Tuomala, Ina (2018) *The perfect hybrid: interaction and integration in Cath Maige Tuired.* MRes thesis.

The Perfect Hybrid: Interaction and Integration in

Cath Maige Tuired

Ina Tuomala, MA (Hons)

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Research in Celtic Studies

School of Humanities
College of Arts
University of Glasgow

September 2018

Abstract

This dissertation is an examination of contemporary Irish identity and social reactions to the process of cultural hybridisation, as they are depicted in the late Viking-Age narrative *Cath Maige Tuired*. The tale is a product of a transitional era which preoccupations and prejudices are reflected in the narrative representations of the Fomoiri and the Tuatha Dé Danann. This dissertation discusses the literary context of the tale before analysing the plentiful parallels between the historical context of the text's writing and the narrative representations of power, interaction and location. The resulting discussion deduces that *CMT* is a narrative of hybridity in which the pivotal cultural identities are built on an ongoing comparison between the tale's representations of the Self and the Other. At the same time the narrative illustrates a number of cultural preoccupations at the forefront of the collective intellectual consciousness.

CMT can be cast as a parable for multiple periods in history and reading the text and its depiction of Ireland in relation to the historical context of late Viking Age illuminates our understanding of cultural identity, interaction and integration in Ireland during this period. The narrative concerns itself with contemporary ideologies and preoccupations in a way, which cannot be examined through more factual sources, such as the Irish annals, alone. Finally, this dissertation makes a case for using hybridity theory in analysing premodern literatures in situations where ample parallels can be drawn between the cultural dynamics of the medieval context and the postcolonial experience, and thus, concludes with a study of hybrid characters in the tale.

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

AFM – The Annals of the Four Masters

AT – The Annals of Tigernach

AU – The Annals of Ulster

CMCS – Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies

CMT – Cath Maige Tuired

FA – The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland

HB – Historia Brittonum

ITS – Irish Texts Society

JSNS – The Journal of Scottish Name Studies

LB – Lebor Bretnach

LGÉ – Lebor Gabála Érenn

MS – manuscript

RIA – The Royal Irish Academy

SGS – Scottish Gaelic Studies

TCD – Trinity College Dublin

TDD – Tuatha Dé Danann

Table of Contents

The Perfect Hybrid: Interaction and Integration in *Cath Maige Tuired*

1 Chapter: Pseudo-history and Identity

1.1 Introduction

At the onset of the eponymous battle in *Cath Maige Tuired*, it is stated that: 'now every day the battle was drawn up between the race (*fine*) of the Fomoire and the Tuatha Dé Danann, but there were no kings or princes waging it, only fierce and arrogant men'.[1] By its own admission, this is not a narrative about a battle between kings for power or land. Instead the conflict depicted is between two cultures, and thus permeates the layers of society. This dissertation will explore the themes of cultural identity, interaction and integration in *Cath Maige Tuired*, henceforth *CMT*, with especial focus on how it depicts and utilises different forms of hybridity. This will be done through textual analysis, character studies and commenting on the use of language and imagery, thus addressing the ideologies and perceptions behind the composition of *CMT* in relation to its historical context. This approach has merit, as it advances beyond considering the tale as a mythological narrative. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, regarding *CMT*, observed in 1998 that 'far too much attention has been paid to Dumézil's theories about mythology and far too little to the Irish context, and the polyvalence of the text within that context'.[2] Since then it has been tentatively remarked that the tale can be seen as a parable for multiple events roughly contemporary to the text's composition.[3] Solidifying these efforts has been hindered by problems in establishing a clear date for the creation of the text, which in turn has kept mythologically oriented discussion as the standard approach for this narrative. The issue of dating will be discussed in later chapters, however, generally it can be stated that the earliest possible date for the compiling of *CMT* is the ninth century, but that it is likely that the text includes a considerable amount of later influences. The tale lends itself to allegorical meanings applicable to many historic periods of cultural upheaval or uncertainty, which in turn

---

[1] Elizabeth Gray (ed. and trans.), *Cath Maige Tuired: The Second Battle of Mag Tuired* (Naas, 1982), 54-5; *Rosernatai trá an cath cech láei eter fine Fomra 7 Thúatha Déa, acht namaá ní bótar rígh nó ruirig oga tabairt, acht óes féigh forúallach namá*; eDIL s.v. 1 *fine*, dil.ie/22114, 'a group of persons of the same family or kindred, or in wider sense, progeny, descendants, a clan, tribe, race'.

[2] Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings in Scotland and Ireland in the Ninth Century', *Peritia* 12 (1998), 296-339, 312, footnote.

[3] For two conflicting examples, see John Carey, 'A London Library, An Irish Manuscript, A British Myth? The Wanderings of 'The Battle of Moytirra'', *ITS: Occasional lecture series* 1 (London, 2014); Michael Chesnutt, 'Cath Maige Tuired – A parable of the Battle of Clontarf', in S. Ó Catháin (ed.), *Northern Lights: Following Folklore in North-Western Europe* (Dublin, 2001), 22-33.

explains the sustained interest it has seen throughout the centuries. Furthermore, viewing the text as a product of its socio-political environment reveals that, as remarked by previous scholars, many of the narrative's cultural dynamics can be extended beyond the literary sphere of the text into the historical context of its production.

CMT outlines a geographical milieu, which is not only mythological but detailed and defined by the real world. Through the use of landscape, location and geographic boundaries *CMT* sets up contrasting group identities, which allow us to explore the defining features of contemporary Irish identity. The narrative confronts multiple themes relating to society and societal order. Furthermore, in exploring these themes, the tale utilises various dynamics demonstrating how the insider is treated by individuals, and by the society at large, as compared to the outsider. Through this contrast it is possible to explore the themes of identity and belonging, as opposed to foreignness and the Other. Moreover, *CMT* includes a high number of situations and dynamics which explore hybridity. Use of the term *hybrid* in the context of literature emerged from the study of postcolonial discourses and in a basic sense means 'a mixture'. Hybridity theory refers to the study of the process of hybridisation, and the effects of hybridity on identity, in situations where new transcultural forms emerge from cultural interaction and integration. Hybridity in *CMT* manifests through depictions of characters with mixed heritage, as well as the literary form and the narrative structure.[4]

This dissertation will argue that *CMT* is a narrative of hybridity, interaction and integration of cultural identity, deeply grounded within its historical context. The discussion contributes to a well-established field of studying Irish pseudo-history. However, much of the existing scholarship, which continues to shape and influence the study of medieval Irish literature, predates the changes initiated by the "anti-nativist" criticism of the 1980s and 1990s. In this regard, Marco Mostert observed that the medieval history we know is primarily a product of the 19th-century Romanticism and nationalism, and that 'modern nationalistic sentiments continue to bedevil the study of early medieval Ireland'.[5] Advocating the purity of Irish cultural identity and portraying Ireland as an 'archaic society shielded from foreign influence' was beneficial for both 19th-century Irish nationalists and British imperialists.[6] This makes changing existing parameters and preconceptions a slow and laborious project. For this reason, even a tale like

---

[4] More discussion on the term hybridity, its theoretical background, and applications for *CMT* will follow in Chapter 3.
[5] Marco Mostert, 'Celtic, Anglo-Saxon or Insular?', in Doris Edel (ed.), *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration* (Blackrock, 1995), 92-115, 98-9.
[6] Clare Downham, *Medieval Ireland* (Cambridge, 2018), 9.

CMT, which has received sustained academic interest, has rarely been considered as a literary product shaped by its historical and socio-political contexts, and as such a product of the Christian writers of the late Middle Ages. However, acknowledging the role of secular and ecclesiastical politics in shaping the literature of this period has greatly enhanced our understanding of the texts and their functions.[7] The concepts of identity, race and ethnicity are frequently addressed in modern scholarship, however, in the medieval Irish context they need to be confronted with understanding of their fluidity and awareness of the difficulty of recovering a historically accurate sense of these highly personal concepts through our modern mindset.[8] Otherness, which in many ways functions as the counterpart of identity, is also a well-established concept in the field of Medieval Studies – especially in the context of religions.[9] Discussing these themes specifically in medieval Irish context is prolific due to the cultural interaction and interchange across the Irish sea zone during this period. This perspective allows us to contextualise Ireland on the wider social and political map and to analyse the society's perceptions of the cultural changes brought on by the Viking Age; a period which can be seen as a transitional age of interaction and integration in Ireland of which an emerging sense of hybridity stands as proof.

1.2   Background to the text

Cath Maige Tuired, 'The Second Battle of Moytirra', has been repeatedly identified as one of the key narratives of Irish pseudo-history.[10] The tale in its oldest form is contained only in the 16th-century vellum manuscript London, British Library, Harleian 5280. The provenance of the manuscript is Irish despite its current location. John Carey has suggested a very plausible path for the manuscript's movements from owner to owner since its compilation based on the various notes found in the margins of the manuscript.[11] Most of his deductions follow the earlier

---

[7] Mark Williams, *Ireland's Immortals* (Princeton, 2016), 76.

[8] Defining *ethnicity* can be problematic, for extensive study of the term and its history in academic usage, see Siân Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing identities in the past and present* (London, 1997). Jones defines ethnic groups as 'identity groups, which are based on the expression of a real or assumed shared culture and common descent' and ethnicity as 'the ways in which social and cultural processes intersect with one another in the identification of, and interaction between, ethnic groups', Jones, *Ethnicity*, 84 & xiii. Concepts of *identity* will be further addressed in 1.3.2.

[9] See for example, James T. Palmer 'The Otherness of Non-Christians in the Early Middle Ages', *Studies in Church History* 51 (2015), 33-52. It can be noted that the study of Otherness within the field of Medieval Studies has received recent criticism and debate after the 2017 International Medieval Congress in Leeds, which in many ways illustrated the possible biases and shortcomings of studying Otherness from a Western perspective.

[10] By *pseudo-history* we mean historical tracts which are constructed according to a certain agenda and do not necessarily conform to historical facts; other terms such as *synthetic-history* have been used for the same corpus. More discussion on Irish pseudo-histories will follow in 1.3.1.

[11] Carey, 'A London Library, An Irish Manuscript*'*, 2-3.

suggestions of Robin Flower, which are outlined in the *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the British Museum*.[12] Harleian 5280 is an eclectic collection of literary materials of various text types, some of which are relevant in relation to the role of *CMT* in this collection. *CMT* is surrounded by material relating to Tara and the succession of Irish kings. The manuscript also includes several prophetic texts and two quatrains comparing the 'national characteristics' of Ireland to 'foreign peoples'.[13] The scribe of Harleian 5280 can be identified as Giolla Riabhach Ó Cléirigh, a poet and a scholar active in the early 16th century. He has also been identified as the primary scribe of the manuscript Rawlinson B 514, and his hand can be found in TCD MS 1319.[14] The identification is based on a note in Harleian 5280: 'a prayer for the soul of the wretch who writes this book for himself, to wit, Giolla Riabhach son of Tuathal son of Tadhg Cam Ó Cléirigh'.[15] This situates the scribe in the very centre of the influential learned dynasty of the Uí Chléirigh.[16] They are known for their involvement in the prominent intellectual and ecclesiastical enterprises of Ireland for centuries during the Middle and Early Modern Ages. The dynasty may be best remembered for Míchél Ó Cléirigh; one of the authors of the Annals of the Four Masters.[17]

Geographically the Uí Chléirigh originate from south of County Galway from a border region between Connacht and Munster. They form a branch of the Uí Fiachrach, originally from the Connachta, and settled in and ruled the Uí Fiachrach Aidhne.[18] Through the centuries, the family branched out into several areas of Ireland, however, it seems that the primary line relocated to Tír Chonaill in County Donegal in Ulster.[19] Their connection with Donegal continued until Gilla Riabhach's time in the 16th century. Giolla Riabhach himself is given two contradicting death dates, 1421 and 1527, in the Annals of the Four Masters (AFM).[20] Of these, the latter is considered to be correct and reads: 'O'Clery (Gilla-Reagh, the son of Teige Cam), a scientific adept in history, poetry, and literature, and a man of consideration, wealth, prosperity, and great

---

[12] Robin Flower, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1926), 298-323.
[13] *Ibid.*, 307.
[14] Brian Ó Cuív, *Catalogue of Irish Language Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries* (Dublin, 2001), 262.
[15] Carey, 'A London Library, An Irish Manuscript'*,* 6; Flower*, Catalogue*, 299; *Oroit ar anmain an truaghain scribas an cuilmenn so dó feib .i. Gilla riabach mac Tuathail meic Taidc caim I Cleirich.*
[16] The history of this family has been recorded from the seventh century onwards in John O'Donovan, *The genealogies, tribes, and customs of Hy-Fiachrach, commonly called O'Dowda's country* (Dublin, 1844), 391-8; the text uses as its sources the *Book of Lecan* and 'the Geneological Manuscript of Duald Mac Firbis'. It is also evident that many of the entries concerning the O'Clery family rely on AFM for information.
[17] Nollaig Ó Muraíle, 'Ó Cléirigh, Míchél', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/20498 [accessed 31.08.2018].
[18] O'Donovan, *Genealogies*, 391-2.
[19] *Ibid.*, 394.
[20] The death notice in 1421 is suggested to be a mix-up between Giolla Riabhach and Giolla Brighde of the same family, see O'Donovan, *Genealogies,* 394.

power, died in the habit of St. Francis, on the 8th day of March'.[21] This contradicts the information in Harleian 5280, which names Tuathal as Giolla Riabhach's father and Tadhg Cam as his grandfather. The confusion appears surprising, as two of the Four Masters were from the Uí Chléirigh dynasty themselves. Therefore, the possibility of these being two separate Giolla Riabhachs remains.[22]

Carey has concluded, by studying *CMT* and Harleian 5280, that Giolla Riabhach had an especial taste for mystification, which is visible in his scribal style and marginalia art and may have extended to his treatment of the literary content.[23] An effect of this, which has been remarked upon by several of those who have worked with the tale and the manuscript, is Giolla Riabhach's 'wilfully eccentric orthography', which Carey saw as a consequence of the scribe's young age at the time when he was copying the manuscript.[24] This extends specifically to his tendency to mix aspects of Old Irish and usages of words which have not been attested anywhere else with the effect that the language of the tale is unique and, therefore, a problematic indicator of the age of the material. On the other hand, both Flower and Carey have argued that at least the bulk of the manuscript must have been written before 1512.[25] This is based on a note which shows that the manuscript was given to Tuathal, who died in 1512, from Fear Feasa son of Conchobhar.[26] This note is not dated, but Carey has accepted the Tuathal in question to be Giolla Riabhach's father, as discussed earlier, for whom the manuscript would have been gifted by Giolla Riabhach's teacher, as he was still a student at this point. This information regarding the scribe and his familial affiliations allows us to locate the manuscript, and thus the narrative, within a geographical and political context. These function as a background for analysing the tale as a conscious and politically motivated literary product.

CMT was first edited and translated in publication by Whitley Stokes in *Revue Celtique* 12 (1891). This edition lacked a number of the more obscure passages, which were subsequently edited and published by Rudolf Thurneysen in *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 12 (1918). He did not attempt to translate these passages, which largely consist of complex rhetoric and *rosc*. The

---

[21] John O'Donovan (ed. and trans.), *Annala rioghachta Eireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616,* vol. 5 (Dublin, 1856); *O Cléirigh .i. An Giolla Riabhach mac Taidhcc Caim saoi lé h-ealadhain h-i senchus, i n-dán, & h-i leighionn fer suim, saidhbhir, sochonáigh, & cumhaing móir éisidhe, & a êcc i n-aibítt San Fronseis an 8 la do Mharta;* further references to AFM can be found in the text.

[22] Other sources, namely that of O'Donovan's genealogy of the O'Clery family, agree with the information in AFM, see O'Donovan, *Genealogies,* 394.

[23] Carey, 'A London Library, An Irish Manuscript', 8.

[24] *Ibid.*, 8 & 10.

[25] *Ibid.*, 9; Flower, *Catalogue*, 298.

[26] *Ibid.*

currently most comprehensive edition of the text is by Elizabeth Gray, and includes an English translation, published by the Irish Texts Society (1982). This publication continues to exclude translations for a number of *roscada* passages, which have been identified as obscure and difficult to work with. However, some of the passages edited by Thurneysen, including §93, §§142-5, and part of §§166-7, were translated by Gray. The missing *roscada* include mainly prophetic sequences spoken by the tale's characters. Some of these have seen attempts at translation, but their comprehensive treatment remains to be done and would greatly improve our understanding of the neglected aspects of the text as a whole.[27] The benefits of studying the poetry and the prose together in Irish texts which include both has recently been highlighted in a study of the *Bórama*, which illustrated that our understanding of the narrative was severely affected by excluding the verse from the analysis of the text.[28] Besides the linguistic complexity and the resulting gaps in translation the student of *CMT* inevitably faces another complication, which is often bypassed with little commentary. This is the different textual variations and their relationship to one another. *CMT*, as it is found in Harleian 5280, seems to be the earliest version and dates from a period between the mid-ninth century and the early eleventh century.[29] Alongside it exists an Early Modern Irish version, which was edited by Brian Ó Cuív under the name *Cath Muighe Tuireadh* (1945). In the introduction he concludes that the tale itself must go back to the Old Irish period and is referred to within several external sources, including *Sanas Cormaic*.[30] Furthermore, he reasons that there must have been several versions of the tale current in the Middle and Early Modern Irish periods, although only one other of these versions has survived.[31] This version, which he edited, appears only in a mid-17th century manuscript Dublin, RIA MS 24 P 9, and has been dated to the late 14th century.[32] It shares some of its key aspects with *CMT*, but there are also significant textual and literary differences. Most notably, the later version is primarily interested in the battle itself rather than the reasons for its onset, which feature in a major role in *CMT*.[33] A number of more nuanced differences in narrative structures and characters emphasises the gap between these versions and indicates the organic nature of

---

[27] For §167 see John Carey, 'Myth and mythography in Cath Maige Tuired', *Studia Celtica* 24/25 (1989/90), 53-69, appendix; for §§137, 166 & 167, see Isolde Carmody, *Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis: An examination of three rosc passages from Cath Maige Tuired* (MPhil Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2004).

[28] Elín Ingibjörg Eyjólfsdóttir, *The Bórama: the poetry and the hagiography in the Book of Leinster* (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2012).

[29] More detailed discussion regarding the date with references is included in the following paragraph.

[30] Brian Ó Cuív (ed.), *Cath Muighe Tuireadh: The Second Battle of Magh Tuireadh* (Dublin, 1945), 1; see a full outline of references to *CMT* in contemporary texts in Gerard Murphy, 'Notes on Cath Maige Tuired', *Éigse* 7 (1953/55), 191-8, 192-5.

[31] Ó Cuív, *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*, 1; i.e. these two versions are *CMT* and Ó Cuív's *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*.

[32] For discussion on the dating, see Mícheál Hoyne, 'The Political Context of 'Cath Muighe Tuireadh', The Early Modern Irish Version of the Second Battle of Magh Tuireadh', *Ériu* 63 (2013), 91–116.

