

ULIDIA 3

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE ULSTER CYCLE OF TALES
UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER, COLERAINE 22–25 JUNE, 2009**

**IN MEMORIAM
PROFESSOR PATRICK LEO HENRY, MRIA**

**EDITED BY
GREGORY TONER
AND
SÉAMUS MAC MATHÚNA**

**CURACH BHÁN PUBLICATIONS
2013**



BERLIN

Bibliographische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliographie;
detaillierte bibliographische Daten sind im Internet unter <http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

Gregory Toner and Séamus Mac Mathúna (editors):

ULIDIA 3 – Proceedings of the Third International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales. University of Ulster
Coleraine, 22–25 June, 2009. In Memoriam Professor Patrick Leo Henry, MRIA

ISBN: 978-3-942002-07-3

Copyright 2013 by curach bhán publications – daniel büchner

Verlag für Kunst & Kulturwissenschaften
Malplaquetstr. 25 – D-13347 Berlin – Germany
<http://www.curach-bhan.com>

Alle Rechte, auch die der Übersetzung, des auszugsweisen Nachdrucks, der Herstellung von Microfilmen,
der digitalen und fotomechanischen Wiedergabe, vorbehalten.

Gedruckt auf säurefreiem und alterungsbeständigem Papier gemäß ISO9706.

Satz: curach bhán publications
Druck: SDL Digitaler Buchdruck, Berlin

Printed in Germany 2013

	<i>In Memoriam Professor Patrick Leo Henry</i>	??
	<i>Introduction</i>	??
1.	Tom McErlean: <i>The archaeology of the Ulster Cycle on the North Coas</i>	??
2.	Kate Louise Mathis: <i>Parallel Wives: Deirdriu and Lúaine in Longes mac n-Uislenm and Tochmarc Lúaine ocus Aided Athairne</i>	??
3.	Joanne Findon: <i>Mother Knows Best: the Role of Nes in Compert Conchobuir</i>	??
4.	Esther Le Mair: <i>A trusted outsider: Leborcham in the Ulster Cycle</i>	??
5.	Kay Muhr: <i>Queen Medb in Place-names</i>	??
6.	Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin: <i>The Banshenchas—genealogy and women of the Ulster Cycle</i>	??
7.	Kicki Ingridsson: <i>Death from Emotion in Early Irish Literature</i>	??
8.	Mary Leenane: <i>Cú Chulainn and the Otherworld</i>	??
9.	Gregory Toner: <i>Narrative, Death, and the Otherworld in Echtra Nera</i>	??
10.	John Carey: <i>Muirchú and the Ulster Cycle</i>	??
11.	Doris Edel: <i>Cú Chulainn on the Couch: Character Portrayal in Táin Bó Cúailnge</i>	??
12.	Grigory Bondarenko: <i>The migration of the soul in De chophur in dá muccida and other early Irish tales</i>	??
13.	Tatyana A. Mikhailova: <i>Cú Chulainn: a watch-dog of Ulster (hero within the tribe?)</i>	??
14.	Caroline McGrath: <i>The Cauldron—A Symbol of Sacrifice in Early Irish Tradition?</i>	??
15.	Marion Deane: <i>The Debate in Feis Tigi Becfholtaig: A Blueprint for Society</i>	??
16.	Maxim Fomin: <i>Paradigms of Polity in Serglige Con Culainn</i>	??
17.	Jacqueline Borsje: <i>A spell called éle</i>	??
18.	Phillip A. Bernhardt-House: <i>Magic and Narrative: Ulster Cycle Texts as Historiolae</i>	??
19.	Sharon J. Arbuthnot: <i>‘Da n-ó mele ⁊ cuitbiuda and so’: What did Derdriu say to Noisiu?</i>	??

20. Stuart Rutten:	
<i>Blind luck in the killing of kin: foster-brothers and the 'x and non-x' formula</i>	??
21. Patricia Ronan:	
<i>Multi-word verbs in the LU and LL-Táin texts</i>	1
22. Mícheál B. Ó Mainnín:	
<i>The Protean Emain: Emain Macha, Emain Ablach (Avalon) And Other Emain Names</i>	??
23. Abigail Burnyeat:	
<i>The Táin-complex in B.L. Egerton 1782</i>	??
24. Lára Ní Mhaoláin:	
<i>Poetry in Brisleach Mhór Mhaighe Muirtheimhne agus Deargruathar Chonaill</i>	
<i>Chearnaigh considered</i>	??
25. P. K. Ford:	
<i>The Ulster Cycle and The Ulster Journal of Archaeology, First Series, 1853–1861</i>	??
26. Caitlyn Schwartz:	
<i>Text, Paratext and Translation: the Ulster Cycle in the Gaelic Revival</i>	??
27. Lora Lee Templeton:	
<i>From Medb to the Decemberists: The Táin in Concept Album Rock</i>	??
28. Mary MacKenna:	
<i>The Ulster Cycle Tales in Art and Popular Culture</i>	??
29. <i>References</i>	13

