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PIARMHEASÚNÚ

Is mór ag na heagarthóirí an cúnamh a fuarthas uathu siúd a rinne piarmheasúnú faoi rún ar na hailt atá san imleabhar seo.

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MAKING THE WHOLE (DIVINE) WORLD CELTIC: TWO NATURAL OBJECTIONS

Abstract

This paper considers two natural difficulties of studying ancient cults from the point of view of methodology, which are further compromised by a human factor. They are in no way confined exclusively to the study of Celtic theonymy and certainly not neglected in academic publications. The first of them is the validity of certain restoration of divine names in fragmentary inscriptions which makes them linguistically Celtic, and this point is illustrated by the alleged but barely proven relation of]kadriaco from Altino in Italy with *Belatukadros* attested in Britain. The second is a very common problem of segmenting linguistically Celtic data from difficult onomastic landscapes, which is illustrated with examples from eastern and central Europe, as well as from northern Italy. These questions are difficult, sometimes impossible, to answer, but nevertheless they should be posed.

Key-words: Celtic, divine-names, epigraphy, Britain, Veneto, Silesia

In this paper two natural difficulties of studying ancient cults as they are recorded in epigraphy will be considered. In fact, these difficulties are further compromised by a human factor, and they are in no way confined exclusively to the study of Celtic theonymy, and both of them are certainly familiar to students of Celtic. The two problems to be addressed are the validity of emendations and extensions of divine names in inscriptions which make them linguistically Celtic, and that of segmenting linguistically Celtic data from the difficult onomastic landscapes represented and filled by purely onomastic or fragmentarily attested languages.[1] Certainly, these difficulties – sometimes interrelated – are known in most individual philologies, and the methodology for addressing these questions has been discussed, as a rule in passing, hundreds if not thousands of times. It is not intended here to be involved in the discussion of theoretical aspects pertaining to the study of these two problems. These questions are difficult, perhaps impossible to answer in quite a few cases, but nevertheless they should be posed while discussing particular data. Therefore, the present study will look at some evidence which raises the two questions, with rather practical aims in view: to contribute properly to

[1]For this set of issues see most recently Daniele Baglioni, Luca Rigobianco, 'Rethinking fragmentariness and reconstruction: an introduction', in D. Baglioni and L. Rigobianco (eds), *Fragments of Languages: From 'Restsprachen' to Contemporary Endangered Languages* (Leiden, 2024), 1–25.

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the compilation of the corpus of linguistically Celtic divine names attested epigraphically in antiquity.

I. VALIDITY OF EMENDATIONS AND EXTENSIONS: THE CASE OF *[BELATU]KADR-

This problem has been at the centre of attention of scholars dealing with Greek and Latin epigraphy for centuries, and students of Ancient Celtic are regularly troubled by the necessity to improve readings in various ways. As was noted by P. De Bernardo Stempel in her article dedicated to methodological issues of analysis of the relevant data, '[a] further pitfall is represented by broken or shortened words'.[2] The challenges presented by abbreviated or shortened words in inscriptions can be various. To illustrate this gradation of (un)certainty in extension one may quote this heavily abbreviated inscription from Lusitania, BVS V S / FIL / S, where BVS is commonly extended into B(andi) V(orteaeceo) s(acrum).[3] The divine name itself is noteworthy: it is generally considered Lusitanian, but is sometimes analysed as Celtic in academic publications,[4] and this problem will be addressed in the second part of this paper. Several more straightforward examples of extensions of Celtic (viz. Gaulish) divine names in Latin inscription attested at the other end of the Roman world may be provided by the data from Dacia. In Ad Mediam (modern Mehadia in Romania) we come across Suc / pro salute / M Sedat / Severiani / leg Aug extended to [D(eo)] Suc(ello) / pro salute / M(arci) Sedat(i) / Severiani / leg(ati) Aug(usti), which contains the famous and much discussed divine name *Sucellus*, while *Sulevia* is attested in the same province in two inscriptions where it is shortened into *Sule* and *Sul*.[5] There are numerous arguments that make extensions and emendations valid, particularly when the divine name is known from other sources, and sometimes the text of the inscription itself through its various 'Celtic symptoms' is supportive of them. I need not add that linguistic expertise to resolve these matters as well as proper philological and epigraphic analysis are of paramount importance. The procedures are helpful for compilation of a definitive corpus of Celtic divine names attested epigraphically, and in doing so a number of examples traditionally considered Celtic in academic studies turn out to be ghost-forms. Thus, recently it has become possible to exclude *Epona* and *Mars Camulus*, thought to be attested fragmentarily in a Latin inscription from Roman Dalmatia (cf. CIL III 8671), from the list of

[2] Patrizia de Bernardo Stempel, 'Method in the analysis of Romano-Celtic theonymic materials: improved readings and etymological interpretations', in J. A. Arenas-Esteban (ed.), *Celtic Religion across Time and Space* (Toledo, 2010), 18–27, at 20.

[3] See, e.g., M. L. Barberarena Núñez and J. L. Ramírez Sádaba, 'Los devotos de las divinidades indígenas en Lusitania', in A. Sartori (ed.), *Dedicanti e cultores nelle religioni celtiche* (Milano, 2008), 9–42, at 20.

[4] See references in Eugenio R. Luján, 'Language and writing among the Lusitanians', in A. G. Sinner and J. Velaza (eds), *Palaeohispanic Languages and Epigraphies* (Oxford, 2019), 304–34, at 329.

[5] See Alexander Falileyev, *Celtic Dacia: Personal Names, Place-Names and Ethnic Names of Celtic Origin in Dacia and Scythia Minor* (Aberystwyth, 2007), 134–5, with further references.

Celtic divine names of the area.[6] In this part of my paper I am going to discuss one particular inscription, the emendation of which has led to a remarkable consensus on the presence in it of a linguistically Celtic name, and to claim that such an approach is erroneous in many respects.

The inscription in question is the Venetic fragmentary text from Altino found in an archaeological context dated to the fifth–fourth centuries; labelled *Tr 8, it reads]kadriako-kvero.n[. The interpretation of its initial part as [Belatu]kadriako-, and its consequent equation with Celtic (or British) *Belatucadros* discussed by A. L. Prosdocimi,[7] are certainly popular with academics, and the title of the paper by E. Zampieri dedicated to this find, 'L'iscrizione votiva in onore di Belatukadro', speaks for itself.[8] As the area where this inscription in Venetic script was found is certainly known for linguistically Celtic components attested in its epigraphy,[9] and (to mention this only in parenthesis) some material artefacts unearthed in Altino are associated by archaeologists with the Celts,[10] a Celtic attribution of a (divine) name in this region thus is certainly unproblematic, historically speaking. Besides, the discussion of whether linguistically Celtic theophoric names are attested in Venetic inscriptions or whether they are simply personal names of Celtic origin[11] does not compromise this approach. Thus, the suggested reconstruction of the name nowadays is most commonly accepted in scholarship,[12] and the

[6]Alexander Falileyev and Anamarija Kurilić, 'Celtic deities in Roman Dalmatia: a reassessment', in K. Matijević (ed.), *Kelto-Römische Gottheiten und ihre Verehrer* (Rahden/Westf., 2016), 239–71, at 258–60.

[7]Aldo Luigi Prosdocimi and Alberto Mancini, 'Venetico VII–VIII', *Archivo Veneto* 105 (1975), 5–68, at 66–8; Aldo Luigi Prosdocimi, 'La lingua', in G. Fogolari and A. L. Prosdocimi (eds), *I Veneti antichi, lingua e cultura* (Padova, 1988), 221–420, at 301–2.

[8]E. Zampieri, 'L'iscrizione votiva in onore di Belatukadro', *Aquileia Nostra* 69 (1998), 417–18; on this inscription, see also Anna Marinetti, 'Epigrafia e lingua di Altino preromana', in *La protostoria tra Sile e Tagliamento: Antiche genti tra Veneto e Friuli* (Padova, 1996), 75–80, at 78; Aldo Luigi Prosdocimi, 'Divino, sacro e culti: Le forme della continuità tra nomi, figure, funzioni', in G. Cresci Marrone and M. Tirelli (eds), *Altnoi. Il santuario altinate: strutture del sacro a confronto e i luoghi di culto lungo la via Annia* (Roma, 2009), 361–86, at 364–5; or, more recently, Luca Rigobianco, 'La designazione dei liberti nella documentazione venetica: strategie linguistiche e riflessi istituzionali', *Scienze dell'antichità* 27 (2021), 185–99, at 192.

[9]See, e.g., Anna Marinetti and Patrizia Solinas, 'I Celti del Veneto nella documentazione epigrafica locale', in P. Barral et al. (eds), *Les Celtes et le Nord de l'Italie* (Dijon, 2014), 75–87, at 76–80; Alexander Falileyev, 'Miscellania Venetica II', *Indoevropejskoie yazykoznanije i klassičeskaja filologija* 20 (2016), 1020–7, at 1020–4; Blanca María Prósper, 'The Venetic inscription from Monte Manicola and three *termini publici* from Padua: a reappraisal', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 46 (2018), 47–107, at 61–3 et passim; Blanca María Prósper, 'Celtic and Venetic in contact: the dialectal attribution of the personal names in the Venetic record', *ZCP* 66 (2019), 131–76; Anna Marinetti, 'Annotazioni sull'iscrizione venetica con onomastica celtica da Bologna', in A. Calderini and R. Massarelli (eds), *Eqo Duenosio: Studi offerti a Luciano Agostiniani* (Perugia, 2022), 647–62.

[10]See, e.g., Giovanna Gambacurta and Angela Ruta Serafini, *I Celti e il Veneto: Storie di culture a confronto* (Bologna, 2019).

[11]E.g., *Tivalei Bellenei*; see the divergent views in Patrizia de Bernardo Stempel, 'La ricostruzione del celtico d'Italia sulla base dell'onomastica antica', in P. Poccetti (ed.), *L'Onomastica dell'Italia antica* (Roma, 2009), 153–92, at 173 and Marinetti and Solinas, 'I Celti del Veneto', 79; and most recently Marinetti, 'Annotazioni sull'iscrizione', 649 et passim.

[12]See, e.g., Daniele Vitali, 'Luoghi di culto e santuari celtici in Italia', in S. Vitri and F. Oriolo (eds), *I Celti in Carnia e nell'arco alpino centro-orientale* (Trieste, 2001), 279–301, at 290; De Bernardo

form, considered as Celtic and referred to as a theophoric name, frequently appears on the pages of numerous publications.[13]

Obviously, the very reconstruction of]kadriako- of the fragmentary inscription from Altino in Northern Italy as **Belatukadr-* is due ultimately to the existence *Belatucadros* venerated by Celtic-speaking tribes elsewhere. Indeed, this divine name is well attested, and, interestingly, in a variety of spellings, such as *Balatocadrus*, *Balatucadrus*, *Balaticaurus*, *Balatucairus*, *Baliticaurus*, *Belatu-cairus*, *Belatugagus*, *Belleticaurus*, *Blatucadrus* and *Blatucairus*, and there are attempts to explain these variations.[14] As was noted in this respect, '[t]he fact is there was no established orthography for Belatucadrus, and so the concept of getting it right does not apply. People were just attempting to put into writing what they had heard, or thought they had heard. The many variations indicate uncertain pronunciation.'[15] Anyhow, these variations in spellings are not critical for the assumption that there is one single divine name, traditionally associated with combat and fighting. Such an interpretation has remained consistent for decades, and the divine name has been glossed

Stempel, 'La ricostruzione del celtico d'Italia', 176; or Emanuela Murgia, *Culti e romanizzazione: Resistenze, continuità, trasformazioni* (Trieste, 2013), 81–2.