[33] Ó Cuív, *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*, 5.

the tale. The story remained relevant and continued to evolve, as can also be attested in its survival within much later 'folk-versions', as Ó Cuív called them.[34]

Alongside this Early Modern version, which shows notable narrative similarities to *CMT*, exists also a completely separate version of the tale. This has been commonly dubbed as *Cath Maige Tuired Cunga*, 'The First Battle of Moytirra' or 'The Battle of Moytirra at Cong'. This text was edited and translated by John Fraser in *Ériu* 8 (1916) and contains a battle between the Tuatha Dé Danann and the Fir Bolg instead of the Fomoiri. This tale has been given a 13th-century date and seems to have developed separately from *CMT*. Due to the later date assigned to this text, it has received a limited amount of attention within academia. The main study, besides Fraser's edition, of this version is Gerard Murphy's 'Notes on *Cath Maige Tuired*', published in *Éigse* 7 (1953–1955). The exact textual relationships between the different versions of the tale remain unclear. When it comes to the development of clearly related but differing versions of medieval Irish texts, Edgar Slotkin has emphasised the active role of the scribes in the evolution of the narratives. He stated that all Irish saga 'passed through the hands of scribes', and that on numerous occasions these scribes did not simply copy down their sources, but actively contributed to them by rearranging and 'correcting' the material.[35] Slotkin suggested that 'when a combination of verbal variety, thematic variety, and overall content exists between manuscripts, we have a case of two recensions of a saga, whatever their origin, existing simultaneously'.[36] In the case of *CMT*, and the variants discussed above, it has repeatedly been suggested that Irish tradition originally included only one battle of Moytirra.[37] Murphy has argued that this certainly was the situation in pre-eleventh century tradition but that variations developed sometime after that.[38] The reasons which made the tale so captivating, both for its medieval audiences and modern critics, and resulted in its appropriation for multiple different contexts in several different variations, will be returned to in the course of this dissertation. However, further comparative work between the chronologically different versions cannot be done within the remits of this discussion, but could prove very interesting from a literary perspective, and useful from a historical viewpoint.

---

[34] Ó Cuív, *Cath Muighe Tuireadh*, 8.
[35] Edgar Slotkin, 'Medieval Irish Scribes and Fixed Texts', *Éigse* 17 (1977-9), 437-50, 440 & 449.
[36] *Ibid.*, 449.
[37] Tomás Ó Cathasaigh following the words of T.F. O'Rahilly, see Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, 'Cath Maige Tuired as Exemplary Myth', in Pádraig de Brún, S. Ó Coileáin & P. Ó Riain (eds.), *Folia Gadelica: Essays Presented by Former Students to R. A. Breatnach* (Cork, 1983), 1-19, 1.
[38] Murphy, 'Notes', 196.

As is attested by the earlier discussion, dating *Cath Maige Tuired* is complicated. This is an issue which many of the text's recent critics have avoided by leaving the matter intentionally vague.[39] Reliable dating of the text is considerably obstructed by the tale's survival in a single manuscript and the manuscript's idiosyncratic spelling. This has made the task of linguistically dating the text, a process which is laborious in the best of conditions, nearly impossible. Clare Downham recently stated that *CMT* 'survives as an eleventh- or twelfth-century reworking of an earlier original'.[40] This statement covers the whole range of current opinions regarding the text's dating.[41] It can be observed that the current version of the text, in its surviving linguistic format, is unlikely to be older than eleventh century. However, most scholars agree that the base of the narrative is older than that. The exact age still raises some debate; more so since episodes and motifs depicted in the tale can be assumed to be older than the narrative itself. John Carey, following in the footsteps of earlier scholars such as Gerard Murphy, has argued for a ninth-century original and saw this as the current consensus amongst scholars.[42] Carey has described *CMT* as 'a parable which addresses the cultural politics of Ireland in the Viking Age', and specifically in the late Viking Age during which the incomers had begun to establish settlement and personal and commercial relationships within Ireland.[43] He goes as far as to draw a direct parallel between *CMT* and records in the Annals of Ulster dating from the latter half of the ninth century. This context and argument will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. On the other hand, some scholars have argued that, especially on linguistic grounds, the text can be no older than late tenth century.[44] Michael Chesnutt has suggested for *CMT* to be seen as a parable of the eleventh-century Battle of Clontarf, which was fought between the men of Brian Bóruma and Máel Mórda mac Murchada and his Hiberno-Norse allies.[45] The narrative lends itself fluidly to be seen as a political parable of both of these occasions, which is largely due to its relatable representation of cultural conflict.

It is clear that this text, like most of its contemporaries, has undergone layers of editing. This also means that it may represent the ideologies and perceptions of multiple people and periods – and that any attempt at excavating the 'original text' must be seen as conjecture.[46] The clearest

---

[39] Such as Downham, *Medieval Ireland*, 163.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] This dating is usually credited to Murphy, see Murphy, 'Notes', 195, and consolidated by many since then, such as Ó Cathasaigh, 'Exemplary Myth', 1.

[42] Carey, 'A London Library, An Irish Manuscript', 14.

[43] *Ibid.*

[44] This stance is taken by Ó Corráin following the earlier assessment of O'Rahilly, based on the use of *Insi Gall* as a name for the Hebrides and the use of Norse-English loan words, see Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings', 311.

[45] Chesnutt, 'A parable', 22-33.

[46] Hildegard Tristram, 'The 'Cattle Raid of Cuailnge', in Doris Edel (ed.), *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration: Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages* (Blackrock, 1995), 61-81, 65.

evidence of editing and alteration of the tale can be seen in the narrative summary at the start of the tale, which has been suggested to originate from a version of *Lebor Gabála Érenn*.[47] This material contradicts other parts of the tale, and thus can be identified as a later addition. The nature of the narrative is episodic, which allows for easy inclusion and editing of material and further complicates the matter of dating the text. Furthermore, *CMT* includes a number of notes, which offer clarifications to the narrative, and are most likely added by later commentators. This can be observed in §44, where a narrator-like voice says: 'she related to him the whole story as we have recounted it'.[48] Here the 'we' is an external voice which claims authorship of the narrative. Furthermore, §84 recounts a tryst between the Dagda and a supernatural woman and includes an additional note at the end of it saying: 'the woman mentioned here is the Morrígan'.[49] There is no other indication to the identity of the woman, and it is unsure whether she was originally intended to be identified in the text.

That the story of the Battle of Moytirra should survive in several textual variations shows that it captured the interest of people in different times and circumstances. The later notations and revisions only emphasise this. It should also be assumed that a degree of oral distribution of the tale was involved during the contemporary period. Máire Herbert noted that treating texts as singular 'finished' products may tidy away the effects of transmission.[50] She emphasised the importance of considering texts within their context, be that the wider manuscript context or the scholarly environment, which led to their emergence and preservation.[51] This is illustrated by the renewed interest in *CMT* during the 16th century. During this time Ireland was once again faced with a significant period of cultural assimilation when the conquering Anglo-Normans had integrated into the Irish society until they became 'more Irish than the Irish themselves'.[52] Therefore, we can see the formation of thematic parallels between the narrative of *CMT* and periods of significant cultural interaction and integration throughout Irish history, which may explain the renewed interest in the tale during these moments of transition. However, despite the attempts to date and verify the origins of texts, textual methods are fallible, as Hildegard Tristram noted:

---

[47] Carey, 'Myth and Mythography', 54.

[48] Gray, *CMT*, 36-7; *atcuad dóu an scél n-uili amal derurmesam.*

[49] *Ibid.*, 44-5; *is hi an Morrígan an uhen-sin isberur sunn.*

[50] Máire Herbert, 'Crossing Historical and Literary Boundaries: Irish Written Culture Around the Year 1000', *CMCS* 53/54 (2007), 87-102, 87-8.

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] A phrase which specifically refers to the 'Gaelicization of the Anglo-Norman settlers' during the late Norman era in Ireland, see Robin Frame, 'More Irish than the Irish themselves', in S.J. Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Irish History* (Oxford, 1998), 386-7.

…the historical, linguistic, and stylistic methods of dating mean that the possibility of verifying the historical clues imparted to us in the self-referential corpus of Middle Irish writing, including the annals, is very small. We have to accept this dilemma as it is and must be aware that traditional dating may be but fiction or wishful thinking.[53]

Therefore, though the precise moment when *CMT* appeared into the literary sphere cannot be pinpointed, the narrative itself can be seen to reflect the socio-political context of the late Viking Age due to the social frameworks portrayed within.

1.3   Theory

1.3.1   Irish pseudo-history

Cath Maige Tuired represents a larger emerging genre of writing within medieval Ireland. Pseudo-history as a major literary genre and a wider intellectual exercise seems to have gained momentum from the ninth century onwards until it reached its peak during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Encapsulating the meaning of the term pseudo-history itself can be complicated. It refers to accounts of history, which distort the commonly accepted facts by, for example, accepting legends and myths as reality. Through intricate intertextual referencing pseudo-history has the potential to become accepted as fact; especially as it instinctively avoids questioning its sources of history. The sense of reliability is increased by plotting the pseudo-historic accounts on commonly known and accepted classical works in order to achieve literary coherence. In the Irish context, the term pseudo-history refers to a corpus of literary material which outlines a fictional origin story of Ireland and its peoples. The emerging genre has been seen as an 'extraordinary effort among Irish scholars and poets to bring together biblical, classical, European and native historical chronology'.[54] Herbert observed this phenomenon as follows:

Considerable energy seems to have been expended on historical writing in the first half of the eleventh century. While repairing the record evidently was an important task, historical activity may also have been stimulated by contemporary Irish political circumstances. As long-established power structures were being opposed, political propagandists sought support in historical precedent. Thus, the legendary past was historicized, and royal dynasties and institutions were credited with a continuum of power that stretched back beyond the horizon of Christianity.[55]

---

[53] Tristram, 'Cattle Raid', 69.
[54] Thomas Clancy, 'Gaelic literature in Ireland and Scotland, 900-1150', in Clare Lees (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 2012), 637-59, 640.
[55] Herbert, 'Crossing Boundaries', 99.

These efforts culminated in the production, or in some cases augmentation, of key Irish pseudo-historical texts such as the extensive and complex *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (*LGÉ*). Equally representative of the genre are shorter prose narratives, such as *Incipit do Suidigud Tellaich Temra,* and an array of poetic material. Pseudo-history is often historicising and utilises characters of either mythical or biblical origin, or those who represent a significantly earlier period in history, and hence have become literary representations of certain ideologies and prejudices. There are indications that pseudo-histories were treated as genuine histories with extensive efforts being made to reconcile them with genealogies and historical tracts.[56] In fact, David Dumville has suggested that the 'two principal manifestations of the Gaelic origin-legend are lodged in the genealogical corpus of medieval Ireland', by which he refers to *LGÉ* and the genealogical poetry found in the *Book of Leinster*.[57] Furthermore, Carey noted that 'the earliest pseudohistorical speculation probably had its roots in genealogy; and it was its genealogical implications which continued to give pseudohistory a political relevance'.[58] The use of a pseudo-historical setting creates a distance between the writer and the political statement they are making, which has also misled many later critics into treating pseudo-histories as myths with no historical relevance. G.S. Kirk has written extensively about the issue of defining myths, and highlighted an important distinction between 'myths on the one hand and legends and sagas on the other – between essentially non-historical tales and those that include identifiable and conspicuous historical elements or are historicizing in intention'.[59] This distinction between historical and non-historical narratives functions as the primary attribute in distinguishing myths from other text types, such as pseudo-histories. Thus, it underlines the importance of treating texts like *CMT*, which is historicising and functions as a political allegory for a period in history, as separate from myths.

Pseudo-histories provide a platform for evaluating the ideologies and contemporary experiences within a secularly themed text in an attempt to understand the historical realities of a specific period. A text's value can be derived both from the 'agenda of its compiler and the content of the work itself'.[60] Thus, through reflection and comparison to the historical context in which

---

[56] For extensive contextualising of the marginalia in *LGÉ,* see Michael Clarke, 'The *Leabhar Gabhála* and Carolingian Origin Legends', in Pádraic Moran & Immo Warntjes (eds.), *Early Medieval Ireland and Europe: Chronology, Contact, Scholarship* (Turnhout, 2015), 441-79.
[57] David Dumville, 'Did Ireland exist in the twelfth century?', in E. Purcell, P. MacCotter, J. Nyhan, & J. Sheehan (eds.), *Clerics, Kings and Vikings: Essays on Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 2015), 115-26, 120.
[58] John Carey, 'Lebor Gabála and the legendary history of Ireland', in Helen Fulton (ed.), *Medieval Celtic Literature and Society* (Dublin, 2005), 32-48, 47.
[59] G.S. Kirk, 'On Defining Myths', in Alan Dundes (ed.), S*acred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth* (London, 1984), 53-61, 55.
[60] J.P. Mallory, *The Origins of the Irish* (London, 2013), 206.

they were compiled, pseudo-histories can be identified as a source of information and a tool for examining the humane experiences and preoccupations of a specific period in history. This appreciation of historical and cultural contexts has, in fact, been seen as crucial for fully appreciating certain Middle Irish texts.[61] The growing popularity of pseudo-history during the period specified above cannot be entirely attributed to a change in literary fashions; as an indication of this stands the on-going and conscious campaign of creation and editing, which is most easily viewed in the numerous contemporary editions of *LGÉ*. In order to establish the reasons behind the interest in the material belonging to this genre, we must consider the motivations behind its production. These contemporary motivations are one of our simplest links to the historical context. The key literary preoccupations of pseudo-history are easy to establish. The texts depict themes of identity and origin, the right to land or a country, and are often seen to stem from a perceived threat to traditions or established social order.[62] Clíodhna Ní Lionáin recently argued that 'the Irish origin myths were not only used by those who considered themselves under cultural attack, but also by larger powers who manipulated the native tradition to validate their own position'.[63] She further deduced that 'origin myths can be appropriated in both the definition and promotion of nationhood and independent sovereignty, but also in the assertion of domination and control over a colonized people'.[64] Thus, pseudo-history is used to create, reflect upon, and project out a sense of unity. Patrick Wadden described this when he pictured the medieval Irish as 'a homogenous cultural and legal unit', and pseudo-histories as a tool used to create a sense that this unity originated from the prehistory.[65] However, when speaking about the Irish as a comprehensive unity, we must remain 'sensitive to the existence of differing cultural, political and literary traditions on the island'.[66] From these notions arises the question of medieval Irish identity and what pseudo-histories can reveal us about it.

1.3.2   Concepts of identity

Who were the Irish? This question is complicated and has already filled up numerous books and articles, such as J.P. Mallory's ingenious exploration of the topic in *The Origins of the Irish*

---

[61] Patrick Wadden, 'Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn: History and literature in twelfth-century Ireland', *Aiste* 4 (2014), 1-34, 5.
[62] Carey, 'A London Library, An Irish Manuscript', 14.
[63] Clíodhna Ní Lionáin, 'Lebor Gabála Érenn: The Use and Appropriation of an Irish Origin Legend in Identity Construction at Home and Abroad', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 27.2 (2012), 33-52, 44.
[64] *Ibid.*, 47.
[65] Patrick Wadden, *Theories of National Identity in Early Medieval Ireland* (PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2011), 5.
[66] Margaret Kelleher & Philip O'Leary (eds.), 'Introduction', in *Cambridge History of Irish Literature* (Cambridge, 2006), 1-8, 4.

(2013).[67] The same question has also been asked in many different forms in articles ranging from David Dumville's 'Did Ireland exist in the twelfth century?' (2015) to the much earlier 'Early Irish Ideology and the Concept of Unity' (1984) by Proinsias Mac Cana.[68] In order to examine this question, it is necessary to appreciate the different concepts of identity and the process of identity creation. The construction of identity has long been defined by two differing schools of thought – either as a natural innate quality or as a social and cultural construct.[69] Regardless of approach, one of the most fundamental questions of identity is whether it appears as static or changeable. Furthermore, if identity is changeable, can that change be achieved through conscious effort? In modern literary theory, due to the influence of poststructuralist theorists such as Derrida, Foucault and Althusser, identity is most often seen as a product of discourse and culture. On the other hand, historians have seen the construction of premodern identities heavily reliant on the process of *identification* to 'certain common features that bind together individuals and groups' and to the creation of a collective memory.[70] In this way identity is reliant on the active invention of tradition, such as a shared past or heritage, but not to the tradition itself.[71] This is reflected in the creation of pseudo-history, or as Michael Clarke called it 'pseudohistorical self-invention'.[72] Furthermore, that process of creation can be seen as a part of ethnogenesis – the effort to create a stable social identity through the invention of its history.[73]

Concepts of identity in the medieval Irish context are frequently discussed in relation to a few key notions. These often involve the roles of genealogy and origin, social unity, as well as locality, in the development of a sense of identity. In the context of this discussion, we need to acknowledge the complications of trying to recreate a medieval sense of identity or ethnicity from our modern perspective, which relies strongly on a framework of ideologies and cultural constructs based on the modern nation-state, something which Dumville went to a length to rebuke existed in the medieval Irish context.[74] Furthermore, it has been noted that an ethnic consciousness, which is at the centre of our understanding of identity today, was not a relevant

---

[67] Mallory, *Origins*.
[68] Dumville, 'Did Ireland exist'; Proinsias Mac Cana, 'Early Irish Ideology and the Concept of Unity', in Richard Kearney (ed.), *The Irish Mind: Exploring Intellectual Traditions* (Dublin, 1984), 56-78.
[69] For discussion on the theory see Satu Sorvo, *Hybridity, Immigrant Identity and Ethnic Impersonation in Karolina Waclawiak's How to Get into the Twin Palms* (MPhil thesis, University of Tampere, 2015), 12-3.
[70] Henrietta Benveniste & Costas Gaganakis, 'Heterodoxies: Construction of identities and otherness in medieval and early Modern Europe', *Historein* 2 (2000), 7-12, 8.
[71] *Ibid.* 9.
[72] Clarke, 'Carolingian Origin Legends', 474.
[73] Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, 2002), 9 & 37.
[74] Dumville, 'Did Ireland exist', 126.

definer in the early Middle Ages.[75] In fact, the primary boundaries of identity during the medieval period were not so much geographical as political, economic, or social.[76] Wadden has suggested that what can be identified as Irish national identity was initially created during the seventh and eight centuries 'as part of a campaign to assert the joint authority of the Uí Néill kings of Tara and their ecclesiastical allies in Armagh'.[77] This has also been seen as a key motivation for the composition of *CMT*.[78] It has been repeatedly suggested that a sense of social identity often focuses on 'who one wants to exclude', as opposed to who belongs.[79] Therefore, nascent identities are often worked out in comparison between social groups, the Self and the Other, which makes periods of cultural conflict and invasion apt for the creation of identities. Throughout the Middle Ages, Ireland came under a prolonged threat on its identity and independence, first by the Scandinavians and then by the Cambro-Normans. Dumville suggested that the 'foreign invasion and settlement in the Viking-Age created an heightened sense of Irishness in face of the intrusive Scandinavians'.[80] D. A. Binchy, on the other hand, noted that while it would be 'an anachronism to say that the Norse invasions created a common sentiment of Irish nationality', they contributed to evoking a sense of 'otherness' which lies in the heart of nationalism.[81] In the light of modern terminology, we may be more inclined to use the word identity, instead of nationality, in this context. However, the notion of Otherness as a driving force behind nationalism is interesting and, without a question, prolific. Mac Cana responded to Binchy's argument by suggesting that the emerging sense of Otherness was instead a logical development in the 'secularisation and politicisation of a spiritual datum of long standing'.[82] The question at what point did a sense of Irish identity emerge remains unresolved, however, all indicators suggest that the disruptive circumstances of the Viking era strengthened the existing concepts of identity and unity.

It has been argued that Celtic scholarship has, until recent decades, hung onto a nationalistically motivated belief of seeing Ireland as something unique and separated from its wider social, economic and political environment.[83] While it has been accepted that Christianity was a

---

[75] Mostert, 'Celtic, Anglo-Saxon or Insular?', 100.

[76] Geary, *Myth*, 38.

[77] Wadden, *Theories*, 4.

[78] Kim McCone, 'A Tale of Two Ditties: Poet and Satirist in Cath Maige Tuired', in Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach & Kim McCone (eds.), *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth, 1989), 122-43, 136.

[79] Mallory, *Origins,* 291.

[80] Dumville, 'Did Ireland exist', 122.