Patricia Ronan

Multi-word verbs in the *LU* and *LL-Táin* texts

1. Introduction

THIS paper deals with multi-word verbal structures which consist of an inflected verb and a nominal verbal form or a noun with verbal semantics. The inflected verb is typically of general and unspecific semantic content. This type of structure is illustrated by the following examples from English:

- [1] take a walk vs. walk
- [2] have a think vs. think

These multi-verbal groups are defined as a combination of an inflected verb and a noun, and the second element may either be a verbal noun or other noun with verbal meaning. The structure can be defined as a verbal group on the grounds that the whole group may be paralleled by a simple verb, or that it at least has verbal semantics. The collocation of the inflected verb and the noun creates a sense unit. In other words, the sense of the verbal group is non-compositional. This type of structure has been observed in various IE and non-IE language groups, and further examples from German and Old Irish are given below.

- [3] *einen Anfang machen* vs. *anfangen*
- [4] *berid dígail* vs. *do:íich*

While the noun element characteristically has the syntactic function of serving as an object of the inflected verb, there are further comparable structures where the noun has the status of a prepositional object, e.g. *to go for a walk*, or *to go on holidays*, or OIr. *gabais for gressacht Con Culainn* ‘he started to attack Cú Chulainn’ (*LU* 6203).

Terminology that has been used to describe these structures in Germanic, Romance or other Indo-European languages includes ‘expanded predicate’ (Algeo 1995), ‘complex verb’ (Brinton 1996), ‘light verb constructions’ (various authors, going back to Jespersen 1909–49, IV, 117), ‘*Funktionsverbgefüge*’ (van Pottelberge 2002, Balles 2003) or ‘*verbonominale Konstruktion*’ (van Pottelberge 1996) and ‘support verb construction’ (Langer 2004). The latter term will be employed here.

It is the purpose of this contribution to identify, quantify and compare structures of this type that can be found in the *Lebor na hUidre* and the Book of Leinster *Táin* texts. The methodologies used in this investigation were both manual and semi-automatic, i.e.

in the first step, the printed versions of the texts were used to identify the potential candidates for support verb structures in early Irish. In the second step all the forms attested in *DIL*, and their likely spelling variants were searched for in the online versions of the *LU-Táin* and *LL-Táin* in the CELT corpus. Those structures which formed a verbal group consisting of one of the verbal forms in question, and a relevant nominal predicate were extracted.

2. Previous Research

Combinations of inflected verb and predicate in earlier daughter languages of the Indo-European language family have been discussed comprehensively, particularly in the Indo-Iranian language family. Thus Balles (2003) and Scarlatta (1999) both mention the use of similar constructions to create new verbs. Some researchers view complex verbs as being more scientific than simple verbs (e.g. Brinton 1996, van Pottelberge 1996). Jacobi (1903) seems to argue in a similar vein, as he considers the likely reasons for the use of support verb constructions in Sanskrit to be that ageing languages favour nominal styles of expression. The context of Jacobi's study suggests that by 'aging language' he seems to mean languages with a (long) literary tradition rather than 'dying languages'. He argues that complex verbal structures are especially frequent in highly formal language and may thus be considered a sign of elaboration in style.

Most authors seem to agree that multi-word verbs are a stylistic means particularly used in the language of formal and literary contexts. Pragmatically, it may be considered an advantage that, where multi-word verbs are used, the predicate and the object can be separated syntactically and the semantic content of the verb, expressed in the nominal form, can be separated from the inflected verb. In the case of Old Irish, and other VSO languages, this means that, while the inflected verb is restricted to clause initial position, the content-bearing nominalised verbal form is found in any position that can be taken by an object.