[13]Claudio Zaccaria, 'Alla ricerca di divinità "celtiche" nell'Italia settentrionale in età romana: Revisione della documentazione per le regiones IX, X, XI', in J. Gorrochategui and P. De Bernardo Stempel (eds), *Die Kelten und ihre Religion im Spiegel der epigraphischen Quellen / Los Celtas y su religión a través de la epigrafía* (Vitoria Gasteiz, 2004), 129–64, at 132 and 141; Patrizia De Bernardo Stempel, 'I nomi teoforici del Celta antico: Individuazione, classificazione, divinitá venerate e cronologia relative', in A. Sartori (ed.), *Dedicanti e cultores nelle religioni celtiche* (Milano, 2008), 92; Patrizia De Bernardo Stempel, 'Celtic and other indigenous divine names found in the Italian Peninsula', in A. Hofeneder and P. de Bernardo Stempel (eds), *Théonymie celtique, cultes, interpretatio / Keltische Theonymie, Kulte, interpretatio* (Wien, 2013), 73–104, at 85; Mariolina Gamba, '*Uno scudo così grande e forte:* considerazioni su una lamina dal santuario del dio Altino', in Giovannella Cresci Marrone et al. (eds), *Il dono di Altino: Scritti di archeologia in onore di Margherita Tirelli* (Venezia 2019), 93–102, at 98; Rigobianco, 'La designazione dei liberti', 192.

[14]For references, see Nicole Jufer and Thierry Luginbühl, *Les dieux gaulois* (Paris, 2001), 27–8, and for various explanation of variations, cf. Martin Henig, *Religion in Roman Britain* (London, 1984), 63; Michelle L. Mann and John Vanderspoel, 'The end of winter: *Belatucadrus* as a spring deity', *Mouseion: Journal of the Classical Association of Canada* 3 (2003), 399–414, at 403–4 (list of attestations on pp. 409–12); or Patrizia De Bernardo Stempel, 'Die sprachliche Analyse keltischer Theonyme', in J. Gorrochategui and P. De Bernardo Stempel (eds), *Die Kelten und ihre Religion im Spiegel der epigraphischen Quellen / Los Celtas y su religión a través de la epigrafía* (Vitoria Gasteiz, 2004), 201–31, at 212 n. 99. See also Patrick Sims-Williams, 'The Celtic composition vowels *-i-* and *-u-*', in G. Oudaer, G. Hily and H. Le Bihan (eds), *Mélanges en l'honneur de Pierre-Yves Lambert* (Rennes, 2015), 313–32, at 323 for the variation of the composition vowel; for vocalic variations in the first component, consider Joseph's rule. For diphthongisation of the second component, cf. Blanca Maria Prósper, 'Two divinities of the Celtic Cantabri: 1) *Ervdino*, divinity of the yearly cycle; 2) *Cabvniaegino*, the Celtic fate of IE **kap-* and the Gaulish spindle whorl from Saint-Révérien', in R. Haeussler and T. King (eds), *Celtic Religions in the Roman Period: Personal, Local, and Global* (Aberystwyth, 2017), 207–28, at 222. Eric Birley, 'The deities of Roman Britain', in W. Haase (ed.), *Religion* (*Heidentum: Die religiösen Verhältnisse in den Provinzen*), Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Part II, vol. 18/1 (Berlin and Boston, 1986), 3–112, at 60, observing variations, notes that '*Belatucadro* predominates'.

[15]Miranda J. Aldhouse-Green and M. E. Raybould, 'Deities with Gallo-British names recorded in inscriptions from Roman Britain', *SC* 33 (1999), 91–135, at 107.

as 'mighty in war',[16] 'strong in battle'[17], or the like, and the attestation from Italy has been characterized – similarly – as 'Celtic god of war'.[18] It should be stressed that *Belatucadrus* (and its variations) is attested only in epigraphy, while ancient authors do not provide any clarification of the corresponding deity, and in fact never mention it at all. Moreover, as experts admit, 'decorative features on the altars to Belatucadrus include cables, chevrons, roundels and a jug, but none of these helps to clarify the nature of the cult'.[19] Therefore, as in quite a few cases, our understanding of the deity is based entirely on the etymology of the divine name. In fact, its belligerent character was observed more than a century ago, and John Rhys summarized the etymological findings in the following way:

> This is a Celtic compound meaning handsome in the slaughter or mighty to kill. The epithet was doubtless meant as a flattering one, acceptable to the god in his character of warrior and slaughterer of his worshippers' enemies.[20]

This etymology of *Belatucadrus* suggested by Rhys is accepted – with certain modifications – by quite a few historians, and, as the translations quoted above already suggest, linguists. The first component of the compounded name, *belatu-*, is thus historically connected, sometimes tentatively, with Early Irish *at-bail*, *epeltu* (< **eks-beltu*) 'die', to PIE **g*^{w}*elh*$_1$- 'stab'.[21] This interpretation, however, is not unanimously accepted, and we find its derivation from **b*^{h}*elH-tu-*, therefore 'shining', in linguistic works, and, consequently, this was accepted by some historians as well.[22] Some details of the traditional reconstruction of *belatu-* remain difficult, and these were addressed by D. Stifter. Without going into details about his investigation, it should be noted that this scholar admits a possibility that the Gaulish word may be derived from Celtic **belo-*, referring further to X. Delamarre's interpretation of the Gaulish forms

[16] Garrett S. Olmsted, *The Gods of the Celts and the Indo-Europeans* (Budapest, 1994), 114.

[17] De Bernardo Stempel, 'Celtic and other indigenous divine names found in the Italian Peninsula', 85. Note, however, the interpretation as 'spring deity' in Mann and Vanderspoel, 'The end of winter', 399–414.

[18] 'Dio celtico della Guerra', Gamba, '*Uno scudo così grande e forte*', 98.

[19] Aldhouse-Green and Raybould, 'Deities with Gallo-British names', 113, noting that Birley, 'The deities of Roman Britain', 61–2 admitted that he may be identified with one of the horned gods found on many of the uninscribed stones of the area.

[20] John Rhys, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom* (London and Edinburgh, 1888), 37–8.

[21] See, e.g., Alfred Holder, *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz* (Leipzig, 1896–1910), vol. 1, col. 367 and vol. 3, col. 823; Georges Dottin, *La langue gauloise* (Paris, 1918), 110 and 232; Karl Horst Schmidt, 'Die Komposition in gallischen Personennamen', *ZCP* 26 (1957), 145; Xavier Delamarre, *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise* (Paris, 2003), 70–1, Wolfgang Meid, *Keltische Personennamen in Pannonien* (Budapest, 2005), 97. For PIE **g*^{w}*elh*$_1$- in Celtic, cf. Nicholas Zair, *The Reflexes of the Proto-Indo-European Laryngeals in Celtic* (Leiden, Boston, 2012), 114 and 218.

[22] Cf. Blanca María Prósper, *The Indo-European Names of Central Hispania: A Study in Continental Celtic and Latin Word Formation* (Innsbruck, 2016), 149 (tentatively), and note the translations of *Belatucadrus* as 'bright shining one' in Anthony Birley, *The People of Roman Britain* (London, 1979), 113 or 'bright one' in Miranda J. Green, *Symbol and Image in Celtic Religious Art* (London, 1989), 113.

as meaning 'strong' or 'bright'.[23] and, therefore, with this treatment as well, *belatu-* may be semantically connected either with brightness or belligerency.

The second component of *Belatucadrus*, as acknowledged by Rhys, has been traditionally and firmly associated with W *cadr*, 'handsome, comely, fine; powerful, mighty', Old Breton *cadr*, Middle Breton *karz* 'id.'.[24] However, H. Pedersen and later K. H. Jackson raised a number of questions regarding this equation, also noting the problem of Gaulish *-dr-* being reflected in Welsh unexpectedly as *-dr-*,[25] and there exist certain attempts to clarify the problem.[26] It may be recalled that J. Pokorny differentiates between W *cadr*, etc., (< **ĥkat-* 'kämpfen') and the second component of *Belatucadrus*, which he traces to PIE **ĥkad-* 'glänzen'. He admits, however, that 'Umbildung eines **katros* "tapfer" [..] zu *kadros* wäre freilich nicht ganz ausgeschlossen'.[27] As only the formal aspect of linguistic comparison matters here, it is possible to venture a number of other explanations of this part of the divine name. Thus, noting the recent explanation of Celtic *Cadanus* by Prósper as a derivation from PIE **ĥ(e)h₂do-* ('hatred, enemy'),[28] one may consider a similar etymology for the second part of *Belatucadrus*. In this case it finds a perfect match in Av. *sādra* 'grief, disaster' or 'woe, torment', from the point of view of word formation,[29] and 'disastrous'

[23]David Stifter, 'Keltische Namen im burgenländischen Landesmuseum', in H. Heftner and K. Tomaschitz (eds), *Ad Fontes! Festschrift für Gerhard Dobesch zum fünfundsechzigsten Geburtstag am 15. September 2004 dargebracht von Kollegen, Schülern und Freunden* (Wien, 2004), 757–72, at 763, referring to Delamarre, *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise*, 72; cf. Schmidt, 'Die Komposition in gallischen Personennamen', 145. Note that in his study of *Belatucadros* K. J. Fairless, 'Three religious cults from the northern frontier region', in R. Miket and C. Burges (eds), *Between and Beyond the Wall: Essays on the Prehistory and History of North Britain in Honour of George Jobey* (Edinburgh, 1984), 224–42, at 225 quotes both interpretations, 'fair in destruction' or 'fair shining one', referring to Holder. It is not quite clear why *Belatucadros* is taken there (p. 228) for a solar deity, protector, healer and multi-natured tribal god.

[24]Holder, *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz*, vol. 1, col. 671; Dottin, *La langue gauloise*, 239; Delamarre, *Dictionnaire*, 96, etc.

[25]Kenneth Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953), 429–31. See also the discussion and references in Schmidt, 'Die Komposition in gallischen Personennamen', 159; D. Ellis Evans, *Gaulish Personal Names* (Oxford, 1967), 167; Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain: Phonology and Chronology,* c. *400–1200* (Oxford, 2003), 73; Delamarre, *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise*, 96. The divine name is left untranslated in most of these studies. I note that in Delamarre, *Dictionnaire des thèmes nominaux du gaulois*, 169–70, Gaulish *cadro-* is glossed as 'handsome' and compared to W *cadr* 'id.', and the same reference to Jackson, *Language and History*, 429–31, is provided. Prósper, 'Two divinities of the Celtic *Cantabri*', 222, also derives the second component of the divine name from **kad-ro-* 'beautiful'.

[26]Richard Coates, 'Four pre-English river names in and around Fenland: *Chater*, *Granta*, *Nene* and *Welland*', *Transactions of the Philological Society* 103 (2005), 303–22, at 307–12. I also note that De Bernardo Stempel, 'Celtic and other indigenous divine names', 84, allows for the sonarization of the voiceless stop followed by *r* in Ancient Celtic, illustrating it by *Ambi-sagros* vs Celt. **sakro-*, and *Gabro-* < **kapro-*, although different explanations may be offered here.

[27]Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern, 1959), 517 and 534, with a question mark.

