

THE FOURTH AGE

Annals of the Four Masters

963 BCE Nuadhat Finnfail, after having been forty years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by Breas, son of Art Imleach.

962 BCE This was the first year of the reign of Breas, son of Art Imleach, over Ireland.

954 BCE Breas, after having been nine years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by Eochaidh Aphach, at Carn Conluain.

953 BCE Eochaidh Aphach was one year in the sovereignty of Ireland, and he fell, at the end of that year, by Finn, son of Bratha.

952 BCE This was the first year of the reign of Finn, son of Bratha, over Ireland.

931 BCE Finn, son of Bratha, after having been twenty two years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by Sedna, son of Breas, in Munster.

930 BCE The first year of the reign of Sedna Innarraigh, son of Breas, son of Art Imleach, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

904 BCE Sedna Innarraigh, after having been twenty years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by Simon Breac.

903 BCE This was the first year of Simon Breac, son of Aedhan Glas, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

905 BCE Simon Breac, the son of Aedhan Glas, after having been six full years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by Duach Finn.

904 BCE This was the first year of Duach Finn, son of Sedna Innarraigh, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

895 BCE Duach Finn, son of Sedna Innarraigh, after having been ten years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell in the battle of Magh, by Muireadhach Bolgrach.

894 BCE Muireadhach Bolgrach spent a month and a year in the sovereignty of Ireland, and he fell, at the end of that time, by Enda Dearg, son of Duach.

893 BCE This was the first year of Enda Dearg son of Duach Find in the sovereignty of Ireland.

875 BCE Enda Dearg, son of Duach, after having been twelve years in the sovereignty of Ireland, died of a plague at Sliabh Mis, with a great number about him.

874 BCE This was the first year of Lughaidh Iardonn, son of Enda Dearg, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

873 BCE The ninth year of Lughaidh Iardonn in the sovereignty of Ireland, when he fell, by Sirlamh, at Rath Clochair.

872 BCE This was the first year of Sirlamh, son of Finn, son of Bratha, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

857 BCE Sirlamh, after having been sixteen years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by Eochaidh Uairches.

856 BCE The first year of Eochaidh Uaircheas in the sovereignty of Ireland.

845 BCE Eochaidh Uaircheas, after having been twelve years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by the sons of Congall: i.e. Eochaidh and Conaing.

844 BCE The first year of the two sons of Congal Cosgarach (son of Duach Teamrach), son of Muireadhach Bolgrach, namely, Eochaidh Fiadhmuine and Conaing Begeaglach, over Ireland; the south of Ireland belonging to Eochaidh, and the north to Conaing.

840 BCE After Eochaidh Fiadhmuine and Conaing Begeaglach had been five years in the joint sovereignty of Ireland, Eochaidh fell by Lughaidh Laimhdhearg, son of Eochaidh Uaircheas, and the sovereignty was wrested from Conaing.

839 BCE The first year of Lughaidh Laimhdhearg, son of Eochaidh Uaircheas, in the sovereignty of Ireland

833 BCE The seventh of Lughaidh in the sovereignty of Ireland, when he fell by Conaing, son of Congal.

832 BCE This was the first year of Conaing Begeaglach, son of Congal, a second time in the sovereignty of Ireland.

813 BCE After Conaing Begeaglach had been twenty years in the sovereignty of Ireland, he fell by Art, son of Lughaidh. He was called Conaing Begeaglach, because he was never seized with fear of any one while he lived.

812 BCE This was the first year of Art, son of Lughaidh, son of Eochaidh Uaircheas, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

807 BCE Art, son of Lughaidh, after having been six years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by Fiacha Tolgrach and his son, Duach Ladrach.

806 BCE The first year of Fiacha Tolgrach in the sovereignty of Ireland.

797 BCE Fiacha Tolgrach, son of Muireadhach, after having been ten years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by Oilioll, son of Art, in Boirinn.