A further development that has been observed in the development of other early varieties of languages may also be relevant for Irish, namely the loss of verbal prefixation. In Old High German prefixation often specified *aktionsart*, but this function was increasingly lost. Periphrasis seems to have been one method that replaced prefixation in the specification of *aktionsart* (van Pottelberge 1996). Thus, various specifications of linguistic expression can be constructed, which emphasise different phases of an action. To illustrate this with an example from Modern English, 'to think' can be specified for *aktionsart* by using periphrastic constructions such as the inchoative *come to mind*, the stative *have in mind*, or continuative *keep in mind*. Specific aspectual properties have also been argued for Old Irish support verb structures, especially with inchoative periphrasis, for which *gaibid* plus verbal noun can be used (Ronan 2009).

Support verb structures are also found in Modern Irish (Tristram 2002, Veselinović 2006, Bloch-Trojnar 2009). Bloch-Trojnar (forthcoming) lists *bain* 'take', *caith* 'spend, throw', *cuir* 'put', *déan* 'do', *faigh* 'get', *lig* 'let', *tabhair* 'give', *tag* 'come' and *téigh* 'go' as common support verbs. These are complemented by nouns with verbal semantics, verbal nouns or other nouns, and they may have a corresponding simple verb (Bloch-Trojnar, *ibid.*):

- [5] *póg a thabhairt* ‘to give a kiss’ vs. *póg, pógadh* ‘kiss’
 [6] *obair a dhéanamh* ‘to do work’ vs. *oibrigh, oibriú* ‘work’
 [7] *cuimilt a thabhairt* ‘to give a rub’ vs. *cuimil, cuimilt* ‘rub, stroke’

Bloch-Trojnar (ibid.) notes that the inflected verbs can add aspectual specification to the support verb structure and she particularly stresses their telicising function.

3. Examples in Old Irish texts

A recent investigation into Old Irish material has shown that similar structures can also be found at early stages of the Old Irish period. An investigation has been carried out on a corpus of about 100,000 words. The investigated texts are the Würzburg Glosses (Wb.), Milan Glosses (Ml.), St. Gall Glosses (Sg.), further material from Thesaurus I and II, *Bethu Brigte, Táin Bó Fraích, Imram Brain, Scéla Muicce Meic Dathó, Compert Con Culainn*, and *Críth Gablach*. In these texts the most frequently used verbs with support verb characteristics are *do-beir*, *do-gní* and *gaibid*. *Fo-ceird* and *berid* are also prominent. In the following some typical examples are given.  A more comprehensive discussion of this material is found in Ronan (forthcoming (a)),  ???

In the earlier Old Irish corpus material, drawn mainly from Glosses material and shorter narrative texts, the most frequently found support verb complemented by a verbal noun or noun with verbal semantics is *do-beir*. A total of 146 examples has been observed, and 38 different predicate nouns are used. Some predicate nouns have simple verbal equivalents, others do not but may have developed equivalent simplexes at later times. This particularly holds for religious terminology.

- [8] *is dered mbetho inso ni fíu sercc do thabairt do*
 ‘this is the end of the world, it is not worth while to love it.’ (Wb. 10b3)
 [9] *oc tabairt bendachtae foir hi rriucht éssu*
 ‘giving a blessing to him in Essau’s form’. (Tur. 85)

The most versatile support verb in terms of variation in predicate nouns is *do-gní*, which is found in 141 relevant attestations in the earlier Old Irish corpus material, but with 51 different predicate nouns. Here again, both examples with corresponding verbal simplexes and without a simplex equivalent can be found.

- [10] *ni dénat firtu úili*
 ‘not all work miracles’ (Wb. 12b12)
 [11] *Is Patraic dorigine a mbaitised*
 ‘Patrick baptized him’ (Thes. II 313.18)

In the earlier Old Irish material, *do-beir* and *do-gní* are followed in frequency by *con-icc* ‘be able’ and *gaibid* (both 19 examples) and *imfolngi* ‘create’ (16 examples). *Con-icc* and *imfolngi* can probably not be considered support verbs in the strict sense as they do not form a semantic unity with the verbal noun. Rather, the collocations are semantically compositional and can be analysed as the ‘ability to do x’ and ‘the creation of x’ respectively.

A further structure that can already be observed in the earlier Old Irish material is the use of *fo-ceird* with predicate nouns. Of this type, 13 examples are found, and they cluster in the narrative texts, rather than in the Glosses. Typically *fo-ceird* is used with predicate nouns indicating motion.

- [12] *Fo:ceird iar suidiu Connle bedg n-úadib*
 ‘Condla made a leap from them.’ (McCone 2000, §15)
- [13] *Fo-ceird bedg cucai*
 ‘He made a jump towards him’. (TBFr. 190)

Against this background of earlier Old Irish, and especially Glosses material, we will now examine corresponding structures from *LU-Táin* and *LL-Táin* data in more detail.