[28]Prósper, *The Indo-European Names of Central Hispania*, 151. For the PIE root see Helmut Rix et al., *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben* (Wiesbaden, 2001), 319; it is represented in Celtic, see R. Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic* (Leiden and Boston 2009), 183 s.v. **kādo-* 'regret, anger'.

[29]Cf. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 517 and Brent Vine, 'On full-grade **-ro-* formations in Greek and Indo-European', in M. Southern (ed.), *Indo-European Perspectives*

semantics will fit the belligerent image of the deity. Therefore, there are again at least two possibilities for an etymological analysis of the second part of the compounded name,[30] one of which leads again to belligerent association, the other being rather different. The uncertainty in the meaning of the Gaulish word has been also noted recently.[31]

Yet again, this is certainly to be expected taking into consideration the character of the data itself. One may be reminded of A. Meillet's famous maxim, 'the etymologies of proper names are uncertain because of the two pieces of data whose value is established by agreement with the facts of other languages, meaning and phonological form, we can utilize only one: phonological form',[32] and although some of divine names – with the help of various types of data of extra-linguistic character – may indeed be explained perfectly clear linguistically, *Belatucadrus* is certainly not a case in point. Still, as this image and semantics of *Belatucadrus* are derived exclusively from etymology, other options for its analysis remain open. It is not, however, intended here or elsewhere to discuss various Celtic or Indo-European stems, a rather mechanical combination of which will formally explain this Celtic compound. Generally, this raises another difficult methodological question pertaining to this study, and as it has been observed for Celtic, 'the etymology of divine names is already problematic enough and we should ask ourselves constantly how etymology relates to semantics and meaning. And again, how do such linguistic insights relate to mythology?'[33] As a result, we have at our disposal a set of interpretations of this word which are similarly plausible provided that its semantics remain by default vague, and it does not seem possible to choose any variant with any degree of confidence.

Whatever the meaning of the divine name *Belatucadrus* may be, its relation with *[*Belatu*]*kadr*-attested in Altino is certainly linguistically possible, at least at face value. In northern Italy as well as elsewhere we find a considerable amount of -(*i*)*āko*- derivatives,[34] and sometimes this suffix is attested

(Washington, 2002), 329–50, at 337 for a tentative derivation of the Avestan word from PIE **k´(e)h₂d-reh₂*. For the root, see now Anders Richardt Jørgensen, 'Mourning among the speakers of Proto-Indo-European: **k̂eh₂d*- "to fall" and "to mourn" ', in J. Larsson, T. Olander and A. Jørgensen (eds), *Indo-European Afterlives: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Life beyond Death* (Stockholm, 2025), 177–94.

[30] *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, edited by R. J. Thomas et al., (Cardiff, 1950–2002), s.v. *cadr* treats Neo-Brittonic words together with (*Belatu*)*-cadros*, to **kat-ro*- (< **k̂at*-); for the morphological model, cf. Skt. *śátru*- 'enemy', discussed by Manfred Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen* (Heidelberg 1996), vol. 2, 607. For the problems of Celt. **kat*- see Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary of proto-Celtic*, 195.

[31] Xavier Delamarre, *Dictionnaire des thèmes nominaux du gaulois*: I. *Ab- / Iχs(o)*- (n. p.: Les Cent Chemins, 2019), 116 and 169. Bernard Mees, 'The Celtic theonyms from Hadrian's Wall', *SC* 59 (2025), 39–50, at 47–8, also discusses *Belarucadrus*, providing more references.

[32] Antoine Meillet, *The Comparative Method in Historical Linguistics*, translated from the French by Gordon B. Ford (Paris, 1967), 57–8.

[33] Lauran Toorians, Review of *Théonymie celtique, cultes, interpretatio* (Wien 2013), *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 61 (2014), 258.

[34] See the data and discussion in Paul Russell, 'The suffix -*āko*- in Continental Celtic', *EC* 25 (1988), 131–73.

with divine names.[35] However, there are a number of hindrances of an extra-linguistic nature which make this connection fairly unlikely. First, the distribution of the altars dedicated to *Belatucadrus* should be considered. All of them are found in a rather restricted area of northern England, and K. J. Fairless, who studied this cult in detail, notes that '[t]here is a notable concentration of the altars within the valley of the River Eden', and suggests alongside many scholars that the cult centre was perhaps at or near modern Brougham. He comes to the conclusion that *Belatucadrus* was a tribal or sub-tribal deity, and the tribe in question turns out to be the Carvetii, who are supposed to have lived around Luguvalium (modern Carlisle).[36] It is commonly assumed that we see here a local deity worshipped in the territory of Cumbria, and there is not a single attestation of the divine name outside this very restricted area in the northern part of modern England. Therefore, to relate *Belatucadrus* from the north of England to **Belatukadriakos* in northern Italy we have to presume contacts between the two territories. This is a difficult task in view of the fact that the attestation of the latter is dated to the fifth to fourth centuries BC, and although a number of individuals with foreign names are attested in Cumbria in Roman times, the data is too late chronologically to be used in support of such contacts. It may be mentioned in parenthesis that even in Roman times, as the limited evidence studied by Anthony Birley suggests, there were no devotees of *Belatucadrus* bearing foreign names, with the exception of Germanic *Vidaris*,[37] and, in the words of Henig, the deity 'appears to have a strong appeal to the indigenous population'.[38] Consequently, one should rely here on archaeological data, also bearing in mind that the Altino of this period is firmly associated with the so-called Este archaeological culture, and Iron Age vestiges in northern Britain are well examined. Disappointingly, archaeological observations are also not helpful: at least to my knowledge, not a single artefact which may be associated with the northern British Iron Age has ever been found in Veneto, and, similarly, there are no proofs of Este presence or influences in Cumbria. Moreover, archaeologists remain rather sceptical in regard of such early contacts between northern England and the Continent in general.[39] So, to support the hypothesis, one must posit a stray traveller crossing more than a thousand miles to bring *Belatucadrus* (or even just a corresponding theophoric name) to Altino from Cumbria.

This, although not entirely impossible, still remains a rather doubtful and at most a very dubious scenario. Moreover, there may be strong reservations whether the cult of *Belatucadrus* in fact existed in fifth- to fourth-century BC northern Britain itself. As K. J. Fairless summarizes, 'the evidence [...] suggests the existence of the cult in the second century, its continuation,

[35] Recently discussed in Falileyev and Kurilić, 'Celtic deities in Roman Dalmatia', 270–5.

[36] Fairless, 'Three religious cults', 225 and 228, cf. Birley, 'The deities of Roman Britain', 60; on the Carvetii, see N. J. Higham and G. D. B. Jones, *The Carvetii* (Gloucester, 1985), or Catherine Ross, 'The Carvetii – a pro-Roman community?', *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society* 2012, 55–68.

[37] Birley, *The People of Roman Britain*, 113.

[38] Henig, *Religion in Roman Britain*, 63.

[39] Cf. Dennis W. Harding, *The Iron Age in Northern Britain* (Abingdon, 2004), 305.

with an increase in popularity in the third century, and its survival perhaps into the early fourth century'.[40] This of course brings us into the domain of *interpretatio*, *translatio* and *identificatio*, seeing that all attestations of the divine name are found in Latin inscriptions of Roman times. Thus, P. De Bernardo Stempel has suggested that 'Mars Belatucadros, "the Mars strong in the battle", and Mars Camulos, "the Mars king of the slaves", are rendering of Mars Victor'.[41] Scholars working in this modern framework acknowledge the fact that there are a few ways to provide a 'Celtic reading' of Latin *Mars Victor*, and de Bernardo Stempel herself in her paper dedicated to the study of Celtic equivalents of classical divine epithets suggests that in Gaul it was rendered by *Mars Segomu* 'M. der Stärkste', and *Mars Belatucadros*, which is rendered there as 'M. der Starke in der Zerstörung', is compared to *Mars Belado* (Narbonensis).[42] As for our particular example, the opinion of R. Haeussler requires full quotation:

> If Romano-Celtic temples indicate a certain persistence of indigenous cult activities, at least in Britain, then it is interesting to see that the distribution pattern of Romano-Celtic temples does not overlap with the distribution of dedications. Especially the myriad of Celtic theonyms attested on Hadrian's Wall, like Belatucadros, Cocidios, the Veteri, and many more, cannot be associated with pre-Roman cults; instead they relate to a military context. And since most Celtic theonyms and epithets are very localised, we cannot assume that these deities were imported from other parts of Britain or Gaul. **Belatucadros therefore need not be a theonym of pre-Roman times**, but an epithet that suits the war-like context on Hadrian's Wall: *Mars belatucadros* is 'the Mars strong in the battle', i.e. the victorious Mars.[43]

This difficulty was seen by P. de Bernardo Stempel, who in discussing the disputable [*Belatu*]*kadriako-* allows for two options: whether it 'was derived from *Belatvcadros* "Strong in the battle" as a functional, explicative attribute of Mars (as it is once explicitly attested in Britain) or as an indigenous deity which became only later identified with the Classical war-god.'[44] While the first

[40] Fairless, 'Three religious cults', 227.

[41] Patrizia De Bernardo Stempel, 'Continuity, *translatio* and *identificatio* in Gallo-Roman religion: the case of Britain', in R. Haeussler et al. (eds), *Continuity and Innovation in Religion in the Roman West* (Portsmouth, 2007), 67–82, at 79.

[42] Patrizia De Bernardo Stempel, 'Keltische Äquivalente klassischer Epitheta und andere sprachliche und nicht-sprachliche Phänomene im Rahmen der sogenannten "interpretatio Romana" ', *ZCP* 61 (2014), 7–48, at 18 and 22; I note the rendering of *Mars Belados* as 'Mars who destroys' in Ralph Häussler, 'Interpretatio indigena: re-inventing local cults in a global world', *Mediterraneo Antico* 15 (2012), 143–74, at 168.

[43] Ralph Haeussler, 'How to identify Celtic religion(s) in Roman Britain and Gaul', in J. d'Encarnação (ed.), *Divindades indígenas em análise: Divinités pré-romaines – bilan et perspectives d'une recherché* (Coimbra/Porto 2008), 13–63, at 41. The bold script added.

[44] de Bernardo Stempel, 'Celtic and other indigenous divine names', 85. Military and martial associations of *Belatucadros* are noted by all scholars who have dealt with this cult, cf. Fairless, 'Three religious cults', 226 or Higham and Jones, *The Carvetii*, 11.

scenario may be considered, the second possibility cannot be taken as proven as we have no evidence in favour of the existence of the deity *Belatucadros* in pre-Roman Cumbria, and any means for the transmission of the cult from northern Britain to northern Italy at this early time are very doubtful, to say the least. It may be suggested that the [*Belatu*]*kadriako-* attested in Altino has nothing to do with *Mars Belatucadros* of Roman or **Belatucadros* of pre-Roman Britain. If indeed Celtic in origin, it may go back to a Celt. appellative **belatucadros* which can be safely reconstructed on the basis of Romano-British data, and the corresponding word may well have been used on the Continent among speakers of Celtic in the fifth to fourth centuries BC. As experience teaches us, a newly discovered text may contain a previously unattested lexeme, the existence of which has been postulated purely on comparative linguistic grounds. This was the case for Gaulish 'daughter' *duχtir* which was found in an inscription unearthed in 1983, although the appellative had been reconstructed decades before the find. Therefore, a discovery of ***belatukadros* (or, perhaps, ***balatukadros*) or their distinct components in a newly found text would solve the problem of the interpretation of the tiny fragment from Altino. This might also help with the establishment of a more precise meaning for **belatucadros*, as the etymological analysis of the compound allows for a number of admissible semantic interpretations. However, the compound may well be a dialectal British word known only in this geographically restricted area.

