

**COMPERT CON  
CULAINN, AND OTHER  
STORIES, VOLUME III**

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Compert Con Culainn, and other stories, Volume III by A. G. van Hamel

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**A. G. VAN HAMEL**

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CULAINN, AND OTHER  
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MEDIAEVAL AND MODERN  
IRISH SERIES

Volume III

COMPERT CON CULAINN  
AND OTHER STORIES

EDITED BY

A. G. VAN HAMEL,

*Professor of Celtic at the University of Utrecht*

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DUBLIN

1933

*Five Shillings*

## MEDIAEVAL AND MODERN IRISH SERIES

IN order to further the study of Irish literature the Department of Finance has made a special grant to provide for the re-publication of mediaeval and modern texts in a form suitable for class work and for the general reader. At the instance of the Minister for Finance an editorial committee has been formed to direct the work. The members of the committee are: Dr. E. J. Gwynn, Provost of Trinity, Miss Knott, Dr. Bergin, Dr. Best, Professor O'Toole, Mr. Delany, Dr. Dillon.

It is hoped to supply editions of stories from the Ulster, Fenian and mythological cycles, and of what is best in Irish poetry and prose.

In the matter of editing, uniformity has not been attempted, the different editors being free to adopt the system which they prefer, subject to the approval of the committee. The price of the volumes will not be uniform, as they will vary in size, but it will be kept as low as possible.

### *Published:—*

- Bate Saibhir, *ed.* J. G. O'Keefe. 3/6.
- Tromdánh Guaire, *ed.* Maud Juven. 3/—.
- Comport Con Culainn and other stories, *ed.* A. G. Van Hamel. 3/—.

### *At the press:—*

- Cúchulainn Cellaig, *ed.* Kathleen Mulchrone.
- Desiderius, by Florence Conry, O.P.M., *ed.* T. F. O'Rahilly.
- Togail Bráidre Dá Derga, *ed.* Eleanor Knott.
- Táin Bó Fraich, *ed.* the late Mary E. Byrne and Myles Dillon.

### *In preparation:—*

- Fled Bricrend, *ed.* Michael A. O'Brien.
- Tóraigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne, *ed.* Eamonn Ó Tuathail.
- Táin Bó Cúalnge (Stowe), *ed.* Tomás Ó Máille.



## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE present edition of four texts from the Ulster cycle was designed with a double object. Being part of the Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series, it is intended for class work and for the general reader. At the same time, as it includes two texts (*Tochmare Emire* and *Aided Con Culainn*) of which the most representative manuscript has not been printed before, it may also be of use to scholars. It is the editor's conviction that for beginners in the field of Irish studies a certain amount of normalizing in the spelling is indispensable. Advanced students, on the other hand, require to have the texts before them in their exact manuscript form, with the emendation only of evident scribal errors. Of the two smaller tales (*Compect Con Culainn* and *Aided Óenfir Aife*) scholarly editions are available and easily accessible; here it was not deemed necessary to point out all the deviations from the manuscript readings introduced for the purpose of uniformity. But for *Tochmare Emire* and *Aided Con Culainn* it is different. Of these two stories a reliable edition from the best sources was a long-felt want; hence no change, however small, has been made in these texts without indication of the actual readings in a note. This could easily be done, as it has not been judged expedient, even for class work, to normalize the spelling of the later stories to the same extent as has been done in *Compect Con Culainn* and *Aided Óenfir Aife*.

The choice of the texts was directed by the intention to bring together four outstanding moments of *Cú Chulainn's* career: the story of his birth, his courtship, the tragic encounter with his only son, and his death through demoniacal magic. For practical purposes the chrono-



logical order has been changed, the Death of Aife's Only One preceding the Wooing of Emer in the present volume. In fact, the difficulties of the latter text exceed those of the former in such a degree that the editor thinks himself sufficiently justified for committing this anachronism.

The language of *Comport Con Culainn* is strictly Old-Irish, that of *Aided Óenfir Aife* later Old-Irish. In *Tochmarc Éimire* different strata may be discerned, varying from archaic to Middle-Irish: this text has been handled and extended a good deal before it received the form in which we now possess it. *Aided Con Culainn* is a fine specimen of an early Modern Irish story. A comparison of the four stories, as to both language and style, will prove highly instructive to the beginner.

The volume has been provided with a complete glossary. In compiling this a serious difficulty was caused by the necessity of bringing together words and forms from different periods of the language. The expedient resorted to was the adoption of a number of references to the standard-forms of the glossary. There was no other way to save the student from looking in vain. Simple verbs and compound verbs with one preposition have been given in the form of the first person singular of the present indicative, compound verbs with more prepositions in that of the stem. But the less obvious compound verbal forms that occur in the texts will be found in the glossary with a reference to the verb to which they belong. An attempt at an interpretation of the obscurer passages (such as the retories) has also been made in the glossary.

The editor expresses his sincere thanks to the Editorial Committee for allowing him to contribute to an enterprise which is essentially Irish. This he regards as a much-valued distinction. Of the members of the Committee Dr. E. J. Gwynn has read both the texts and the glossary in manuscript: to him the editor is indebted for some

important suggestions. What Dr. M. Dillon has done for this little book, cannot possibly be enumerated. He has read the manuscript and all the proofs, and it is difficult to imagine what the book would be like but for the numerous corrections proposed by him. All that the editor can wish is that his gratitude should not be inadequate to a help so graciously offered.

For all errors that remain the editor alone is responsible.

A. G. VAN HAMRE.

Utrecht, June 1933.