[81] D. A. Binchy, 'The passing of the old order', in Brian Ó Cuív (ed.), *The impact of the Scandinavian invasions on the Celtic-speaking peoples c.800-1100A.D* (Dublin, 1975), 119-32, 129.

[82] Mac Cana, 'Early Irish Ideology', 67-9.

[83] Mostert, 'Celtic, Anglo-Saxon or Insular?', 98; Downham, *Medieval Ireland*, 9.

connecting factor between Ireland and the rest of Europe, it is rarely appreciated how fully the Christian culture and learning permeated into the Irish society and identity. As a part of this process, the origin-stories of Ireland were mapped out according to Christian historiography. Ireland was not alone in this, and Mallory noted that: 'many of the 'nations' of early medieval Europe were very much preoccupied with providing themselves with an origin rooted in either classical or biblical antiquity'.[84] In Irish pseudo-histories, the origins of people were traced to prehistoric and biblical events, often through stories and genealogies recounting the descendent of the Irish from biblical characters. This leads to the importance of genealogy, heritage and origins in the development of a sense of identity, especially as it is depicted in written sources. These themes are also heavily present in *CMT* and crucial for the depictions of cultural identity in the narrative. All in all, recent scholarship has moved to acknowledge that the Irish identity was not built in a vacuum and, like most social or national identities, it relies on interaction and contrast. The increased cross-cultural contacts of the Viking Age, as well as the Norman threat which quickly followed this period, encouraged attempts by the learned classes to solidify the Irish presence within the European context.[85] Clarke argued that especially *LGÉ* 'shows Irish identity being worked out among the nascent ethnographies of Carolingian Europe'.[86] Dumville saw the 'self-conscious, or 'imagined', national community' created through literary means as a key component in the emergence of the Irish identity.[87] In his opinion the creation of this imagined community had already began by the advent of Christianity in Ireland – well before the production of works such as *LGÉ*.[88] However, Dumville also stated that the 'imagined national community of Ireland was complete by the end of the eleventh century', and that *LGÉ* and *Dinnshenchas Érenn*, as well as the 'militantly nationalistic *Cogadh Gaedel re Gallaib*', stood as proof of this due to their portrayal of unified Ireland. Assertions like this highlight the relevance of pseudo-historical narratives in terms of the developing sense of medieval Irish identity. This leaves little doubt that a concept of unified Irish identity existed, at least in the literary imagination, if not as a political construct, by the late Viking Age. It is, therefore, justified to discuss *CMT* in terms of the Irish identity it portrays and promotes. The paradigms of the Self and the Other are at the heart of analysing literary identities, which are manifested through the dynamics of comparison between the opposing concepts. As will be established later, these concepts manifest themselves clearly and consistently within *CMT*, and amongst them rises the concept of hybridity, which is established as the third space within the set definitions of identity.

---

[84] Mallory, *Origins*, 207.
[85] Elva Johnston, *Literacy and Identity in Early Medieval Ireland* (Woodbridge, 2013), 85-6.
[86] Clarke, 'Carolingian Origin Legends', 458.
[87] Dumville, 'Did Ireland exist', 123.
[88] *Ibid.*

It seems prudent to take this moment to not only consider the concepts of identity, but also how those identities are referred to within this discussion. As was established earlier, the term *Irish* in this dissertation refers indiscriminately to the inhabitants of Ireland who identify as such due to factors like their descent, or social and economic ties. This definition must be assumed to include a range of different cultural and political traditions existing on the island. The terminology concerning the foreigners is more complicated. The Viking-Age incomers can be, and have been, referred to with a mixture of the terms Scandinavian, Norse and viking.[89] In this dissertation 'viking' is used as a term of occupation rather than ethnicity, and may appear in contexts such as 'viking raid'. For this reason, the term is only capitalised in the expression the 'Viking Age' which, like the 'Middle Ages', is capitalised in normal usage. As a term of ethnicity, in cases which are not direct quotations from elsewhere, it has been deemed prudent to use the term 'Scandinavian' instead of 'Norse'. This is done to avoid unnecessary linguistic or national connotations; especially in situations where the exact origin of the incomers is unsure. It has been suggested that the Scandinavians exerting power in Ireland rarely came all the way from Scandinavian countries.[90] Therefore, 'Scandinavian' is in many cases used to refer to the ethnically Scandinavian settlers of the insular world. The cultural assimilation of the period has also prompted the use of multiple terms denoting hybridity, including Hiberno-Norse, Hiberno-Scandinavian, Norse-Celtic, Norse-Irish *et cetera.* More discussion regarding hybridity, as well as the Irish term *Gall-Goídil,* will follow in Chapter 3.

1.4   *CMT* in previous studies

Cath Maige Tuired, as one of the key narratives of what became known as the 'Mythological Cycle', has been the subject of a number of studies throughout the years.[91] Even more frequently it has been mentioned in passing as a reference or a literary example by scholars discussing other

---

[89] The terminology used in the Irish Annals will be discussed in 2.2.3.

[90] Ó Corráin suggested that despite references to them in the Irish annals, there were no kings of Norway at this point, he also noted that there is no evidence of the Danish dynasty ever ruling in Ireland, Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings', 300. Furthermore, he refers to a note in the Annals of Inisfallen, which states that the Scandinavians came from the Northern and Western Isles, including Scotland, Man and Ireland, Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings', 309-10.

[91] A literary cycle has been defined as 'a generic classification of groups of texts … based on a set of parameters in intratextual cohesion', these parameters include geographical location and core personnel, see Erich Poppe, 'Of Cycles and Other Critical Matters: Some issues in medieval Irish literary history and criticism' *E.C Quiggin Memorial Lectures* 9 (Cambridge, 2008), 11. Use of the name 'Mythological Cycle' has been discouraged, but is often assumed primarily out of habit and lack of viable options. It is especially problematic in connection to the efforts of distancing pseudo-histories such as *CMT* from myths and mythology. Alternatives such as 'Cycle of Sagas' and 'Cycle of Gods' have been suggested, see Poppe, 'Cycles', 8 & Ó Cathasaigh, 'Exemplary Myth', 11.

matters. When considering the treatment of the text within the academic circles, it would be remiss to not begin by discussing Elizabeth Gray, the author of the most relevant edition and translation of the text (1982), whose meticulous study of the tale resulted in a three-part article 'Cath Maige Tuired: Myth and Structure' published in *Éigse* 18 and 19 (1980-3). Her study of the text is detailed and shows a great depth of understanding for the literary dynamics and characters of the tale. Her analysis relies on the earlier theories of the folklorist Georges Dumézil and focused on examining the strategies of kingship, the role of kinship, and especially the father-son dynamic, within the text. Following Dumézil's lead, she interpreted *CMT* as an example of an archetypal Indo-European myth rooted in native Irish folklore.[92] She regarded *CMT* specifically as a myth of creation, which explained 'why things are as they are', and which set out the 'necessary periodic regeneration of human society'.[93] Gray's observations regarding the narrative are accurate and detailed, yet her certitude in regarding the tale as a Celtic myth resulted in an inward turned analysis of the power structures within the narrative. An integral part of her argument was to view the opposing Tuatha Dé Danann and Fomoiri as 'tribes' warring with each other, but similar in terms of culture and identity. This left space only for a brief consideration of the foreign nature of the Fomoiri in the second part of her article series:

> The geographical location of the lands of the Fomorian rulers is largely unidentifiable: Balor, the King of the Isles, rules the Hebrides; but Indech's territory, like Elatha's, is unspecified. But despite geographical vagueness, the Fomorian sphere of influence, from Scandinavia west to Ireland, including the Hebrides, does not represent the tradition that the Fomorian realm lies beneath the sea and belongs to the Otherworld. Instead, the Fomorian threat is described as if it were a vast alliance among various Scandinavian forces, all bent upon the conquest of Ireland.[94]

This consideration became an afterthought in the otherwise well-built argument, and Gray explained it away as a contemporary attempt to conceal, or avoid emphasising, the Otherworldly connection of the Fomoiri.[95] Alternatively, she suggested that the identifiable and contemporarily relevant geographical milieu was a way of 'mythologizing the Viking threat by linking it to the mythic warfare between the gods and their enemies'.[96] Thus, despite the thoroughness of her argument, if we reject *CMT* as a myth and treat it as a product of its contemporary society, many of her conclusions can be expanded further. In other words, the

---

[92] Gray, 'Myth and Structure 1', 185-6.
[93] *Ibid.*, 183-4.
[94] Elizabeth Gray, 'Cath Maige Tuired: Myth and Structure (24-120)', *Éigse* 19/1 (1982), 1-35, 16.
[95] *Ibid.*, 17.
[96] *Ibid.*

dynamics she observed become indicators of wider ideologies and social phenomena instead of 'inter-tribal' warfare between mythological characters.

Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, like Gray, viewed *CMT* as a myth and an account of theomachy.[97] Furthermore, he regarded the tale specifically as an exemplary myth in which gods set an example for the people to follow.[98] He observed that: 'as far as the content of a myth is concerned, we can say that an exemplary myth embodies in a dramatic way the ideology and value system of the community, and that it validates these in the course of the narrative'.[99] Ó Cathasaigh agreed with Dumézil's theories of sovereignty and saw the theme of rightful tripartite kingship as a key to reading *CMT*.[100] This perspective has since been challenged and one of the first to extensively study *CMT* from a non-mythological point of view was Kim McCone. He approached the tale in terms of its structure and emphasised its 'extreme narrative sophistication and technical virtuosity'.[101] At the centre of McCone's attention were the mirroring sequences of Cridenbél the satirist and Coirpre the poet. These characters are used to demonstrate different social dynamics, especially the guest-versus-host dynamic, and the role of honour in society. McCone noted that structurally these characters form a 'diptych with parallel developments but inverted relations'.[102] The structural parallelism and inverted roles are also repeated in the case of a number of the tale's other characters; primarily between Bres and Lug.[103] These parallels create obvious contrasts between Belonging and Otherness, and allow intimate analysis of the concept of identity in the narrative. These details emphasise the conscious creation of the tale as a literary reflection of the society and its values. McCone made two key observations to this effect. First, he noted that the usage of themes and literary conventions, which were seen as secular as opposed to ecclesiastical in their motivations, allowed the clerical establishment and the powers allied with it an opportunity to promote their social and political interests.[104] Secondly, he noted that the depiction of the Tuatha Dé Danann (henceforth TDD), the men of Ireland, and the Fomoiri within the tale allows them to be interpreted within the tale's contemporary historical context as opposed to the mythological remit.[105] This returns us to the possible political motivations behind the text. McCone concluded

---

[97] The term *theomachy* is used, especially within Greek mythology, to refer to a battle among gods or the War of Gods, Ó Cathasaigh, 'Exemplary Myth', 1.
[98] *Ibid.*
[99] *Ibid.*, 9.
[100] *Ibid.*, 6-8.
[101] McCone, 'A Tale', 125.
[102] *Ibid.*, 126.
[103] These characters will be discussed further in 3.3.
[104] McCone, 'A Tale', 133.
[105] *Ibid.*, 136; *fir(u) Érenn*, see Gray, *CMT*, 42, 50, 52 *et cetera*.

that *CMT* emphasises 'the importance of social cohesion and rallying round the Tara kingship in order to repel foreign attacks', which in turn presents the narrative as Uí Néill political propaganda.[106] Thus, McCone's analysis can be seen as a key turning point in scholarship regarding *CMT*. It takes a conscious step from treating the text as a myth to seeing it as a literary work reflecting contemporary ideologies and concerns.

As established earlier, John Carey has examined the textual and manuscript contexts of *CMT*. Moreover, he has written extensively about the narrative itself, often from a semi-mythological point of view. This includes the influential 'Myth and mythography in Cath Maige Tuired' published in *Studia Celtica* 24/25 (1989/90). In this article he discussed occasions where *CMT* shares common themes with the wider corpus of Irish literature, and where it deviates from the norms. Carey is convinced that *CMT* describes, and was influenced by, the events of second half of the ninth century.[107] He connected the narrative especially to the reigns of Máel Sechnaill mac Maíle Ruanaid (846-862) and Áed Findliath mac Néill (862-879) and concluded, like others before him, that this connects the tale with Tara and the Uí Néill dynasty.[108] Carey based this argument on parallels between the events around the union of Elatha and Ériu in the tale, and the historical union between Olaf the White of Dublin and the daughter of Áed Findliath, as well as other annalistic evidence.[109] He concluded that the portrayal of Ireland in *CMT* mirrors the late Viking Age reality, in which foreign intrusion and cultural decline were at the forefront of the social consciousness. He saw the mythological aspects of the tale as an attempt to preserve culture and tradition within a narrative in which 'the old gods are actors in a new myth'.[110] When it comes to the dating of the tale, most scholars seem to either be content with Carey's suggestion, or refrain from suggesting specific dates. However, Michael Chesnutt has written extensively about the *CMT* from a Norse-Celtic perspective, which differs from a majority of the scholarship considered here.[111] He discussed *CMT* in relation to *Njál's saga* as a possible portrayal of the battle of Clontarf, based heavily on the thematic content of the narratives, and argued that:

---

[106] McCone, 'A Tale', 136.
[107] He renews this opinion in more recent studies, see for example Carey, 'A London Library, An Irish Manuscript', 14.
[108] Carey, 'Myth and Mythography', 60.
[109] *Ibid.*, 63, fn.
[110] *Ibid.*, 60.
[111] Chesnutt, 'A parable', 27; Chesnutt notes that he is not the first to draw these parallels: 'the Norwegian historian Alexander Bugge recognised long ago that the Fomoire of *CMT* were the Viking of the Northern Isles in disguise', see A. Bugge (ed.), *On the Fomorians and the Norsemen by Duald mac Firbis* (Christiania, 1905), vii.

Brjáns saga shared with *CMT* the key motifs not only of the Irish king's victory in death, the vengeance wreaked on his killer, and the enemy being driven back into the sea whence they came, but also of the survival against all odds of the ambitious foreign instigator of the conflict.[112]

Based on this cross-cultural reflection he suggested that *CMT* is a reflection of eleventh-century events. According to Chesnutt, this timescale coincides with Norse-Celtic cultural integration which emerged in Ireland and the West in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[113] Chesnutt agreed that similarities can be found between the historical context Carey points out and *CMT*, but suggested that a 'Norse-Irish dynastic union' between Olaf Cuarán of Dublin and princess Gormlaith of Leinster would provide a more fitting analogy.[114] Similarly, he drew a parallel between Bres, as the tale's 'half-foreigner' gathering an invasion on Ireland, and Sitric of Dublin.[115] As Chesnutt himself assessed, this reading compromises treating *CMT* as a mythological source, but could extend our understanding of Norse-Irish storytelling and its reception beyond the borders of Ireland.[116]

There is an abundance of scholarship to credit and discuss, however, the final study to be mentioned in this overview is Mark Williams' recent monograph *Ireland's Immortals* (2016). Williams has achieved a comprehensive overview of Irish mythology, not only of its history and literary manifestations, but also its misunderstandings, common prejudices and perceptions. He saw *CMT* as a manifestation of the transitional mindset of the Viking Age, in which the 'downtrodden gods' rebel against a race of oppressive enemies.[117] The native gods are used as a vehicle for underpinning social cohesion, as well as asserting particular political claims.[118] Williams, maybe more than any of the previous critics of *CMT,* considered the roles and implications of social groups for the tale and for the imagined society as a whole. He noted that the TDD are not connected to Otherworldly locations, like their traditional role would suggest, instead they hold their court at Tara. Therefore, the gods have assumed the role of 'men of Ireland' and become 'scaled-up versions of human beings'.[119] Williams has summarised his argument regarding the social values of *CMT* as one of proportion; the narrative is an

---

[112] Chesnutt, 'A parable', 28-30; it should be noted that the current academic opinion considers *Brjáns saga* hypothetical, as it does not survive outside possible literary remains *Njál's saga*.
[113] *Ibid.*, 22.
[114] *Ibid.*, 26.
[115] *Ibid.*, 27.
[116] *Ibid.*, 30.
[117] Williams, *Ireland's Immortals*, 72-3.
[118] *Ibid.*, 75.
[119] *Ibid.*, 94.

exploration of what is enough and what is too much.[120] The comparison between the TDD and the Fomoiri, therefore, becomes a contrast between different social organisations. He argued that the relationship between the literary gods and the 'the real-life social hierarchies of Viking-age Ireland' is realised through the cultural descriptions of the narrative. The gods become vessels of culture, intimately connected to the cultivated land, but distanced from their traditional status as divinities, or as Williams concluded: 'we thus have culture and cultivation, but no cult'.[121]

All of these influential scholars, alongside many more, have contributed to our understanding of the text and its literary context. This gives us the opportunity to reconcile the literary context with what is known of the historical period and its events. Our increased understanding of pseudo-history as a genre, and as a representation of political agendas, allows us to study *CMT* within its historical context. The narrative preoccupations with identity and hybridity lead us to evaluate the contemporary perceptions and prejudices. Within these ideologies lies a sense of Irish identity at the forefront of the literary consciousness during the late Viking Age. The next chapter of this dissertation will focus on establishing parallels between the historical context of the tale's composition and its narrative content.

---

[120] Williams, *Ireland's Immortals*, 108.
[121] *Ibid.*, 126.

2 Chapter 2: Identity and Interaction in *CMT*

2.1 Introduction

Cultural identity, interaction and integration are heavily featured in *CMT's* literary themes, however, in order to assess these concepts outwith the literary dimension we must turn to the historical context of the text's composition. If we proceed from a point of view that, whichever of the arguments about the date of *CMT* is more convincing, it dates from somewhere between the second half of the ninth century and the beginning of the eleventh, we give ourselves rough parameters to work with in order to contextualise the tale through its historical backdrop. Therefore, this chapter will discuss the major themes of the narrative; the dynamics of power, cultural interaction, kingship, and tribute, by focusing on the apparent parallels between the literary dimension and the late Viking Age in Ireland. The chapter will conclude with an examination of the geographical and physical environment depicted in *CMT* and how this corresponds to the contemporary worldview at the time of the tale's composition. Thus, addressing how the text can improve our understanding of the contemporary perceptions of the political and ideological environment. The narrative discourse itself interacts with the text's historical context and through integration of the two we may examine the underlying concepts of contemporary Irish identity.

