

**LEBOR GABÁLA ÉRENN**  
The Book of the Taking of Ireland

PART VI

Index

**INTRODUCTION**

EDITED AND TRANSLATED WITH NOTES, ETC.

BY

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Index Compiled

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## INTRODUCTION

Lebor Gabála Éirenn (The Book of the Taking of Ireland; The Book of Invasions; The Book of Conquests) tells the story of Ireland from the time of the biblical creation to the restored reign of Máel-Sechlainn as the 157<sup>th</sup> king of Ireland. This ‘pseudo-history’ of Ireland is recounted in stories of occupations of the island both before and after the biblical flood.

The *ante*-diluvian invasions of Ireland include those of: Banba; The Three Spanish Fishermen – Capa, Laigne and Luasad; Cessair. The invasions of the *post*-diluvian period were those of: Partholon; Nemed; the Fir Bolg; the Fir Domnann; the Fir Gaileoin; Túatha Dé Danann; the Sons of Míl (the Milesians, the Gaidel, the Gaels).

Subsequent to the invasion of the Sons of Míl (the Gaedil), ‘The Roll of the Kings’ documents the alleged history of Ireland and the events of those later times up until the twelfth century.

In a life filled with scholarly pursuits, archaeological excavations and administrative responsibilities R.A. Stewart Macalister dedicated years of effort to Lebor Gabála Éirenn. He sought out the original manuscripts of the extant variant versions, transcribed the handwriting, sought technical assistance to clarify illegible entries and language, translated the text into English, organized the materials into three ‘redactions’, separated the verse from the prose and provided extensive notes and commentary. These efforts were published by the Irish Texts Society in four volumes between 1938 and 1941. Macalister’s death in 1950 prevented his completion of the project, but a fifth volume dedicated to the ‘Roll of the Kings’ was assembled “by Brian A. Riley, an educated reader,”<sup>1</sup> from Macalister’s notes and was published in 1956. A comprehensive index to the contents of these five volumes was never produced.

While there has never been a great demand, there has been one scholar who has recognized the need for a comprehensive index to Lebor Gabála Éirenn. R. Mark Scowcroft has said:

Students of the text and the tradition suffer most, of course, from the absence of indices in the printed edition. A text of this size and complexity requires indices of proper names (personal, tribal, and local), of the first lines of the poems, and of subjects covered in the introduction and notes; concordances to the recensions and a general bibliography would also be helpful.<sup>2</sup>

This index is based on the English language translation of Lebor Gabála Éirenn, The Book of the Taking of Ireland, edited and translated by R.A. Stewart Macalister, as published by the Irish Texts Society, in five parts, as follows:

Volume XXXIV	Part I	first published in 1938
Volume XXXV	Part II	first published in 1939
Volume XXXIX	Part III	first published in 1940
Volume XLI	Part IV	first published in 1941
Volume XLIV	Part V	first published in 1956

Also included in the indexing is A New Introduction to Lebor Gabála Éirenn by John Carey published in 1993 by the Irish Texts Society as part of the subsidiary publication series. This short (21 pages) text provides an overview and context for the nature, sources and textual history of Lebor Gabála Éirenn.

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<sup>1</sup> Padraig O Riain, ed., *Irish Texts Society, the First Hundred Years*, Irish Texts Society, Subsidiary Series 9, London, 1998, p. 95. Riley was never credited for his work in the publication of the fifth volume of LGÉ.

<sup>2</sup> R. Mark Scowcroft, “‘Leabhar Gabhála Part I: The Growth of the Text’”, *Eriu*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1987, p. 137.

The page size was chosen to be 8½” x 11” and the type size was selected at 10 points for easy readability.

The index is arranged in alphabetical order for the convenience of the reader. A short word comes before a long one beginning with the same letters. Prepositions and conjunctions are disregarded. A proper noun precedes a common noun of the same spelling. There was no attempt made to have separate indices of people, peoples, places and general topics as this would require the reader to use multiple indices.

For the most part, the literary characters of Lebor Gabála Érenn are entered by their names, followed by any appendages. As an example, Muirchertach mac Erca will be found under Mu (Muirchertach) not mac E (mac Erca) or E (Erca). Where more modern names are to be found, the names of the person is given in full; that is, the surname is followed, where available, by a given name or initials. An example of this arrangement would be Carey, John. A surname followed by initials is alphabetized before one with a spelled-out name. Where there is doubt if a character with the same name is one or two different characters, the choice has been to assume two different characters. Identical names are repeated and superscript numbers are used to distinguish different characters with the same name. The particular superscript number selected has no significance. The attempted sequencing of the same or similar names is (1) name with only general information and no ancestral or descendant data; (2) name with ancestral history; (3) name with descendant history only; (4) name with a secondary name or title; (5) alternative name or name spelling with a (**See:** ) reference. Names beginning with Mc are alphabetized as if they were spelled Mac. Titles are ignored in alphabetizing. The name of a person will precede the name of a place or thing with the same name. The names of peoples and of places are sometimes interchangeable and it is not always clear from the context which is intended – e.g. the Connachta, Connachta.

