

The ‘Poems on World-Kingship’ in the Book of Uí Mhaine

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(1) Ninus son of Belus

Nin mac Bel, roga na rīg,
oirderc a blad, ’s a bŭainbrīg,
a gēglī ba blodaib bes,
cētrī in domain co dīles.

Ninus son of Belus, best of the kings;
illustrious his fame and his lasting power,
whose branching splendour will be famous,
the first king of the world legitimately.

(ed. and tr. from BB by Boyle (2017))

2a. The Bible provides roots, origins, legitimacy and a chronological framework for...the interconnected ideas of kingship, invasion, ancestry, language and geography.

2b. [The synchronistic tracts] lend legitimacy, weight and a chronological framework for the most prominent concerns of [the Book of Ballymote], namely Irish origins, history, genealogy, political relationships, language and geography.

(Boyle, ‘Biblical history’)

(3) From *Adam primus pater fuit* (text from M, fol. 48r)

Mac do tSem Asur. Mac do sein Bel. Mac do sein Nin. As i side .c.rīg in domain. Is a .ix.madh bliadan deg a ru gein Nin mac Beil bas Chaim 7 Iafet. Is in bliadan da n-eisi Nin mac Beil do gabail rige in domain. Is in .xxi. bliadan do rige Nin gein Aprathaim. .dcccc. xliiii. ó Adaim co gein Aprathaim. Saimiraimis bean Nin .lxii. As le do ronadh mur Baibiloine...A cinn cheithri mbliadan da rige tainic Párrthalon dochum nEirinn.

Assur was the son of Sem. His son was Bel. His son was Nin. He was the first king of the world. In the nineteenth year since Nin mac Beil had been born, the death of Cham and Iafeth. In the year after them Nin mac Beil took the kingship of the world. In the twenty-first year of the kingship of Nin, the birth of Abraham. 944 [years] from Adam to the birth of Abraham. Semiramis wife of Nin, 52 [sc. years in kingship]. By her was built the wall of Babylon...At the end of the fourth year of the reign [sc. of Ninias son of Nin] Parthalon came to Ireland.

(4) Gilla Cóemáin, *Anállad*

(§ 19) Darcellus ba flaith na fond
dar thríall Solom a thempoll;
i mmedón flatha ind fhir fhind
táncatar Gáedil Héirind.

Dercylus was lord of the territories
when Solomon endeavoured to build his temple;
in the middle of the reign of the fair man
The Goídil came to Ireland.

(§ 37) Trícha bliadain trí bliadna,
cóir ó shein dola íarma,
co bás meic Fhedilmthi i nHí
is co ésteacht Grigoríí.

Thirty –three years
- it is right from that [date] to go then -
until the death of the son of Feidlimid in Iona
and until the passing away of Gregory.

(§ 57) A dó secht ndeich ar mile
ó gein Críst, cá chomríme,

Two [and] seven tens plus a thousand
from the birth of Christ – howsoever you may compute [it]-

cosin mbliadain-sea, ci at-ber,
i torchair Díarmait dúrigen.

to this year – though I may say it -
In which resolute Díarmait fell.

(5) Flann Mainistrech’s ‘Poems on World-Kingship’ (partially edited by Mac Airt)

Book of Uí Mhaine, fol. 44vb – 47rb

Book of Lecan, fol. 11rb -13vb

MS RIA Div3, fol. 36ra- 40vb

(6) The closing quatrains (from M, fol. 40 va-vb)

Cach flaith ósa ghairgbrígh nglain
fris ráitea airdrígh in domain,
o Nín co Leo leamnach lann
ros-rím ant eolach aenFhland.

Each prince who has clear rough force,
Who is called high king of the world,
From Ninus to enduring Leo of the shields,
The learned unique Flann counted them.

Fland fēigbind ro bhean brīg mbr<eth,
fer> lēigind mīn Mainisdreach,
ro glēa triana gnīmh a guth
rē cach rīg do rēidhiugu<dh>.

Keen-sweet Flann carved the forceful estimation,
The smooth scholar of Monasterboice;
He clarified through his voice’s work
How to make straight the time of every king.

Trī cēt bliadan - breathaib blad -
is a cethair cethrachad,
ō chond – is mōrglicc in modh –
ōenchronic do rēidhiughudh.

Three hundred years - fame from interpretations -
plus four and forty,
from the start – very clever is the deed –
to make straight the single chronicle.

Conchobur clannmīn na cnedh,
Āedh, Gairbith, Díarmait dúrigen,
Donnchadh, dā Nīall, cen snīm snēidh,
Rīgh na rē-sea co ro-rēidh.

Conchobar smooth-haired (?) of the wounds,
Aedh, Gairbith, hardy Diarmait,
Donnchadh, two Nialls, without swift sorrow,
[are] the kings of this time full-straightly.

(7) The beginning of Assyrian kingship (M, fol. 44 vb; cf. Mac Airt (1954-55), 256-7)

Rīga Asardha re cāch
ro gab in flathus fīrghnāth,
cland co caschlūim, co cēill nglē,
Asūir meic Sēimh meic Naeë.

The kings of the Assyrians before all
took the communal kingship,
the curly-haired descendants, with bright sense,
of Assur son of Sem son of Noah.

Nín mac Béil bladhaigh, ced be,
dībh cēna do gab rīge,
ro shealbh āenduine ō Dhia
Aissia uile *acht* madh India.

Nín son of famous Béil, whatever it be,
of them was the first who took the kingship,
this one man from God possessed
All Asia, except India.

(8) The death of Nín mac Béil (M, fol. 44 vb)

Soidhead ro meabhaidh amach
dia mbaī ag togail na cathrach.

He was defeated by an arrow, abroad,
when he was sacking the city.

(9) Shift to the Scythians

37.

Tre fhlaith Asar aidhli neart, ro chosain racht rīgh Éigheafat; [<i>leg.</i> Éghept]	During the kingship of the Assyrians, of mighty strength, the king of Egypt contended for rule,
flaith faili uallcha for each sēis targlam sluagha Vesoghēis.	the prince most proud over every host, Vesoges gathered his hosts.

38.

Vesoighēis, ba mōr a clū, rug a shlōg co Sceitheagdhu; adbert friu, nīrbho rō in guth, cath dō ino riarugudh.	Vesoges, great was his fame, brought his host against the Scythians: he said to them – the voice was not excessive - to make war against him or be ruled by him.
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(10) Contents of MS Bamberg, Msc. Hist. 3 (cf. Ní Mhaonaigh (2017))

Paul the Deacon, *Letter to Athelberga*
Aurelius Victor, *Epitome on the Caesars*
Tract on areas of the world, provinces etc
Tract on the kingship of the Assyrians
Tract on the Amazons
Tract on the people of the Scythians, on the Trojan War, on Aeneas
Paul the Deacon/Eutropius, *Roman History*
Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*
Jordanes, *On the succession of kingdoms*
Jordanes, *On the origin and deeds of the Getae*
Paul the Deacon, *On the deeds of the Lombards*
Isidore of Seville, *Enumeration of the winds*
Leo the Archpriest, *Life of Alexander the Great*
Palladius, *Information on the peoples of India*
Dindimus, *Descriptio* (of what?)
Collation of Alexander and Dindimus
Alexander's Letter to Aristotle
Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*
Chronica de sex aetatibus mundi

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