2.2 Summary of *CMT*

In order to embark on this discussion, a general awareness of the narrative of *CMT* is required. The aim of this section is to highlight key points of the tale, although the brief summary that follows does not allow a full appreciation of the intricacies of the narrative. In its simplest form *CMT* is a physical and symbolical power struggle between the Tuatha Dé Danann, the men of Ireland, and the Fomoiri who in this tale hail from Lochlann and the Hebrides.[122] In her edition, Gray introduces *CMT* as a timeless 'paradigmatic illustration of principles fundamental to the ordering and maintenance of human society'.[123] Furthermore, the geographical milieu of the tale

---

[122] The name Tuatha Dé Danann is usually translated as the 'people/tribe of the goddess Danu', a shortened form of the name, Tuatha Dé, means the 'people/tribe of God' but is also used to refer to the Israelites of Old Testament, McCone has suggested this connotation in their role in *CMT* and drawn multiple biblical parallels, see McCone, 'A Tale', 137; Dumville has suggested that in the Middle Ages there existed 'a self-confident conviction that the Gaelic people should be part, or indeed the latter-day representative, of God's Israel', Dumville, 'Did Ireland exist', 120; moreover, it has been suggested that the Irish origin legends were modelled on biblical accounts depicting the wandering of the Jews, Mallory, *Origins,* 214; for recent and extensive examination of the development of the TDD from the early Middle Ages to the present see Williams, *Ireland's Immortals.*

[123] Gray, *CMT*, 1.

is at the forefront of the narrative and, as will be discussed later, clearly corresponds to the geopolitical environment of Ireland and the surrounding regions during the late Viking Age.[124] The character at the heart of the tale is Bres. He is named in the beginning of what can be regarded as the body of the text, in §15: 'Now the conception of Bres came about in this way…'.[125] The previous line has also led to some speculation that this portion of the tale is actually a birth-tale (*compert*) of Bres.[126] He is the son of a Fomoirian king Elatha mac Delbáeth and Ériu the daughter of Delbáeth, a woman of the TDD. It is said that, walking by the sea, Ériu saw a silver vessel and then an amazingly handsome stranger with golden-yellow hair and a number of ornaments of gold and silver with precious stones on them.[127] This description sets Elatha up as the foreigner, as compared to Ériu, and is emphasised by his arrival over the sea. Carey has analysed the function of this sequence, and stated that:

> Parallels to one or another aspect of this scene are not hard to find in medieval Irish literature, but one detail is unique for the period. The woman's name in Ériu – she is 'Ireland' in person. One of the oldest and most widespread of Celtic narrative themes is the idea that a king's gaining the sovereignty is symbolised, or actualised, by his union with a female figure who represents the land – and this episode in our tale is obviously a story of that kind. But in this case it is not the rightful ruler to whom Ireland gives herself, but a foreigner; and the fruit of their passion is a half-breed usurper with no understanding of his land's traditions. We are obviously dealing with a political allegory here.[128]

The union between a king and a sovereignty goddess, or a female embodiment of land, can be seen as a deeply embedded notion in Celtic traditions.[129] However, it has been noted that this sequence might be the only one of a 'king from outside Ireland seducing a land-goddess in the medieval literature' concerning Ireland.[130] Bres the half-foreigner is the quintessential embodiment of hybridity within the tale. He becomes the king of Ireland but proves to be a poor choice for the role, ultimately bringing the TDD under the tribute of the Fomoiri. The hybrid heritage of Bres, as well as the concept of tribute, arise as central conflicts within the narrative. The main plotline of *CMT* follows Bres and his career but there is also a number of separate episodes and side narratives within the tale. The most notable of these are the mirroring sequences discussed by McCone which include the poet Coirpre and the satirist Cridenbél and

---

[124] Further discussion to follow.
[125] Gray, *CMT*, 26-7; *Is amlaid-so íarum arrícht compert Bresi.*
[126] Chesnutt, 'A parable', 27.
[127] Gray, *CMT*, 26-7.
[128] Carey, 'A London Library, An Irish Manuscript', 15.
[129] For further discussion, see Máire Herbert, 'Goddess and king: the sacred marriage in early Ireland', in Louise Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992), 264-75.
[130] Carey, 'Myth and Mythography', 55; Mallory, *Origins,* 208.

evaluate the importance of hospitality as a part of kingship, as well as the healing of Núadu's hand by Míach and Dían Cécht, and the subsequent killing of Míach.[131]

After prolonged and complicated battle preparations, undertaken primarily by the hero character Lug and the Dagda, the narrative culminates in the battle on the plain of Moytirra. Lug functions as the counterpart of Bres, and his appearance in the narrative is triggered by the threat posed by the Fomoiri. He is another hybrid character but with a Fomoirian mother and TDD father. This solidifies hybridity as one of the main themes of the narrative. The Dagda, on the other hand, appears in different roles in several of the narrative episodes. He becomes the character who overcomes the greatest number of obstacles throughout the narrative, although his most notorious appearances are two sexual encounters with supernatural women. Once the battle has been won and the TDD are victorious, the narrative closes with a prophecy of the end of the world, uttered by the Morrígan.[132] The prophecy reflects some of the key themes of the narrative, including descent and the downfall of social order. It should, however, be noted that the final *rosc* passage is fragmentary, and has possibly been augmented later.[133]

2.3   Viking Age as the historical context of *CMT*

2.3.1   Power dynamics

The Viking Age can be defined as the active period of the Scandinavian diaspora.[134] In Ireland this began by the very end of the eighth century in the form of raids conducted primarily on wealthy ecclesiastic centres.[135] The end of the era is often pinpointed to the Norman conquest of England in 1066. However, Scandinavian influence continued for at least another century in Ireland and the Western Isles. Therefore, a perhaps more prudent date in the Irish context would be the year 1169 when Cambro-Norman mercenaries, invited by Diarmait Mac Murchada, landed in Ireland. Cultural interaction between the Irish and Scandinavian groups was the major event shaping the Irish culture and identity since the introduction of Christianity in late antiquity.[136] The political landscape of Ireland, on the other hand, was in a constant state

---

[131] McCone, 'A Tale'.

[132] For more discussion on the prophecy and the role of the Morrígan in *CMT*, see Carmody, *Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis*, 106-26.

[133] Carey, 'Myth and Mythography', 54; Carmody, *Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis*, 103, fn.

[134] The suitability of the term *diaspora* in the Scandinavian context has been examined by Lesley Abrams, who concluded that for a time the widespread Scandinavian activity retained a strong group identity and acted like a genuine diaspora, Lesley Abrams, 'Diaspora and identity in the Viking Age', *Early Medieval Europe* 20 (2012), 17-38.

[135] Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings', 323.

[136] Alex Woolf, 'The Scandinavian Intervention', in Thomas Bartlett & Brendan Smith (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Ireland,* part 1 (Cambridge, 2017), 107-30, 107.

of flux. At the beginning of the Viking Age, the political powerhouses of the Uí Néill and the Éoganachta had upheld a relative political stability.[137] However, the unexpected largescale appearance of foreigners in Ireland disrupted the power dynamics. Scandinavian activity can be divided into periods of increased activity and relative calm; these fluctuations have been examined in detail by scholars such as Colmán Etchingham.[138] It should be noted that currently there exists a number of varying opinions and theories of the exact pattern of activity in Ireland during the centuries of the Scandinavian diaspora. Generally, it can be stated that the sporadic raiding of the early years began with an attack on Rechru in 795.[139] This initial period lasted approximately until the year 837, before it escalated into more intense raiding and the arrival of larger fleets which operated from semi-permanent bases, such as the new *longphuirt*, within Ireland.[140] The establishment of these more permanent bases, which could be inhabited all year round, also resulted into increased political and social involvement. It seems that from around the year 873 onwards the focus of the Scandinavian activity was increasingly centred on Dublin and its rulers.[141] During this period the role of Dublin as a key economic and social location was consolidated, however, as a part of the ongoing game of power politics the Scandinavian elite was expelled from it in 902.[142] Nonetheless, the general habitation of the city seems to have continued uninterrupted during this period. Dublin was reclaimed by the Scandinavian rulers around 917, and the subsequent decades saw it grow in size and wealth into an influential urban centre.[143]

In many ways the political situation towards the end of the Viking Age presented a field of newly realised possibilities, which were strongly influenced by the reigns of Brian Bóruma and Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill. It has been suggested that their campaigns solidified the idea of pan-Irish overkingship.[144] Be this as it may, the system of kingship in medieval Ireland was multi-layered and power generally remained localised. For this reason, historians such as Clare Downham have recommended the use of a provincial approach when discussing the political

---

[137] Woolf, 'The Scandinavian Intervention', 118.

[138] See Colmán Etchingham, 'Viking Raids on Irish Church Settlements in the Ninth Century: A Reconsideration of the Annals', *Maynooth Monographs Series Minor 1* (1996), 7-16.

[139] Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings', 323; The location of *Rechru* is much debated, most people suggest it was either Rathlin Island or Lambay Island, note that Byrne gives the year of the raid as 794 instead, see F.J. Byrne, 'The viking age', in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (ed.), *A New History of Ireland: Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), 609-34, 609.

[140] Charles Docherty, 'The Vikings in Ireland: a Review', in Howard Clarke, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh & Raghnall Ó Floinn (eds.), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), 288-330, 295; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200* (London, 2017), 255; Byrne, 'The viking age', 611.

[141] Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 269.

[142] *Ibid.*

[143] *Ibid.*, 271-4.

[144] Dumville, 'Did Ireland exist', 124.

developments of this era.[145] Considering the power dynamics is further complicated by the existence of several key ecclesiastical locations with considerable influence, such as Armagh and Clonmacnoise, in addition to the power centres held by the secular kings.[146] The question of religion itself, which may have represented the final major hurdle on the way to full cultural interaction, was solved by the early eleventh century at the latest. By the year 1028, when Sitric of Dublin visited Rome, the Scandinavians of Ireland were openly Christian.[147] However, despite this Lesley Abrams has noted that a degree of religious separatism between the Scandinavian and Irish Christians remained, which may have contributed to the ongoing division in terms of cultural identity.[148] Examining the mechanics of religious change via archaeology is problematic, as the material evidence of religious identity is often sparse.[149] Therefore, discussion is heavily reliant on the impressions conveyed by the Irish annals, and especially the use of the term *geinte* ('heathens') as opposed to *Gaill* ('foreigners') in reference to the Scandinavians.[150] All in all, this rudimentary overview of the arrival and settling of the Scandinavians into Ireland aims to set out the political context in which majority of the Irish pseudo-historical narratives were imagined and created. This dissertation will focus on a time period after the second half of the ninth century as a period particularly pertinent for the production of this literary material.

Irish pseudo-historical literature gives a much simpler picture of the distribution of power in which the focal point is Tara. The ancient site was the symbolic base of Uí Néill over-kingship and the dynasty has been held responsible for creating the legend that Tara had once been the seat of mythical kingship over all of Ireland.[151] This is also the case in *CMT*, which depicts Tara as the court of the TDD, although only when Núadu is the king; the name Tara does not appear in connection to Bres.[152] The crucial role of Tara in Irish tradition can be explained by what Mac Cana called 'the cult of the centre'. According to this idea the existence of a significant centre itself creates a unity, which becomes enclosed around the central point.[153] *CMT* depicts

---

[145] Downham, *Medieval Ireland*, 81.

[146] The term *monastic town* is among the most used to describe these locations, however, there is significant controversy about their secular/ecclesiastic nature, see Mary Valante, 'Reassessing the Irish 'Monastic Town'', *Irish Historical Studies* 31/121 (1998), 1-18.

[147] Dates between the ninth and eleventh centuries have been suggested, Lesley Abrams, 'Conversion and the Church in Viking-Age Ireland', in John Sheehan & Donnchadh Ó Corráin (eds.), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West* (Dublin, 2010), 1-10, 2.

[148] *Ibid.*, 8; she has noted that the situation was complex and, therefore, the precise role of religion is hard to ascertain.

[149] *Ibid.*, 2.

[150] *Ibid.*, 3.

[151] Downham, *Medieval Ireland*, 82.

[152] Gray, *CMT*, 38-9.

[153] Mac Cana, 'Early Irish Ideology', 67.

the TDD as a such unity, and furthermore, as the only meaningful social unit within Ireland, which emphasises the potential of pseudo-history to be used as political propaganda.[154] It is typical for pseudo-history to present Ireland as primarily occupied by only one race or group at a time. For example, in *LGÉ* the settling of Ireland occurs by waves of migration in which one group eventually gives way to the next. Presenting Ireland in these terms can be seen to have two intersecting purposes. First, it creates a literary illusion of Ireland which is under one ruler. Secondly, it implies that this singular political unit, which also reigned over Tara, was the sole rightful group to hold power in Ireland, which emphasised their power through precedence. However, the depiction of Ireland being settled by waves of migrations can also be seen as a source of anxiety in the face of such a strong invader as the Scandinavians proved to be, as there was clear literary precedence for conquest of the island. The fact that the TDD fight against a distinctly outsider force invading Ireland illustrates the potential of the narrative to be seen as a political allegory, and shows that the power dynamics are ultimately a more nuanced form of cultural interaction than the 'inter-tribal' relationship Gray saw the narrative to depict.[155]

If we consider the dynamics of power depicted in *CMT* against the historical layout, the simple dichotomy between the Irish versus the incoming foreigner remains at the forefront. Power in *CMT* seems to be inherently tied to location and landscape, as is illustrated through the role of kingship in the narrative. Previous studies on *CMT* have already discussed the function of kingship and the fundamental connection it shares with the cultivated land and the fertility of natural landscape; this has largely been done in terms of Dumézil's theories of mythology.[156] If we instead consider the question of location in terms of identity and Otherness, the physical land comes to symbolise identity which is made separate and sheltered by the surrounding sea – over which the invading Other arrives. Both in *CMT* and during the Viking Age, the incomer began quickly settling the land and exerting influence over it. In terms of history, the establishment of permanent settlements at key locations such as Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, Limerick and Cork, consolidated the Scandinavian influence in these areas and brought Scandinavian settlements closer to the Irish kingdoms in terms of political influence.[157] The fact that these Scandinavian power centres focused in the southern half of Ireland has been seen as a direct consequence of the relative weakness and fragmentation of the kings of Munster, or

---

[154] In this context it should be noted that there is a division between literature and political propaganda, although difficult to distinguish in places, which comes down to the (later) usage of the text, for discussion see Johnston, *Literacy*, 159.

[155] Gray, 'Myth and Structure 1', 189.

[156] On kingship and *CMT* see Gray, 'Myth and Structure 1', 185-6.

[157] Seán Duffy, *Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Houndmills, 1997), 29.

conversely as a sign of the strength of the Northern Uí Néill and the Ulaid.[158] Furthermore, the power of the Scandinavians was not limited to the settlements within Ireland, or the nearby islands, but also extended to the sea itself. Instead of assuming the role of a liminal border region, the sea comes to represent the constant threat of the invaders in both the literary narrative and the historical reality.[159]

2.3.2   Interaction

The trials of cultural interaction are evident in the narrative of *CMT,* and if they are compared to the historical context of the late Viking Age many parallels can be drawn between the narrative and the situation in reality. Interaction between the Irish and the Scandinavians began with a period of raiding – during this time both secular and ecclesiastic centres suffered as a direct consequence of the destruction and theft of property and wealth, as well as the increased expenses put into military resources to defend the country.[160] Over time, as the incomers started to settle in Ireland and be more involved in social and economic contexts; the Irish kings began forming alliances with the Scandinavians who were frequently hired as mercenaries.[161] Examples of occasional collaboration are numerous and indicate that both groups sought to benefit from these situations. For instance, Cináed mac Conaing, a king of Brega, allied himself with the Scandinavians of Dublin against the high-king Máel Sechnaill mac Máele Ruanaid in the mid-ninth century.[162] Likewise, the reign of Áed Finnlíath (d. 879) saw both alliances with, and defiance by, the different Scandinavian factions.[163] In addition to political or economic transactions, intermarriages provided another important way of forming alliances and interactions between the cultural groups.[164] By the eleventh and twelfth centuries the primary role of the Scandinavians was that of traders.[165] During the early period of the cultural contact, the Irish were clearly distinguishable and separate from the Scandinavians, however, this distinction was to grow less clear over time.[166] Scandinavian identity itself was complex by the late Viking Age, being influenced, socially and culturally, by the areas into which Scandinavian raiders, traders and diaspora had spread. Nonetheless, a distinctively Scandinavian identity was maintained which has been attributed to the fact that at the 'core of Scandinavian identity in the

---

[158] Duffy, *Ireland*, 30; Byrne, 'The viking age', 619.
[159] In literature the Fomoiri are often connected with a location under or beyond the sea – this connotation was most likely not lost to the medieval audiences, Williams, *Ireland's Immortals'*, 94.
[160] Duffy, *Ireland*, 29.
[161] *Ibid.*, 30.
[162] *Ibid.*; Downham, *Medieval Ireland*, 85.
[163] Downham, *Medieval Ireland*, 94.
[164] Abrams, 'Conversion', 3.
[165] Duffy, *Ireland*, 30.
[166] Woolf, 'The Scandinavian Intervention', 123.

early Middle Ages was a shared language'.[167] With the language also came a shared oral culture and traditions. While it is likely that the Irish and the Scandinavians developed a linguistic understanding of each other relatively early in their interaction, both the Irish and Norse languages persisted in Ireland; a fact which may have assisted in the creation of what Alex Woolf called a 'distinct Hiberno-Norse identity'.[168] In this regard, it is important to consider to what extent did the Scandinavians retain their distinct identity over time?[169] Conversely, it should be reflected to what extent did this transitional period lead to cultural change in Irish society and identity? Lesley Abrams suggested, on this matter, that despite the close cultural interactions of the Viking Age the 'religious separatism, the absence of a unitary state, and in particular the cellular nature of the Irish political and ecclesiastical institutions may have combined to keep Irish and Scandinavians apart'.[170]

The narrative of *CMT* encapsulates many of the social concerns associated with periods of prolonged cultural contact and integration. The literary depiction of a struggle to retain political independence, cultural identity and social traditions can be seen as a representation of the Gaelic Irish cultural perspective of the late Viking Age. From a literary point of view, it is interesting that the TDD and the Fomoiri, the Self and the Other of the narrative, are presented with very similar physical attributes. This is rarely the case for narratives which are deemed to be postcolonial, as Otherness is frequently emphasised through physical appearance.[171] In terms of the narrative this similarity is emphasised by, and possibly becomes necessary due to, the mirroring sequences between Bres and Lug. *CMT* itself states that the battle was fought between 'the race of the Fomoire and the men of Ireland'.[172] Thus, the narrative identifies the Fomoiri as distinct from the TDD. However, the somewhat ambiguous term *fine* has left some uncertainty regarding to their precise relationship and has partially facilitated the numerous different interpretations of the narrative in scholarship. Ultimately, the Fomoiri are represented as the foreign invader, a common character-type in medieval Irish literature. It is also this literary intruder, which Máire Ní Mhaonaigh has seen as the personification of an archetypal viking-as-oppressor character, which is often utilised in historical narratives.[173] She has argued that in

---

[167] Woolf, 'The Scandinavian Intervention', 110.

[168] *Ibid.*, 109.

[169] *Ibid.*, 124.

[170] Abrams, 'Conversion', 8.

[171] Depictions of the Fomoiri moved towards this norm in later traditions in which they are often monstrous or physically deformed. Both the TDD and the Fomoiri are occasionally perceived as giants but Williams saw this inconsequential for a narrative like *CMT* because 'it was a common belief among medieval scholars that ancient people had been bigger than themselves', Williams, *Ireland's Immortals*, 94-5.

[172] Gray, *CMT*, 58-9; *Fine Fomra ⁊ firu Érenn*', definition of *fine* is in footnote 1.

[173] Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, 'The Vikings in Medieval Irish Literature', in A.-C. Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), 99-106, 101; Máire Ní Mhaonaigh has discussed the literary representations of the vikings

literature the vikings were depicted as an apocalyptic threat, which was biding its time to overthrow the Irish society if it succumbed to social and moral ills.[174] This sense of morbid expectation for the world's end is echoed in the final poem of *CMT*, which prophecies the failing of society and social order.[175] In many ways, the involvement of the Fomoiri in the society of the TDD threatens to fulfil the apocalyptic warning, as is indicated in the following passage:

> There was great murmuring against him [Bres] among his maternal kinsmen the Túatha Dé, for their knives were not greased by him. However frequently they might come, their breaths did not smell of ale; and they did not see their poets nor their bards nor their satirists nor their harpers nor their pipers nor their horn-blowers nor their jugglers nor their fools entertaining them in the household. They did not go to contests of those pre-eminent in the arts, nor did they see their warriors proving their skill at arms before the king.[176]

This episode lists the social expectations, which Bres as a king fails to fulfil.[177] A king's success, furthermore, is crucial for the well-being of the society. Following the example of Bres, the Fomoiri oppress the TDD, destroy the prosperity of their community, leave social obligations unfulfilled, and eventually impose tribute on them. These narrative depictions echo the concerns of a society undergoing a period of significant social transition.

2.3.3   Annalistic evidence

The majority of our information regarding the Scandinavian activity in medieval Ireland comes from the Irish annals. The historical evidence can be verified or criticised through interdisciplinary means, like comparison with archaeological surveys. However, despite their own inherent biases, the annals remain an invaluable source for the contemporary Irish mindset.

