corm*a*c um cheil coír *con*id f*r*i

83. s f*or*mat int sloig. tabrad

84. dia ai*r*e náomh nár. in craobh do

85. tr*a*igh bail*i* buaín .//. a delb t*ru*m

86. f*or* buirr bil*i* buidhnib reb. rola

87. ib tor. dia*r* celgad ro celgait

88. fir. aml*aid* sin ro celgait cor

89. cormac ⁊rl-. Sunn ro claidhed m*a*c

90. buain baín

Royal Irish Academy MS 23 N 10, pp. 129-30
Diplomatic Transcript

[p. 129, ll. 1-27]

1. Bail*e* bin*n*b*er*l*ac*h m*a*c buain. t*r*i hui capa. m*a*ic cinga m*a*ic rosa

2. m*a*ic ruiruighi mo*n*ach .7 bail*e* .7 f*er* corp a quib*us* *da*il mbhuai*n* .7 *da*il

3. cuirp .7 monaigh aradh aoe*n*m*a*c buain ba sains*er*c su*m* di aillind

4. inghin lughach m*a*ic f*er*g*us*a fai*r*gi *nó* dinghin eoghai*n* m*a*ic *da*thi 7 baoi coir

5. chuin*n*e eturr*u* ag ros na righ occ luin*n* maoelduib a*r* bru boin*ne*

6. bregh. Tainic in f*er* atuaigh dia torr*acht*in o em*ain* macha tar sliab .7 tar

7. muirthemhne c*o* t*r*aigh mbail*i*. Ro tair*n*ed a c*ar*p*at* .7 ro cuiredh a neich

8. f*or* féur ing*h*eilt. doghnisit aines .7 aoibhnes .7 a mbad*ar* an*n* *co*n

9. facad*ar* ealp*ait* uat*h*m*ur* eo*n*nduine cucta andes. ba dian a ceim

10. .7 a churaigh i*m*the*cht* meiti lais na raited in talm*ain*. am*ail* sighe seigh

11. di aill *nó* gaoth di ghlasm*ur*. a chle fri tír. a*r*a chion*n* a*r* baile *con* fia*r*f

12. aighthh*er* dhe cidh th*ét* *nó* canas dtanic *nó* cid fath a thinenuis. do tua

13. igh in*n*b*er* teighim .7 ar is bo*t*uaigh anosa co sliab suighi laighi*n* .7 ní

14. fuil di sg*él*e liu*m*. a*cht* i*ngen* lugha mic f*er*g*us*a tuc g*r*adh do bhail*e* m*a*c buain

15. .7 tain*ic* dia coin*n*e co rucs*a*t oig laigin fuirr*i* .7 mar*b*ait inro

16. fosta am*ail* ro geallsa*t* dr*a*i .7 deghfaighe doibh na co*m*raicifedis

17. a mb*et*haigh .7 *con*ricfidis iarna mbas .7 nach sg*er*adais t*r*e u*h*it*h*e

18. sior. is iat si*n* mo sg*él*a .7 mosteig*h*i uaidhaibh ma*r* sigha gaoithe

19. ta*r* glasmuir .7 ni pud*ur* coi*m*gidhech a fosta. Ot cual*a* baile

20. aní si*n* difuit ma*r*uh gan an*m*ui*n* .7 claoit*er* a f*er*t .7 a rait*h* .7 sait*er*

21. a liag*h* .7 dignit*her* aen*ac*h gub*a* l*a* uollta .7 asaigh iubha*r* t*r*ina lighe

22. co*m*barroil .7 delb cin*n* uhail*i* fo*r*a barr. un*de* t*r*aigh uhail*i* iar musl*á*

23. bodes in f*er* c*ét*na cu hair*m* a mbai an ingi*n* aillin*n* 7 doching

24. isin ngr*i*anan can ticc int i na genar a*r* an inghi*n* a tuaisc*er*t leithi

25. e*renn* o thuaigh in*n*b*er* .7 se*c*a seo c*o* sliabh suidhe laighen Sg*él*a let a*r* a

26. n ing*en* ni fuilit sc*él*a is cainti sun*n* a*cht* at*cunnar*c ullta ag aen*ac*h

27. gubha .7 a cl*aid*i r*a*tha .7 ag suig*h*i lia 7 ag scr*i*bha an*m*a*n* uail*i* m*a*ic buain

[p. 130, ll. 1-22]