4. Data from Táin Recensions

Two *Táin* texts have so far been examined for support verb structures used in them. One is the *LU-Táin*, based on the Best and Bergin edition of the text (*LU*). The text consists of about 25,000 words. In total 116 relevant constructions were found of a semantically low content verb and predicate noun structure which collocate in the narrow sense, i.e. they form a semantic unit. The predicate nouns consisted both of verbal nouns and of other nouns, and the following list indicates the support verb constructions and the number of their attestations: *do-beir* (22), *do-gní* (26), *fo-ceird* (16), *gaibid* (15), *téit* (7), *feraid* (6), *benaid* (5 – with *béim* only), *con-icc* (5), *do-icc* (4 – with *in dáil* only), *fichid* (4), *beirid* (3) and *léicid* (3).

The second text examined is the *LL-Táin*, based on C. O’Rahilly’s edition. The text consists of c. 55,000 words, and a total of 284 examples of support verb structures were found in it. The structures are attested in the following numbers: *do-beir* (103), *do-gní* (43), *gaibid* (40), *fo-ceird* (28), *berid* (24), *feraid* (16), *téit* (7), *con:icc* (6), *benaid* (6 – with *béim* only), *fo-fúabair* (4), *fichid* (3), *do-boing* (2), *do-icc* (2 – *ar gelsine* only). It is immediately obvious that the numbers in *LL* exceed those of *LU* considerably. This observation will be addressed in section 5 of this paper and we will now turn to a discussion of the use of the most prominent support verb constructions.

4.1 do-beir

Do-beir ‘give’ is complemented by 42 different predicate nouns, half of which (21) are verbal nouns, and half are other nouns with verbal semantics.

Noun complements of <i>do-beir</i> in the <i>LU-Táin</i> . Total: 22	Noun complements of <i>do-beir</i> in the <i>LL-Táin</i> . Total: 103
bréc (1), búaid (1), cairdine (1), cath (3), celg (1), cobair (2), fiuss (1), fobairt (2), gáire (1), imthus (1), indas (1), maldacht (1), menman (1), robad (1), srem (1), tofonn (2), tús (1)	aire (2), airchoit (1), ardmess (4), bás (1), béim (16), bendacht (1), bréc (3), briathar (33), búaid (1), buille (1), cath (9), celg (1), comlann (1), comairle (3), cor (2), crothad (1), fiuss (1),

... continued on p. 5

... continued from p. 4	
Noun complements of <i>do-beir</i> in the <i>LU-Táin</i> .	Noun complements of <i>do-beir</i> in the <i>LL-Táin</i> .
	fóbair (2), fobairt (1), fuatach (1), gáire (2), guin (1), géis (1), guth (1), imthecht (1), laid (1), menman (1), nertad (1), póc (5), táin (1), teogasc (1), tinól (1), tofonn (1), trécud (1)

Table I: noun complements of *do-beir* in the LU and LL Táin texts

We can observe that the most frequent collocation is that with the noun *briathar* ‘word’, of which 33 examples are found in *LL* but none in *LU*, e.g.

- [14] *dosbert na briathra sa ar aird*
‘spoke those words loudly’ (*TBC* II, 1310)
- [15] *Ocus rabert na briathra sa*
‘and he spoke these words’ (*TBC* II, 2379)

As this phrase is particularly found to introduce passages of *retoiric* it can be considered a formula in the *LL* text. An alternative construction, found both in the *LL* and *LU* texts, contains *as-beir* or *báigid briathar*.

Another collocation that is restricted to the *LL* text is that of *do-beir* and *béim* ‘blow’, VN to *benaid*, of which 16 examples are found in *LL*:

- [16] *Rabert Fer Diad béim dá glún chlé*
‘gave a blow to his left knee’ (*TBC* II, 3302–3)
- [17] *Dabert Fergus béim dá durn dó-som*
‘F. gave him a blow of his fist’ (*TBC* II, 4866)

While some examples of the form *do/da-bert* are found, the majority of examples contains the form *rabert*. McCone (1997, 199) shows that this form does indeed belong to the verb *do-beir*, with replacement of the preverb by the augment. The collocation of *do-beir* with *béim* is not entirely stable, however. In the *LU-Táin*, five examples are found with the verb *benaid*, and six examples in *LL*. Yet the collocation with *do-beir* prevails over the *figura etymologica* ‘*benaid béim*’. This may be an indication of the increasing avoidance of the more traditional *figura etymologica* construction and its replacement by collocations of high-frequency verbs with more specific verbal nouns.

