

Aided Cheit maic Mágach

The Death of Cet mac Mágach

Note to the reader

A complete version of this saga appears in the manuscript Adv. MS. 72.1.40 (Gaelic XL) in the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh. In Meyer's footnotes, which are incorporated into this presentation, this manuscript is referred to as [MS].

Section 1

Cid diatá A[i]ded Ceit maic Mágach?

Ní hansa.

Luidh Cet fecht ann a crích nUlad do chuinghi[d] gona duine,

inní ba minic lais .i. Ulaid do goin,

úair ní dechaid asa nóendin ríam [cen] guin Ultaig.

Cid de atá Aided Cheit maic Mágach?

Ní hansa.

Chuaigh Cet feacht n-aon i gcrích nUlad go chuingeadh gona duine,

an ní ba mhinic leis .i. Ulaid do mharú,

óir ní dheachaigh as a naíonacht riamh gan goin Ultaig.

Whence is the Death of Cet mac Magach?

Not hard to tell.

Once upon a time Cet went into Ulster to seek the slaying of a man,

a thing he often did (viz., to slay Ulstermen),

for from his childhood he never went without the slaughter of an Ulsterman.

Section 2

Luid sium síar íarum	Chuaigh-sean siar iaramh	So he went westwards,
ocus trí nói [<i>The MS has the ordinary compendium for nó, with a dot or small i over it</i>] cinn do Ultaib lais	agus trí naoi gcinn do Ultaib leis,	having the heads of thrice nine men of Ulster with him.
ocus docuredh íarum Conall Cernach for a lurg co Bréfní Connacht.	agus do cuireadh iaramh Conall Cernach ar a lorg go Bréifne Chonnacht.	And Conall Cernach was then sent upon his track to Brefne in Connacht
Laad snechta an gemrid do sunnrad,	Thit sneachta an gheimhridh go sonrach,	(for winter-snow had fallen),
co fúair Conall a fástigh hé ac fuine a chotach [a acotach MS] ocus a ara.	go bhfuair Conall i bhfástigh é, ag fuinneadh a chodach agus a ara [<u>leis</u>]	until in an empty house he found him and his charioteer cooking their meal.
Bátar tra na eochu fón carpat amuich.	Bhádar na heacha fón gcarbad amuigh.	The horses, however, were under the chariot outside.

Section 3

“Is é Cet so,” ar Conall, “ní fíu dúin comrac fris	“Is é Cet so,” ar Conall, “agus ní fiú dúinn comhrac leis	“This is Cet,” said Conall, “and it is not fitting for us to fight with him
ar a doilghi ocus ar a cródacht.	ar a dhoilghe agus ar a chrógacht.	on account of his ferocity and his fierceness.
Is amnus in fer fil [and],” ar Conall.	Is amhnas an fear atá ann,” ar Conall.	He is a savage man,” said Conall.

“Fé amai!” ol in t-ara, “ní maith tig tar do beólu,	“Fé amai!” ar an t-ara, “ní maith tig thar do bheola,	“Woe!” said the charioteer, “no good comes over thy lips,
in péist fil for dígail Ulad [cen] gabáil tige fair	an phéist fuil ar díoghail Ulad, gan gabháil tige air,	not to storm the house in which is the pest that is harrying Ulster,
ocus ní meabal tra comtuitim duit fris,	agus ní meabhal comhthitim duit leis,	and it is no shame for thee to fall in combat together with him;
oir atá dia beódacht [beogachta MS] connuic so.”	óir atá dá bheodhacht go nuige seo.”	for such is his courage until now [<i>Here the text seems corrupt</i>].”
“A athair,” ar Conall,	“A athair,” ar Conall,	“O father,” said Conall,
“ní tibur m’ anum do láith gaili fer nÉrenn	“ní thabhara m’anam [<u>d’éinne</u>] do láith gaile fhear nÉrenn,	“I shall not give my life to any hero of the men of Ireland;
ocus dobér tra comartha forsna eochu.”	ach do bhéara mé comhartha ar na heacha.”	but I shall put a token upon the horses.”
Gadaid Conall dúal a muing na n-eoch	Goideann Conall dual ó mhoing na n-each,	Conall snatches a lock out of the mane of the horses,
ocus dobeir andlochtan a cinn in carpait	beireann dlaoi i gcinn an charbaid	and puts a wisp upon the front of the chariot,
ocus téit as sair co hUltu.	agus téann as soir go hUltu.	and goes away eastward to Ulster.