---

and the role of Lochlann in Medieval Irish literature on several occasions, see Ní Mhaonaigh, 'The Vikings' and Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Literary Lochlann', in Wilson McLeod, James Fraser & Anja Gunderloch (eds.) *Cànan & Cultar: Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig* 3 (Edinburgh, 2006), 25-37.

[174] Ní Mhaonaigh, 'The Vikings', 101; despite the possibilities of reading *CMT* as a political allegory of the late Viking Age, it needs to be questioned to which extent were the literary inhabitants of Lochlann perceived as the predecessors of the Hiberno-Scandinavians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. There are no indications that Lochlann, or its associated regions, in *CMT* represent a mythical or an Otherworldly location, although it had been imbued with such associations within the shared literary imagination by the end of the twelfth century, Ní Mhaonaigh, 'The Vikings', 104.

[175] Gray, *CMT*, 72-3; Mac Cana also noted on the (Scandinavian) invaders being perceived as primary agents for social and moral decay, Proinsias Mac Cana, 'The influence of the Vikings on Celtic Literature', in Brian Ó Cuív (ed.), *The Impact of the Scandinavian Invasions on the Celtic-speaking Peoples c. 800-1100* (Dublin, 1962), 78-118, 110.

[176] Gray, *CMT*, 32-3; *Gapuis trá Bres an flaith feib do-n-indnacht dó. Buí fodhord móar imbe lie máthrui la Túaith Déi, ar níbtar béoluide a scénai úatha. Cid menic notístais, níptar cormaide a n-anáulai. Ní fhacutar dano a filidh iná a mbardai nó a cáinte nó i cruitire nó i cuslendaib nó a cornairie nó i clesomhnaig nó a n-ónmide oga n-airfide aru cinn isin techlug. Níco lotar dano a comramai a ségonn. Ní facutar a trénfiorai do fromadh fri eggnamh liesin rígh.*

[177] Kingship and tribute will be discussed in 2.3.4.

Inspecting the annalistic evidence shows how, and in what contexts, the foreigners were recorded throughout this period. Ó Corráin has noted that the annals include three entries regarding the activity of 'Viking royals' in Ireland in 848, 849 and 853, all of which are connected to the kingdom of '*Lothlend, Laithlind, Laithlinn,* later *Lochlainn*'.[178] The title 'king of Lochlann' is used in entries, such as AU 853.2: 'Amlaíb, son of the king of Lochlann, came to Ireland'.[179] Other terms for, as far as we can tell, viking rulers appear occasionally, such as AU 873.3: 'Ímar, king of the Norsemen of all Ireland and Britain, ended his life.'[180] This entry also has interesting connotations in terms of the geopolitical of unity of the Scandinavians. The annals generally refer to the incoming foreigners either as *gennti* or *Gaill*, however, a number of variations appear occasionally.[181] Some of the names include *Nordmannis* (e.g. AU 859.4, 863.3, 871.4 and 873.3), *Finngenti* & *Dubgennti* (e.g. AU 877.5), *Dubhgaill* (e.g. AU 877.3, 893.3) and *Finngaill* (e.g. AU 851.3). These labels have been seen as an indication of diverse Scandinavian groups being active in Ireland. However, Downham has considered this argument and deduced that any ethnic connotations have been imbued on the names by later historians.[182] A great majority of the annal entries describe the plundering of ecclesiastic sites and killing of people. However, amongst these are entries which indicate a more complicated relationship. The fact that these entries are in minority has seen them being overlooked in favour of a more simplistic vikings-as-plunderers analogue. Interaction which has turned into collaboration can be seen in entries such as AU 862.2: 'Aed son of Niall went with (?) the kings of the foreigners into Mide, and plundered Mide with Flann son of Conaing', and AU 850.3: 'Cinaed son of Conaing, king of Cianacht, rebelled against Mael Sechnaill with the support of the foreigners, and plundered the Uí Néill from the Sinann to the sea'.[183] The prevalence of mentions pertaining to the Scandinavians in the annals emphasises their constant presence within the consciousness of the Irish since the beginning of the Viking Age. Despite this they retain a sense of being distinctly Other throughout much of the period in how they are depicted through language.

The wealth of literary material surviving from medieval Ireland allows us to compare and contrast literary motifs between different types of material. The annals are easily seen as a

---

[178] Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings', 300; note that it has been questioned whether *Laithlind* and *Lochlann* refer to the same location, and if so whether it was in Scandinavia or in Scotland, for discussion, see Arne Kruse, 'Laithlinn', *Namn og Nemne* 32 (2015), 49-86.

[179] Seán Mac Airt & Gearóid Mac Niocaill (ed. & trans.), *The Annals of Ulster* (Dublin, 1983); *Amhlaim m. righ Laithlinde do tuidhecht a n-Erinn*; further references to AU will be included in the text.

[180] *Imhar, rex Nordmannorum totius Hibernie & Brittanie, uitam finiuit.*

[181] Clare Downham, *Viking kings of Britain and Ireland: the dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014* (Edinburgh, 2007), xv-xx.

[182] *Ibid.*

[183] AU 862.2: *Aedh m. Neill co riga Gall i m-Mide, & la Flann m. Conaing do indriudh Midhe*; AU 850.3: *Cinaedh m. Conaing, rex Ciannachtae, du frithtuidecht Mael Sechnaill a n-neurt Gall cor indridh Ou Neill o Shinaind co m-muir.*

distinct type of source, and more truthful in their representation of the historical context than narrative stories. Despite this all literature was produced by the same learned classes, and so manifests a common intellectual formation, shared prejudices and political motivations. Therefore, it is not a surprise that the description of the Fomoiri in *CMT* is in many ways paralleled to that of the invaders in the annals. We can begin by considering the moment of invasion as it is described in *CMT*:

> After that he [Elatha] sent him [Bres] to the champion Balor, grandson of Nét, the king of the Hebrides, and to Indech mac Dé Domnann, the king of the Fomoire; and these gathered all the forces from Lochlainn westwards to Ireland, to impose their tribute and their rule upon them by force, and they made a single bridge of ships from the Hebrides to Ireland.[184]

In this scenario the Fomoirian ruler of Ireland is losing his position and requests help from his kin overseas. The request is granted resulting in an alliance and the Fomoiri come into Ireland to impose rule and tribute on them. It is this collaboration which leads to the battle. Reading a sequence like this it is easy to see the allegorical connotations of such a situation when it is contrasted with the power structures of the late Viking Age. In fact, there is evidence of very similar occasions within the annals. In AU 853.2 it is stated that: 'Amlaíb, son of the king of Lochlann, came to Ireland, and the foreigners of Ireland submitted to him, and he took tribute from the Irish'.[185] Another occasion is envisioned in entry AU 849.6: 'A naval expedition of seven score ships of adherents of the king of the foreigners came to exact obedience from the foreigners who were in Ireland before them, and afterwards they caused confusion in the whole country'.[186] These entries provide a direct historical parallel to the narrative extract described above, which in turn enforces the possibilities of reading the narrative as a reflection of the historical situation. This scenario of a Scandinavian fleet arriving in Ireland to enforce the power of the already settled incomers has been described as facilitating 'conquest, control of the Vikings already settled in Ireland, and the imposition of taxes on Irish kingdoms'.[187] This brings us to one of the major motifs shared between the historical evidence for the period and *CMT* – that is the concept of tribute.

---

[184] Gray, *CMT*, 36-7; *Faíthius iar sin cusan trénfer, co Balor húa Néitt, co rígh na n-Innsi, 7 co hIndech mac Dé Domnand, co ríg Fomoire; 7 nos-taireclamat-side do neoch buí ó Lochlainn síar do slúag doqum n-Érenn, do astad a císa 7 a rígi ar éigin foruib, gur'ba háondroichet long ó Indsib Gallad co hÉrinn leo.*

[185] *Amhlaim m. righ Laithlinde do tuidhecht a n-Erinn coro giallsat Gaill Erenn dó, & cis o Goidhelaib.*

[186] *Muirfhecht .uii.xx. long di muinntir righ Gall du thiachtain du tabairt greamma forsna Gaillu ro badur ara ciunn co commascsat h-Erinn n-uile iarum.*

[187] Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings', 302.

2.3.4 Kingship and tribute

CMT has often been considered a narrative of kingship addressing the role and responsibilities of a king.[188] Upon closer inspection many of the requirements of a king stated in the narrative seem to have parallels in other texts produced in the period.[189] For instance, Dáibhi Ó Cróinin has suggested that according to the law tract *Cóic Conairi Fuigill*, 'The Five Paths of Judgement', several conditions must be met before a man is legally eligible for kingship.[190] These include that the candidate must be the son and the grandson of a king.[191] They must also be 'of good legal standing', physically unblemished and not guilty of theft, as well as 'a man of property'.[192] While a number of further stipulations is specified in legal tracts, these primary conditions crystallise around the concepts of descent, good judgement and right to land. These concepts can be compared to the elements of rightful kingship in *CMT*:

> There was contention regarding the sovereignty of the men of Ireland between the Túatha Dé and their wives, since Núadu was not eligible for kingship after his hand had been cut off. They said that it would be appropriate for them to give the kingship to Bres the son of Elatha, to their own adopted son, and that giving him the kingship would knit the Fomorians' alliance with them, since his father Elatha mac Delbaith was king of the Fomoire.[193]

Bres is eligible for the kingship of Ireland because he is descendent from Elatha, who comes from a line of Fomoirian kings. Furthermore, he is a more eligible candidate than Núadu due to being 'physically unblemished'. In the course of the narrative, it also becomes apparent that he is connected to the cultivated land through his role as the king.[194] However, as a ruler Bres does not fulfil the social obligations of hospitality, patronage and public entertaining, expected from a king.[195] These literary expectations are clear echoes of the nature of Irish kingship in the Middle Ages. Kingship was socially motivated and 'power was displayed in public events', such as inaugurations at royal sites, furthermore, the king continuously exercised acts of enforcing

---

[188] Gray called *CMT* 'a narrative treatise on kingship', Gray, 'Myth and Structure 1', 191.

[189] It should be noted that legal tracts represent the same value system and originate from the same cultural framework as the other categories of writing.

[190] Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 91.

[191] *Ibid.*; Downham, *Medieval Ireland*, 62.

[192] Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 91.

[193] Gray, *CMT*, 26-7; *Baí imcosnam flathae fher n-Érenn iter Túad Dé ₇ a mná, ar nirb' inríghae Núadoo íar mbéim a láime de. Adpertutar ba cumdigh dóip ríge do Pres mac Elathan, díe ngormac fesin, ₇ co snaidhmfed caratrad Fomure fria an ríge de tabairt dó-sin, ar ba rí Fomore a athair, ed ón Elotha mac Delbáeth*; note that this sequence can be found at the start of the narrative, within a part of the text which may be a later addendum.

[194] See, Gray, *CMT*, 69; further discussion about this sequence in Elizabeth Gray, 'Cath Maige Truired: Myth and Structure (84-93, 120-67)', *Éigse* 19 (1982/83), 230-62, 251.

[195] This quote was discussed in 2.3.2.

his power, such as extracting hospitality and making legal judgements.[196] The ideal of a rightful king was heavily influenced by Christian ideologies, which further emphasised the importance of qualities such a generosity, truth and good judgement.[197] Upon inspecting the role of kingship in *CMT* in these terms, it becomes apparent that it is only when Bres fails to abide by these ideologies that he is declared an unfit king. This judgement is passed by the poet Coirpre, to whom Bres has also failed to show the expected hospitality, in the following sequence: "Bres's prosperity no longer exists,' he said, and that was true. There was only blight on him from that hour'.[198] It can be noted that, hand in hand with these prominently Christian values, existed a more mythologically based belief of a 'union between a king and his kingdom'.[199] A king's role in the fortunes of the natural world and agriculture can be seen as a common motif in folklore and mythology of areas such as Ireland. The king's rightful judgement was seen to affect, not only the people, but also the abundance of the natural landscape.[200] Kingship itself was in many ways contractual – it was tied to the royal clients and their obligations rather than geographical borders.[201] The 'freemen in early medieval Irish society were bound to their lords on receipt of a fief (often comprising cattle)', thus as can be expected from a primarily agricultural society, the success of a ruler was tied to the well-being of the cultivated land.[202]

From the start of the ninth century the power of provincial kings over petty kings had increased, which also led to the development of a widespread system of tax, tribute and renders.[203] The concept of tribute features heavily in the historical sources for medieval Ireland. Woolf has stated that 'many *túatha* regularly paid tribute to neighbouring kings or indeed to a king of their own who spent little time among them'.[204] According to him this system of tributary relationships formed also between the Scandinavian settlers and the Irish, especially in contexts where the initial camps turned into towns with significant trade and resources.[205] In the annals the concept of tribute appears, not often, but steadily through the centuries and can refer to obligations extracted by either Scandinavian or native Irish rulers. One of these references from AU was quoted above and refers to Amlaíb from Lochlann, who came to Ireland and had the 'foreigners of Ireland' submit to him and gathered tribute from the Irish.[206] In this example,

---

[196] Downham, *Medieval Ireland*, 83.
[197] *Ibid*., 83-4.
[198] Gray, *CMT*, 34-5; *Ní fil a maín trá Bresi,' ol sé. Ba fír ón dano. Ní boí acht meth foair-sim ónd úair-sin.*
[199] Downham, *Medieval Ireland*, 84.
[200] *Ibid.,* 85.
[201] *Ibid.,* 83.
[202] *Ibid*., 57.
[203] *Ibid*., 58 & 60.
[204] Woolf, 'The Scandinavian Intervention', 126.
[205] *Ibid.*
[206] AU 853.2, for this quote see 2.3.3.

tribute is only mentioned in connection to the native Irish people. In fact, it has been suggested that, for example, in the case of Dublin tribute largely consisted of cattle brought in from the hinterland, which was used to feed the growing population of the settlement.[207] The fact that only the Irish were subject to material tribute in this context has been seen as an indication that the Scandinavians were seen as freemen, but the Irish as a subject population.[208] A further note to gathering tribute, from a slightly different perspective can be found in the Annals of Tigernach (AT) 980.4, and a reference to the same event is noted in AFM 979.6. These entries describe the campaign of Mael Sechnaill mac Domnaill and Eochaidh mac Ardgail against the 'Foreigners of Dublin' during which they demanded, amongst other things, freedom from tribute for the Uí Néill.[209] The simple entry reveals several aspects of the power dynamics involved; it is interesting that the Scandinavian rulers of Dublin gathered tribute from the prominent dynasty of the Uí Néill. Although this can primarily be seen as evidence of the power of Dublin during this era. A decade later the fortunes had changed and Mael Sechnaill imposed tribute on Dublin instead.[210]

In *CMT*, all of the references to tribute appear in the body of the narrative.[211] The first significant mention is in §25:

> But after Bres had assumed the sovereignty, three Fomorian kings (Indech mac Dé Domnann, Elatha mac Delbaith, and Tethra) imposed their tribute upon Ireland – and there was not a smoke from a house in Ireland which was not under their tribute. In addition, the warriors of Ireland [Ogma and the Dagda] were reduced to serving him.[212]

This sequence includes the double insult of extracting tribute and forcing the men of high status into servitude. Carey has previously contrasted this episode with the following entry from AU 863.4:

> The caves of Achad Aldai, and of Cnodba, and of Boadán's Mound above Dubad, and of Óengoba's wife, were searched by the foreigners – something which had never been done before. This was the occasion when three kings of the foreigners, i.e. Amlaíb and

---

[207] Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 273-4.

[208] Ó Corráin, 'Vikings', 301.

[209] Whitley Stokes (ed.), 'The annals of Tigernach', *Revue Celtique* 16-18 (1895-97); Gearóid Mac Niocaill (trans.), 'The Annals of Tigernach', in CELT https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T100002A/index.html [accessed, 30.08.2018].

[210] AT 989.2.

[211] There are indications that cattle-tribute is an aspect of *CMT*, see §165 in Gray, *CMT,* 70-1; the word for tribute *cí(o)s* in *CMT* can also be found in AU 853.2, however, AT 980.4 and AFM 979.6 use the word *cáin*.

[212] Gray, *CMT*, 28-9; *Ó rogeb íarum Bres ríghe, ronaisceatar Fomoraig (.i. Indech mac Déi Domnann ⁊ Elathu mac Delbaíth ⁊ Tethra, trí ríg Fomorach), a cíos for Érinn – cona boí déi do cléthe a n-Érinn forsna béth cíos dóib. Dobretha dano na trénfirae a foghnam dóu.*

Ímar and Auisle, plundered the land of Flann son of Conaing; and Lorcán son of Cathal, king of Mide, was with them in this.[213]

He suggested that this annal entry is directly correlated with the motivations for the writing of *CMT*. In this argument Indech, Elatha and Tethra are directly paralleled with Amlaíb, Ímar and Auisle, and the actions of the Fomoiri are seen as the actions of the Scandinavians. The next time tribute is mentioned in §50 when Balor and Indech 'gathered all the forces from Lochlainn westwards to Ireland, to impose their tribute and their rule upon them by force'.[214] This section explicitly describes the forces coming from Hebrides (*ó Indsib Gallad*) and Lochlann to force tribute on the men of Ireland. The symbolic and practical role of tribute in the power discourse is obvious, and the parallel to annalistic evidence of tribute extracted by the Scandinavians during the Viking Age cannot be overlooked in this context.

CMT describes tribute as bondage and a destiny worse than death, therefore, it comes to represent the ultimate loss of independence and communal honour. *CMT* indicates that tribute had to be paid 'by the act of the whole tribe', which emphasises it as a shared responsibility.[215] In this sense the battle of Moytirra becomes a nationalistic struggle for independence and identity, as can be seen here:

> Lug was urging the men of Ireland to fight the battle fiercely so they should not be in bondage any longer, because it was better for them to find death while protecting their fatherland (*a n-athardho*) than to be in bondage (*fo doíri*) and under tribute (*fou cís*) as they had been.[216]

It is in these three concepts – the fatherland, bondage and tribute – that the sense of identity, or the impending loss of it, culminate.[217] *Atharda* represents the ancestral land, which appears as the physical manifestation of belonging-through-descent, more than the geographical location. It signifies the land with its customs, traditions and social history. *Doíre* and *cís*, on the other hand, signify two different sides of lost independence. *Doíre* is the loss of one's freedom and social status, whereas *cís* concerns economic freedom. Taking control over the social and economic freedom of people is a way of establishing cultural or political power over them. In

---

[213] Carey, 'A London Library, An Irish Manuscript', 16; *Uamh Achaidh Alddai & Cnodhbai & uam Fheirt Boadan os Dubadh & uam Mna Angobann ro scruidiset Gaill, quod antea non perfectum est, .i. a fecht ro slatsat .iii. righ Gall feronn Flaind m. Conaing, .i. Amhlaim & Ímhar & Auisle; & Lorcan m. Cathail leo occa, rí Mide.*

[214] Gray, *CMT,* 36-7; *nos-taireclamat-side do neoch buí ó Lochlainn síar do slúag doqum n-Érenn, do astad a císa 7 a rígi ar éigin foruib.*

[215] *Ibid.,* 32-3; *a foicidh na túaithe oli.*

[216] *Ibid.,* 58-9; *Boí Lug og nertad fer n-Érenn co roferdais go dícra an cath fo dégh ná beidis a ndoíri ní bod sírie. Ar ba ferr dúoib bás d'fhogáil oc díden a n-athardho indás beith fo doíri 7 fou cís amal rouhátar.*

[217] eDIL s.v. *atharda*, dil.ie/4648, 'fatherland, patrimony, native land'; eDIL s.v. *doíre*, dil.ie/17939, 'captivity, bondage, slavery'; eDIL s.v. *cís*, dil.ie/9231, 'tax, tribute, cess, rent'.

other words, parallels to many of the socio-political themes and motifs of the late Viking Age can be identified in the narrative of *CMT*. This reflects the nature of the narrative as a political allegory and justifies its use in analysing the ideologies and perceptions of the era.