A further prominent position is held by collocations of *do-beir* and *cath*. Three examples are extant in the *LU* and nine in the *LL* text.

- [18] *Dobérsa cath duit ol Fergus*
‘I will give battle to you, said Fergus.’ (*LU* 4646)
- [19] *dobertsat teóra catha dona slúagaib*
‘They gave 3 battles to the hosts’ (*TBC* II, 2188)

In addition to collocations with *do-beir*, we also find examples with *fichid* ‘fights’ (2 in

LU, 3 in LL), *fo-ceird* ‘puts’ (1 in LU, 3 in LL) and with *gaibid* (1 each in LU and LL). A further alternative is provided in LL, which also collocates *cath* with *feraid*.

[20] *ro fich cath fri Findmóir*

‘she fought a battle against Findmór’ (LU 5822)

[21] *Ro gab a chatherred catha 7 comraic 7 comlaind.*

‘His warriors gave battles and fights and contests.’ (LU 6410–1)

The latter example is not a case of the ingressive/inchoative use of *gaibid* in the sense of ‘they started...’ as the context indicates that this is continuous action rather than the beginning of the action, and this collocation therefore forms a further alternative to *do-beir*. *Cath* is not a verbal noun and it has no direct verbal equivalent. Even though the derivation *cathaigid* is attested as well (*DIL* s.v.) its use does not seem to have been a real alternative for the redactors of the versions in hand. The only example using a comparable construction is found in the LL text and uses a further derivative form, *dénam cathugud* (*co ndernam cathugud dar n-echaib*, ‘so that we may do battle from our horses’, *TBC* II, 3142). It can be seen that various alternative collocations are used to express the concept of fighting battles. Of these, *do-beir cath* is the most prominent in the texts under consideration here. As the concept of ‘fighting’ is a frequent one, however, it is likely that scribes or redactors had no desire to use one stable collocation all the time, but that they deliberately used variants to avoid repetitions.

In the three collocations highlighted here, the central meaning component of ‘giving an entity’ is still traceable in the use of the verb *do-beir*.

4.2 *fo-ceird*

A further prominent verb to be used in collocations with verbal nouns or other nouns with verbal semantics is *fo-ceird*. Its Modern Irish successor *cuir* ‘put’ is frequent in support verb constructions (Bloch-Trojnar 2009). In the earlier Irish material investigated here, collocations with nouns are found, but they are considerably less prominent than collocations with *do-beir* or *do-gní*. *Fo-ceird* is used with 23 different predicate nouns in the corpus texts, about half of which (11) are verbal nouns, and half are other nouns. The numbers of attestations are illustrated in the following table.

Noun complements of <i>fo-ceird</i> in the LU- <i>Táin</i> . Total: 16	Noun complements of <i>fo-ceird</i> in the LL- <i>Táin</i> . Total: 28
ardness (2), armgrith (1), bedg (1), bricht (1), comlann (1), celtair (1), cles (1), comlann (1), cor (4), ernail (1), fomus (1), gleo (1), suide (1)	ág (1), airdbe (1), ár (2), bricht (1), cath (3), celtair (1), cles(rad) (6), cor (8), coscar (1), cúairt (2), foesam (2)

Table II: *noun complements of fo-ceird in the LU and LL Táin texts*

It can be observed that *fo-ceird* is complemented most extensively by its own verbal noun, forming a *figura etymologica*. These structures mostly, but not invariably, show modification of the verbal noun by an adjective or prefix.

- [22] *Fochichursa aurchor dait or Nad Crantail 7 ní n-íngaba*
‘I will cast a great throw on you said Nad Crantail and you cannot avoid it.’ (LU 5761–2)
- [23] *Focheird róut n-urchoir úad ar ammus cungi carpait Conaill*
‘He made a cast at the yoke of Conall’s chariot.’ (TBC II, 1026–7)
- [24] *ara indled a nóí carpti dí coro lád cor isin dúnud*
‘he should yoke her nine chariots so that she could do a cycle in the camp’ (LU 4615–6)

A total of seven of the eight collocations in the *LL-Táin* text contain the phrase *fo-ceird róut n-urchoir*. This is likely to be a fixed collocation, an idiomatic phrase, used by the redactor.