Section 4

“Fé, a Ceit!” ar an t-ara.

“Ní fé,” ar Cet,

“is mait[h] in t-anocul tuc for na heocha.

Conall so,” ar sé,

“ocus biaid caradrad de ocus bid maith hé.”

“Fé amae!” or in t-ara,

“in fer rolá ár Connacht

do tabairt méla fort

ocus ní toircéba t’ainm co bráth

can a bás nó can a rúacad a fescur.”

“Maith ám,” ar Cet.

Lotar ina diaid co hÁt[h] Ceit.

“Fé, a Cheit!” ar an t-ara.

“Ní fé,” ar Cét,

“is maith an t-anacal thug ar na heacha.

Conall [a rinne] so,” ar sé,

“beidh caradas de, agus ba mhaith é.”

“Fé amae!” ar an t-ara,

“an fear do rinne ár Chonnacht

do thabhairt méala ort,

agus ní mhairfidh t’ainm go bráth

gan a bhás nó gan a ruagadh an feascar so.”

“Maith ámh,” ar Cet.

Chuadar ina dhiaidh go hÁth Ceit.

“Woe, Cet!” said the charioteer.

“Not woe,” said Cet.

“It is well that he has spared the horses.

This is Conall(’s doing),” said he,

“and from this there shall be friendship, and it will be well.”

“Woe!” said the charioteer,

“that the man who has made a laughter of the men of Connacht

should put disgrace upon thee,

and thy name will not endure till Doom

without thy killing him or putting him to flight this evening.”

“Right indeed,” said Cet.

They went after him as far as Cet’s Ford.

Section 5

“Amin, a Chonaill!” ar Cet.	“Aimin, a Chonaill!” ar Cet.	“Now, Conall!” said Cet.
“Cid sin, a Ceit?” ar Conall.	“Cid sin, a Cheit?” ar Conall.	“What is that, Cet?” said Conall.
“Ní racha as aniu, a clóain,” or Cet.	“Ní racha [tú] as inniu, a chlaonáin,” ar Cet.	“ <u>Thou</u> shalt not escape to-day, O evil one,” said Cet.
“Dóig lem,” or Conall ac intód [intógh MS cuici	“Dóigh liom,” ar Conall, ag iontó chuige;	“That is my opinion too,” said Conall, turning towards him.
ocus nothúairgenn cách díb a chéili	agus do thuairgeann cách díobh a chéile,	And each of them smites the other,
co clos fon díthrub uli	go clos fón díthreabh uile	
a ngníthech ocus a mbolcfadach	a ngníthach agus a mbolgfadach,	so that their shouting and their panting,
ocus gáir na scur	agus gáir na scor,	and the . . . of the horses,
ocus [<i>Here the MS is illegible</i>] an anr-[<i>An leg. a n-arad?</i>]	agus . . . a n-araí,	and the . . . of their charioteers (?)
ac láigedh na láth ngaili robátar isin áth,	ag laoidheadh na láth ngaile do bhí isan áth,	inciting the heroes who were in the ford
co torchair ceachtarde anunn ocus anall.	go dtorchair ceachtarde anonn agus anall.	were heard throughout the wilderness,
Marb immorro Cet fo cétóir	Marbh, iomorra, Cet fo chéadóir,	until both fell to this side and that.
		Cet, however, died forthwith,

ocus dororchair Conall a nél.

agus do thorchair Conall i néal.

and Conall fell into a swoon.

Section 6

Ocus dúscid Conall asa nél.

Agus dhúiscigh Conall as a néal.

And Conall awoke out of his swoon.

“Ber lat na hechu co hUltu,” or sé,

“Beir leat na heacha go hUltu,” ar sé,

“Take the horses with thee to the men of Ulster,” said he,

“ar ná romaisget Connachta cetus.”

“ar ná romaisget Connachta cétus.”

“before the men of Connacht . . .”

Faroféimid in gilla tra a tócbáil-som ina carpat

Ní raibh i gcumas an ghiolla, ámh, a thógbháil-san ina charbad,

However, the lad was unable to lift him into the chariot,

ocus ceilebraid in gilla dó íarum ocus luid dia tig.

agus ceileabhrann an giolla dó iaramh agus chuaigh dá thigh.

and so he bids him farewell, and he went home.