There is yet another approach to the treatment of [Belatu]kadriako- attested in Altino. As has been shown by Paul Russell, quite a few forms with -(*i*)*āko-* in Northern Italy are derived from non-Celtic bases.[45] Moreover, this sequence is found in a number of Venetic texts, and not only with linguistically Celtic anthroponyms,[46] but also in indigenous formations,[47] and this derivation model has received considerable attention from linguists, and these instances were discussed by such scholars as J. Untermann, M. Lejeune, A. Prosdocimi, and A. Marinetti.[48] That allows us, at least theoretically, to consider the base found in Altino as epichoric, and hence to regard the extension [Belatu-] as totally unnecessary. The configuration -*cadr-* in]kadriako- is (so far) unknown in Venetic, but the corpus of this language is fairly limited, so the lack of corresponding attestations or comparable lexemes may be blamed on that. *Mutatis mutandis*,]kadriako- may well be Celtic, and even a part of a compounded form, but its first component may equally be different from what is

[45] Russell, 'The suffix -*āko-*', 157–64, cf. Luka Repanšek, *Keltska dediščina v toponimiji jugovzhodnega alpskega prostora* (Ljubljana, 2016), 87–9 and Alexander Falileyev, 'Divine names from Latin inscriptions of Istria: some considerations', in R. Haeussler and T. King (eds), *Celtic Religions in the Roman Period: Personal, Local, and Global* (Aberystwyth, 2017), 419–39, at 429.

[46] For the analysis of *.a.rs.petijako.s.* in the inscription from Cadore, see Repanšek, *Keltska dediščina*, 215–16 and Prósper, 'Celtic and Venetic', 163–4.

[47] Cf. Russell, 'The suffix -*āko-*', 159 n. 109 and see Blanca María Prósper, 'Language change at the crossroads: what Celtic, what Venetic, and what else in the personal names of Emona?', *Voprosy onomastiki* 16/4 (2019), 33–73, at 40. For Venetic vho.u.go.n.tiiaka and .o.stiiako see Repanšek, *Keltska dediščina*, 88.

[48] Cf., e.g., Prosdocimi, 'La lingua', 373–4 or Anna Marinetti, 'Il Venetico di Lagole', in G. Fogolari and G. Gambacurta (eds), *Materiali Veneti e Romani del Santuario di Lagole di Calalzo al Museo di Pieve di Cadore* (Roma, 2001), 59–73, with further references.

restored traditionally. At any rate, it seems reasonable to exclude from our discussion of Celtic theophoric names the form attested in the Venetic inscription from Altino, and the connection of]kadriako- with northern British *Belatucadros*, which is after all very dubious from both historical and geographical perspectives, remains thus highly hypothetical, to use fairly mild terms.

II. Up in arms about the long arm of coincidence

The term 'the long arm of coincidence' was elegantly used by P. Sims-Williams in his discussion of ancient place-names which look Celtic at face-value, but in fact definitely or most probably belong to other languages.[49] *Mutatis mutandis*, this long arm operates in various domains of ancient onomastics, and divine names are no exception here. Therefore, this natural difficulty should be addressed in order to redeem the corpus of *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz* from a number of attestations that do not belong to it. Since in the first part of this paper the data from ancient Veneto was discussed, to illustrate the second point I will use an example from the same area. But first, however, we have to move to the territory of Silesia in modern south-western Poland in antiquity.

Discussing the tribes of *Lugiorum nomen* who dwelt in this area, some of which most probably had Celtic names, Tacitus, *Germ.* 43, mentions the divinity Alci (*nomen Alcis*) venerated by the Naharvali:

> Apud Nahanarvalos antiquae religionis lucus ostenditur. Praesidet sacerdos muliebri ornatu, sed deos interpretatione Romana Castorem Pollucemque memorant. Ea vis numini, nomen Alcis. Nulla simulacra, nullum peregrinae superstitionis vestigium; ut fratres tamen, ut iuvenes venerantur.
>
> 'The Naharvali proudly point out a grove associated with an ancient worship. The presiding priest dresses like a woman; but the deities are said to be counterparts of our Castor and Pollux. This indicates their character, but their name is the Alci. There are no images, and nothing to suggest that the cult is of foreign origin; but they are certainly worshipped as young men and as brothers.'[50]

Now we go back to Veneto, where the word *alkomno* is found in the famous early Venetic inscription from Este, *Es 120 *alkomno metlon śikos enogenes vilkenis horvionte donasan*. Both the form and the complete text where it occurs have been the subject of lengthy scholarly discussions and disputes. It is normally considered nowadays that it contains three personal names in the nominative case, *Śikos*, *Enogenes* and *Vilkenis*, and the verbal form

[49] Patrick Sims-Williams, *Ancient Celtic Place-Names in Europe and Asia Minor* (Oxford, 2006), 27–37.

[50] Text and translation from Alf Önnerfors (ed.), *P. Cornelii Taciti libri qui supersunt*, vol. II/2: *Germania* (Stuttgart, 1983) and *Tacitus: The Agricola and the Germania*, translated with an introduction by H. Mattingly, revised by S. A. Handford (Harmondsworth, 1970).

donasan 'they gave'. The noun in the accusative singular *metlon* denotes, probably, the term for an offering, while *horvionte* is totally obscure but may be seen as an epithet of the divine name.[51] The subject of a votive offering, *alkomno*, at least according to many scholars, is to be analysed historically as a participle in a dual masculine form. This Venetic divine name is often treated in association with the dioscuric myth,[52] and it should be remembered that dual formations are certainly to be expected in conjunction with the dioscuric phenomenon.[53] Fortunately, at least to my knowledge, there have been no attempts to argue in favour of the linguistic Celticity of *alkomno* in the Este inscription, notwithstanding the fact that Celtic linguistic traces have been found, as noted above, in Venetic inscriptions, and even some Venetic divine names have been analysed as Celtic: for example, a Celtic etymology has recently been considered, although tentatively, for an undeniably Venetic goddess – the famous Reitia.[54]

The *Alci* from Silesia are occasionally brought into discussion of Venetic *alkomn-*. Although in the first edition of the inscription from Este A. L. Pros-

[51] See, e.g., Prosdocimi, 'La lingua', 282–4; Anna Marinetti, 'Terminologia istituzionale e formula onomastica in venetico', in P. Poccetti (ed.), *L'onomastica dell'Italia antica* (Roma, 2009), 357–74, at 371–2; or more recently Cristina Girardi and Simona Marchesini, 'Le forme della pluralità divina nell'Italia preromana: *Prolegomena* per una tipologia', in M. J. Estarán Tolosa et al. (eds), *Des mots pour les dieux: Dédicaces cultuelles dans les langues indigènes de la Méditerranée occidentale* (Bern, etc., 2021), 35–59, at 45.

[52] Cf. also, e.g., Sarah De Nardi, 'Revisiting the sacred landscapes of northeast Italy between the 8th century BC and the 2nd Century BC', unpublished PhD thesis, University College of London, 2008, 408 or Giuseppe Sassatelli, 'I Veneti e l'Etruria padana', in M. Gamba et al. (eds), *Venetkens: Viaggio nella terra dei Veneti antichi* (Venezia, 2013), 119–32, at 129. There are other interpretations of *alkomno*: thus, Jürgen Untermann, 'Die venetische Sprache', *Glotta* 58 (1980), 281–317, at 297–300 takes it for a *n*-stem variant of the anthroponym **Alkomnos* (he reads the text as *Alkomno Metlonšikos*).

[53] Melanie Malzahn, 'Die Genese des indogermanischen Duals', in M. Ofitsch and Ch. Zinko (eds) *125 Jahre Indogermanistik in Graz* (Graz, 2000), 291–315, at 304. For IE backgrounds of the myth and its various manifestations, see the classical monograph by Donald Ward, *The Divine Twins: An Indo-European Myth in Germanic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1968). Deverbal forms in **-mno-* are known and well-examined in Celtic and Venetic. See Patrizia de Bernardo Stempel, 'Das indogermanische *m*(*V*)*no*-Verbaladjektiv im Keltischen', in R. Bielmeier and R. Stempel (eds), *Indogermanica et Caucasica: Festschrift für K. H. Schmidt* (Berlin and New York, 1994), 281–305 (and cf. p. 287 for kara.n.mn.s. found in Venetic context) and Blanca María Prósper, 'Some thoughts on the Gaulish results of Common Celtic *-mn-* in Galatian', *Keltische Forschungen* 3 (2008), 189–99. For *-mno-* derivatives in Venetic see, e.g., Michele Lejeune, '*Voltiomnos, Volsomnos, Volsounos*', *Bulletin de la société de linguistique* 49 (1953), 41–51, or Aldo Luigi Prosdocimi, 'Note linguistiche italiche 1–4', *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia Patavina* 81 (1968–9), 279–92, and recently Prósper, 'Celtic and Venetic', 141.

[54] de Bernardo Stempel, 'La ricostruzione del celtico d'Italia', 173: ? Celtic, **reg´-t-yā*. For a Venetic approach, see Prosdocimi, 'La lingua', 388, and cf. Anna Marinetti, 'Da Altno – a Giove: la titolarita del santuario. I. La fase preromana', in G. Cresci Marrone, M. Tirelli (eds), *Altnoi. Il santuario altinate: strutture del sacro a confronto e i luoghi di culto lungo la via Annia* (Roma, 2009), 87–127, at 110. The etymology traces the name to PIE **h₃reiH-* 'flow' (cf. Lat. *riuus* 'stream') and will not be discussed here. For the corresponding texts, see Katherine McDonald, 'The dedications to Reitia and the epigraphic visibility of women in Este and the Veneto', in M. J. Estarán Tolosa et al. (eds), *Des mots pour les dieux: Dédicaces cultuelles dans les langues indigènes de la Méditerranée occidentale* (Bern, etc., 2021), 79–94.

docimi argued against this equation,[55] this dismissal was refuted in his later work. Still, he spoke there about archaeological and not linguistic considerations,[56] and this parallel was taken on board in the recent article by Girardi and Marchesini and is discussed there already in terms of 'linguistic comparison'.[57] The visual likeness of *alkomn-* and *Alci* and the fact that they both allegedly refer to dioscuric deities is definitely remarkable. Although the tribal name *Naharvali* itself is most probably linguistically Germanic in origin, the tribe belonged to *Lugiorum nomen* with its straightforward Celtic associations. Probably in view of that also, this divine name *Alci* has been listed as Celtic by Whatmough, even though in the same publication he provides its Germanic etymology.[58] Forms in *alco-* certainly are known in Gaulish toponymy as well as in personal names,[59] and their similarity at face value to the Silesian attestation is apparent, which however does not make it Celtic by default. To the best of my knowledge it was K. T. Witczak who first offered a comprehensive discussion of Tacitus's *Alci* as linguistically Celtic.[60] For those who do not read Polish, a summary of the observations is conveniently provided in the author's English article published in a journal with excellent accessibility, but, for readers' convenience, it may still be quoted here in full:

> Lusitanian *Trebo-pala* (name of a deity) < IE. **trebo-palā* 'protector of the dwelling', cf. Vedic *Viś-pala* (f.), a horse-like goddess or heroine connected with the twin gods Aśvins (see Maggi 1983), Latin *Pales* (dat. pl. *Palibus*), a divine pair of Old Roman deities, the patrons of flocks and herds. Also the Indo-European name of the divine twins **Pal-ikoi* (du. *Paliko*), preserved in the name of the Sicilian twin-gods *Palici* and Celtic *Alci* (cf. Witczak 1995, 1997), contains the same Indo-European root **pal-* 'to protect'.[61]

[55] Aldo Luigi Prosdocimi, 'Una iscrizione inedita dal territorio atestino: Nuovi aspetti epigrafici linguistici culturali dell'area paleoveneta', *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto* 127 (1968–9), 182–3 referring to Rosenfeld, 'Die Dioskuren', 1–6.

