

Testament of Morann

(Translated by Fergus Kelly)

I have taken the liberty of a few translation descisions of my own. In his translator's notes F. Kelly describes the word "fi/rinne" as meaning alternatly "truth" or "justice", and he appears to switch between them arbitrarily in his English rendition. Here I have restored all counts of the word fi/rinne to read truth. But if the alternation is not so arbitrary, perhaps the Druid's sacred truth is identified with the proper administration of justice-- and if this is so, it is not such a bad thing. It makes Truth universally accessible, Druid or not.

-Bren

1. Here begins the Testament of Morann son of Moen to Feradach Find Fechnach son of Craumthann Nia Nar. He was the son of the daughter of Loth son of Derelath of the Picts. His mother brought him away in her womb after the vassal tribes had destroyed the nobles of Ireland except for Feradach in his mother's womb. He came over afterwards with hosts and Morann sent this Testament to him.

2. Arise, set forth
O my Neire accustomed to proclaiming
The virtue of dutifulness makes you known
Dutiful the journey you undertake
Announce, increase truth.
Fair [and] lasting
My words before my death
Bring him the virtue of rectitude
Which each ruler must have
If you go past every [other] king
I measure them for the protection of my kin.

3. If you go to a king
Hasten to Feradach
Find Fechnach
Good, vigourious
He will be long ruling
In the seat of full soverenty
He will move many tribes
Of thieves to the sea
He will increase his heir
Filled with valour.

4. Let him keep my advice which follows here.
5. Tell him before every [other] word
Bring him with every word this lasting justice.
6. Let him preserve Truth, it shall preserve him
7. Let him raise truth, it will raise him.
8. Let him exalt mercy, it exalth him
9. Let him care for his tribes, they will care for him
10. Let him help his tribes, they will help him
11. Let him soothe his tribes, they will soothe him
12. Tell him, it is through the truth of the ruler that plagues [and] great lightnings are kept from the people
13. It is through the truth of the ruler that he judges great tribes [and] great riches.
14. It is through the truth of the ruler that he secures peace, tranquility, joy, ease, [and] comfort.
15. It is through the truth of the ruler that he dispatches (great)

battilions to the borders of hostile neibours.

16. It is through the truth of the ruler that every heir plants his house-post in his fair inheritance

17. It is through the truth of the ruler that abundances of great tree-fruit of the great wood are tasted.

18. It is through the truth of the ruler that milk-yields of great cattle are maintained.

19. It is through the truth of the ruler that there is abundance of every high, tall corn

20. It is through the truth of the ruler that abundance of fish swim in streams.

21. It is through the truth of the ruler that fair children are well begotten.

22. Tell him, since he is young, his rule is young.

Let him observe the driver of an old chariot.

For the driver of an old wheel rim does not sleep

He looks ahead, he looks behind, in front and to the right and to the left.

He looks, he defends, he protects, so that he may not break with neglect or violence the wheel-rims which run under him.

23. Tell him, let him not exalt any judge unless he knows the true legal precedents.

24. It is through the truth of the ruler that every man of art attains the crown of knowledge. After that he will sit to teach the good rule to which he has submitted.

25. It is through the truth of the ruler that the borders of every true lord extend so that each cow reaches the end of its grazing.

26. It is through the truth of the ruler that every garment of clothing is obtained for glances of eyes.

27. It is through the truth of the ruler that enclosures of protection of cattle [and] of every produce extend.

28. It is through the truth of the ruler that the three immunities of violence at every assembly protect every lord from the restraints of collision during the course of his noble rule.

The first immunity [is] the racing of horses at assemblies.

The second immunity of them [is] a hosting [of a millitary force]

The third immunity [is] the privilege of the ale-house with friends and great abundances of mead-circuit, where foolish and wise, familiars and strangers are intoxicated.

29. Tell him, let him not redden many fore-courts, for bloodshed is a vain destruction of all rule and of protection from one kin for the ruler.