2.4   Land and locality

Pseudo-history is often approached from an ethnocentric viewpoint due to its original connection with genealogies and its attempt to create and outline the ethnic origins of peoples, as well as its representation of relatable socio-political situations, as outlined above. However, the importance of land and location has repeatedly appeared as a key motif in the foregoing discussion. Therefore, considering a geopolitical perspective and the connection between the landscape and the literature in relation to pseudo-historical texts can open up new horizons in their criticism. In fact, Mac Cana saw the geographical location and land itself 'as the material basis for the concept of national unity'.[218] Moreover, Williams noted that in tradition the 'gods' natures were inseparably yoked to the places where they were supposed to live'.[219] Thus, the relationship between the characters and the geography of Ireland forms a key approach to constructing the ideological milieu of pseudo-histories, including *CMT*. Furthermore, pseudo-history exploits physical features of the landscape and historically significant sites to further its agenda – the main example of this is the way in which Tara has been constructed as the seat of power from prehistory onwards in pseudo-historical narratives.[220] Moreover, *LGÉ* and the associated pseudo-historical corpus is presented as an origin legend of the whole of Ireland. This amplifies the appropriation of geographic sites and lays claim on the island as a whole. In addition, the right to the physical land can, as already noted, be connected to a king's right to rule and the early traditions involving a sovereignty goddess. Thus, in the literary traditions physically claiming the island promotes a much larger ideology of political power, which is held not only over the island but also over its people. Analysing the geographical layout of a narrative is also a simple way of discussing the manifestations of the Self versus the Other, as these concepts are fundamentally represented by geographic boundaries.

CMT itself uses an extensive array of both real and fictional geographical features and place-names, which were indexed by Gray based largely on Hogan's *Onomasticon*.[221] Gray lists 83 place-

---

[218] Mac Cana, 'Early Irish Ideology', 67.
[219] Williams, *Ireland's Immortals*, 89.
[220] Ní Lionáin, 'Lebor Gabála Érenn', 39; this makes it allegorically especially powerful that in *CMT* Tara is the court of the TDD.
[221] Gray, *CMT*, 138-41; Edmund Hogan, *Onomasticon goedelicum locorum et tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae* (Dublin, 1910).

names in total, among which are the mythical locations; *Falias, Findias, Goirias* and *Murias*.[222] Although all of these locations can be found in the summary at the beginning of the tale, and therefore, it is possible that they were not originally part of the literary landscape of *CMT*.[223] This would mean that all of the place-names in the body of the text can be, with relative certainty, associated with 'real' geography of Ireland and the surrounding regions. The places indexed by Gray, which in *CMT* are associated with locations outside Ireland are:[224]

> *Ára/Árainn* (Arran),[225] *Espáin/Espán* (Spain),[226] *Íle* (Islay),[227] *Innsi/Insi Gall/Insib Gallad/Innsib Gall* (the Hebrides),[228] *Lochlainn/Lochlaindi*,[229] *Mana/Manaidn* (the Isle of Man),[230] *Rachra/Rachraind* (Rathlin Island?),[231] *Sgiathia* (Skye or Scythia)[232] and *Traoi* (Troy).[233]

Árainn, Íle, Manaidn and *Rachraind* appear in the addendum in §13 and will be discussed in more detail shortly. The next group of place-names includes *Lochlainn* and variations of the name *In(n)si Gall*. These form the central area of the foreigners' power in *CMT*. *Insi Gall* is generally taken to refer to the Hebrides and has a strong Scandinavian connotation during this period, as does Lochlann. Although the latter has created much debate regarding both its location and the meaning of the name.[234] Use of the name *Insi Gall* in *CMT* is one of the reasons, why the text's dating remains contended. This is due to the fact that the term *Insi Gall* was used in the contemporary Irish annals for the first time in the end of the tenth century.[235] It remains questionable, whether the usage predates that in other texts or in common speech.

The remaining foreign locations appear on their own and only once in the course of the narrative. *Sgiathia Lochlaindi* is taken by Gray to mean Scythia of Lochlann, but Ó Corráin has noted that it could be taken to mean the Isle of Skye instead.[236] The context in which the name appears in *CMT* can be read in support of his argument. It is stated in the narrative that there

---

[222] Gray, *CMT*, 24-5.
[223] Carey, 'Myth and Mythography', 54.
[224] For consistency the Irish forms of these names are listed in the form they appear in the Index, Gray, *CMT*, 138-41.
[225] Gray, *CMT*, 26-7; Gray notes that Arran is most likely intended here, but this could be questioned, Gray, *CMT*, 138.
[226] *Ibid.*, 38-9.
[227] *Ibid.*, 26-7.
[228] *Ibid.*
[229] *Ibid.*, 38-9.
[230] *Ibid.*, 26-7.
[231] *Ibid.*; note again that the location could also be Lambay or other.
[232] *Ibid.*, 38-9.
[233] *Ibid.*, 40-1.
[234] For discussion, see Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Literary Lochlann'.
[235] Thomas Clancy, 'The Gall-Gàidheil and Galloway', *JSNS* 2 (2008), 19-50, 26.
[236] Gray, *CMT*, 38-9; Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings', 314.

'was rivalry between the men from Scythia of Lochlainn and the men out of the Hebrides concerning that expedition'.[237] In terms of the geopolitical realities of this rivalry, it would make sense that these areas are in close vicinity of each other. However, including Scythia and Troy in *CMT* could be seen as influence from Christian historiography, which played part in the construction of Irish pseudo-histories. Associating this location with Skye could be a later rationalisation, or an attempt to ground the story in local geography. On the other hand, it has been previously thought that the first viking attacks occurred on Rathlin and Skye in 795, which would emphasise the importance of these two places being named in the tale. However, the mention of Skye in this context has been deemed a mistake by Downham.[238] The last two names on the list are *Espáin* and *Traoi*, which appear in §55 and §69 respectively.[239] Out of these *Espáin* holds less significance as a geographical location, as it only appears as a component of the phrase 'the king of Spain'.[240] Troy, on the other hand, merits a further look into its appearance within the tale:

> Then [Lug] said that they should bring him the *fidchell*-boards of Tara, and he won all the stakes, so that he made the *cró* of Lug. (But if *fidchell* was invented at the time of the Trojan war, it had not reached Ireland yet, for the battle of Mag Tuired and the destruction of Troy occurred at the same time.)[241]

This occasion is one of the clear indications that *CMT* has been edited and annotated during its development. It is likely that this notation has been added in an effort to provide coherence and historical context, as a similar statement can be found in some recensions of *LGÉ*. It appears as a note within a king-list recounting the ancestors of the sons of Míl, as follows: 'Thuoris … in his time Troy was captured, and to him came Menelaus and Helen after its capture'.[242] According to the complicated timeline of *LGÉ* this would allow the reign of the TDD and the fall of Troy to occur during the same period in the narrative timeline. It is a remarkable show of intertextual coherence that these timelines in *CMT* and *LGÉ* appear to support each other. The fact that the information is included as a separate note in each text opens up the possibility that they have been read and revised together with an agenda to improve the coherence of the corpus as a whole.

---

[237] Gray, *CMT*, 38-9; *Ba combág ogond fir o Sgiathia Lochlaindi 7 a hInnsib Gall immon slógad-sin.*

[238] Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings', 323; Clare Downham, 'An imaginary Viking-raid on Skye in 795?', *SGS* 20 (2000), 192-6.

[239] Gray, *CMT*, 38-9 & 40-1.

[240] *Ibid.,* 38-9; *rí Espáine*; the king of Spain and his children appear as stock characters in much of the Irish pseudo-historical material from this period.

[241] *Ibid.*, 40-1; *As ed atbert-som go rocurit fidhcelda na Temrach dia saigidh-sium ann sin, 7 gou rug-som a toichell, coned and sin dorigne an cró Logo. (Acht masa I n-uamas an Catha Troíanna rohairged in fi[d]ceall ní torracht hÉrinn and sin í. Úair is a n-áonaimsir rogníadh cath Muigi Tuired 7 togail Traoi.).*

[242] R.A.S. Macalister (ed. and trans.), *Lebor gabála Érenn: The book of the taking of Ireland*, part V (Dublin, 1956), 51.

The opening lines of *CMT* state that: 'the Túatha Dé Danann were in the northern islands of the world'.[243] This immediately anchors the location of the TDD to a familiar part of the world. The same sequence recounts how the Fir Bolg were driven away from Ireland: 'those of the Fir Bolg who escaped from the battle fled to the Fomoire, and they settled in Arran and is Islay and in Man and in Rathlin.'[244] The Fomoiri, and in this particular sequence the Fir Bolg, are associated with islands which were under heavy Scandinavian influence during the late Viking Age. This specific group of islands, *Árainn, Íle, Manaidn* and *Rachraind,* appears in an easily recognisable form in several of the eleventh-century pseudo-historical texts. In addition to *CMT*, it is repeated in *Lebor Bretnach*, which is the Gaelic version of *Historia Brittonum*, and in *LGÉ*. Of course, the close relationship between this sequence in *CMT* and in *LGÉ* needs to be recognised within this discussion. At the very least this can be seen as an attestation to the intertextual literary landscape in which these pseudo-histories were created and revised. In *LB* the group appears in the following context: 'The Fir Bolg however conquered the Isle of Man and some other islands in addition, i.e. Arran and Islay and Rathlinn'.[245] This is an addition found solely in the Gaelic version of the text. *Historia Brittonum* simply states that: 'Bulc indeed with his people held the Isle of Man, and others round about'.[246] In *LGÉ* the corresponding information appears in the form:

> The Fir Bolg fell in that battle all but a few, and they went out of Ireland in flight from the Tuatha De Danann, into Ara, and Ile, and Rachra and other islands besides. (It was they who led the Fomoraig to the second battle of Mag Tuired.)[247]

The close relationship between the sequences in *CMT* and *LGÉ* is unmistakable, which shows that one of the texts was worked out in conjunction with intimate knowledge of the other. The above section can only be found in Macalister's source F, which is split into two parts found between Stowe D.3.1 and the *Book of Fermoy*. Carey has argued that the interpolation at the beginning of *CMT* in which the above group of islands is mentioned originates on the whole from a version of *LGÉ*.[248] However, there appears to be some further complications when it

---

[243] Gray, *CMT,* 24-5; *Bátar Túathai Dé Danonn i n-indsib túascertachaib an domuin*; note again that these lines originate from the summary at the start of *CMT*, which explains the following mention to the Fir Bolg.
[244] *Ibid.*; *Do neoch immorro térná de Feraib Bolc asin cath, lotar ar teched de saigid na Fomore gor gabsad a n-Árainn 7 a nd-Íle 7 a Manaidn 7 a Rachraind.*
[245] A.G. van Hamel, *Lebor Bretnach* (Dublin, 1932); *Fir Bolg immorro rogabsat Manaind 7 araile innsi arceana .i. Ara 7 Ili 7 Rach[r]a;* translation in courtesy of Thomas Clancy.
[246] David Dumville (ed.), *The Historia Brittonum* (Cambridge, 1985), 69; *Builc autem tenuit cum suis Euboniam insulam et alia circiter loca*; translation in courtesy of Thomas Clancy.
[247] R.A.S. Macalister (ed. and trans.), *Lebor Gabála Érenn: Book of the Taking of Ireland*, part IV (Dublin, 1941), 10-1; *Fir Bolg tra do rochradar isan eat sin acht beg, 7 lodar-side a Erinn for teichid Tuatha De Danann, in Araind 7 an Ili 7 a Rachraind 7 an insib aili olchena. Conad iad tue Fomoreha iarsin don eat tanaisti Muigi Tuirid.*
[248] Carey, 'Myth and Mythography', 54.

comes to the relationship of these three extracts. The simplest of them is found in *LB*, which is barely a translation of the account in *HB* with the addition of the three other names. Both accounts in *CMT* and in *LGÉ* include more narrative information. This could be due to the different styles and purposes of the texts. While more dedicated research is necessary in order to draw definite conclusions, it looks like *LGÉ* has, on this occasion, been edited with knowledge of the parallel in *CMT*. Intertextual relationships like this go to show how origin-stories and pseudo-histories were worked out within the same learned circles. Therefore, the intellectual environment shapes the literary landscape in which the historical milieu permeates through the political agendas of the writers.

CMT is set in prehistory, to a time of the sacking of Troy, but the tale's medieval writers conjured an imaginary landscape which was essentially timeless. Mountains, lochs and rivers are used to create a relatable geographical milieu; twelve examples in each of these categories are named in the narrative. Situating these locations into the political landscape of medieval Ireland shows that a majority of them are in the northern-half of Ireland in the territories of the Connachta and the Uí Néill.[249] The familiarity with the slowly changing natural features of Ireland promotes a sense of belonging, which is emphasised when the narrative contrasts the geographical milieu of Ireland to the lands ruled by the Fomoiri. The clear dichotomy is a simple way of not only creating parallels to the realities of the Viking Age, but also emphasising the set discourse between the Self and the Other in the narrative. The defining moment of this juxtaposition is when the Fomoirian rulers gather their forces from 'Lochlainn westward to Ireland' to impose their tribute and rule on the island. They do this by making 'a single bridge of ships from the Hebrides (*ó Indsib Gallad*) to Ireland'.[250] The *Insi Gall* in this context would seem to refer to islands relatively close to Ireland. It should also be noted that the *Insi Gall* appears separate from Lochlann, although both of them come under the jurisdiction of the Fomoiri. Thus, landscape and locality form a base for the creation and portrayal of identity and belonging, more so in the constant dichotomy with the foreign locations.

The aim of this chapter has been to build a case for considering the parallels between the historical context of the late Viking Age in Ireland and the Irish sea zone, and the literary narrative of *CMT*. Special focus was paid on the discourses of power and cultural interaction. It can be argued that, compared to the complicated socio-political landscape of medieval Ireland, the literary depiction is a simplification of the contemporary realities and to some extent

---

[249] It should be recognised that not all of the locations can be reliably located on the modern map.
[250] Gray, *CMT*, 36-7; *ó Lochlainn síar do slúag doqum n-Érenn; háondroichet long ó Indsib Gallad co hÉrinn leo.*

propagandistic. However, the narrative depictions show significant parallels to the annalistic evidence, especially when it comes to the presentation of concepts of political power and tribute. In this context, it needs to be acknowledged that both our literary work and our chronicles have the same intellectual and literary provenance, which almost certainly has resulted in some level of intertextuality and 'cross-contamination' between literary genres. The way in which *CMT* employs key themes and a realistic geographical milieu as its setting provides credibility for using it as a historical source in an effort to examine the contemporary ideologies and sense of identity. Furthermore, *CMT* itself includes discreet commentary regarding the role and identity of the characters within it, as can be seen in the quote: 'So Lóch was spared. Then he chanted 'The Decree of Fastening' **to the Gaels** (*do Gaídelaib*)'.[251] This is the only occasion on which the narrative refers to the TDD as Gaels, but it functions as a further justification for treating them as such and discussing the narrative as a literary reflection of the society and its values. The Fomoiri who hail from the islands across the sea are clearly the Other of the narrative and often directly relatable to the Scandinavian incomers.[252] However, on one occasion they are described in a distinctly different manner: 'This is why they were asked for the delay: that he might gather the warriors of the **síd** (*sídho*), the Fomoire'.[253] This is the only occasion on which the role of the Fomoiri, for an unknown reason, slips from being considered as the historical Other to being a mythological Other. Nonetheless, the cultural interaction between the Fomoiri and the TDD closely reflects the realities of late Viking-Age interactions between the Irish and the Scandinavians in the Irish sea zone. A complete cultural assimilation between the Irish and the Scandinavians was avoided for a long time due to strong independent cultural identities. This may have assisted in the creation of hybrid identities, which shared characteristics of both cultures, as a form of retaining major pieces of cultural identity within a situation of profound interaction. The Irish literary class had a highly developed sense of Irish identity based on language and culture and consolidated through genealogy and origin myths. Therefore, the Scandinavian identity was so strongly cast as the Other compared to the Irish, that especially in the literary sphere, they were destined to remain *Gaill*, foreigners.[254]

---

[251] Gray, *CMT*, 64-5; *Aunauchta Lóch íerum. Is ann cachain 'In Dáil n-Ashadha' do Gaídelaib.*
[252] *Ibid.*
[253] *Ibid.*, 34-5; *Is airi gesu dóib an dául: co tarcomlat-sim trénfiru ant sídho .i. na Fomore.*
[254] Furthermore, Mac Cana has suggested that due to the 'rigidity' of the Irish literary tradition, and the conservative nature of the learned classes, the Scandinavians were not incorporated into the major Irish literary cycles before the twelfth century – when the incomers had already assimilated to the Irish society. Even then the literary representations remained that of raiders and invaders, which Mac Cana suggested was due to the anxieties and negative memories left behind by the Viking Age, Mac Cana, 'The influence of the Vikings', 96-8.

3 Chapter 3: Hybridity and Integration in *CMT*

3.1 Introduction

At last we can turn to the thought of hybridity, which has lingered on the edges of our consciousness throughout this dissertation and in many ways acted as the motivation behind its writing. Hybridity embodies a sliding scale of change which includes the mid-steps, as well as the extremes. These medial spaces were called the 'difficult middles' by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen.[255] Hybridity arises as a central concept within the ideological landscape of *CMT,* but it is apparent that the preoccupation with cultural change has its roots deeper in the contemporary consciousness of the late Viking Age. Following from the consideration of cultural interaction in the previous chapter, it is easy to see that the natural movement from interaction to integration between the Irish and the Scandinavian cultural factions brought with it uncertainties, as well as cultural pressure points. The aim of this chapter is to advance from considering separate cultures and identities, which come into contact with each other and begin to interact on social, political and economic levels, to examining the hybridity which results from migration, colonisation or cultural integration. As has already been established, hybridity in its simplest form means *mixing* – the 'disruption and forcing together' of any unlike unities.[256] It first emerged in the academic consciousness as a term of biology. However, the hybridity theory of literary and anthropological disciplines has deeper connotations regarding the discourses of race, culture, and identity. There is no single correct concept of hybridity; it is everchanging by its nature.[257] The rhetoric of hybridity, however, as it can be understood in modern scholarship, emerged in conjunction with postcolonial theory and the study of imperialism. The fundamental voices of hybridity theory include names such as Homi K. Bhabha, Mikhail Bakhtin and Robert Young.[258] The theoretical discourse that these scholars have built relies on a long tradition of literary, anthropological, and cultural study with influence from key thinkers such as Foucault, Derrida and Lacan. The aim of this chapter is to discuss hybridity theory and how it applies in the context of *CMT*, as well as consider the concepts of liminality and subversion within the framework of hybridity theory. All of this will be done in conjunction with discussion of the different manifestations of hybridity in the content, context

---

[255] Cohen can be considered a pioneer in medieval hybridity theory, especially regarding bodies and monster-theory. His focus is on hybridity in medieval British texts but many of the same principles are applicable to the Irish context, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain* (New York, 2006).
[256] Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London, 1995), 26.
[257] *Ibid.*, 27.
[258] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994); Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin, 1981).

and structure of *CMT*, and consideration of how they illuminate our understanding of the narrative and the concepts of identity portrayed within it.