28. Righ*dam*na ul*ad* do taobh t*r*aighi uail*i* .7 se ag torri*cht*ain len*n*ai*n*

29. .7 mna s*er*ce dia dt*u*c g*r*adh a*r* ni fuil a n*dan* doiu*h* *co* ristais ina

30. mb*et*ha *nó* n*e*c dib do faicsi*n* di a*r*a*ile* ina mbiu doling am*ac*h ia*r*

31. nin*n*ill an misgeoil dofuit mar*b* aill*inn* cin an*m*ui*n* .7 clait*er*

32. a f*er*t .*7*rl asaigh abhall t*r*iana lig*h*e .*7* ba gesg*a* mo*r* a gciond

33. *secht* mbl*iadan* .*7* dealb chion*n* aill*inne* f*or* ua*cht*a*r* a gcion*n* *secht* mbl*iadan* tesc*ait*

34. fil*id* .*7* faidh .*7* fisidh int iubha*r* boi ós baile .*7* m*us*gniit tabaill

35. f̂il*ed* de .*7* scribhait fise .*7* feasa .*7* s*er*ca (*nó* ig—a) .*7* tochm*ur*ca ul*ad* in*n*ti

36. fon c*ét*n*a* scribht*ar* tochma*r*ca laig*en* in*n*ti si. Doruac*ht* int sa*m*aui*n* ia*r*

37. suithi .*7* dognit*her* a feis la ha*r*t m*a*c *cu*in*n*. Tangud*ar* fil*id* .*7* aes

38. g*a*ca dana don feis si*n* am*ail* ba beus .*7* tiagaitsiu*m* .*7* d*us*cí a*r*t

39. .*7* ot *cu*n*n*air*c* m*us*co*m*air*c* *7* t*u*ca chuige in *da* thapaill co *m*bad*ar* ina la*m*

40. aibh aighe f*r*i haighe. IM*us*ling in taphold f*or* a*raile* dibh c*ur* imnaiscedh

41. am*ail* f*et*hlin*n* im urslait .*7* nir cui*m*gedh a ni*m*sgar*ad* *7* bad*ar* am*ail* gac

42. s*ét* isin taisce a dtemhraigh cur*us* oslaicc dunlaing m*a*c ena

43. .i. dia*r* ort in i*ngenraid* i temr*aig* .ut d*icitu*r

44. […]bald aill*inne* a*r*da iba*r* baile beg a orba. cia dob*er*ait a laighaibh

45. ni tuicit daoine borba. Et atb*er*t i*ngen* chorpm*aic* hi chuind.

46. IS f*r*is sa*m*lai*m* aluime. f*r*i hiubha*r* ratha bail*i*. f*r*is *co*mbairuim a*raile* f*r*isan

47. abhaill aillinde. Flan*n* m*a*c lonai*n* d*ixit*

48. Deisid corpm*ac* um ceill coir. *con*id f*r*is f*or*m*a*d int sloig. tabhr*ad*

49. dia aire nae*m*bh ná*r* in c*r*aoebh di t*r*aigh uhail*i* uhuaín. FINIT.

Royal Irish Academy MS 23 N 10, pp. 129-30
Semi-Diplomatic Edition

Baile Binnberlach mac Buain.

Tri hui Capa maic Cinga maic Rosa maic Ruiruighi: Monach ⁊ Buan[1] ⁊ Fer Corp, a quibus Dail mBhuain ⁊ Dail Cuirp ⁊ Monaigh Aradh. Aoenmac Buain [.i. Baile]. Ba sainserc-sum di Aillind inghin Lughach maic Fergusa Fairgi *nó* d'inghin Eoghain maic Dathi ⁊ baoi coir chuinne eturru ag Ros na Righ occ Luinn Maoelduib ar bru Boinne Bregh.

Tainic in fer atuaigh dia torrachtin o Emain Macha tar Sliab [Fuait] ⁊ tar Muirthemhne co Traigh mBaili. Ro tairned a carpait ⁊ ro cuired a n-eich for féur ingheilt. Do-ghnisit aines ⁊ aoibhnes ⁊ a mbadar ann co n-facadar ealpait uathmur eonnduine cucta andes. Ba dian a ceim ⁊ a chruaigh-imthecht.[2] Meiti lais na raited in talmain amail sighe seigh di aill *nó* gaoth di ghlasmur. A chle fri tír.

"Ara chionn", ar Baile, "co n-fiarfaighthher dhe cidh thét *nó* canas dtanic *nó* cid fath a thinenuis."

