

The Battle of Airtech

1. After the destruction of Cormac at Da Choca's Hostel an assembly was held by the Ulid, and they placed the kingdom under the control of Conall Cernach, and they offer it unto him. 'Nay indeed,' said Conall, 'I will not take it, but give it to my fosterling, namely, Cuscraid the Stammerer of Macha, for it has surpassed my vigour and my skill of hand; but whosoever will share an equal portion of prowess and will go round wood and plain before you by day and night in the gap of danger against your enemies, for they are numerous in every place, he is the proper person to have as your battle-chief.'

Thereupon Cuscraid was proclaimed king, and he binds them with pledges. And then it was that Conall spake these words lamenting Conchobar, and moreover the Instruction of Cuscraid:

2. 'Great sorrow has consumed me,
a mist of heavy grief wastes me away
for the loss of my mighty sovran
the diadem of a renowned prince,
Conchobar of the comely face,
famous king of famous Emain.

My prowess does not exceed that of a woman in travail.
I am powerless, I am useless after the great deeds of noble Emain.
The veins of my body do not kindle
though it hear of a high wondrous deed.
Let this be my choice
that death be dealt to me in the midst of my comrades
that I should not incarnadine my deeds among raw striplings
in the order of youthful championship.
My body is wounded.
I am useless, unprofitable, sickly,
after the fierce one of Ard Ulid,
and that is what has consumed me.'

3. 'Rise up O fair Cuscraid,
arise upon the path of a noble father.

Let thy assemblies be frequent concerning the right of borders,
for meeting of nobles
who go to (?) an act of hospitality and generosity (?)
for bestowing of kine and horses . . . with jewels (?)

Be a follower of sovran law.

Fulfil the word given on oath.

Let the law of thy rule be consolidated, lest thy misdeeds ruin the heavy fruits of the people
that increase under thy protection.

Be thou skilled in every tongue, so thou be not ignorant in any art that one will speak in
argument with thee.

Be just and righteous in judgment, not suppressing speech between the tethra of the
strong and the weak.

Be not brutish in the mead court.

To exalt the good is incumbent on thee, to enslave the oppressor, to destroy criminals.

Be a zealous and mighty champion, holding assemblies, ardent, warlike, contending
against foreign lands, for the protection of thy great territories.

Be heedful of swift obstinate ignoble strife, lest there be added to thy numerous sorrows
the sorrows of a sick bed.

May they not attain thee, may they not lay hold upon thee . . . thy heavy sorrows. That
is. . .

4. Now Cuscraid the Stammerer of Macha, Conchobar's son, divided his land among
his brethren, namely the children of Rudraige and the rest of the children of Conchobar, as
follows: He gave to Conall Cernach all from the strand of Inber Colpa to Coba, that is
Caille Chonaill Cernaig its name thereafter. To Furbaide Fer Bend, the two Teffas, that is,
northern Teffa and southern Teffa. Fir Maland and Fianclair na Bredcha he gave to
Glaisne son of Conchobar. To Irial Glunmar, Goll and Irgoll, that is, the land of Gerg son of
Faeburdel. To Follamain son of Conchobar, Farney. To Maine son of Conchobar, Loch
Erne. To Lama son of Conchobar, Lamraige. To Benda son of Conchobar, Corcu Oche.
To Conaing son of Conchobar, the Mugdorna. To Fiacha son of Conchobar, Ailechthir.
The land of Dubthach Doeltengthach (Chafer-tongued) and his two sons, namely Corc and
Conroi, was Tir Liath Maini and the place where Loch Neagh is to-day.

5. Now in that wise, after a space, he distributed the Fifth of the Ulid among the clann of
Conchobar, as was fitting.

6. The nobles of the Ulid were saying that it would be a good thing for them if Fergus
son of Roch were brought back to them, and peace made with him, for they would be so

much the stronger against their enemies; for the ill-deeds of the men of Ireland were mighty against them, and they were being raided and maimed and slain on all sides. These tidings reached Fergus, and he made peace with the Ulid, and they bound one another with a covenant, that is, Fergus and Cuscraid.

7. Medb sought to prevent Fergus from going back to the Ulid, and offered to pay him the cumals of his Sons who were slain at Da Choca's Hostel, namely Illand the Fair and Fiachna the One-eyed.

8. Now Fergus went eastwards to the Ulid, with a great retinue, and his wife Flidais along with him. And the land Fergus demanded was the land of Sualdam son of Roch, and of Cu Chulinn son of Sualdam, namely, Crich Cuailnge and Mag Murthemne and Crich Rois and Brug Mna Elcmairi. The said land was given to him, and he dwelt there until Flidais his wife died at the Strand of Baile mac Buain, after which he went back to Ailill and Medb, for his householding in the east was not good after Flidais. In this way he met his death, through the one act of jealousy of Ailill son of Mata.