[56] In his fundamental work: Prosdocimi, 'La lingua', 284 ('per le considerazioni archeologiche').

[57] Girardi and Marchesini, 'Le forme della pluralità divina nell'Italia preromana', 45 ('comparazioni linguistiche').

[58] Joshua Whatmough, *The Dialects of Ancient Gaul* (Cambridge, 1970), 1101, 1244 and 1081 correspondingly.

[59] See a collection in Delamarre, *Dictionnaire des thèmes nominaux*, 45–6; geographical names may be of a different origin, cf. Alexander Falileyev, *In Search of the Eastern Celts: Studies in Geographical Names, their Distribution and Morphology* (Budapest, 2014), 96 with further references. The paper by Diether Schürr, 'Zum Namen des Altkönigs: Volksetymologie und keltischer Kontext', *Keltische Forschungen* 8 (2019–26), 111–19, which is relevant for this discussion, appeared too late to be referred to below.

[60] Krzysztof Tomasz Witczak, 'Śląsk w epoce antycznej: kult Alków (Tacyt, Germania 43) i jego celtycka geneza', in J. Rostropowicz (ed.), *Tradycje kultury antycznej na Śląsku* (Opole, 1997), 48–55.

[61] Krzysztof Tomasz Witczak, 'On the Indo-European origin of two Lusitanian theonyms (*Laebo* and *Reve*)', *Emerita* 66 (1999), 65–73, at 66. The argument is repeated in subsequent publications, cf., e.g., Ignacy Ryszard Danka and Krzysztof Tomasz Witczak, 'DEIS EQUEUNUBO – the divine twins in Asturia', in P. Stalmaszczyk and M. Fomin (eds), *Dimensions and Categories of Celticity: Studies in Language* (Łódź, 2010), 17–26, at 23.

As I have already analysed this piece of evidence in my analysis of Celtic linguistic traces in the territory of modern Poland,[62] I will proceed to further arguments in conjunction with the topic and aim of this discussion, providing further linguistic arguments against this comparison. It should be reminded, nevertheless, that a cult of divine twins was certainly known in Celtic antiquity,[63] that Celtic associations in the early history of Silesia are well established,[64] and, incidentally, that the claim for the presence of Celtic-speaking people in fifth-century Sicily – the home of the twin-gods *Palici* – has also been made.[65] As for the Palici,

> [t]he cult of these twin gods, who are identified by Aeschylus as the sons of Zeus and Thalia, a local nymph and daughter of Hephaestus, was among the most important for the island's native Sikel communities. Aeschylus is said to have been the first writer to bring the Palici into Greek literature (Macrob. Sat. 5.19.17), and they are the subject of the play's main surviving fragment, which offers a Greek etymology of their name.[66]

The name of the Sicilian divine twins was explained by Aeschylus as 'those who have returned', and their association with dioscuric narratives is prominent.[67] Nevertheless, Witczak's equation of the Sicilian *Palici* (i.e. *Palicī*, Gk. Παλικοί) with the alleged Celtic *nomen Alcis* attested in the territory of modern Poland and their common etymology is difficult to accept even on linguistic grounds, and should therefore be abandoned. The arguments against this equation may be briefly summarised in the following way.

Indeed, Lusitanian *Trebopala* used in this analysis has been derived recently from **trebo-ph₂-ló-* ('protectress of the village') by Prósper, who also

[62] Alexander Falileyev, 'The Silesian Harii', *SC* 43 (2009), 201–6 and Falileyev, *In Search of the Eastern Celts*, 81–90.

[63] See, e.g., Steven O'Brien, 'Dioscuric elements in Celtic and Germanic mythology', *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 10 (1982), 117–136 or Antone Minard, 'Of horses and humans – the divine twins in Celtic mythology and folklore', in K. Jones-Bley et al. (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth Annual UCLA Indo-European Conference* (Washington, 1998), 158–78.

[64] See (recently) Przemysław Dulęba, 'La Tène culture in Silesia: remarks on the state of research and new cognitive perspectives', *Recherches Archéologiques* 10 (2019), 137–59 or Przemysław Dulęba, Renata Abłamowicz, Agata Sady-Bugajska and Jacek Soida, 'The economy of the La Tène culture communities based on the example of research from Upper Silesia', *Prähistorische Zeitschrift* 96 (2021), 511–31.

[65] Luuk de Ligt, 'The inscription from Centuripe: language, meaning and historical background', *Glotta* 83 (2007), 30–42, at 38; for early languages in Sicily, see a useful survey in Jonathan Prag, 'The indigenous languages of ancient Sicily', *Palaeohispanica* 20 (2020), 531–51.

[66] Mark Thatcher, 'Aeschylus' *Aetnaeans*, the Palici and cultural politics in Deinomenid Sicily', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 139 (2019), 67–82, at 67.

[67] That is ἦ καὶ Παλικῶν εὐλόγως μένει φάτις; πάλιν γὰρ ἵκουσ' ἐκ σκότου τόδ' εἰς φάος 'And does the name of the Palici remain reasonable? Yes, since they come back from darkness to this light'. See recently Thatcher, 'Aeschylus' *Aetnaeans*', 71. For the sanctuary of *Palici*, see Laura Maniscalco (ed.), *Il santuario dei Palici: Un centro di culto nella Valle del Margi* (Palermo, 2008).

notes that the full grade **peh₂-ló-* is attested as the second part of Vedic compounds *avi-pālá-* 'shepherd,' *aja-pālá-* 'goat-herd,' or *go-pālá-* 'cow-herd'.[68] The (apparently) Siculian *Palici* theoretically may contain its reflex, but, nevertheless, our knowledge of this idiom is frustratingly meagre for any definitive conclusions,[69] and this is the obvious objection to other attempts to provide PIE etymologies for this divine name.[70] In regard to the suggested equation of *Palici* and *Alci* if labelled Celtic, more definite observations may be pronounced. Although reflexes of the PIE etymon with 'guarding' semantics are probably found in Celtic,[71] this equation is difficult to accept purely on formal grounds. The explanation of discrepancies exhibited by *Alci* as suggested by the Polish scholar ("[t]he syncope of the short vowel *-ĭ-* seems a quite common process, whereas the loss of the initial **p-* is such a phonological feature, which appears exclusively in the Celtic languages")[72] thus deserves a commentary. If indeed the PIE etymon contained the initial **p-*, its loss in Celtic is expected and unproblematic, of course, but to label this phenomenon exclusively Celtic would be erroneous. A more serious objection concerns the syncope of *-ĭ-*: infrequent in Gaulish, it is securely attested only for the composition vowel in compounds,[73] while Celtic names in *Virdo-* have been tentatively traced to *virido-* through syncope, but may be dealt with differently.[74] In addition, Prósper advocates a Common Celtic syncope of medial *-i-* between two sibilants,[75] and all these explanations are not applicable to our case. Besides, Gaulish **saliko-* as in the personal name *Salicogenna*, etc., normally glossed as 'willow'

[68]Blanca Maria Prósper, 'The Lusitanian oblique cases revisited: new light on the dative endings', in J. A. González Iglesias et al. (eds), *Curiositas nihil recusat: Studia Isabel Moreno Ferrero dicata* (Salamanca, 2021), 427–42, at 439, and 'Celto-Venetica: Indo-European names from north-eastern Italy and the dialectal classification of Venetic', *Voprosy onomastiki* 21 (2024), 9–50, at 20. Different strategies to explain its second component of the Lusitanian divine names have been used, see, e.g., Blanca Maria Prósper, 'The inscription of Cabeço das Fráguas revisited: Lusitanian and *Alteuropäisch* populations in the west of the Iberian Peninsula', *Transactions of the Philological Society* 97 (1999), 151–83, at 157–60 for a different etymology and, subsequently, cf. pp. 157–8 against attempts to discuss *Trebo-pala* together with *Viś-pala*. Cf. also Luján, 'Language and writing', 322 et passim.

[69]Cf., e.g., Markus Hartmann, 'Siculian', in L. Klein et al. (eds), *Handbook of Comparative and Historical Indo-European Linguistics*, vol. 3 (Berlin, 2017), 1854–7.

[70]See, e.g., Marcel Meulder, 'Les dieux sicules paliques portent un nom indo-européen', *Latomus* 57 (1998), 33–7, where it is derived from a colour name. Earlier literature in J. H. Croon, 'The Palici: an autochthonous cult in ancient Sicily', *Mnemosyne* 5 (1952), 116–29 (esp. 119–20, 125–7).

[71]Cf. Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic*, 125 on Celt. **fasto-* 'growth' (as in OIr *ás*) < **peh₂-s-* 'herd, protect'. For the configuration, see Lucien van Beek, 'The etymology of Greek πέπαμαι', in B. S. Sandgaard Hansen et al. (ed.), *Etymology and the European Lexicon* (Wiesbaden, 2017), 427–41.

[72]Danka and Witczak, 'DEIS EQUEUNUBO', 23.

[73]See Evans, *Gaulish Personal Names*, 134, and Patrick Sims-Williams, 'The Celtic composition vowels *-i-* and *-u-*', 317. Cf. also Patrizia de Bernardo Stempel, 'The phonetic interface of word formation in Continental Celtic', in J. L. García Alonso (ed.), *Continental Celtic Word Formation: The Onomastic Data* (Salamanca, 2013), 63–84, at 78–9 for syncope in unstressed syllables.

[74]Schmidt, 'Die Komposition', 92, 296; Evans, *Gaulish Personal Names*, 125; cf. Delamarre, *Dictionnaire*, 321.

[75]E.g., Prósper, 'Celtic and Venetic', 153.