The other prominent collocation of *fo-ceird* is with the noun *cless* or *clessrad* ‘feat’, of which seven examples have been found.

- [25] *Is and so focheird torandchless céit*
‘He then did a thunderfeat of a hundred/of blows.’ (LU 6492)
- [26] *focheird clesrada ána ilerda ingantacha*
‘he attacked him with splendid, manifold and wonderful feats’ (TBC II, 3277–8)

The collocation is not restricted to *fo-ceird*, though, and collocations of *cless* with *fo-gní* are also found with one example each in the *LU* and *LL* texts. Thus the collocation is not completely fixed, but *fo-ceird* and *cless* form a strong bond.

Further, the collocation with the noun *ardmess* ‘estimate’ may be noted. Of this, two examples are found in *LU* text.

- [27] *Cure airdmius dún tarsin slóg ol Cú Culaind fri Lóeg.*
“Give us an estimate as to the host”, said Cú Chulainn to Loeg.’ (LU 4784)

While the *LU* redactor prefers *fo-ceird*, the redactor of the *LL-Táin* uses *do-beir* in all four examples of *ardmess* found in that text.

- [28] *Dobér-sa ardmes furri amne, ar ésiú.*
“I will put an estimate on it then”, said he.’ (TBC II, 757)

Here we seem to have an example of personal linguistic preferences of those writers. This shows that no overall grammaticalisation can be assumed for this collocation, but that personal, or perhaps even dialectal preferences, must be assumed.

In addition to the three collocations mentioned above, a number of further combinations are found, but with too low a frequency to be able to argue for fixed collocations. It is noticeable that nouns of fighting are well represented in collocations with *fo-ceird*. We can also find *armgrith*, *cath*, *comlann*, and *gleo*. For these, simple verbs cannot be used, and the use of periphrastic constructions involving a general verb and the noun is a necessity to express these concepts in verbal contexts. It seems likely that the usage of *fo-ceird* has been abstracted from a core collocation with a similar sense, such as *cless*, and transferred to semantically similar contexts.

4.3 *berid*

A further type of collocation to be addressed here is that involving the verb *berid* ‘bears’.

Overall, examples of *berid* with 14 different predicate nouns are found, nine of which are verbal nouns, and five are other nouns. The distribution can be observed in the following table.

Noun complements of <i>berid</i> in the <i>LU-Táin</i> . Total: 3	Noun complements of <i>berid</i> in the <i>LL-Táin</i> . Total: 24
búaid (1), greimm (1), immarchor (1)	bás (1), bendacht (2), breth (4), búaid (5), comaid (1), guin (1), imchomarc (3), osnad (2), robad (2), rith (1), taffond (1), táin (1)

Table III: noun complements of *berid* in the *LU* and *LL Táin* texts

The most prominent collocation involving *berid* is that involving the noun *búaid* ‘victory’, of which multiple examples are found, particularly in the *LL-Táin* text.

- [29] *ní ruc búaid ná bissech dóib*
 ‘he gave them neither victory nor advantage’ (*TBC* II, 3020)

The *LL-Táin* text also provides a number of examples of *berid breith* and the structure may have been employed as a fixed collocation by the redactor of the *LL-Táin* text, but it is not found at all in the *LU-Táin*. The redactor of the *LL* text also shows a preference for *berid* over *do-beir* with the predicate noun *robaid*:

- [30] *co mboí... ic brith robuid don Dund Chúalnge*
 ‘warning the Donn of Cuailgne’ (*TBC* II, 1304–5)

This is one instance that illustrates the preference of the redactor of the *LL-Táin* for collocations involving verbs other than *berid*. This dislike of *berid* collocations by the *LU* redactor, or alternatively a marked preference on the part of the *LL* redactor for the use of *berid* collocations, may explain the imbalance in the numbers of its attestation in the *LU* and *LL* texts. Interestingly, the Yellow Book of Lecan version of Recension I, in contrast to the *LU* version, provides examples of *berid* complemented by both *robaid* and by *búaid*.

It is also noteworthy that we have markedly more collocations with verbal nouns than with non-verbal nouns as predicates of *berid*. The verb is used with semantically varied verbs, thus no core semantic area of its use can be observed. However, only a few different predicate nouns are in use and overall only few tokens are found. But it is noteworthy that a large number of collocations are with alliterating predicate nouns, which may suggest a connection of these support verb structures to formal or poetic language.