796 BCE This was the first year of Oilioll Finn, son of Art, son of Lughaidh Laimhdhearg, over Ireland.

786 BCE Oilioll Finn, son of Art, son of Lughaidh Laimhdhearg, after having been eleven years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by Airgeatmhar and Duach Ladhghair, in the battle of Odbha.

785 BCE This was the first year of Eochaidh, son of Oilioll Finn, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

772 BCE Eochaidh, son of Oilioll Finn, after having been seven years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by Airgeatmhar and by Duach Ladhghair, at Aine.

771 BCE This was the first year of Airgeatmhar, son of Sirlamh, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

749 BCE The thirtieth year of Airgeatmhar in the sovereignty of Ireland, when he fell by Duach Ladhgrach and Lughaidh Laighdhe, son of Eochaidh.

748 BCE The first year of Duach Ladhgrach, son of Fiacha Tolgrach, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

739 BCE The tenth year of Duach Ladhgrach in the sovereignty of Ireland, when he fell by Lughaidh Laighdhe.

738 BCE This was the first year of Lughaidh Laighdhe in the sovereignty of Ireland.

732 BCE Lughaidh Laighdhe, after having been seven years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by Aedh Ruadh, son of Bodharn, son of Airgeatmhar.

731 BCE The first year of Aedh Ruadh, son of Badharn, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

725 BCE Aedh Ruadh, son of Badharn, after having been seven years in the sovereignty of Ireland, left the sovereignty to Dithorba, son of Deman, after having spent the first period himself, for there were injunctions upon him to resign it to Dithorba at the end of seven years; and on Dithorba, also, to resign it to Cimbaeth at the end of seven years more; and so in succession to the end of their reigns lives. The reason that they made this agreement respecting the sovereignty was, because they were the sons of three brothers.

724 BCE The first year of Dithorba, son of Deman, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

718 BCE Dithorba, son of Deman, after having been seven years in the sovereignty of Ireland, resigned the kingdom to Cimbaeth, son of Fintan, for his was the turn after Dithorba.

717 BCE This was the first year of Cimbaeth, son of Fintan, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

711 BCE Cimbaeth, son of Fintan, after having been seven years in the sovereignty of Ireland, resigned the kingdom to Aedh Ruadh, son of Badharn.

704 BCE Aedh Ruadh, son of Badharn, after having been, for the second time, seven years in the sovereignty of Ireland, resigned the kingdom to Dithorba again.

703 BCE The first year of Dithorba, son of Deman, the second time that he assumed the sovereignty of Ireland.

697 BCE Dithorba, after having been on that second occasion seven years in the sovereignty of Ireland, gave his turn to Cimbaeth, son of Fintan.

696 BCE The first year of Cimbaeth, the second time that he assumed the monarchy of Ireland.

690 BCE Cimbaeth, after having been for the second time in the sovereignty of Ireland, resigned the kingdom to Aedh Ruadh, son of Badharn.

689 BCE This was the first year of Aedh Ruadh, son of Badharn, in the sovereignty of Ireland, the third time that he assumed the government.

683 BCE Aedh Ruadh, son of Badharn, after he had been (the third time that he assumed the government) seven years in the sovereignty of Ireland, was drowned in Eas Ruaidh, and buried in the mound over the margin of the cataract; so that from him Sith Aedha and Eas Aedha are called.

682 BCE The third year of Dithorba, the third time that he took the sovereignty of Ireland.

676 BCE After Dithorba had been in the sovereignty of Ireland (the third time), he resigned the kingdom to Cimbaeth.

675 BCE This was the first year of Cimbaeth in the sovereignty of Ireland the third time that he took the sovereignty.

669 BCE After Cimbaeth had been seven years in the sovereignty of Ireland for the third time, Macha, daughter of Aedh Ruadh, son of Badharn, said that her father's turn to the sovereignty was her's. Dithorba and Cimbaeth said that they would not give the sovereignty to a woman. A battle was fought between them; Macha defeated them, and expelled Dithorba, with his sons, into Connaught, so that he was slain in Corann. She afterwards took to her Cimbaeth as husband, and gave him the sovereignty. She afterwards proceeded alone into Connaught, and brought the sons of Dithorba with her in fetters to Ulster, by virtue of her strength, and placed them in great servitude, until they should erect the fort of Eamhain, that it might always be the chief city of Uladh Ulster.