9. A great contention thereupon arose between Ailill and Medb and Conchobar's fifth concerning Crich Maland. For to Conchobar it had been given on account of those that were slain around him on the hosting of Táin Bó Cuailnge. Medb said that she had made over her land to none save Conchobar alone. The Ulid replied that they would not yield up the land unless it were won from them on the field of battle.

10. Awful now and untold was the war that broke out between them because of that. Many a stiff stout fight there was, many the gigantic deeds, and many were the swift-slaying heroes that fell in that war. Because of that war it was the lot of (?) the Ulid to fall around Cuscraid and around Conall Cernach and around Amergin son of Ecetsalach the Smith, and around Follamain and Furbaide, two sons of Conchobar. 'Twas it brought about the death of Cet son of Magu, and Doiche, and Mug Corb, and Scannal, and Ailill sons of Magu, and Ailill son of Cet, Magu's son, and Cet himself, and Beichu of Breifne along with his sons.

11. Because of that a great hosting was gathered by the Ulid in the fifth of Ol nEgmacht, and they fell to harrying the land before them, until they came to the territory of Airtech Uchtlethan (Broad-breast) son of Tomanten, son of Fer Choga of the Fir Domnann.

12. The three Connachts then assembled, namely, Fir Domnann, Fir Craibe, and Tuatha Taiden. Now these are the war lords of the Fir Ol nEgmacht, namely, Mac Cecht, and huge fierce Cet son of Magu, and Maine Aithremail, and Sanb son of Cet, and Maine Maithremail, and Ailill of Breifrie, and Loingsech of Loch Ri, and Aengus king of the Fir Bolg, and Fer Deiched son of Fer Diad, Daman's son, and Aengus son of Ailill Find, and

Mata son of Goll Eilech, and Troga and Flaithri, two sons of Fraech, Fidach's son, and Imchad son of Lugaid.

13. These however are the war lords of the Ulid, namely, Conall Cernach son of Amergin, and Amergin the poet, and the sons of Conchobar, and Fiac son of Fergus, and Fergus son of Eirрге Echbel (Horse-mouth), and Sothach son of Sencha, Ailill's son, and Fiachu son of Laidgen king of the Fir Bolg, and Guala son of Gerg son of Faeburdel.

[H. 3, 18] 14. The Fir Ol nEgmacht however did not let Ailill or Medb go with them into the battle. They form battalions then on each side, one as great and lofty as the other, and they make towards one another on the field of battles and of conflicts. Then they encountered, and every man took to smiting his fellow and to hard hacking. Rude and sharp was the fight between the Fir Ol nEgmacht and the Ulid. Envy and hatred and ill-will there was on every side. There was uproar and tumult on both sides of the host, namely, the bawling of the men, the outcry of the soldiers, the groans and lamentations of the strongmen, and clashing and clatter of the swords, the whiz and whirr of the spears and arrows, and the roaring and wailing of the huge tottering rocks as they crashed upon the shields and breastplates and helms of the wardogs and veterans. Mighty and great was the tumult, for never have there been heroes from that day to this like the heroes of that time, for vigour and strength and [spear] casting, for greatness and beauty and dignity, for valour and daring and prowess. Mighty and great also was the tumult and . . . , the noise and the din and the quaking of the earth under the feet of the strongmen, . . . of the mighty virile men as they were being heavily overthrown to the earth and to the ground. After that every man engaged in combat in the battle.

15. There fell by Conall Cernach, Ailill Ardagach and Scannal, both sons of Magu. Ailill of Breifne and Loingsech of Loch Ri fell by him also on the same day. Aengus king of the Fir Bolg and Fer Teiched son of Fer Diad fell by Cuscraid son of Conchobar king of the Ulid. Aengus son of Ailill Find fell by Amergin son of Ecetsalach the Smith. Mata son of Goll Eilech, by Irial Glunmar son of Conall Cernach. Troga and Flaithri, two sons of Fraech, Fidach's son, fell by Glaisne son of Conchobar. Imchad son of Lugaid fell by Guala son of Gerg.

16. Even the Ulid also fell in great numbers in the battle. Fiachu and Conaing were slain by Cet and Mac Cecht. Corc son of Dubthach Doeltengthach (Chafer-tongued) fell by Sanb son of Cet. Guala son of Gerg was slain by Maine Aithreml. Two fell by one another's hands in the battle, namely, Benna son of Conchobar and Cet son of Ailill and Medb.

17. Now after that the battle went against the Fir Ol nEgmacht, owing to the force of the

onset and the slaughter, and every man thereupon followed up his pursuit of the battle. Amergin pursued the two Eithiars, sons of Fergus son of Roich, until they fell by one another at Imlech Ai. After which the Fir Ol nEgmacht raised a red wall against the Ulid, for the Ulid never followed up a slaughter if only a wall were set up against them.

18. It was in this battle of Airtech the Fir Domnann were finally destroyed. Whereupon the Ulid returned home, bearing great spoil with them. IT ENDS

[H adds: It is of this battle Gennan son of Cathbad said, 'The Battle of Airtech we fought by day, etc.']