4.4 *do-gní*

With a total of 67 attestations with predicate nouns, *do-gní* is the second most frequently attested support verb in the corpus. Even though its use will not be treated in great detail

in the present discussion, some general comments are in order. As in other cases, the raw frequencies of the constructions are higher in the *LL-Táin* text than in the *LU-Táin*, namely 41 examples in the *LL* text and 26 examples in *LU*. These are used with 32 different predicates, of which slightly more than half (18) are verbal nouns, and somewhat less (14) other nouns. A considerable number of these examples are composed of *do-gní* and the verbal noun of *gníid*, *gním* ‘deed’. Of these, 17 examples are found, 12 in the *LL* text and 5 in the *LU* text.

- [31] *Mac bec doringni in gním sain, ar Fergus, i cind chóic mblíadan.*
 “A little lad did this deed”, said Fergus, “at the end of his fifth year”. (*TBC* II, 814)
- [32] *Nibo machdad dagním do dénam dossom indiu.*
 ‘It is no wonder that he should perform a good exploit today’ (*LU* 4852)

These examples of *do-gní* and *gním* typically provide an environment in which the verbal noun is the rheme of the sentence. The action that would otherwise be expressed by the verb becomes the object of the sentence. Semantically, the collocation of *gním* with the related verb *do-gní* is a logical choice if the writer wants to turn the verbal element into an object phrase and at the same time wants to avoid the addition of new verbal content in the sentence. Other frequent collocations include *do-gní* and *cless* ‘feat’. This collocation is an alternative to *fo-ceird* and *cless* illustrated in 4.2 above, but appears to be particularly frequent with a certain type of feat ascribed to Cú Chulainn, the *torandchless* or ‘thunderfeat’, as four of the seven examples concern this.

- [33] *dáig ní súaire in torandchless dogní-sium forro cacha nóna*
 ‘because the thunderfeat he applies to them every afternoon is not pleasant’ (*TBC* II, 1506–7)
- [34] *lasa torandcless darigénsat in da láth gaile isind áth*
 ‘with the thunderfeat that the two warriors performed in the ford’ (*LU* 6209)

A further collocation that is prominent in the *LL* text is that of *do-gní* and *laíd* ‘lay’, which appears six times in the *LL* text, five times in the *YBL* text, but not at all in the *LU* redaction. This again illustrates that in addition to expressions used in both recensions, we also find examples that are favourite expressions of some, but not of other writers.

5. Results

We have found that even in earlier Irish a number of structures that can be described as support verb structures exist, and a number of verbs with relatively general semantics, such as *do-beir*, *do-gní*, *berid* and *fo-ceird* are used in these collocations. They are predicated by verbal nouns and by other nouns with verbal semantics in roughly equal numbers. Where a corresponding simplex structure exists, the periphrastic structure offers an optional alternative for modifying or specifying the expression’s semantic or pragmatic structure. Where no simplex exists, on the other hand, the structure offers the possibility of creating a verbal expression of the concept.

In the comparison of the structures in two very closely related texts, a number of surprising observations have been made. Most prominently, there is a considerably higher

number of instances in the *LL-Táin* than in the *LU-Táin*. In total, 116 relevant examples were found in the *LU* text. Taking account of the considerably shorter *LU* text as a basis, one would have expected the roughly 100% longer text of the *LL-Táin* to display twice the amount of examples of support verb constructions. Thus about 230 examples might have been expected in the *LL* text. A total of 284 examples have been found, i.e. about a quarter more examples than would have been expected on the basis of the numbers in the *LU* text.

In the case of *do-beir*, based on the *LU-Táin* count of 22 examples, around 44 examples would have been expected in *LL*, but more than twice as many, 103, have been found. Most prominently, for the verb *berid*, on basis of the three examples found in the *LU-Táin*, we would have expected six examples in the *LL-Táin*, but 24 examples were in fact found in the *LL* text. While for both *do-beir* and *berid* we find markedly higher counts in the *LL-Táin* text, this is not the case for the verb *fo-ceird*. For *fo-ceird* we would have expected something like 32 examples in the *LL-Táin*, based on the *LU-Táin*'s count of 16 examples. Here, less than the expected number, 28 examples, were in fact found, thus *fo-ceird* is noticeably prominent in the *LU-Táin*. This might either be due to a relatively high prominence of *fo-ceird* based collocations in the *LU-Táin*, or indeed to a marked scarcity of them in the *LL-Táin*. Overall in earlier Irish *fo-ceird* is relatively sparsely attested in support verb structures, but there has been an apparent increase during later stages of the language – and in the use of the redactor of the *LU-Táin*. To put this observation into context and to assess the general frequency of these structures in early Irish texts, further investigation based on a broader text base is needed, however.