"Do Tuaigh Innber teighim ⁊ ar is botuaigh anosa co Sliab Suighi Laighin ⁊ ní fuil di sgéle lium acht ingen Lugha mic Fergusa tuc gradh do Bhaile mac Buain ⁊ tainic dia coinne co rucsat oig Laigin fuirri ⁊ marbait inro fosta amail ro geallsat drai ⁊ deghfaighe doibh na comraicifedis a mbethaigh ⁊ con-ricfidis iarna mbas ⁊ nach sgeradais tre uhithe sior. Is iat sin mo sgéla."

⁊ mos-teighi uaidhaibh mar sigha gaoithe tar glasmuir ⁊ ni pudur coimgidhech a fosta. Ot-cuala Baile an-í sin di-fuit maruh gan anmuin ⁊ claoiter a fert ⁊ a raith ⁊ saiter a liagh ⁊ di-

[1] MS: Baile
[2] MS: churaigh imthecht.

gnit*her* aen*ac*h gub*a* l*a* Uollta ⁊ asaigh iubha*r* t*r*ina lighe co*m*barroil ⁊ delb cin*n* Uhail*i* fo*r*a barr, un*de* T*r*aigh Uhail*i* iar[um].

Mus-l*á* bodes in f*er* c*ét*na cu hair*m* a mbai an ingi*n* Aillin*n* ⁊ do-ching isin ng*r*ianan.

"Can ticc int-i nat athgenamar[3]", a*r* an inghi*n*.

"A tuaisc*er*t leithi E*renn* o Thuaigh In*nber* ⁊ s*e*ca seo c*o* Sliabh Suidhe Laighen."

"Sg*él*a let", a*r* an ing*en*.

"ni fuilit sc*el*a is cainti sun*n* *acht* at-*cu*nn*ar*c Ullta ag aen*ac*h gubha ⁊ a[g] c*laid*i r*a*tha ⁊ ag suig*h*i lia ⁊ ag scribha an*man* Uail*i* m*a*ic Buain righ*dam*na Ul*ad* do taobh T*r*aighi Uail*i* ⁊ se ag torri*cht*ain len*n*ai*n* ⁊ mna s*er*ce dia dt*u*c g*r*adh a*r* ni fuil a n*dan* doiu*h* *co* ristais ina mb*e*tha *nó* n*e*c dib do faicsi*n* di a*raile* ina mbiu."

Do-ling am*ac*h ia*r* n-in*n*ill an misgeoil. Do-fuit mar*b* Aill*inn* cin an*m*ui*n* ⁊ claite*r* a fe*r*t ⁊ *araile* ⁊ asaigh abhall t*r*iana ligh*e* ⁊ ba gesga mo*r* a gciond *secht* mbl*iadan* ⁊ dealb chion*n* Aill*inne* f*or* ua*cht*a*r*. A gcion*n* *secht* mbl*iadan* tesc*ait* fil*id* ⁊ faidh ⁊ fisidh int iubha*r* boi ós Baile ⁊ m*us*-gniit tabaill fìl*ed* de ⁊ sc*r*ibhait fise ⁊ feasa ⁊ s*er*ca ⁊ tochm*ur*ca Ul*ad* in*n*ti. Fon c*ét*n*a* sc*r*ibht*ar* tochmarca Laig*en* in*n*tisi.

Do-rua*cht* int Sa*m*aui*n* ia*r* suithi ⁊ do-gnit*her* a feis la hA*r*t ma*c* *Cu*in*n*. Tangud*ar* fil*id* ⁊ aes g*a*ca dana don feis si*n* am*ail* ba beus ⁊ [do-radsad a taibli leo]. Tiagait-siu*m* ⁊ d*us*-cí A*r*t ⁊ ot-*cu*nn*air*c m*us*-co*m*air*c* ⁊ t*u*ca[d] chuige in *da* thapaill co *m*bad*ar* ina la*m*aibh aighe f*r*i haighe. Imus-ling in taphold f*or* a*raile* dibh c*ur*' imnaiscedh am*ail* f*e*thlin*n* im urslait ⁊ nir cui*m*gedh a n-i*m*sgar*ad* ⁊ bad*ar* am*ail* gac sét isin taisce a dTemhraigh curus-loisc[4] Dunlaing mac Ena .i. diar' ort in i*ngen*r*aid* i Temraig, ut d*icitur*:

[3] MS: na genar ar an
[4] MS: r*us*oslaicc

Abald Aill*inne* a*r*da.
iba*r* Baile, beg a orba.
cia dob*er*ait a laighaibh
ni tuicit daoine borba.