Hybridity theory is a developing field and includes controversies and grey areas, some of which have sprouted from the topic's current popularity and the resulting misuse of the term. The framework of hybridity used within this dissertation is intentionally straightforward and inclusive in order to accommodate the complications and ambiguities of pre-modern literary and social research. Such research is, to a certain degree, reliant on conjecture. However, there are a number of simple deductions which can be made based on *CMT* and its historical context, outlined above, which will set parameters for the following discussion. First, the period covering the late Viking Age and continuing into the early Norman period saw increasing internationalisation in Ireland. Carey has gone as far as to describe this era as an 'epoch of rapid and far-reaching social change'.[259] The increased cross-cultural contact between two different groups with strong sense of cultural identity had a clear potential to result in the creation of hybrid spaces and identities. Furthermore, this process created anxieties and concerns in the learned classes, like such change is prone to create in conservative social environments, which is reflected in the literary evidence from the era.[260] However, due to a limited social group being in charge of the production of intellectual material, we cannot automatically assume that these concerns were shared across the layers of the society. It can, nevertheless, be asked whether the intellectual orders would have had especial reason to be anxious over the social changes, or if their reaction was likely to have been shared across the society. Carey saw these social changes as the direct motivation behind the writing of *CMT* and suggested that:

> One writer symbolised this perceived disintegration with the reign of the half-foreign un-king Bres; and, with an inspired leap of the imagination, told a story in which Ireland was rescued from decadence by its own ancient gods.[261]

This statement describes Ireland as having fallen under the reign of a king who fails to identify with a singular identity group, does not manage to uphold the traditions and moral values expected from a king, and whose reign is ended by the heroes of the deep-past. Therefore, the negative consequences of cultural hybridity are emphasised, but its representation on the whole is more complicated. In addition to the un-king there is the *Samildánach*, the master of all arts, and suddenly hybridity is not only a threat but also the solution, and a possible way to overcome the limitations of humanity.

---

[259] Carey, 'A London Library, An Irish Manuscript', 14.
[260] *Ibid*; this can be reflected back to Mac Cana's assertion of the rigid literary traditions, Mac Cana, 'The influence of the Vikings', 96-8.
[261] Carey, 'A London Library, An Irish Manuscript', 14.

3.2 Hybridity theory

Hybridity appears most openly as a state of identity in moments of cultural transition, just as the 'fixity of identity is only sought in situations of instability and disruption'.[262] A condition of hybridity is the 'preservation of a degree of cultural and ethnic difference'.[263] The search for fixity itself implies a state of multiplicity, as it must be compared to a notion of singularity in order to have meaning.[264] As was noted in 1.3.2, identity is seen as a product of culture and discourse. In order to accept, and utilise, hybridity theory we must accept that identity is flexible and can be moulded through cultural discourses. In line with the theories of Foucault, it is often thought that the construction of identities is 'the focal point in the complex relationship between subjects (individuals and groups) and dominant discursive practices'.[265] The processes of individual and collective identification have their roots in structures of inclusion versus exclusion, which are central for periods of social formation.[266] As an emerging term the definitions of hybridity remain malleable; it is frequently seen as a way out of binary thinking, and by extension as a way to destabilise the dominant power discourses.[267] Therefore, hybridity is ultimately about freedom from fixed labels and expressions. This freedom is often a threat to the consensus of settled power discourses within a society, which can make hybridity subversive and radical. Moreover, hybridity is also a logical continuation within the development of identities in the context of globalisation, and thus, a paradox within the parameters of conservative patterns of identity.

For Bakhtin, who was foremost a linguist, hybridity represented the mixture of two languages, separated by identity or consciousness, within a 'single utterance'.[268] He also made a distinction between conscious hybridity and unconscious, 'organic', hybridity. Out of these he saw unconscious hybridisation as the most important mode in the development of all languages.[269] This dualistic mode of hybridity has been seen as an especially important dialectic mode in cultural interaction, as organic hybridity is inclined towards fusion, whereas, conscious hybridity is confrontational and juxtaposing.[270] Therefore, the doubleness of hybridity is simultaneously aiming for togetherness and separation.[271] It was Homi K. Bhabha who cemented hybridity as

---

[262] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 4.
[263] *Ibid.*, 27.
[264] *Ibid.*
[265] Benveniste & Gaganakis, 'Heterodoxies', 8.
[266] *Ibid.*
[267] For examination of arguments for and against this, see Sorvo, *Hybridity*, 17.
[268] Bakhtin, *Dialogic,* 358.
[269] *Ibid.*, 358-9.
[270] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 22.
[271] *Ibid.*

one of the key concepts of postcolonial studies. Bhabha's hybridity is subversive as it undermines the colonial hegemony by opening up the dominant discourse for influences of the other culture. Furthermore, as it becomes double-voiced, hybridity destroys the illusion of purity and superiority.[272] Due to the prominence of postcolonial thought in the development of hybridity theory, it is intrinsically connected to contemporary ideas of race and racism. This is because sex and sexuality are in a primary role within cultural contact, and the 19th-century imperialist discussion of hybridity focused almost solely on sexuality and sexual unions between races.[273] The Western stereotype of the promiscuous, exotic and tempting Other is widespread in descriptions of colonialised people, from especially what was referred to as the Orient.[274] This image is connected to a description of the Other as savage and monstrous. Therefore, the same character is simultaneously both tempting and dangerous.[275] Hybrid forms, whether they were produced by language or sex, were 'seen to embody threatening forms of perversion and degeneration'.[276]

A strong case has been made for reading pre-modern texts in terms of postcolonial literary theory where there are political and cultural resonances between the contexts.[277] It is remarkable how fitting some of the key concepts of hybridity theory are for discussing *CMT*. As a primary example we can use the conception of Bres. The strange Other arrives over the sea and appears as beautiful and tempting. He immediately seduces the native woman in one of the most straightforward episodes of medieval pair-forming found within Gaelic literature:

> The man said to her, 'Shall I have an hour of lovemaking with you?'
>
> 'I certainly have not made a tryst with you,' she said.
>
> 'Come without the trysting!' said he.[278]

It becomes apparent that the woman has remained virtuous before the tryst and it is only the arrival of the stranger which makes her change her behaviour, and she ends up lamenting that: 'the young men of the Túatha Dé Danann have been entreating me in vain – and you possess me as you do.'[279] There are several details of interest and importance, which we can get from this short interaction. First, the Other is undeniably sexually promiscuous and tempting. However, both the hybrid progeny and the Other himself prove dangerous for the prosperity

---

[272] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 23.

[273] *Ibid.*, 9.

[274] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978), 188.

[275] *Ibid.*

[276] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 5.

[277] Daniel Boyarin & Virginia Burrus, 'Hybridity as Subversion of Orthodoxy? Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity', *Social Compass* 52 (2005), 431-41.

[278] Gray, *CMT*, 26-7; *Ispert an fer frie, 'Innum-bioa-ssae úar coblide laut?' 'Ní rud-dálus ém,' ol in phen. 'Tic frisna dáulta,' ol é-sium;* alternative translations of *frisna* might be possible.

[279] *Ibid.*; *Maccáema Túath(a) nDéa dom nemét íar mo cáenghuide ⁊ mo ét did-siu amal atom-cota-siu.*

of Ireland in the course of the narrative. The unusual gender dynamic of the above interaction was remarked upon earlier and it appears significant again in this context. A situation where the foreign man seduces the native Irish woman, instead of the other way, could be reflective of the contemporary worries of the Viking Age. From the annalistic evidence in particular, it seems that cross-cultural unions with this dynamic were either more common, or more commonly remarked upon. This may not be surprising if our understanding of the dynamics of viking bands is correct; it is commonly considered that these groups consisted primarily of young men. The scene also suggests that the arrival of the Other is a threat to the virtue of the women, which could reflect another contemporary worry, on the part of the ecclesiastical writers of the literary material at least.[280] This anxiety is reflected in the closing verse of the narrative in which one of the signs for social collapse is that women will be 'without modesty'.[281] That a narrative should present a society where hybridity, which is seen as dangerous and perverse, becomes common and prominent, and closes with an apocalyptic prophecy which describes the failure of Christian morals and the collapse of organised society, is hardly a coincidence.

Conscious representations of hybridity are generally more obvious and clearer indicators of contemporary thoughts regarding concepts of identity and discourse. In *CMT*, these representations are born from interaction and sexual unions between the identity groups, and thus, are most clearly represented through some of the tale's characters. The less apparent manifestations of hybridity in *CMT* can be connected to, for example, aspects of language, literary form and religion. These function as indicators for more subconscious prejudices, cultural ideologies and literary preoccupations. Literary hybridity, that is hybridity of the narrative form, is not overt in *CMT* but a sense of duality is created by the split of the narrative into prose and verse forms. Although it should be noted that prosimetrum was a well-established literary form of medieval Ireland and not unique to this tale or corpus.[282] This being said, pseudo-history is inherently hybrid, which Carey noted resulted from the replacement of the authority of the pagan hierarchy with the Bible. Thus, the native origin-legends were hybridised with ideas from the Book of Genesis and subject to the emerging discipline of Christian historiography.[283] Considering religious hybridity in situations of cultural interaction

---

[280] Dumville noted that, although it is rarely observed directly, the vikings were a threat to women and there are records of them, for example, wintering in nunneries, see David Dumville, 'The Churches of North Britain in the First Viking Age', *Fifth Whithorn Lecture* (1996), 9-10.
[281] Gray, *CMT*, 72-3; *mna can feli*; eDIL s.v. *féle*, dil.ie/21543, 'modesty, sense of decorum or propriety', other readings are possible.
[282] Proinsias Mac Cana, 'Prosimetrum in Insular Celtic literature', in Joseph Harris & Karl Reichl (eds.), *Prosimetrum: crosscultural perspectives on narrative in prose and verse* (Cambridge, 1997) 99–130.
[283] John Carey, 'The Irish National Origin-Legend: Synthetic Pseudohistory', *E.C Quiggin Memorial Lectures* 1 (Cambridge, 1994), 3.

is especially important as those situations often lead to religious conversion or religious-based conflict as opposing belief systems collide. We have established that this is relevant in both the historical and narrative contexts of *CMT*. While religion is carefully faded to the background of the narrative, we are intimately aware of the ideological conflict between the tale's Christian writers and the characters they employ that have roots in pagan deities; just as we are aware of the devoutly Christian Ireland in contrast to the pagan invaders of the period around the text's composition. These examples indicate that hybridity of both literary form and religious discourse exists at the background of the narrative content of *CMT*. It could also be tentatively suggested that *CMT* includes linguistic hybridity, most likely in the form of loan words, but also through its pseudo-archaic form of language which emphasises the text's multiple temporal levels. Regretfully, the linguistic complexity of *CMT* and the limited size of this dissertation do not allow for a study of the language aspect to be conducted here.

3.2.1 Subversion, liminality and the third space

Liminality and the third space are Bhabha's contributions to hybridity theory. He described liminality as an 'interstitial passage between fixed identifications [which] opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy'.[284] Thus, liminality is an in-between space within fixed identities.[285] This space has also been described as the third space, as it exists outside the defined Self and the Other. Robert Young, regarding this theory, noted that: 'Hybridity here becomes a third term which can never in fact *be* third because, as a monstrous inversion, a miscreated perversion of its progenitors, it exhausts the differences between them'.[286] In other words, there is the Self and the Other, and while hybridity manifests as the third space among them, it cannot actually **be** a third separate unity because it exhausts, i.e. breaks down, the borders separating the two primary modes. Therefore, at a point where hybridity truly exists, the Self and the Other have ceased to exist. Bhabha noted that this is what makes hybridity subversive, specifically as it 'breaks down the symmetry and duality of self/other, inside/outside'.[287] These contrasts hold the entire meaning value of cultural interaction, especially as identity itself is defined through comparison of one with the other. Joseph Nagy described liminal characters in medieval Irish literature as being between separate categories of space, time, or identity. He suggested that liminality in Irish literary tradition is primarily embodied by the poet-seer, who as a member of the *áes dána* could transcend the

---

[284] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 5.
[285] Liminality was introduced to the criticism of medieval Irish literature by Nagy, see Joseph Falaky Nagy, 'Liminality and Knowledge in Irish Tradition', *Studia Celtica* 16 (1981), 135-43.
[286] Young, *Colonial Desire*, 23.
[287] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 116.

normal social divisions.[288] This immediately identifies Lug, the *Samildánach*, as a liminal character. He is both a poet-seer who has 'access to realities beyond the experience of most other members of society', and a master of all arts.[289] This is emphasised through the long episode in which Lug proves his right to enter Tara and is allowed to sit 'in the seat of the sage, because he was a sage in every art'.[290] Liminality of space and time can also be identified in the narrative of *CMT*, but these appear less crucial in terms of this discussion.[291] On a final note, it can be observed that Ireland itself could be read as a liminal location within the narrative, due to its descriptions of timeless landscape, as well as the way in which Ériu invites the Other in by her own actions, which also result to the arrival of hybridity on the island, before crossing to the territory of the Fomoiri herself.

3.3 Character hybridity in *CMT*

It is clear that *CMT* portrays realistic, historically relatable, characters with hybrid identities. This follows the usual pattern of hybridity in the first instance emerging through considerations of race, sex and cross-cultural sexual unions. It is through the treatment of these characters, that we can understand the attitudes towards hybridity and identity within the text and the society in which it originated. Nagy noted that the liminal characters in medieval Irish literature can either have extraordinary powers that benefit the society or can pose a threat to social order by transcending social divisions; Bres and Lug represent these two possibilities.[292] As noted previously, the narrative of *CMT* is built on parallels, mirroring sequences and duality.[293] This becomes its signature vehicle for examining socially problematic questions and illustrates a high level of narrative sophistication. The conscious comparison and parallelism shows that discussing hybridity is not merely accidental, but intentional and done deliberately.

Lug is introduced twice within the narrative. First, in §8, it is stated that: 'the Túatha Dé then made an alliance with the Fomoire, and Balor the grandson of Nét gave his daughter Ethne to Cían the son of Dían Cécht. And she bore the glorious child, Lug'.[294] Secondly, in §55, it is added that: 'He is the foster son of Tailtiu the daughter of Magmór, the king of Spain, and of

---

[288] Nagy, 'Liminality', 135 & 143.
[289] *Ibid.*, 135.
[290] Gray, *CMT*, 38-43; *síasur a suide súad, ar bo suí cacha dáno é.*
[291] Further discussion could be devoted to, for example, a liminal scene where the Morrígan stands astride a river, with one foot on each side of it, Gray, *CMT*, 44-5.
[292] Nagy, 'Liminality', 135; Note that Gray has discussed these characters before, but due to her 'inter-tribal' approach, her discussion did not extent to considering the characters as hybrids.
[293] McCone, 'A Tale', 123-4.
[294] Gray, *CMT*, 24-5; *Gnísit íarum Túadh Dé caratrad fri Fomorib 7 debert Balar úa Néit a ingin .i. Ethne, de Cén mac Dien Cécht. Gonad í-side ruc a ngen mbúadha .i. Lucc.*

Eochaid Garb mac Dúach'.[295] It is important to note that Lug appears as the product of a deliberate union, which is made to consolidate an alliance. It becomes apparent that Lug is dual in both birth and upbringing, as the son of a Fomoirian mother and TDD father, and as a foster-child of a TDD warrior and his wife who is a Fir Bolg queen. Despite the emphasised duality, Lug consistently identifies himself as a TDD throughout the narrative, which is one of the key differences compared to the actions of Bres. It could also be noted that, in the case of Lug, the TDD are his father's kin, whereas the opposite is true for Bres; this might be significant in the patriarchal context of medieval Ireland.

Bres is also introduced twice in the narrative, first in §14, when the wives of the TDD recommend him for the kingship:

> …it would be appropriate for them to give the kingship to Bres the son of Elatha, to their own adopted son, and that giving him the kingship would knit the Fomorians' alliance with them, since his father Elatha mac Delbaith was king of the Fomoire.[296]

This is followed immediately by the birth-tale of Bres in which the second introduction occurs. It appears that the Tuatha Dé, in the above context, refer solely to the men, and their wives are a separate entity whose *gormac* Bres is.[297] Furthermore, Ériu is not included in this group, possibly due to her unmarried status. This reveals notable differences between the situations of Lug and Bres. Primarily, Bres is born as a result of a sexual tryst, rather than a political alliance. He is hybrid by birth but a TDD by upbringing. Furthermore, Bres moves between the fixed identities of a TDD and a Fomoiri in the course of the narrative. This movement signifies liminality, and it is his refusal to settle into one identity that ultimately threatens the social order.

Therefore, the character who denies his inherent hybridity in favour of a singular identity is strengthened by it and becomes invaluable for the society. Whereas, the character who embraces his liminality threatens the social order and almost results to the loss of cultural independence and identity. This interpretation sees hybridity accepted as a phenomenon of the time and a natural consequence of cultural interaction, and identity as a conscious choice between the different groups. Therefore, it is not the dual-identity which threatens the society, but the active choice given to the hybrid characters. Ultimately, *CMT* presents a situation where hybridity has the potential to strengthen the society and it is not insignificant that the two hybrid characters appear as the most skilful warrior, and as the epitome of all beautiful things, respectively.

---

[295] Gray, *CMT*, 38-9; *Dalta siden Tailltine ingine Magmóir rí Espáine 7 Echtach Gairuh meic Duach.*

[296] *Ibid.*, 26-7; *…ba cumdigh dóip ríge do Pres mac Elathan, díe ngormac fesin, 7 co snaidhmfed caratrad Fomure fria an ríge de tabairt dó-sin, ar ba rí Fomore a athair, ed ón Elotha mac Delbáeth.*

[297] This indicates that TDD could denote status or role, rather than be an ethnonym.

Nevertheless, the reactions of the surrounding society prove deciding in seeing how the hybrid characters appear within the wider narrative context. Hybridity traditionally results in a degree of separation and experiences of being an outsider, not the Other, but truly outside the defined identities. In many ways this lack of belonging does not manifest itself in *CMT*. Instead, the hybrid characters can move fluidly between the defined identity groups. While, this is an entirely possible and realistic representation of hybridity, it reminds us that in *CMT* hybridity is not abstract, rather it is closely tied to the contemporary experiences and expectations.

3.3.1 The Gall-Goídil

Before moving on from hybrid characters, it seems fruitful to note that a historical counterpart for the literary hybrid appears briefly in the Irish annals. This emphasises that the literary preoccupations and prejudices seemed to stem from deeper cultural worries and makes the use of hybridity theory even more prolific, as we are clearly looking at a situation of cultural interaction and contact, which led to hybridity both within the social context and its cultural representations. The historical counterpart that we are discussing here is the Gall-Goídil, which should be taken to mean a 'foreign seeming Gael; a scandinavianised Gaelic speaker, or a foreigner who speaks Gaelic'.[298] On the other hand, it has been suggested that instead of being a term of (ethnic) identity, the Gall-Goídil was used to refer to imported mercenaries from the Hebrides who were known as '*gallóglaigh*, 'foreign soldiers' or perhaps 'soldiers from the *Innse Gall*' … later Anglicised as 'galloglass''.[299] Despite the Gall-Goídil being connected to Galloway on linguistic grounds, it has been shown that the name initially referred to a group active solely in Ireland, who were most likely Gaelic speaking but of a mixed heritage, and active within the political scene of Ireland.[300] In their brief existence in the ninth-century annals, there is little certain information about their geographical or political connections.[301] Although AU 856.3 records them fighting against the *gennti* with Máel Sechnaill mac Máele Ruanaid. A much more prolific description of the Gall-Goídil can be found from the Fragmentary Annals of Ireland (FA), but it should be noted that this is an eleventh- or twelfth-century reflection.[302] FA describes the Gall-Goídil as a mix between the Scandinavians and the Irish: 'Gall-Gaedil (that is, they are Irish, and fosterchildren of the Norse, and sometimes they are even called

---

[298] Clancy, 'The Gall-Gàidheil', 21.
[299] Wadden, 'CRnR', 8.
[300] Clancy, 'The Gall-Gàidheil', 45.
[301] Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings', 326; AU 856.3, 856.4 & 857.1, for example.
[302] It is clear that the extrapolation in FA is based on very little information, possibly the entries in AU.