30. Tell him, let him give any reciprocal service which is due from him, let him enforce any bond which he should bind, let him remove the shame of his cheeks by arms in battle against other territories, against their oath, against all their protections.

31. Tell him, let not rich gifts or great treasures or profits blind him to the weak in their sufferings.

32. Tell him, let him estimate the creations of the creator who made them as they were made; anything which he will not judge according to its profits will not give them with full increase.

33 Let him estimate the earth by its fruits

34. Let him estimate the yew by its well-made articles

35. Let him estimate cattle by their winter-circuit of fame

36. Let him estimate milk-yield by its increase

37. Let him estimate corn by its height

38. Let him estimate streams by their clean washing

39. Let him estimate iron by its properties at disputes of tribes.

40. Let him estimate copper by its firmness [and] strength [and] dense artefacts.
41. Let him estimate silver by its durability [and] value [and] white artefacts.
42. Let him estimate gold by its foreign wonderful ornaments.
43. Let him estimate the soil by its services where people may seek out produce.
44. Let him estimate sheep by their covering which is selected for the garments of the people
45. Let him estimate pigs by the fat side, for it is freeing from shame of every face
46. Let him estimate the war-bands which accompany a true lord, for the rule of his retinue belongs to every king; anything which he will not judge according to its profits will not summon them with full increase.
47. Let him estimate unfree persons [and] serving companies; let them serve, let them provide food-rent, let them measure [it], let them give [it] in return for the true grants of the ruler
48. Let him estimate old men in the seats of their ancestors with numerous benefits of respect.
49. Let him estimate fathers and mothers with benefits of maintenance [and] dutiful consistency.
50. Let him estimate the fees of every craftsman for firm articles [and] well made objects
51. Let him estimate the right and justice, truth and law, contract and regulation of every just ruler towards all his clients.
52. Let him estimate the proper honour-price of every grade of free and base nemed-persons.
(I have failed, I am made to blush.)
53. Arise, set forth,
O my Neire accustomed to proclaiming
To Feradach Find Fechnach.
Announce to him the high points of my words
54. Darkness yields to light
Sorrow yields to joy
An oaf yields to a sage
A fool yields to a wise man
A serf yeilds to a free man
Inhospitallity yields to hospitallity
Niggardliness yields to generosity
Meanness yields to liberality
Impetuosity yields to composure
Turbulence yields to submission
A usurper yields to a true lord
Conflict yields to peace
Falsehood yields to truth.
55. Tell him, let him be merciful, just, impartial, conscientious, firm, generous, hospitable, honourable, stable, beneficent, capable, honest, well-spoken, steady, true-judging.
56. For there are ten things which extinguish the injustice of every ruler.
(Beware that you do not do it, beware of everything, O rulers.) Announce from me the ten: rule and worth, fame and victory, progeny and kindred, peace and long life, good fortune and tribes.
57. Tell him: he may die, he will die, he may depart, he will depart; how he has been, how he will be, that is what will be proclaimed. He is not a ruler unless he performs these deeds.

58. Tell him, there are only four rulers: the true ruler and the wily ruler, the ruler of occupation with hosts, and the bull ruler.

59. The true ruler, in the first place, is moved towards every good thing, he smiles on the truth when he hears it, he exalts it when he sees it. For he whom the living do not glorify with blessings is not a true ruler.

60. The wily ruler defends borders and tribes, they yield their valuables and dues to him.

61. The ruler of occupation with hosts from outside; his forces turn away, they put off his needs, for a prosperous man does not turn outside.

62. The bull ruler strikes [and] is struck, wards off [and] is warded off, roots out [and] is rooted out, pursues [and] is pursued. Against him there is always bellowing with horns.

63. Arise, set forth

O my Neire accustomed to proclaiming

To Feradach Find Fechnach

A noble, mighty ruler

To every ruler who rules truly.

Let him keep my words,

They will bring him to victory.

I measure them for the protection of my kin.

(I am forced) Finit.