668 BCE The first year of Cimbaeth in the sovereignty of Ireland, after Macha had taken him to her as husband.

662 BCE Cimbaeth, son of Fintan, having been seven years in the sovereignty of Ireland, after he had been taken to her as husband by Macha, died at Eamhain Macha. This Cimbaeth was the first king of Eamhain.

661 BCE The first year of Macha in the sovereignty of Ireland, after the death of Cimbaeth, son of Fintan.

655 BCE Macha Mongruadh, daughter of Aedh Ruadh, son of Badharn, after she had been seven years in the sovereignty of Ireland, was slain by Reachtaidh Righdhearg, son of Lughaidh. It was Macha that commanded the sons of Dithorba (after bringing them into servitude) to erect the fort of Eamhain, that it might be the chief city of Ulster for ever, as we have said before; and it was Cimbaeth and Macha that fostered Ugaine Mor.

654 BCE The first year of Reachtaidh Righdhearg, son of Lughaidh, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

635 BCE Reachtaidh Righdhearg, son of Lughaidh, after having been twenty years in the sovereignty of Ireland, fell by Ugaine Mor, in revenge of his foster mother, i.e. Macha Mongruadh.

634 BCE This was the first year of Ugaine Mor, son of Eochaidh Buadhach, in the sovereignty of Ireland.

595 BCE At the end of this year Ugaine Mor, after he had been full forty years king of Ireland, and of the whole of the west of Europe, as far as Muir Toirrian, was slain by Badhbhchadh, at Tealach An Chosgair, in Magh Muireadha, in Bregia. This Ugaine was he who exacted oaths, by all the elements visible and invisible, from the men of Ireland in general, that they would never contend for the sovereignty of Ireland with his children or his race.

Badhbhchadh, son of Eochaidh Buadhach, was for a day and a half after Ugaine in the sovereignty of Ireland, when Laeghaire Lorc, son of Ugaine, slew him, in revenge of his father.

The Destruction of Dind Ríg Translated by Whitley Stokes

Whence is the Destruction of Dind Ríg? Easy (to say). Cobthach the Meagre of Bregia, the son of Ugaine the Great, was king of Bregia, but Loegaire Lorc, son of Ugaine, was king of Erin. He, too, was a son of Ugaine the Great. Cobthach was envious towards Loegaire concerning the kingship of Erin, and wasting and grief assailed him, so that his blood and his flesh wasted away. Wherefore he was surnamed the Meagre of Bregia, and Loegaire's murder was brought about.

So Loegaire was called to Cobthach that he might leave him his blessing before he died. Now when Loegaire went in to his brother the leg of a hen's chick is broken on the floor of the house. 'Unlucky was thine illness', says Loegaire. 'This is fitting', says Cobthach: 'all has departed, both blood and bone, both life and wealth. Thou hast done me damage, my lad, in breaking the hen's leg. Bring it hither that I may put a bandage round it.'² 'Woe is me', says Loegaire, 'the man has decay and destruction: he is delivered into neglect.' 'Come, tomorrow', says Cobthach, 'that my tomb be raised by thee, and that my pillar-stone be planted, my assembly of mourning be held, and my burial-paeon be performed; for I shall die swiftly.' 'Well', says Loegaire, 'it shall be done.'

'Well, then', saith Cobthach to his queens and his steward, 'say ye that I am dead, but let none other know it, and let me be put into my chariot with a razor-knife in my (right) hand. My brother will come to me vehemently, to bewail me, and will throw himself upon me. Mayhap he will get somewhat from me.'