“Olc so tra,” or Conall,

“Olc so,” ar Conall,

“Now, this is bad,” said Conall,

“aonfer do Connachtaib

“aonfhear do Chonnachtaibh dom ghoint,

“that a single man of Connacht should have wounded me [*Something like this seems omitted*],

ocus rogellus-[s]a ám,” ar sé, “nach[am] muirfed aonfer do Chonnachtaib

agus do gheallas-sa ám,” ar sé, “nach marbhadh aonfhear do Chonnachtaibh mé,

while I have vowed that no single man of Connacht should kill me.

ocus robo ferr lem iná ríge in domuin

agus do ba fearr liom ná ríge an domhain

And I had rather than the kingship of the world

nech do Chonnachtaib dom athguin

co ná ba[d] for aon fer do Chonnachtaib
nobeith mo marbad.”

neach do Chonnachtaibh dom athghoin,

go ná ba ar aon fhear [amháin] do
Chonnachtaibh do bheadh mo mharbhadh.”

that some one of Connacht should wound me
again,

so that the slaying of me should not rest with
one man of Connacht.”

Section 7

Bélchu Bréfní tra, is é tánic ar tús.

“Cet so,” or sé.

“Conall dono sunna,” ar sé

“ocus bid [bit **MS**] maith an Ériu festa,” or sé,

“ó dotorchair in dá árchoin so

doloitsitar an Éiriu eturra,”

la tabairt a[i]rlaindi a tsligi for Conall.

“Fair t’irlaind díom, a athair!” or sé.

“At beó,” ar Bélchú.

Bélchú Bréifne, ámh, is é tháinic ar dtús.

“Cet so,” ar sé.

“Conall san,” ar sé,

“agus beidh maith in Ériu festa,” ar sé,

“ó do thorchair an dá árchoin seo

do loiteadar Ériu eatarthu,”

ag tabhairt urlainn a shlighe ar Chonall.

“Beir t’urlainn díom, a athair!” ar sé.

“At beo,” ar Belchú.

Bélchú of Brefne, however, was the first to
come there.

“This is Cet,” said he.

“And here is Conall,” said he.

“And henceforth Ireland will be happy,
since these two slaughter-hounds have fallen,
who ruined Ireland between them.”

So saying, he set the butt-end of his spear on
Conall.

“Take away [*lit.* ‘take heed’] thy spear from
me, O father!” said Conall.

“Thou art alive,” said Bélchú.

“Ní buide [buige MS] frit ón,” ar Conall, “am beó-sa.”	“Ní buí leatsa,” ar Conall, “am beo-sa.”	“No thanks to thee,” said Conall, “I am alive.”
“Fír, a Conaill,” ar Bélchú, “a[c] cuinci[d] do gona atái form-sa	“Fíor, a Chonaill,” ar Bélchú, “ag cuingeadh do ghona ataoi ormsa,	“I see it, O Conall,” said Bélchú, “thou wouldst have me slay thee.
ocus ní dingén-sa, oir is marb cena tú.”	agus ní dhéanadsa óir is marbh cheana tú.”	But I shall not do so, for thou art dead as it is.”
“Ní lémt[h]a cid mo brat do goin,” ar Conall,	“Ní leomhthá fiú mo bhrat do ghoin,” ar Conall,	“Thou wouldst not dare to wound even my cloak,” said Conall,
“a caillech trúag!”	“a chailleach thrua!”	“thou wretched old woman!”
“Nítmairbfet-sa [nitmuirbebsom MS] tra, acht atá ní cena,” ar sé.	“Ní mharbhód-sa tú anois, ach atá ní eile,” ar sé.	“I shall not kill thee now, but there is something else.
“Notbér lem dom tig ocus not-ícfaiter acum	“Do bhéara liom dom thigh, agus íochfar tú agam,	I shall carry thee with me to my house, and thou shalt be healed with me;
ocus madat [magat MS] slán immorro caithfet frit.”	agus má duit slán cathód leat.”	and when thou art whole, I shall fight with thee.”