Among all of the manuscripts studied, Macalister identified three distinct versions, including scribal glosses, which he classified as Redactions One, Two and Three (R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>, R<sup>3</sup>). The scribes who wrote these stories have used non-standardized spellings for the names of characters and places. Where this has occurred, the most commonly used name is the main entry and all of the variant names are enclosed in brackets. Additionally, each variant name has its own main entry with a cross-reference to the commonly used name. Parentage and familial relations of the characters sometimes presented a difficulty for the scribes. “They marry, sometimes more than once. They have extra-marital relations. They have children.”<sup>3</sup> They marry within the family. They marry between generations. They have multiple spouses. Where characters have the same name, their parents, spouses and children may have been attached to a different figure.

Numbers are given in both spelled and numerical form depending on the context. Where numbers are quoted as part of a quotation, the quote format should prevail. Under the heading of **Numbers**, numbers are arranged in numerical format and sequence. Numbers when associated with specific dates are arranged in date sequence under the heading **Chronology**. Where dates are used in an annotation they follow the format used in the text. Sometimes, to save space, a numerical form has been used where a spelled form may have been, thus leading to inconsistency in the way that numbers are presented.

Concepts or themes are listed alphabetically. Some examples of themes in the index include: Agriculture, Climate, Colours, Fauna, Flora, Measurements, Society, Transportation.

The format of each entry contains a main entry and where appropriate one or more sub-entries. The main entry is left hand justified in all cases, in 10 point bold type, and is a noun or a substantive phrase. Adjectives are not used alone. The letter of the first word of a main entry is capitalized as are all words normally capitalized in the text. A sub-entry is indented by two letter positions from the main entry, in 10 point bold type, and with a blank line separating the sub-entry from the main entry. Each sub-sub-entry is indented by two letter positions from the previous sub-entry, in 10 point bold type, with a blank line separating the sub-sub-entry from the sub-entry.

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<sup>3</sup> Jon O. Newman, “A Genealogical Chart of Greek Mythology” University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London, 2003, p. 1

Cross-references are used to avoid duplicate entries wherever possible. Cross-references follow a main entry or sources and are enclosed in parentheses. There are two types of cross-references that have been used:

(**See:** ) – a cross-reference that directs the reader from one main entry to the main entry where a complete description is provided.

(**See Also:** ) – a cross-reference associated with a main entry that has a full description, but that shows where additional information can be found.

Annotations have been provided only from the translated text of Lebor Gabála Érenn to clarify the meaning of a main or sub-entry. It would often be helpful to provide supplemental information to an annotation from other sources to assist the reader with a better understanding. However, additional clarifying information from other sources has *not* been used. This keeps the work to its basic purpose of being *an index*, and avoids the problems of source selection or omission while keeping the index to a reasonable length. Direct quotations or paraphrases from the text are used whenever possible and are enclosed in quotation marks.

The source for each main or sub-entry appears immediately following the annotation. Source information is enclosed in parentheses and labeled as “source” in 10 point bold type. The source includes the author’s name, either Carey or Macalister. For entries under Macalister, the volume, in 10 point bold type, and the page number is cited. For entries under Carey the year of publication and the page number is cited. Footnotes are indexed when they contain information that is not in the text. Footnote entries have the page number followed by an *n* in italic type. Volume numbers are separated from page numbers by a semi-colon. Page numbers are separated by commas.

It is usually a false economy to use abbreviations. It saves little or nothing in space and costs the reader extra effort in looking at, looking up, or remembering what it means. Nevertheless, it has been an oft-used convention in Irish scholarship to abbreviate the names of books and manuscripts. Carey and Macalister have followed this convention as well. There is a main entry entitled **Abbreviations**, which attempts to identify all of the abbreviations used by Carey and Macalister and to provide a brief identification of their meaning.

Etymologies and pronunciation of words are *not* provided.

This present volume is an attempt to provide a guide for a new generation of scholars to the often bewildering and complicated contents of Lebor Gabála Érenn. Responsibility for the selection of items to include as well as the annotations is, of course, mine alone. Users of this information may very well identify other topics that should have been included. Scholars applying to this material the eclectic disciplines of : anthropology, archaeology, art analysis, comparative literature, compositional studies, feminist criticism, folklore, form criticism, genealogical analysis, history, intertextual theory, linguistics, literary criticism, mathematical analysis, motif analysis, mythology, psychoanalytic criticism, semiotics, speech act theory, structural analysis, style analysis and other techniques yet to be developed, will provide greater insight into this important collection<sup>4</sup>.

Michael Murphy  
Oceanside, New York  
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<sup>4</sup> Varese Layzer, *Signs of Weakness: Juxtaposing Irish Tales and the Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd., 2001. There are many ways of reading a text and Layzer encourages a collaborative and synthetic approach to Irish text studies to unravel its multiplicity of meanings and to utilize new ways to make texts accessible to more people. To this I would add that the contributions of interested, educated readers be as welcomed as those of the professors.