This was true. The chariot is brought out. His brother came to bewail him. He comes and flings himself down upon Cobthach, who plunges the knife into Loegaire at the small of his back, so that its point appeared at the top of his heart, and thus Loegaire died, and was buried in Druim Loegairi.

Loegaire left a son, even Ailill of Ane. He assumed the kingship of Leinster. The first parricide did not seem enough to Cobthach, so he gave silver to some one who administered a deadly drink to Ailill, and thereof he died.

After that, Cobthach took the realm of Leinster. Now Ailill of Ane had left a son, even Móen Ollam. Now he was dumb until he became a big man. One day, then, in the playground, as he was hurling, a hockey-stick chanced over his shin. 'This has befallen me!' says he. 'Moen labraid', ("speaks") say the lads. From that time Labraid was his name.

The men of Erin are summoned by Cobthach to partake of the Feast of Tara. Labraid went, like everyone, to partake of it. Now when they were most gloriously consuming the banquet, the eulogists were on the floor, lauding the king and the queens, the princes and the nobles.

'Well then', says Cobthach, 'know ye who is the most hospitable (man) in Erin?' 'We know', says Craiphtine (the Harper), 'it is Labraid Loingsech, son of Ailill. I

went to him in spring, and he killed his only ox for me.' Says Ferchertne the Poet: 'Labraid is the most hospitable man we know. I went to him in winter, and he killed his only cow for me, and he possessed nothing but her.'

'Go ye with him then!' says Cobthach, 'since he is more hospitable than I.' 'He will not be the worse of this', says Craiptine, 'and thou wilt not be the better.' 'Out of Erin with you then', says Cobthach, 'so long as thou art alive!' 'Unless we find our place (of refuge) in it', says the lad.

They are then rejected. 'Whither shall we go?' says the lad. 'Westwards', answered Ferchertne.

So forth they fare to the king of the Men of Morca, the Men of Morca that dwelt about Luachair Dedad in the west. Scoriath is he that was their king.

'What has brought you?' asked Scoriath. 'Our rejection by the king of Erin.' 'Ye are welcome', says Scoriath. 'Your going or your staying will be the same (to us) so long as I am alive. Ye shall have good comradeship', says the king.

Scoriath had a daughter, whose name was Moriath. They were guarding her carefully, for no husband fit for her had been found at once. Her mother was keeping her. The mother's two eyes never slept (at the same time), for one of the two was watching her daughter. Howbeit the damsel loved Labraid. There was a plan between her and him. Scoriath held a great feast for the Men of Morca. This is the plan they made — after the drinking, Craiptine should play the slumber-strain, so that her mother should fall asleep and Labraid should reach the chamber. Now that came to pass. Craiptine hid not his harp that night, so that the queen fell asleep, and the (loving) couple came together.

Not long afterwards the queen awoke. 'Rise, O Scoriath!' says he. 'Ill is the sleep in which thou art. Thy daughter has a woman's breath. Harken to her sigh after her lover has gone from her.'

Then Scoriath rose up. 'Find out who has done this', quoth he, 'that he may be put to the sword at once!' No one knew who had done it. 'The wizards and the poets shall lose their heads unless they find out who has done it.' 'It will be a disgrace to thee', says Ferchertne, 'to kill thine own household.' 'Then thou thyself shalt lose thy head unless thou tellest.' 'Tell', quoth Labraid: 'tis enough that I only should be ruined.'

Then said Ferchertne: 'The lute hid no music from Craiptine's harp till he cast a deathsleep on the hosts, so that harmony was spread between Moen and marriageable Moriath of Morca. More to her than any price was Labraid.' 'Labraid' says he, 'forgathered with her after ye had been lulled by Craiptine's harp.' In this he betrayed his companions.

'Well then', says Scoriath, 'until tonight we have not chosen a husband for our daughter, because of our love for her. (But) if we had been choosing one, 'tis he whom we have found here. Let drinking take place within' says the king,

'and let his wife be put at Labraid's hand. And I will never part from him till he be king of Leinster.'