As far as the two texts in hand are concerned, a relatively high incidence of support verb constructions can be observed, particularly as compared to the earlier Old Irish material described in section 3 above. A veritable explosion in the number of some structures can be observed particularly in the *LL-Táin*. Conceivably, this might be due to a more elaborate style used in the *LL-Táin* as compared to the *LU-Táin* and to other textual genres. This explanation would be in line with an increase in stylistic complexity that has been argued for in the ongoing development of other vernacular literatures, such as Germanic or Sanskrit. The observation that some support verb structures seem to favour alliteration may also play a role here. On the other hand, the increase in support verb structures may also have formal reasons in the progressive reduction of aspect marking by verbal prefixes. If that were the case, this development would not be unique in Irish as it has also been argued for other languages, particularly for Germanic languages, that the loss of aspectual prefixes may cause an increase in support verb structures.

However, a great degree of variation of support verbs in collocation with a given predicate noun is typically thought to indicate the lack of grammaticalisation of a structure (van Pottelberge 1996). We do find a large degree of variation in the *Táin* texts, especially between *do-beir* and *berid*. On the other hand, variation is also found in well grammaticalised constructions in other languages. Thus Modern English, which makes frequent use of well established support verb structures, shows variation even in highly frequent structures. This may be due to dialect preferences, such as the use of *have a shower* versus *take a shower*. Other variation may be caused by idiolects or by doublets of unknown provenance, such as *do an errand* versus *run an errand* (Algeo 1995). All these factors, dialectal variation, idiolect, stylistic variation, but also lack of grammaticalisation based on lack of frequency of the structures, may contribute to the variation in the early Irish

material investigated here. Overall, the evaluation of an even larger textual basis would be needed to enable us to draw more informed conclusions. The textual basis investigated here is too small to make confident assessments of all the factors responsible for the use of these early Irish structures, and obviously we lack native speaker competence to do so as well. Nevertheless, the data suggests that the seeds of the system found in Modern Irish are beginning to be clearly visible in the early Irish material under investigation here as well.

References

*Abbreviations*¹

- AFM = O'Donovan (1848–51).
AM = Kelly (1976).
AU = Mac Airt & Mac Niocaill (1983).
BCC = *Briathartheosc Con Culainn*, in: Dillon (1953, 9–10).
BMMM = Kimpton (2009).
CCC = Windisch (1880, 134–45).
CGH = O'Brien (1962).
CIH = Binchy (1978).
Civ. Surv. = Simington (1931–61).
CMCS = *Cambrian* (formerly *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*).
CPR *Jas I* = Griffith (1966).
DCDM = Windisch (1891).
DIL = Quin (1983).
Fiants Eliz. = 'Calendar and Index to the Fiants of the Reign of Elizabeth I' Appendix to the 11–13th, 15–18th and 21–22nd *Reports of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records in Ireland*, Dublin (1879–81, 1883–86, 1889–90).
FTB = Meyer (1905b).
Inq. Ult. = Hardiman (1829).
Lec. = Book of Lecan.
LEIA = Vendryes, , *et al.*, *Lexique étymologique de L'Irlandais Ancien*. Dublin and Paris (1959–).
LL = Best, Bergin, O'Brien, & O'Sullivan (1954–83).
LMU = Hull (1949).
LU = *Lebor na h-Uidre* (Best & Bergin, 1929).
NIEA = Northern Ireland Environment Agency.
OSM = Day & McWilliams (1990–98).
OSNB = Name-books compiled during the progress of the Irish Ordnance Survey in 1827–35, National Archives, Dublin.
PSAMNI = Chart (1940).
RIA = Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.
SCC = Dillon (1953).
TBC I = O'Rahilly, C. (1976).
TBC II = O'Rahilly, C. (1967).
TBC III = Nettlau (1894) & Thurneysen (1912b).
TBC-St. = O'Rahilly, C. (1961).
TBFr. = Meid (1974).
TCD = Trinity College, Dublin. 
TLA = Breatnach (1980).
Thes. = Stokes, W. & Strachan, J. (1901), Stokes, W. & Strachan, J. (1903).
YBL = The Yellow Book of Lecan.
ZCP = *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*.

???

¹ Other textual abbreviations used can be found in the *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (Quin 1983).