

This thesis is mainly concerned with the development of the Fenian narratives about the adventures of Fion (later Finn or Fingal) and his war-band, the *fian*, as it was told by his son, the bard Oisín (later Ossian). The Fenian tales are unique in literary history because they have fascinated people for more than thousand years and are still being written. Since the 12th century when the first codex, The Book of Leinster, containing the first five stories about Finn mac Cumhaill and his *fian* appeared, hundreds of books with the same thematic saw the light of the world. Some are almost unknown today or even lost and others, on the other hand, became an inspiration for the whole era.

The story about the hero Finn and his army of warriors was first written down in Ireland in the 13th century (according to other sources already in the 12th century) and was the main narrative of the Fenian cycle. However, the story itself is much older circulating as a part of oral tradition of Ireland and Scotland for centuries. The original story has changed immensely during the centuries due to its oral character. The same happened to the role of Finn and his troops of young warriors, the stories won on significance and become one of the major cycle of tales of Ireland and later Scotland.

In the first story where one of the first mentions of Finn appears, called The Poem of Fothad Cananine, Finn (at that time called Fion) was presented only as one of many soldiers fighting in the army of a hero named Fothad. In the middle of the 12th century one of the most famous old Irish codices was written - The Book of Leinster, containing among others one of the first written tales about Finn: *Tochmarc Ailbhe* (The Wooing of Ailbhe), *Aithed Gráinne re Díarmait* (The Elopement of Gráinne with Díarmait), *Uath Beinne Étair* (The Cave of Howth), *Uath Dercce Ferna* (The Horror of Derc Ferna) which is now lost, and *Echtra Fhind i nDerc Ferna* (The Adventures of Finn in Derc Ferna).