Then Labraid's wife came to him and sleeps with him.

And thereafter they deliver a hosting of the Munstermen till they reached Dind Ríg (for) the first destruction. And they were unable to destroy it until the warriors outside made a deceptive plan, namely, that Craiptine should go on the rampart of the fortress to play the slumber-strain to the host within, so that it might be overturned, and that the host outside should put their faces to the ground and their fingers in their ears that they might not hear the playing.

So that was done there, and the men inside fell asleep, and the fortress was captured, and the garrison was slaughtered, and the fortress was sacked.

Now Moriath was on the hosting. She did not deem it honourable to put her fingers into her ears at her own music, so that she lay asleep for three days, no one daring to

move her. Whence said Flann Mac Lónain:⁷ ‘As great Moríath slept before the host of Morca — more than any tale — when Dind Ríg was sacked — course without a fight — when the hole-headed lute played a melody.’

Thereafter Labraid took the realm of Leinster, and he and Cobthach were at peace, and his seat was at Dind Ríg.

Once upon a time, however, when he had taken it, and Cobthach had the full kingship, he induced this Cobthach to do his will and meet his desire. So a house was built by him to receive Cobthach. Passing strong was the house: it was made of iron, both wall and floor and doors.⁸ A full year were the Leinstermen abuilding it, and father would hide it from son, and mother from daughter, husband from wife, and wife from husband, so that no one heard from another what they were going about, and for whom they were gathering their gear and their fittings. To this refers (the proverb): ‘not more numerous are Leinstermen than (their) secrets.’ Where the house was built was in Dind Ríg.

Then Cobthach was invited to the ale and the feast, and with him went thirty kings of the kings of Erin. Howbeit Cobthach was unable to enter the house until Labraid's mother and his jester went in. This is what the jester chose (as his reward for doing so): the benediction of the Leinstermen, and the freedom of his children forever. Out of goodness to her son the woman went. On that night Labraid himself was managing household matters.

On the morrow he went to play against the lads in the meadow.⁹ His fosterer saw him. He plies a one-stemmed thorn on Labraid's back and head. ‘Apparently’, saith he, ‘the murder thou hast (to do) is a murder by a boy! Ill for thee, my lad, to invite the king of Erin with thirty kings, and not to be in their presence, meeting their desire.’

Then Labraid dons (his mantle) and goes to them into the house. ‘Ye have fire, and ale and food (brought) into the house.’ ‘Tis meet’, says Cobthach. Nine men had Labraid on the floor of the house. They drag the chain that was out of the door behind them, and cast it on the pillar-stone in front of the house; and the thrice fifty forge-bellows they had around it, with four warriors at each bellows, were blown till the house became hot for the host.¹⁰

‘Thy mother is there, O Labraid!’, say the warriors. ‘Nay, my darling son’, says she. ‘Secure thine honour through me, for I shall die at all events.’

So then Cobthach Coel is there destroyed, with seven hundred followers and thirty kings around him, on the eve of great Christmas precisely. Hence is said: Three hundred years — victorious reckoning — before Christ's birth, a holy conception, it was not fraternal, it was evil — (Loegaire) Lorc was slain by Cobthach Coel.

Cobthach Coel with thirty kings, Labraid ... slew him (Lugaid). Loegaire's grandson from the main, in Dind Ríg the host was slain.

And 'tis of this that Ferchertne the poet said: ‘Dind Ríg, which had been Tuaim Tenbath,’ etc. i. e. Máin Ollam he was at first, Labraid Moen afterwards, but Labraid the Exile, since he went into exile, when he gained a realm as far as the Ictian Sea, and brought the many foreigners with him (to Ireland), to wit, two thousand and two hundred foreigners with broad lances in their hands, from which the Laigin (Leinstermen) are so called.

This is *the Destruction of Dind Ríg*.

Whitley Stokes. Cowes, Isle of Wight.