(cf. OIr *sail*, gen. *sailech*, W *helyg* 'id.') < **salik*- 'willow-tree'[76] presupposes that PIE (descriptive) **palik*- yields ***alik*- in Gaulish. As for Gaulish *alco*- attested in onomastics, its meaning and etymology remain disputable, and several approaches to deal with it are known.[77] In any event, to interpret – following Witczak – the Lepontic name *Alkouinos* (= Gaul. *Alcovindos*) as '[who is] white like the *Alci*', or the toponym *Alcobendas* near modern Madrid as 'hillock[s] of the *Alci*', appears unacceptable, as we are certainly dealing here with a common noun.[78]

Moreover, it is most likely that the name of the divine twins venerated by the *Nahanarvali* in the territory of modern Poland is not linguistically Celtic at all. A Germanic etymology has been applied to it, and quite often Proto-Germanic **alh*- 'temple' (Gothic *alhs*, Old English *ealh* 'id.')[79] is cited in this respect; whatever prehistoric details the word (and, respectively, the cult) might have remain by default disputable.[80] Much has been written on this cult venerated by one of tribes of *Lugiorum nomen* and its genesis, and as was summarized recently by Matthias Egeler in his comment on the testimony of Tacitus, 'the example of the divine brothers illustrates that Celtic-Germanic parallels may be due not only to borrowings or a process of exchange between these two peoples, but also to a shared heritage'.[81] It is more or less evident, however, that on purely linguistic grounds Siculian *Palici* cannot share its pre-history with Gaulish forms in *alco*-, and Venetic *alcomn*- is unrelated to the divine name from Sicily. Nevertheless, the Celtic and Venetic forms referred to *may* have a common PIE etymology with Tacitus's *Alci*, which is not linguistically Celtic. It is of course remarkable that apart from Celtic all these examples are discussed within the dioscuric narrative, and it has been noted that '[i]t is common for a pair of twins to be called by a single

[76]For the pre-history, see Rosemarie Lühr (ed.), *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Althochdeutschen* VII (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021) s.v. *sal(a)ha*, and cf. David Stifter, 'Prehistoric layers of loanwords in Old Irish', in G. Kroonen (ed.), *Sub-Indo-European Europe: Problems, Methods, Results* (Berlin, Boston, 2024), 157–202, at 171.

[77]It is traditionally rendered as 'elk', see Delamarre, *Dictionaire de la langue gauloise*, 38 with references; alternative suggestions (incl. < PIE **h₂elk*- 'ward off, defend') are discussed in David Stifter et al. (eds), *Lexicon Leponticum* (2009–), URL: https://lexlep.univie.ac.at/, s.v. **alk* (David Stifter, Corinna Salomon).

[78]For the former, see the previous footnote, for the latter, cf. Blanca Prósper, 'Indogermanisches bei einem ligurischen Wort: 'Ex rivo *Vindupale*' (*CIL* 5, 7749)', *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 33/2 (1998), 143–58, at 147–8 (I am grateful to Prof. Juan Luis García Alonso for this reference)

[79]See, e.g., Hellmut Rosenfeld, 'Die Dioskuren als λευκὼ πώλω und die Alces', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 89 (1940), 1–6, at 2, or Guus Kroonen, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Germanic* (Leiden, Boston, 2013), 22. Cf. also Ward, *The Divine Twins*, 43–4 for other Germanic approaches and most recently Anders Andrén, 'Divine Twins', in Jens Peter Schjødt et al. (eds), *Pre-Christian Religions of the North: History and Structures* (Turnhout, 2020), 1453–63, at 1456.

[80]Note that Rick Derksen, *Etymological Dictionary of the Baltic Inherited Lexicon* (Leiden, Boston, 2015), 49–50 discussing its Common Baltic cognate **alkas* (cf. Lith. *elkas* '(holy) grove on a hill, idol', *alka* (dial.) 'place on a hill where sacrifices are performed, sacrifice'), apart from the PIE etymology, to **h₂elk*- 'ward off, defend', admits that the Germanic and Baltic words may be of substratum origin. For the Baltic words and their meanings, see Dalia Pakalniškienė, Audronė Kaukienė and Jūratė Laučiūtė, 'Baltų kalbų žodynas (A)', *Res humanitariae* 4 (2008), 8–53, at 21–2 et passim.

[81]Matthias Egeler, *Celtic Influences in Germanic Religion: A Survey* (München, 2013), 19.

name in the plural, or dual'.[82] This description fits perfectly with the data from Veneto, Silesia and, probably, from Sicily, and the fact that the former two (as well as Gaulish onomastic *alco-* unrelated to the dioscuric narrative) may be etymologically connected is notable insofar that normally different motivations lie beyond dioscuric names, cf. the *Ashvins* in Sanskrit texts, lit. 'horse-possessors', or indeed Greek Διόσκοροι, Διόσκουροι, Διὸς κοῦροι 'sons of Zeus'. This possible interrelation of the Celtic, Venetic, and Germanic lexemes remains far from certain, of course, but a more definitive and negative response should be made to the attempts to reconstruct the common name of the divine brothers which goes back to PIE times.

The example discussed here should be viewed as a dramatic reminder that extreme caution should be exercised in dealing with the segmentation of linguistically Celtic divine names, for which data of an extra-linguistic nature becomes sometimes more important than the linguistic procedure itself. Moreover, with Venetic *alcomn-* and Germanic *Alci* we most likely deal with the same *signifié* (presented also in etymologically unclear Siculian *Palici*), and in both areas Celtic linguistic traces are fairly well visible. Nevertheless, it is still yet another illustration of 'the long arm of coincidence', and this rather imperceptible factor should be borne in mind in the discussion of methodologies and the natural difficulties pertaining to this field of academic exercise. Obviously, the selection of linguistically Celtic divine names is particularly difficult in those regions which are represented by onomastic languages, and I have dealt with a reasonable amount of this type of data preserved in the Roman epigraphy of various parts of eastern, central and southern Europe to the effect that, e.g., *Dea Orcia*, *Porobonus*, *Sedatus*, *Tamitenus*, or *Vertumnus*, which have been considered linguistically Celtic at given attestations by a number of scholars, should most probably be removed from these discussions.[83] More recently, analysing the evidence of the lack of linguistically Celtic divine names from Latin inscriptions of Istria in modern Croatia I was forced to go back to the same set of questions in order to demonstrate that local attestations of *Ica*, *Sentona*, *Trita* (and *Iria* in the neighbouring Liburnia) should be excluded from any further discussion of *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz*, although they have been rather constantly referred to as Gaulish in academic literature.[84] Fortunately, this revision of the data in favour of its epichoricity is now becoming a trend in historical Celtic linguistics, and non-Celtic approaches have been used aptly, e.g., to analyse the divine names *Adsalluta* and *Sauercna* in Alpine regions by Repanšek.[85] Certainly, to pronounce a (divine) name found, for example, in Holder's still useful compendium or elsewhere in the existing all-inclusive surveys as non-Celtic is a Sisyphean task, even for those areas

[82]Ward, *The Divine Twins*, 6.

[83]Alexander Falileyev, *The Celtic Balkans* (Aberystwyth, 2013), 108, 111, 121–2, 134, 150; Alexander Falileyev, 'Where linguistics fails: towards interpretations of some divine names in the Roman Danubian Provinces', in L. Zerbini (ed.), *Culti e religiosità nelle province Danubiane* (Bologna, 2015), 167–76, at 168–72; Ascold Ivantchik and Alexander Falileyev, 'A Celtic dedication from Olbia? A Reassesment', in K. Konuk (ed.), *Stephanèphoros* (Bordeaux, 2012), 335–40.

[84]Falileyev, 'Divine names from Latin inscriptions of Istria', 419–39.

[85]Repanšek, *Keltska dediščina*, 43–4 and 46.

where we have a much better understanding of the languages used there in antiquity.[86] Purely linguistic analysis, however perfect and precise it may be, is not a universal remedy to ensure proper selection of the data, as has been shown on many occasions.[87] Nevertheless, there exists a certain tendency in modern Celtic studies which takes for granted that nearly anything which can be linguistically explained as Celtic is in fact Celtic. This undoubtedly constitutes an enormous methodological problem in its own right, since with a variation of the Midas touch everything obscure may be turned into Celtic. To take this point to its extreme, the name *Midas* itself allows for a Celtic linguistic approach within this framework, and Gaulish *mid* attested in the calendar of Coligny might be quoted in support of the claim as well as an impressive amount of forms in *-as* collected as Celtic by J. Whatmough in his great *Dialects of Ancient Gaul*.[88]

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[86]Celto-Germanic areas of interactions come instantly to mind, see recently, e.g., Torsten Meißner, 'Celtic and Germanic names and naming traditions', in T. Meißner (ed.), *Personal Names in the Western Roman World* (Berlin, 2012), 179–98, at 191.

[87]See, e.g., Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Celtic personal names', in T. Meißner (ed.), *Personal Names in the Western Roman World* (Berlin, 2012), 151–66 (cf. '[t]he fact that the name or a similar one can be found in authoritative-looking works such as Holder's *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz* is no guarantee that the name really is Celtic and often leads to circular arguments. It is also perilous to argue that a name must be Celtic because a plausible Celtic stem can be found in the Indo-European and Celtic etymological dictionaries, for many names are open to multiple etymologies', p. 151) or Falileyev, 'Divine names from Latin inscriptions of Istria', 434–5, where a Celtic approach to the number of Near Eastern divine names is applied outrageously as an attempt to illustrated the fallacy of a strictly linguistic procedure.

[88]For Gaulish *mid* 'month' see Delamarre, *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise*, 226–7; for forms in *-as* see, e.g., Whatmough, *The Dialects of Ancient Gaul*, 192 (*Baginas*), 868 (*Buccas*), 1079 (*Arcas*), 1106 (*Aduenas*), etc. This article is based on my paper delivered at Lisbon F.E.R.C.An. workshop in 2016, and the contribution to its *Proceedings* written shortly afterwards. I am grateful to the participants for a useful discussion and to Dr Simon Rodway for his comments on an earlier draft of the paper. The *Proceedings* were never published, and the present version of the text incorporates more details and takes more recent discussions into account. This additional research became possible within the Leverhulme Trust Project RPG-2025-116 'Celtic Britain and Ireland: An Etymological and Historical Dictionary of Early Celtic'.

THE CHILTERN HILLS, CILTRIA AND THE NAME OF THE CELTS

Abstract

The name of the Chiltern Hills has long been acknowledged to derive from a root comparable to the ethnonym Celt. The name of the Celts has recently been explained as reflecting an underlying meaning 'covered', but the alternative etymologies that have been supposed for the name of the Chilterns are not properly supported from a comparative linguistic perspective. The name of the Chiltern Hills and related toponyms from the south of England suggest that the early Britons called themselves Celts, contrary to the claims made by Celtosceptics.

A key contention of the Celtosceptical literature is the claim that the term *Celt* was not used of the ancient British and Irish by Greek and Roman writers. This observation is widely held to be true even if the use of the term Κελτοί 'Celt' in Ancient Greek was imprecise and did not necessarily exclude Britain.[1] But as John Koch has responded, '[S]o what? … since the people of Iron Age Britain and Ireland have left us only fragmentary written records, we do not know with absolute certainty … that they did not identify themselves as Celts'.[2] Koch's criticism can be put more strongly, however. There is evidence that the ancient Britons considered themselves to be Celts because a reflex of the term *Celt* appears to be recorded quite widely in British place-names, most pertinently in that of the Chiltern Hills. The name of the Chilterns is first recorded in the *Tribal Hidage* as that of a territory *Ciltern sætna* 'of the Chiltern dwellers' (for an expected nominative plural **Cilternsætan*) and it has usually been assumed that the description *Ciltern* predates the Anglo-Saxon period.[3]

Patrick Sims-Williams notes that the Greek geographer Strabo records that his predecessor Hipparchus claimed that Britain was inhabited by Κελτοί and that Hipparchus seems to have relied on the explorer Pytheas of Massalia for his information.[4] The works of both Hipparchus and Pytheas are only known through quotations or fragments preserved by later authors, but there

[1] Philip M. Freeman, 'The earliest Greek sources on the Celts', *EC* 32 (1996), 11–48.

[2] John T. Koch, 'Celts, Britons, and Gaels—names, peoples, and identities', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, New Series 9 (2003), 41–56, at 43.

