

QUEER MEDIEVAL IRELAND

CARANTES



Did you know...

Cú Chulainn, greatest hero of the Ulster Cycle, had a 'very special relationship' with another man? His name was Fer Diad! In *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, they hug, kiss, and talk about sleeping in the same bed while on adventures when they were younger. They end up bound by honour to fight to the death, and Cú Chulainn wins... But he composes sad poetry about it.

Did you know...

High King Niall Frosach solved a mysterious pregnancy with his spectacular gaydar? A young woman came to him with a baby she had given birth to, but she hadn't slept with a man for years. How could this be?! Well, Niall knew right away! Her girlfriend must have slept with a man just before they fooled around, and she accidentally impregnated her with the man's child.

Did you know...

One of Finn mac Cumail's people changed sexes? Like, a lot? We don't know their name, but they are one of the wonders of Finn's warrior band, the *Fíana* in *Feis Tighe Chonáin*! Each year, they spontaneously change sex, and can have children both ways!

Did you know...

Even the clerical elite couldn't resist a fine looking man? Saint Findchán, a priest and 'soldier of Christ', had fallen in 'carnal love' for Áed Dub mac Suibni, a 6th century king of the Dál Araide. The fact that Áed was a vicious murderous man who killed the High King and got ousted from kingship didn't seem to deter Findchán, as he even welcomed him in his monastery for years.

1. This can be found in the two earliest versions of *Táin Bó Cúailgne* ('Cattle Raid of Cooley'). Of these two, Recension 2 has more queer bits! (O'Rahilly, Cecile. *Táin Bó Cúailgne: from the Book of Leinster* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967).

2. Check out: McMannus, Damian. 'Niall Frosach's 'Act of Truth': a Bardic Apologue in a Poem for Sir Nicholas Walsh, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas', *Ériu* 58 (2008): 133-68.

3. Read this here: O'Kearney, Nicholas. *Feis Tighe Chonáin Chinn-Shleibhe, or the Festivities at the House of Conan of Cenn-Sleibhe in the County of Clare* (Dublin: 1855).

4. Erbnen, Eachiarn, 'Carnaliter amans: The Relationship between Áed Dub mac Suibni and the Priest Findchán in Adomnán's Account,' *Celtic Students Conference*. University of Glasgow, 30th of March - 1st of April 2023.