Et atb*er*t i*ngen* Chorpm*aic* hi Chuind:

IS f*r*is sa*m*lai*m* Aluime.
f*r*i hiubha*r* Ratha Baili.
f*r*is *co*mbairuim a*r**aile***
f*r*isan abhaill Aillinde.

Flan*n* m*a*c Lonai*n* d*i*x*it*:

Deisid Corpm*ac* um ceill coir.
*con*id f*r*is fo*r*m*a*d int sloig.
Tabhr*ad* dia aire nae*m*bh ná*r*
in c*r*aoebh di *T*raigh Uhaili Uhuaín.

FINIT.

Royal Irish Academy MS 23 N 10, pp. 129-30
Translation

Baile the Sweet-spoken, son of Buan.

Caba, son of Cing, son of Ros, son of Rudraige had three grandsons: Monach and Buan and Fer Corb, *a quibus* Dál mBuain and Dál Cuirb and Monaig Arad. Buan had one son (i.e. Baile). He was the special love of Aillenn, daughter of Lugaid, son of Fergus of the Sea (or of the daughter of Eogan, son of Dathí) and they arranged a proper meeting between them at Ross na Ríg, at Lann Maolduib, on the banks of Boyne in Brega.

The man came from the north to meet her from Emain Macha, across Sliab Fuait and across Muirthemne to Tráig Baili. They unhitched their chariots and they put their horses on the grass to graze. They made merry and enjoyment and when they were there they saw a horrible individual apparition approaching them from the south. Swift was his course and his harsh approach. He sped over the earth like the darting of a hawk from a cliff, or the wind from the green sea. His left towards the land.

"[Go] to meet him", said Baile, "so that he may be asked whither he goes or whence he comes, or what is the cause of his hurry".

"I am going to Tuaig Inber for it is northward now to Mount Leinster and I have nothing to report with me but the daughter of Lugaid son of Fergus, she gave her love to Baile son of Buan and she was coming to meet him when the warriors of Leinster took hold of her and killed her, as the druids and good seers promised them that they would not meet in life and they would meet after their death and that they would not part in eternity. Those are my tidings.'

And quickly he departed from them like a gust of wind over the green sea and they were not capable of detaining him. When Baile heard that, he fell dead without life and his mound and his rath were dug and his stone was planted and his funeral games were held by the men of Ulster, and a yew tree grew through the stone and the form of Baile's head on its top. Hence was Traig Baili then.

The same man went southward to the place where was the girl Aillenn, and he went into the bower.

"Whence comes the one whom we do not recognise?", said the girl.

"From the north of Ireland, from Tuaig Inber and past this to Mount Leinster."

"What tidings have you?" said the girl.

"I have no news worth lamenting here but I have seen the men of Ulster at funerary games and digging a rath and planting a stone and writing the name Baile son of Buan royal heir of Ulster beside Tráig Baili and he was coming to meet a lover and lady-love to whom he had given love for it is not their destiny to meet in life or for any one of them to see the other while they are alive."

He sprang out after contriving the evil-tale. Aillenn fell dead without life, and her grave was dug and an apple-tree grew through the stone and there was a large tree at the end of seven years and the likeness of Aillenn's head on [its] top. At the end of seven years the poets and prophets and learned men cut down the yew that was over Baile and made a poet's tablet of it and they wrote the visions and feasts and loves and wooing of Ulster on it. In the same manner the wooings of Leinster were written on it.

Samain arrived after that and its feast was made by Cormac, son of Art. The poets and people of every art came to the feast as was the custom and [they brought

their tablets with them] and when he saw them he asked for them. And the two tablets were brought to him so that they were in his hands face to face. The tablet sprang on the other of them, so that they were bound together like woodbine about the green branch and it was not possible to part them and they were like every treasure in the treasury in Tara until Dúnlaing son of Énna burnt them, i.e., when he slew the maidens in Tara. As it is said,

> The apple tree of noble Aillenn
> The yew of Baile, small its inheritance,
> Though they were brought into poems,
> Unlearned people do not understand [them].

And the daughter of Cormac, grandson of Conn said:

> What I liken Aluime to
> Is the yew of Ráith Baile
> What I liken the other to,
> Is the apple tree of Aillenn.