Section 8

Iarsin tra tócbaid for a muin agus a leth ina diaid,	Iarsin tógbhann ar a mhuin é agus a leath ina dhiaidh,	So then he lifts him on his back, half dragging him behind,
co ráinic a tech	go ráinic a theach,	until he reached his house.
ocus dobeir leaga cucui gur bo slán.	agus do bheir lianna chuige gur ba slán.	And he brought physicians to him until he was whole.
“Bid fíor,” ar Bélchú fria maccaibh,	“Beidh fíor,” ar Bélchú lena mhacaibh,	“It will be even so,” said Bélchú to his sons,
“raga in fer sa úaim agus ní dingna ar les.	“ragha an fear so uaim agus ní dhéana ár leas.	“this man will escape from me and will do us no good.
Marbaid in fer resiu dech [dech- MS] úain.	Marbhaigh an fear roimis a imtheacht uainn.	Kill ye the man before he goes from us.
Tigid iarum cucui uili amárach d’agaid,	Tigig iaramh chuige sibh uile amárach d’óiche,	Come then to him all of you to-morrow night,
co facar-sa in airecul fosclaicthi ar bar cinn	agus fágarsa an t-aragal fosclaithe ar bhur gcinn	when I will leave the house open before you,
ocus marbaid [é] ina lebaid.”	agus marbhaig é ina leabaidh.”	and kill him in his bed.”
Rofítir fer in imnid agus an uile móir .i. Conall in mídúthracht robói dó.	Do fhidir fear an imní agus an oilc mhóir .i. Conall, an mídhrúthracht do bhí dó.	The man of affliction and great woe, even Conall, knew the evil intent which was (<u>harboured</u>) against him.

Section 9

“Dún in tech!” ar Conall fri Bélcoin.	“Dún an teach!” ar Conall le Bélchoin.	“Close the house!” said Conall to Bélchú.
Téit sair ocus fácbaid in tech fuslaicthi.	Téann soir agus fágann an teach fosclaithe.	He goes forward and leaves the house open.
“Mait[h] didiu, a Bélchú,” ar Conall, “tarr am lebaid-sa!”	“Maith anois, a Bhélchú,” ar Conall, “tar im leabaidh-se!”	“Well now, Bélchú,” said Conall, “come into my bed!”
“Ní tó,” or Bélchú.	“Ní tó,” ar Belchú.	“Nay,” said Bélchú.
“Do cenn dít-sa,” ar Conall, “mina tisi isin lebaid.”	“Do cheann díotsa,” ar Conall, “muna dtíse isin leabaidh.”	“Off with thy head,” said Conall, “unless thou come into the bed.”
“Bid éicin,” ar Bélchu.	“Ba éigin,” ar Belchú.	“It must needs be,” said Bélchú.
Dúnaid [dunaig MS] didiu Bélchú in tech.	Dhún Bélchú an teach ansin.	Then Bélchú closed the house.
Iar cotlud do Bélchoin fuslaicid [fusli MS] Conall an tech.	Iar chodladh do Bhélchoin fosclaíonn Conall an teach.	When Bélchú had fallen asleep, Conall opens the house.
Dothecait maic Bélchon dochum na imdaidi a mbái a n-athair	Do thacaid mic Bhélchon dochum na hiomdha a mbí a n-athair,	The sons of Bélchú come towards the bed in which their father was
ocus doberait a tri sligi trit gur marbsat	agus do bheirid a dtri shlighe tríd gur mharbh siad é.	and put their three spears through him, so that they killed him.
ocus eirgid Conall íarsin ocus imrid a claidem forra	Agus éirghíonn Conall iarsin agus imríonn a chlaíomh orthu,	And then Conall arises and plies his sword upon them,

co mbói spreathach a n-incinni im na
fraighthaib

ocus beridh a ceithri cinnu lais sair,

co ríacht a thech résiu roba matin.

Conid hí A[i]ded Ceit agus Bélchon Bréfni
cona maccaib in sin.

go mbí spreathach a n-inchinní im na
fraighthaibh

agus beireann a gceithre cheanna leis soir,

go riacht a theach roimhe do ba mhaidin.

Gonadh hí Aided Ceit agus Bélchon Bréfne
gona mhacaibh an sin.

so that their brains were scattered about the
walls.

And he carries their four heads with him
eastward

until he reached his house before it was
morning.

So that is the Death of Cet and of Bélchú of
Brefne with his sons.