Norsemen)'.[303] Language is often seen as the key to their mixed identity.[304] However, the most interesting description of them in terms of hybridity theory can be found in FA 858:

> Gall-Gaedil… they were men who had forsaken their baptism, and they used to be called Norsemen, for they had the customs of the Norse, and had been fostered by them, and though the original Norsemen were evil to the churches, these were much worse, these people, wherever in Ireland they were.[305]

According to this description the Gall-Goídil are hybrid either by cultural influence, heritage, or nurture. In this regard, it has been suggested that there had been sufficient intermarriages or sexual unions between the Irish and the Scandinavians to have created a hybrid generation by the second half of the ninth century.[306] However, the mention to fosterlings (*daltai*), both above and in *CMT,* has interesting implications about the sense of identity being reliant on environment and cultural discourse.[307] Furthermore, the hybrid is again seen as much more degenerative and harmful to the church and its moral values, as well as to the society, than either the Self or the Other alone. Thus, the later annalistic references to the term echo the literary representation of hybridity in *CMT*.

The aim of this chapter has been to discuss hybridity theory and how it applies in the context of *CMT*, as well as consider the concepts of liminality and subversion within the framework of hybridity theory. We have established that pseudo-history itself, as a product of merging literary traditions, is naturally hybrid. Furthermore, as Nagy suggested, the prosimetric form of the narrative provides a liminal transition between the literary modes.[308] However, in the most clear and compelling way hybridity is explored in the narrative content of the tale. During this discussion certain patterns have emerged in the way in which *CMT* exploits concepts of hybridity. These can be summarised through a lesser known and often ignored sequence in §124, which introduces a third person that represents the hybrid identities of *CMT*.[309] Despite appearing as a separate short episode, the included interaction is complicated and approaches hybridity, interaction and prejudices from several different levels. At the centre of the sequence is Rúadán the son of Bres and Bríg who is the daughter of the Dagda. He is both the son and a

[303] Joan Radner (ed. and trans.), *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* (Dublin, 1978), 98-9; *na n-Gall n-Gaoidheal, .i. Scuit íad, & daltai do Normainnoibh íad, & tan ann ad-bearar cidh Normainnigh fríu.*

[304] Dumville, 'The Churches of North Britain', 26-8.

[305] FA*, Ghall-ghaoidhealaibh… úair daoíne ar t-tregadh a m-baiste iad-saidhe, & ad-bertais Normannaigh fríu, uair bés Normannach aca, & a n-altrum forra, & ger bó olc na Normannaigh bunaidh dona h-eaglaisibh, bá measa go mór iad-saidhe, .i. an lucht sa, gach conair fo Eirinn a m-bidís.*

[306] Dumville, 'The Churches of North Britain', 27-8.

[307] Lug is the *dalta* of Tailtiu, see Gray, *CMT*, 38-9.

[308] Nagy, 'Liminality', 135-6.

[309] Gray, *CMT*, 56-7.

grandson of the TDD. Despite this he is part of the Fomoiri, his father's paternal kin. He gets sent to the TDD to learn about their customs of war and is gifted a spear by his maternal kin. He betrays their trust and turns the spear on one of the TDD, with the result that he himself gets killed by the same weapon. He subsequently dies in the presence of Bres and the Fomoiri. This sequence appears to express similar ideologies and concepts of identity as the more intricate plot regarding Bres and Lug. Rúadán moves fluidly between the fixed identities due to his mixed heritage. He is welcomed to the TDD but betrays their trust by failing to adhere to a singular identity group. He is killed as a result of his betrayal. Therefore, this sequence appears as a warning on the part of the tale's writers. The hybrid character is acknowledged and accepted until he uses his mixed heritage against the Irish.

4 Chapter 4: Conclusions

This dissertation has studied the polyvalence of *Cath Maige Tuired* in the literary and historical contexts of late Viking-Age Ireland. The tale is intrinsically tied to the socio-political context of its production and enriched by its subsequent scribe-author-editors. The narrative is malleable due to its episodic nature and applicable to multiple historical events as a result of its depictions of relatable social dynamics and cultural conflict. This has ensured its centrality for the study of medieval Irish literature, but also complicated the efforts to pick apart the different layers of influences shaping the narrative. Therefore, *CMT* should be regarded as an aggregate, which carries within itself generations of literary traditions, cultural influences, pride of the Irish cultural identity, and experiences of conflict. In this scenario, the reader holds the crucial role of regarding the multi-layered narrative as something bigger than the perceptions of a singular writer. *CMT* is a text of cultural and ideological preoccupations during periods of profound change, and an attempt to stabilise concepts of identity through an imagined shared past. A subsequent concern in this dissertation was the consideration of cultural identity, interaction and integration, which are pivotal for both the narrative and the historical contexts from which it emerged. Finally, the dissertation examined the concept of hybridity in *CMT*, and came to the conclusion that the narrative is a study of the possible consequences of the destabilisation of a fixed Irish identity through the emergence of openly hybrid characters holding prominent roles in the society.

Through this discussion it has been illustrated how contextualising a text with reference to the historical backdrop to its composition can increase our understanding of the narrative and its functions. Furthermore, this dissertation has demonstrated how postmodern literary research can be applied to a premodern context with good results. During the discussion it emerged that hybridity theory is a suitable tool for analysing the textual products of the Middle Ages. This is the case especially in the Irish context due to the prolonged state of cultural interaction and conflict since the arrival of the Scandinavians in the eighth century. This dissertation offers a preliminary look at the existence and implications of hybridity in *CMT*. It also leaves much scope for further analytical work and could be easily extended to the wider literary context or applied with a more in-dept approach within the framework of this discussion.

Hybridity stands alone at the breaking point of the Self and the Other, as the sole survivor of cultural assimilation. Within the theoretical parameters, cultural interaction leads to either the assimilation of the submissive discourse into the dominant culture, or to a state of hybridity

where neither culture remains fixed. The late Viking Age seems to present us with the latter scenario. The Irish and Scandinavian cultural and social identities were equally well-established and independent. However, hybridity had the potential to be socially and economically beneficial. In this regard, Downham has brought our attention to the thriving Hiberno-Scandinavian ports, which benefited from their dual-identity.[310] In the literary depictions of the period, the social groups remained within their fixed identities of the Self and the Other despite their prolonged cultural interaction. *CMT* reflects a situation where the Self and the Other retain their fixed cultural roles, which results in the formation of new hybrid identities. They also have the potential to benefit the society; but only if the hybrid rejects its inherent liminality in favour of a singular identity, which is a paradox in terms of the nature of hybridity. Therefore, *CMT* presents an intriguing insight to the self-perceived cultural change happening in medieval Ireland and how it was seen to affect the society. What is said is augmented by the unconscious connotations linked to the hybrid identities and situations, which reveal some of the worries and prejudices at the forefront of the intellectual consciousness.

We can end this discussion on the note of Carey's provocative statement: 'Ireland appears, again and again, not merely as earth and stone but as the Other, a mysterious being rooted in timelessness and challenging the limits of our own mortality'.[311] If we look at this statement in the light of Ériu being the physical embodiment of Ireland itself in *CMT*, we can immediately see that Ireland is also the Self to be seduced by the Other, which emphasises its liminal quality. The Irish pseudo-historical project provided ample opportunities for the creation of identity, which strived for a sense of timelessness and longevity in the face of the tumultuous period of the late Viking Age. The Other will always remain separate from the Self because the very concepts are defined by their contrasting natures. The hybrid, on the other hand, can choose whether it appears as perfect or destructive, whether it strengthens the society or threatens it. Carey's Bakhtinian suggestion that: 'the power of language enables us to build in our minds an image of the earth in which we dwell: outside is taken inside, and the Other becomes a portion of ourselves', comes very close to the base value of hybridity.[312] Literary representation has the power to change profound ideologies; the Self and the Other no longer exist, but identity remains and is continuously reassessed and reworked within the framework of cultural discourses.

---

[310] Downham, *Medieval Ireland*, 68.
[311] John Carey, 'Native Elements in Irish Pseudohistory', in Doris Edel (ed.), *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration: Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages* (Blackrock, 1995), 45-60, 60.
[312] *Ibid.*

5 Bibliography

Abrams, Lesley, 'Conversion and the Church in Viking-Age Ireland', in John Sheehan & Donnchadh Ó Corráin (eds.), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West* (Dublin, 2010), 1-10.

Abrams, Lesley, 'Diaspora and identity in the Viking Age', *Early Medieval Europe* 20/1 (2012), 17-38.

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin, 1981).

Benveniste, Henrietta & Gaganakis, Costas, 'Heterodoxies: Construction of identities and otherness in medieval and early Modern Europe', *Historein* 2 (2000), 7-12.

Bhabha, Homi K., *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994).

Binchy, D. A., 'The passing of the old order', in Brian Ó Cuív (ed.), *The impact of the Scandinavian invasions on the Celtic-speaking peoples c.800-1100A.D* (Dublin, 1975), 119-32.

Boyarin, Daniel & Burrus, Virginia, 'Hybridity as Subversion of Orthodoxy? Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity', *Social Compass* 52 (2005), 431-41.

Bugge, Alexander (ed. and trans.), *On the Fomorians and the Norsemen by Duald mac Firbis* (Christiania, 1905).

Byrne, F.J., 'The viking age', in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (ed.), *A New History of Ireland: Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), 609-34.

Carey, John, 'Myth and mythography in Cath Maige Tuired', *Studia Celtica* 24/25 (1989/90), 53-69.

Carey, John, 'The Irish National Origin-Legend: Synthetic Pseudohistory', *E.C Quiggin Memorial Lectures* 1 (Cambridge, 1994).

Carey, John, 'Native Elements in Irish Pseudohistory', in Doris Edel (ed.), *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration: Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages* (Blackrock, 1995), 45-60.

Carey, John, 'Lebor Gabála and the legendary history of Ireland', in Helen Fulton (ed.), *Medieval Celtic Literature and Society* (Dublin, 2005), 32-48.

Carey, John, 'A London Library, An Irish Manuscript, A British Myth? The Wanderings of 'The Battle of Moytirra'', *ITS: Occasional lecture series* 1 (London, 2014).

Carmody, Isolde, *Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis: An examination of three rosc passages from Cath Maige Tuired* (MPhil Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2004).

Chesnutt, Michael, 'Cath Maige Tuired – A parable of the Battle of Clontarf', in S. Ó Catháin (ed.), *Northern Lights: Following Folklore in North-Western Europe* (Dublin, 2001), 22-33.

Clancy, Thomas, 'The Gall-Gàidheil and Galloway', *JSNS* 2 (2008), 19-50.

Clancy, Thomas, 'Gaelic literature in Ireland and Scotland, 900-1150', in Clare Lees (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 2012), 637-59.

Clarke, Michael, 'The *Leabhar Gabhála* and Carolingian Origin Legends', in Pádraic Moran & Immo Warntjes (eds.), *Early Medieval Ireland and Europe: Chronology, Contact, Scholarship* (Turnhout, 2015), 441-79.

Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain* (New York, 2006).

Docherty, Charles, 'The Vikings in Ireland: a Review', in Howard Clarke, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh & Raghnall Ó Floinn (eds.), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age* (Dublin, 1998), 288-330.

Downham, Clare, 'An imaginary Viking-raid on Skye in 795?', *SGS* 20 (2000), 192-6.

Downham, Clare, *Viking kings of Britain and Ireland: the dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014* (Edinburgh, 2007).

Downham, Clare, *Medieval Ireland* (Cambridge, 2018).

Duffy, Seán, *Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Houndmills, 1997).

Dumville, David (ed.), *The Historia Brittonum* (Cambridge, 1985).

Dumville, David, 'The Churches of North Britain in the First Viking Age', *Fifth Whithorn Lecture* (1996).

Dumville, David, 'Did Ireland exist in the twelfth century?', in E. Purcell, P. MacCotter, J. Nyhan & J. Sheehan (eds.), *Clerics, Kings and Vikings: Essays on Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 2015), 115-26.

Etchingham, Colmán, 'Viking Raids on Irish Church Settlements in the Ninth Century: A Reconsideration of the Annals', *Maynooth Monographs Series Minor* 1 (1996), 7-16.

Eyjólfsdóttir, Elín Ingibjörg, *The Bórama: the poetry and the hagiography in the Book of Leinster* (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2012).

Flower, Robin, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1926).

Frame, Robin, 'More Irish than the Irish themselves', in S.J. Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Irish History* (Oxford, 1998), 386-7.

Fraser, John (ed. and trans.), 'The first battle of Moytura', *Ériu* 8 (1916), 1-63.

Geary, Patrick, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, 2002).

Gray, Elizabeth, 'Cath Maige Tuired: Myth and Structure (1-24)', *Éigse* 18 (1980/1), 183-209.

Gray, Elizabeth, 'Cath Maige Tuired: Myth and Structure (24-120)', *Éigse* 19/1 (1982), 1-35.

Gray, Elizabeth (ed. and trans.), *Cath Maige Tuired: The Second Battle of Mag Tuired* (Naas, 1982).

Gray, Elizabeth 'Cath Maige Tuired: Myth and Structure (84-93, 120-67)', *Éigse* 19/2 (1983), 230-62.

Hamel, A.G. van (ed.), *Lebor Bretnach* (Dublin, 1932).

Herbert, Máire, 'Goddess and king: the sacred marriage in early Ireland', in Louise Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992), 264-75.

Herbert, Máire, 'Crossing Historical and Literary Boundaries: Irish Written Culture Around the Year 1000', *CMCS* 53/54 (2007), 87-102.

Hogan, Edmund, *Onomasticon goedelicum locorum et tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae* (Dublin, 1910).

Hoyne, Mícheál, 'The Political Context of 'Cath Muighe Tuireadh', The Early Modern Irish Version of the Second Battle of Magh Tuireadh', *Ériu* 63 (2013), 91–116.

Johnston, Elva, *Literacy and Identity in Early Medieval Ireland* (Woodbridge, 2013).

Jones, Siân, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing identities in the past and present* (London, 1997).

Kelleher, Margaret & O'Leary, Philip (eds.), 'Introduction', in *Cambridge History of Irish Literature* (Cambridge, 2006), 1-8.

Kirk, G.S., 'On Defining Myths', in Alan Dundes (ed.), *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth* (London, 1984), 53-61.

Kruse, Arne, 'Laithlinn', *Namn og Nemne* 32 (2015), 49-86.

Mac Airt, Seán & Mac Niocaill, Gearóid (ed. and trans.), *The Annals of Ulster* (Dublin, 1983).

Macalister, R.A.S. (ed. and trans.), *Lebor Gabála Érenn: Book of the Taking of Ireland*, part IV (Dublin, 1941).

Macalister, R.A.S. (ed. and trans.), *Lebor Gabála Érenn: Book of the Taking of Ireland*, part V (Dublin, 1956).

Mac Cana, Proinsias, 'The influence of the Vikings on Celtic Literature', in Brian Ó Cuív (ed.), *The Impact of the Scandinavian Invasions on the Celtic-speaking Peoples c. 800-1100* (Dublin, 1962), 78-118.

Mac Cana, Proinsias, 'Early Irish Ideology and the Concept of Unity', in Richard Kearney (ed.), *The Irish Mind: Exploring Intellectual Traditions* (Dublin, 1984), 56-78.

Mac Cana, Proinsias, 'Prosimetrum in Insular Celtic literature', in Joseph Harris & Karl Reichl (eds.), *Prosimetrum: crosscultural perspectives on narrative in prose and verse* (Cambridge, 1997) 99–130.

Mac Niocaill, Gearóid (trans.), 'The Annals of Tigernach', in CELT [https://celt.ucc.ie/published/ T100002A/index.html].

Mallory, J.P., *The Origins of the Irish* (London, 2013).

McCone, Kim, 'A Tale of Two Ditties: Poet and Satirist in Cath Maige Tuired', in Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach & Kim McCone (eds.), *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth, 1989), 122-43.

Mostert, Marco, 'Celtic, Anglo-Saxon or Insular?', in Doris Edel (ed.), *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration* (Blackrock, 1995), 92-115.

Murphy, Gerard, 'Notes on Cath Maige Tuired', *Éigse* 7 (1953/55), 191-8.

Nagy, Joseph Falaky, 'Liminality and Knowledge in Irish Tradition', *Studia Celtica* 16 (1981), 135-43.

Ní Lionáin, Clíodhna, 'Lebor Gabála Érenn: The Use and Appropriation of an Irish Origin Legend in Identity Construction at Home and Abroad', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 27.2 (2012), 33-52.

Ní Mhaonaigh, Máire, 'The Vikings in Medieval Irish Literature', in A.-C. Larsen (ed.), *The Vikings in Ireland* (Roskilde, 2001), 99-106.

Ní Mhaonaigh, Máire, 'Literary Lochlann', in Wilson McLeod, James Fraser & Anja Gunderloch (eds.), *Cànan & Cultar: Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig* 3 (Edinburgh, 2006), 25-37.

Ó Cathasaigh, Tomás, 'Cath Maige Tuired as Exemplary Myth', in Pádraig de Brún, S. Ó Coileáin & P. Ó Riain (eds.), *Folia Gadelica: Essays Presented by Former Students to R. A. Breatnach* (Cork, 1983), 1-19.

Ó Corráin, Donnchadh, 'The Vikings in Scotland and Ireland in the Ninth Century', *Peritia* 12 (1998), 296-339.

Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200* (London, 2017).

Ó Cuív, Brian (ed.), *Cath Muighe Tuireadh: The Second Battle of Magh Tuireadh* (Dublin, 1945).

Ó Cuív, Brian, *Catalogue of Irish Language Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries* (Dublin, 2001).

O'Donovan, John, *The genealogies, tribes, and customs of Hy-Fiachrach, commonly called O'Dowda's country* (Dublin, 1844).

O'Donovan, John (ed. and trans.), *Annala rioghachta Eireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616,* vol. 5 (Dublin, 1856).

Ó Muraíle, Nollaig, 'Ó Cléirigh, Míchél', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), [https://doi.org /10.1093/ref:odnb/20498].

Palmer, James, 'The Otherness of Non-Christians in the Early Middle Ages', *Studies in Church History* 51 (2015), 33-52.

Poppe, Erich, 'Of Cycles and Other Critical Matters: Some issues in medieval Irish literary history and criticism', *E.C Quiggin Memorial Lectures* 9 (Cambridge, 2008).

Radner, Joan (ed. and trans.), *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* (Dublin, 1978).

Said, Edward, *Orientalism* (London, 1978).

Slotkin, Edgar, 'Medieval Irish Scribes and Fixed Texts', *Éigse* 17 (1977-9), 437-50.

Sorvo, Satu, *Hybridity, Immigrant Identity and Ethnic Impersonation in Karolina Waclawiak's How to Get into the Twin Palms* (MPhil Thesis, University of Tampere, 2015).

Stokes, Whitley (ed.), 'The annals of Tigernach', *Revue Celtique* 16-18 (1895-97).

Tristram, Hildegard, 'The 'Cattle Raid of Cuailnge', in Doris Edel (ed.), *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration: Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages* (Blackrock, 1995), 61-81.

Valante, Mary, 'Reassessing the Irish 'Monastic Town'', *Irish Historical Studies* 31/121 (1998), 1–18.

Wadden, Patrick, *Theories of National Identity in Early Medieval Ireland* (PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2011).

Wadden, Patrick, 'Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn: History and literature in twelfth-century Ireland', *Aiste* 4 (2014), 1-34.

Williams, Mark, *Ireland's Immortals* (Princeton, 2016).

Woolf, Alex, 'The Scandinavian Intervention', in Thomas Bartlett & Brendan Smith (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Ireland,* part 1 (Cambridge, 2017), 107-30.

Young, Robert, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London, 1995).