Flann son of Lonán said:

> Let Cormac decide with proper sense,
> And against him the envy of the host
> Let him remember – illustrious saint –
> The tree from Tráig Baili Buain.

FINIT

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APPENDIX TWO

A QUESTION OF ORDERS

The following page shoes a representative sample of the ways in which an editor may choose to order the seven witnesses of 'Gráinne Speaks of Díarmait'. The relevant quatrains are set in parallel across two pages. Firstly, the poems are arranged chronologically, beginning with the earliest witness according to the dates of the manuscripts in which they are attested. The second arrangement is ordered so that the witnesses of the two variant traditions are placed alongside one another. Lastly, the quatrains have been arbitrarily selected so as not to preference any one classification of the evidence.

Each choice of orders offers its own advantages files attached and disadvantages. For example, the middle arrangement allows the reader to more readily examine the witnesses of the two versions of the poem in relation to one another. However, the reader may be left with the impression that the version presented on the right-had folio developed subsequent to the version on the left-hand folio. Therefore, it could be convincingly argued that the solution lies in a chronological presentation of the material. However, as Jack observes, 'the attempt at chronological arrangement often impels an editor toward a decision for which there is insufficient evidence'.[1] Ultimately, there can be no simple solution as even the arbitrarily arranged material may lead the reader to make certain assumptions regarding the nature of the poem and its transmission which the editor may not have anticipated. Therefore, the editor must always bear in mind the influence his/her arrangement of the material will have on the reader, particularly in the production of a parallel-text edition

[1] Ian Jack, 'A Choice of Orders: The Arrangement of "The Poetical Works"', in *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. Jerome McGann (Chicago, 1985), pp. 127-43, 224-7, at p. 128.

'Gráinne Speaks of Díarmait' (*EIL*, no. 54)[1]: A Question of Orders.

[R]	[U]	[U2]	[H]	[Y]	[E]	[C]
Fil dune frismad buide lemm diuderc ara tibrind in mbith mbuide huile huile cid diubert	Fil dune rismad bude lem diuderc ara tribrind in bith ule a meicc maire cid diúbert.	Fil dune rismad bude lem diuderc dia tibrind in bith mbude hule hule cid diúbert.	Fil dune rismad buide lem díutercc ara tribrind in mbith ule a meicc maire[2] cid diuper[t]	Fil duine risbudh buidhe leam diuderc ara tibraind an bith buidhe a meic maire cidiubeirt	Fuil duine fhis bud buidi linn diuderc ara tibrainn in bith a meic muire cid diubert	Fil duine frisbud buidhe lium diuderc ara tibraind in bith a meic muire cidiubert

Figure IV-2

[H]	[R]	[U]	[U2]	[Y]	[E]	[C]
Fil dune rismad buide lem díutercc ara tribrind in mbith ule a meicc maire cid diuper[t]	Fil dune frismad buide lemm diuderc ara tibrind in mbith mbuide huile huile cid diubert	Fil dune rismad bude lem diuderc ara tribrind in bith ule a meicc maire cid diúbert.	Fil dune rismad bude lem diuderc dia tibrind in bith mbude hule hule cid diúbert.	Fil duine risbudh buidhe leam diuderc ara tibraind an bith buidhe a meic maire cidiubeirt	Fuil duine fhis bud buidi linn diuderc ara tibrainn in bith a meic muire cid diubert	Fil duine frisbud buidhe lium diuderc ara tibraind in bith a meic muire cidiubert

Figure IV-3

[Y]	[U2]	[H]	[E]	[R]	[C]	[U]
Fil duine risbudh buidhe leam diuderc ara tibraind an bith buidhe a meic maire cidiubeirt	Fil dune rismad bude lem diuderc dia tibrind in bith mbude hule hule cid diúbert.	Fil dune rismad buide lem díutercc ara tribrind in mbith ule a meicc maire cid diuper[t]	Fuil duine fhis bud buidi linn diuderc ara tibrainn in bith a meic muire cid diubert.	Fil dune frismad buide lemm diuderc ara tibrind in mbith mbuide huile huile cid diubert	Fil duine frisbud buidhe lium diuderc ara tibraind in bith a meic muire cidiubert	Fil dune rismad bude lem diuderc ara tribrind in bith ule a meicc maire cid diúbert

Figure IV-4

[1] For the theoretical justification for presenting these stanzas in parallel see Chapter 4 pp. 298-300.
[2] 'nó u' over 'a' of maire

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