[3] David N. Dumville, 'The Tribal Hidage: an introduction to its texts and their history', in Steven Bassett (ed.), *The Origins of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (Leicester, 1989), 225–30, recension A, l. 21. On Old English *sætan* 'dwellers', see John Baker, 'Old English *sǣta* and *sǣtan* names', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society* 46 (2014), 45–81 and idem, 'Old English *sǣte* and the historical significance of "folk" names', *Early Medieval Europe* 25 (2017), 417–42.

[4] Patrick Sims-Williams, ' "Celtic Britain" in pre-Roman archaeology, reconsidered', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 44 (2025), 446–61.

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is no doubt that some early Greek authors held the inhabitants of Britain to have included Κελτοί. Pytheas appears to have written his Περὶ τοῦ Ὠκεανοῦ (*About the Ocean*) in the late fourth century BC and Hipparchus compiled his Πρὸς τὴν Ἐρατοσθένους γεωγραφίαν (*Against the Geography of Eratosthenes*) in the second-century BC.[5] But in the early first century AD Strabo disagreed with Hipparchus, contending that he was wrong and that the inhabitants of Britain were properly called Βρεττανοί 'Britons': οὗς ἐκεῖνος μὲν ἔτι Κελτοὺς ὑπολαμβάνει, ἐγὼ δ' οἶμαι Βρεττανοὺς εἶναι 'whom he [i.e. Hipparchus] takes to be still Celts, but I think they are Britons'.[6] Strabo, however, may have merely recorded a change in the way the inhabitants of Britain referred to themselves. By the time Strabo was writing, it appears that the people of Britain who spoke languages related to those of Gaul had come to principally see themselves as Britons rather than Celts, although evidence they had formerly used the term *Celt* of themselves appears to be preserved in British toponymy.

The name of the Celts seems to be preserved quite widely in British place-names. The name *Ciltern* appears to be derivationally Celtic and it is most obviously explained as retaining a form of the ethnonym *Celt*. *Ciltern* has long been explained as a reflection of an element **kelto-* 'high' comparable to Latin *celsus* 'high' and Old English *hyll* 'hill' (derivatives of Indo-European **kelH-*, **kl̥H-* 'to rise, to be tall'), but despite the obvious appeal of a place-name element with such a meaning to explain the name of a range of hills, no suitable reflexes of an earlier **kelto-* with a meaning comparable to 'high' are attested in the Celtic languages.[7] The derivation of *Ciltern* from a formation **kelto-* 'high' was originally proposed by Eugen Zachrisson before the development of contemporary Indo-European root-structure theory and it is extremely unlikely: *-to-* enlargements are customarily formed with zero-grade root apophony in the Indo-European languages and the expected Celtic reflex of inherited **kl̥H-to-* would be **kālto-*.[8]

In the nineteenth century, Latin *celsus* was similarly associated with the name of the Celts, but Richard Coates dismisses a connection of *Ciltern* with *Celt* on the grounds that 'little can be said about *Celt*, as it is not even clear in which language the name was formulated'.[9] Coates's supposition that *Ciltern* may reflect a 'Pre-British **ciltā* "steep hill" ' may seem semantically reasonable, but it is quite irregular from a derivational perspective. No matter whether

[5]Hans Joachim Mette (ed.), *Pytheas von Massalia* (Berlin, 1952), no. 6b; David R. Dicks (ed.), *The Geographical Fragments of Hipparchus* (London, 1960), no. 61.

[6]Strabo, trans. Horace L. Jones, *The Geography of Strabo*, 8 vols (London, 1917), 2.1.18.

[7]R. Eugen Zachrisson, 'English place-name puzzles: a methodical investigation into the question of personal names or descriptive words in English place-names', *Studia Neophilologica* 5 (1932), 1–69, at 60; idem, 'English place-name compounds containing descriptive nouns in the genitive', *Englische Studien* 70 (1935), 60–73, at 66; Eilert Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th ed. (Oxford, 1960), 104.

[8]Zachrisson, 'English place-name puzzles', 60; Ranko Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic* (Leiden, 2009), 6.

[9]Christian Wilhelm Glück, 'Celtae', *Beiträge zur vergleichenden Sprachforschung auf dem Gebiete der arischen, celtischen und slawischen Sprachen* 5 (1868), 97–8; Richard Coates, 'Remarks on "pre-English" in England: with special reference to **uentā*, **ciltā* and **cunāco*', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society* 16 (1984), 1–24, at 24, n. 20.

the element is held to be of archaic Celtic or pre-Celtic origin, there is no good reason why such a form (which lacks clear cognates in any of the Indo-European languages) would ever have existed.[10] The only likely derivation is from a slightly Anglified or late Brittonic spelling of the ethnonym *Celt*, a term that can hardly be characterised as 'Pre-British' even if a reflex of the ancient designation is not obviously recorded in the medieval Brittonic languages.

The place-name *Ciltern* appears to be related to the similarly derived toponyms *Cheltenham* (< Old English *Celtanhom*), *Chilcombe* (< *Ciltacumb*), *Childerditch* (< *Celta*), *Chilgrove (< lytle Ciltene), Chilthorne* (< *Cilterne*), *Chiltington* (< *Ciltine*), *Chiltley* (< *Ciltelei*) and *Chilton Candover* (< *Chiltecandevere*). But rather than reflecting a meaning 'high', the ethnonym *Celt* appears to be a vṛddhi of the inherited Indo-European past participle **ḱl̥tos* 'covered, hidden' (to Indo-European **ḱel-* 'to cover'), related to Middle Irish *celt* 'covering, garment, clothing', that originally indicated 'those who are covered, those who have clothes'.[11] While vṛddhi formations are rare in the Celtic languages, they reflect a type of internal modification that is widely attested in other Indo-European dialects which was originally employed to create possessive derivatives. The description *Celt* seems most likely to have arisen as a term that originally distinguished humans from animals (as those who possess clothes) and the apparent preservation of the term in the name of the **Cilternsætan*, *Cheltenham*, *Chilcombe*, *Childerditch*, *Chilgrove*, *Chilthorn*, *Chiltington*, *Chiltley* and *Chilton* indicates that it is likely that it was formerly employed in British Celtic.

The most difficult aspect of the place-name *Ciltern* is its enlargement by *-ern*. The nasal is not recorded in *Ciltria*, a name first attested in the thirteenth-century *Gesta abbatum monasterii sancti Albani* of Matthew of Paris that is also recorded in the inflected forms *Ciltre* and *Cyltre* (in the expression *tria hundreda de Ciltre/Cyltre*).[12] But it is not as clear what the function of the final *-n* recorded in Anglo-Saxon sources may have been. Matthew of Paris records the name *Ciltria* in an account of the life of an eleventh-century abbot of St Albans called Leofstan, so the term may date back to the late Anglo-Saxon period, and the *Ciltern* dwellers mentioned in the *Tribal Hidage* have long been supposed to represent a British people who were conquered by the West Saxons in the late sixth century. It may be that *Ciltern* continues a form first employed to describe a polity from the sub-Roman period that is alluded to in a sixth-century entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

[10]Coates, 'Remarks on "pre-English" ', 7–15; and thereto Victor Watts (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Cambridge, 2010), 134.

[11]Kim McCone, 'Greek Κελτός and Γαλάτης, Latin *Gallus* 'Gaul" ', *Die Sprache* 46 (2006), 94–111; idem, *The Celtic Question: Modern Constructs and Ancient Realities* (Dublin, 2008); idem, 'The «Celts»: questions of nomenclature and identity', *Cahiers de Centre de Linguistique et des Sciences du Langage* 38 (2013), 21–37; Bernard Mees, 'The etymology of *Britain*', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 26 (2025), 85–101, at 95–7; and cf. Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Celtomania and Celtoscepticism', *CMCS* 36 (Winter 1988), 1–35, at 21–2.

[12]Henry T. Riley (ed.), *Gesta abbatum monasterii sancti Albani*, 3 vols (London, 1867–9), i, 39; *Inquisitions and Assessments relating to the Feudal Aids; with other analogous documents preserved in the Public Record Office; A.D. 1284–1431*, 6 vols (London, 1899–1920), i, 89, 108 and 114.

In 571, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* mentions a victory over the Britons at a battle of Bedcanford. The entry is recorded in the Parker manuscript, the most archaic of the recensions of the *Chronicle*, in the following manner:

> *Her Cuþwulf feaht wiþ Bretwalas æt Bedcanforda 7 .iiii. tunas genom, Lygeanb[u]rg 7 Ægelesb[u]rg, [Benn]ingtun 7 Egonesham, 7 þy ilcan geare he gefor.*[13]
>
> This year Cuthwulf fought with the Britons at Bedcanford and took four towns: Lygeanburg & Ægelesburg, Benningtun & Egonesham. And this same year he died.

How reliable the entry for 571 may be is unclear as it stems from part of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* that seems to have been assembled in the ninth century from sources that are otherwise lost.[14] Yet Cuthwulf's victory was taken by Rutherford Davis to be an indication that he was conquering a British kingdom in the former Roman *Civitas Catuvellaunorum* ('district of the Catuvellauni') that lay to the east and north of Dorchester upon Thames.[15] Lygeanburg, Ægelesburg, Benningtun and Egonesham are usually accepted to be Limbury, Aylesbury, Benson and Eynsham, and the site of Cuthwulf's victory has long been supposed to be Bedford, recorded as *Bedanford* later in the *Chronicle*. An otherwise unrecorded figure, Cuthwulf bore a name that suggests that he may have been one of the princes or even the subkings of the West Saxons (or Gewisse) mentioned by Bede – after all, members of the House of Cerdic typically bore alliterating names – and the Britons defeated by Cuthwulf have usually been associated with the later **Cilternsætan* of the *Tribal Hidage*.

The name *Ciltern* suggests that the defeated people may have been known as the **Cilterni* in Latin. But Sims-Williams proposes that the 571 record should not be taken to be reliable.[16] Instead, Sims-Williams suggests that the entry should be understood from a ninth-century perspective – as an assertion of West Saxon rulership over the **Cilternsætan* in the light of the Mercian victory of 779 in the Battle of Bensington. '[W]ithout asserting that the 571 annal was simply invented to form a "charter" for West Saxon territorial aspirations', Sims-Williams contends, 'it may nevertheless be suggested that it may have been shaped by the events of 779 and after'.[17] The main basis of Sims-Williams's proposal is ostensibly linguistic: 'It is odd that the captured British *tunas* all have English names'. But *Lygeanburg* was evidently named for a stronghold on the River *Lea*, a hydronym that seems to have a Celtic etymology, and it is not clear that any of the first elements of *Ægelesburg*, *Benningtun* and *Egonesham* are etymologically English either.[18] The first element of *Ægelesburg* could

[13]Janet M. Bately (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Vol. 3: MS A* (Cambridge, 1986), 24.

[14]Daniel Anlezark, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (Woodbridge, 2025), 54–85.

[15]K. Rutherford Davis, *Britons and Saxons: The Chiltern Region 400–700* (Chichester, 1982), 63–5.

[16]Patrick Sims-Williams, 'The settlement of England in Bede and the *Chronicle*,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 12 (1983), 1–41, at 32.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Eilert Ekwall, *English River-Names* (Oxford, 1928), 239–41.

reflect an earlier Latin *Agilius*, *[Benn]ingtun* (corrected to *Bænisingtun* in the Parker manuscript) a Celtic personal name *Benusa* and *Egonesham* a Brittonic form of *Aeco*.[19] Sims-Williams's claim may reflect no more than evidence that the compilers of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* supplied ninth-century names for the four towns (with the original Celtic second elements replaced by their Old English equivalents), updating an earlier record.

Davis supported his contention that the 571 entry records the conquest of a British polity by arguing that the Chiltern region is characterised by the paucity of place-names that preserve the Old English elements *-hām*, *-tūn* and *-ing-*. He contended that place-names with *-hām* and *-ing-* are a sign of archaism – that they appear in regions of England that were settled by the Anglo-Saxons before the seventh century – and that this is further evidence that the Chiltern region remained under British political control until 571.[20] It is not clear that place-name evidence can be employed in such a manner, however, the appearance of the forms *[Benn]ingtun* and *Egonesham* in the entry for 571 undermining Davis's case. But a closer morphological analysis of the name *Ciltern* may support his interpretation of the entry for 571 in the *Chronicle* as reflecting the conquest of a sub-Roman Brittonic kingdom.

A key problem with analysing the Old English form *Ciltern* is that its morphology is unexpected. *Ciltria* seems best taken to be a Middle Latin derivative of *Ciltern*, the Old English form also being attested in a charter from 1006 as *Cilternes* and *Cilterni*, and in an entry in the *Peterborough Chronicle* for 1009 as *Ciltern*.[21] But a similar enlargement to that found in *Ciltern* seems to be reflected in the British and Gaulish personal names *Andernus*, *Carnirnus*, *Logirnus*, *Tigernus* and *Tocirnus*. *Tigernus* (cf. Old Irish *tigern* 'lord' < **tigerno-*), however, appears to feature a Hoffmann suffix, indicating mastery, that is also attested in Latin *dominus* 'lord'.[22] As a place-name, *Ciltern* is likely to have been enlarged with a different nasal suffix, with *Cilt-er-* reflecting the Celtic base that *Ciltern* was derived from.

The main problem with taking *Ciltern* as a derivation of a form of the ethnonym *Celt* is that Celtic enlargements with a suffix *-r-* are typically very old – they usually date to the Indo-European period. Inherited adjectives were regularly formed with **-ro-* as part of the archaic Indo-European Caland system, and while there is some secondary use of enlargement by *-r-* in the Celtic languages, such formations are not typically derived from nominal bases.[23]

[19]Iiro Kajanto, *The Roman Cognomina* (Helsinki, 1965), 248; Xavier Delamarre, *Dictionnaire des thèmes nominaux du Gaulois*, 2 vols (Paris, 2019–23), i, 36 and 119.

[20]Davis, *Britons and Saxons*, 68–96 and 108–11.

[21]Peter Sawyer (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (London, 1968), no. 914 and cf. no. 1047; Bernard J. Muir and Nicholas A. Sparks (eds), *The Peterborough Chronicle*, 2 vols (London, 2022), s.a. millesimo ix.

[22]Karl Hoffmann, 'Ein grundsprachliches Possessivsuffix', *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft* 6 (1955), 35–40; Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic*, 378–9; Delamarre, *Dictionnaire des thèmes nominaux du Gaulois*, ii, 462.

[23]Patrizia de Bernardo Stempel, *Nominale Wortbildung des älteren Irischen* (Tübingen, 1999), 228–40; Jeremy Rau, *Indo-European Nominal Morphology: The Decads and the Caland System* (Innsbruck, 2009), 65–186.

From this perspective, it appears more likely that *Ciltern* reflects a compound with a phonologically reduced second element. *Chilthorne* (< *Cilterne*) in Somerset may feature a form of Old English *ærn* 'house, habitation' as its second element, but a more plausible candidate for *Ciltern* is a cognate of Old Cornish *rid*, Old Breton *rid* and Welsh *rhydd* 'free' (< Proto-Celtic **ɸriyos*) or, more regularly, Middle Welsh *rihyt* and Old Irish *ríge* 'kingdom' (< Proto-Celtic **rīgi̯om*). It is usually assumed that inherited Brittonic **g* first lenited to **ɣ* in the late fifth century and then had palatalised to *i̯* after a palatal vowel already by the early decades of the sixth century. The grammatical endings of Brittonic terms had also been lost by that time, the syncopation of composition vowels occurring in the mid- to late-sixth century.[24] A second element reflecting **rīgi̯om* 'kingdom' would be likely to be pronounced merely as **rī(i̯)* by 571 and it seems possible that *Ciltern* could continue an earlier Brittonic **Celto-rīgi̯om* 'kingdom of the Celts' (or an uncompounded **Celtoi rīgi̯om* or the like). In his *Life of Camillus*, Plutarch records a similar ethnonym Κελτόριοι 'Celtorians' for a people of the south of Gaul whose name has been analysed either as 'free Celts' or 'royal Celts' and a comparable formation seems likely to underpin *Ciltern*.[25] The final nasal of *Ciltern* may be an Old English (cf. Old English *Frysan* 'Frisians') or Latin (cf. Latin *regnum* 'kingdom') rather than a Celtic marker, and rather than a Brittonic development comparable to Middle Welsh *gwyllt* 'wild' < **gᵘeltis* (cf. Middle Irish *geilt* 'crazy person'), the raising of the root vowel of *Celt* to *Cilt-* is more regularly associated with *i*-umlaut, an early English sound change that runic evidence shows was finalised no later than the first half of the seventh century.[26]

The names of *East* and *West Chiltington* in Sussex are also remarkable as they seem to reflect an earlier form *Ciltine* recorded as the name of a place that Cædwalla of Wessex had been exiled to and, as *Ciltinne*, in charters of King Offa of Mercia and Eadberht of Kent.[27] Nasal suffixes of this sort are generally typical of Celtic river names formed as if they were those of goddesses, such as the River *Devon* in Leicestershire (< *Dyvene* < **Dubinā* 'the dark') and the *Vendaine* in France (< **Vindinā* 'the white').[28] *Ciltin(n)e*, however, may be better understood to preserve the singulative suffix attested in *Corinium* (< **kori̯o-* 'troop, host'), *Lendiniae* (< **lend-* '(drinking) water') and *Londinium* (< **lond-* 'fierce, strong'; cf. Old Irish *lonn* 'fierce, strong, violent, vehement, eager, bold; irascible, angry' and Welsh *llon* 'merry, glad, cheerful, happy, gay, joyous; excited, agitated; mighty, strong') as if it originally designated 'the

[24]Kenneth H. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953), 433–48, 560–1, 631–3 and 646–51.

[25]Plutarch, *Camillus*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, *Plutarch's Lives*, 10 vols (London, 1914), ii, 15.2; Delamarre, *Dictionnaire des thèmes nominaux du Gaulois*, i, 207.

[26]Gaby Waxenberger, 'Absolute chronology of early sound changes reflected in pre-Old English runic inscriptions', *NOWELE: North-Western European Language Evolution* 72 (2019), 60–77, at 73.

[27]Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfred*, ed. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, 1927), 42; Sawyer (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, nos 106 and 1612; Coates, 'Remarks on "pre-English" ', 7–10.

[28]Delamarre, *Dictionnaire des thèmes nominaux du Gaulois*, ii, 463 and cf. Lionel Joseph, 'The sources of the **-ono-* "god" suffix', in Joseph F. Eska et al. (eds), *The Method Works: Studies on Language Change in Honor of Don Ringe* (Leiden, 2024), 79–97.

place of the Celts'.[29] Similarly, *Chilgrove*, the name of a site attested in Ardley, Oxfordshire, appears to be first recorded in a tenth-century charter as *lytle Ciltene* as if there were two places with the name, much as names preserving the ethnic description *walh* 'foreigner, Briton' are widely attested throughout England.[30] The place-names with a first element reflecting *Celt*, however, are restricted to the south of England, much as those that continue *Cumbre* 'British, Cumbrian' (presumably a calque on Latin *compatriota* 'fellow-countryman') are only found in the West Midlands and the northwest and those that continue *Brettas* 'Briton' are restricted to the north.[31] Yet the comparable place-names reflecting *Cumbre* and *Brettas* are Old English coinages, and formations such as *Celtanhom* seem to be more closely paralleled derivationally by *Sault-Saint-Rémy* (Ardennes), first recorded in the tenth century (in a will of St Remigius, ostensibly of sixth-century date) as a villa called *Celtus*.[32]

It may be that pre-Celtic place-names survived long enough to influence medieval English toponymy and elements otherwise unknown in Celtic are sometimes preserved onomastically. But the name of the Chilterns can be explained quite regularly as reflecting the ethnonym *Celt* and there are no other directly attested options other than Middle Irish *celt* 'covering, garment, clothing' which is used figuratively in the compound *celtbrais* 'thickly covered' (once) to indicate woods.[33] A hypothetical element **celto-* or **ciltā* 'high' has no obvious reason to have existed and it is methodologically unwarranted to prefer a derivation from a term that is not attested otherwise over one that is. The root vowels in the first elements of *Chilcombe*, *Chiltley* and *Chilton* (and early variants such as *Ciltan ham* for Cheltenham) can be explained by postulating an adjectival base **Celti̯o-* which is attested otherwise in the Hispano-Celtic name *Celtius* that is attested over twenty times (presumably as an ethnic identifier) in Lusitania.[34] But it is the names *Ciltern* and *Ciltene* that are particularly important because it is not only their first elements that appear to be derivationally Celtic. It is not entirely certain whether Middle Latin *Ciltria* is a remodelled form of Old English *Ciltern* or a reflex of an earlier **Celto-rīgi̯om* 'kingdom of the Celts'. It is evident, however, that Davis's contention that the entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for 571 indicates that an independent British polity survived in the former *Civitas Catuvellaunorum* until the late sixth century is supported by the likely etymology of the name of the Chilterns.

[29]Peter Schrijver, *Language Contact and the Origin of the Germanic Languages* (New York, 2014), 57.

[30]Sawyer (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, no. 883.

[31]A. Hugh Smith, *English Place-Names Elements*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1956), i, 50, 119–20 and ii, 242–4.

[32]Flodoard, *Historia ecclesiae Remensis*, in Jacques-Paul Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Latina* 135 (Paris, 1879), 1.18; Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville, *Recherches sur l'origine de la propriété foncière et des noms de lieux habités en France* (Paris, 1890), 501; Delamarre, *Dictionnaire des thèmes nominaux du Gaulois*, i, 208.

[33]Richard I. Best et al. (eds), *The Book of Leinster*, 6 vols (Dublin, 1954–83), i, fol. 18r, l. 2259.

[34]Eugenio R. Luján, 'Celtic and Celtiberian in the Iberian Peninsula', in Eduardo Blasco Ferrer et al. (eds), *Iberia e Sardegna: Legami linguistici, archeologici e genetici dal Mesolitico all'Età del Bronzo* (Milan, 2013), 97–112, at 99.

The kingdom conquered by the West Saxons in 571 seems likely to have been known as **Cilt(ə)ri* in Old English, an *i*-umlauted form of a Brittonic **Celtrī* 'the kingdom of the Celts', while *Ciltern* may be an old plural formation (comparable to *Frysan*), perhaps influenced by Old English *ærn* 'house, habitation'. Middle Latin *Ciltria* appears to reflect a development of the name of the Chilterns, although *Ciltria* may well be an older designation than the date that is suggested by its first appearance in the *Gesta abbatum monasterii sancti Albani*. What the place-names *Ciltern*, *Ciltria* and the related forms *Cheltenham*, *Chilcombe*, *Childerditch*, *Chilthorn*, *Chiltington*, *Chiltley* and *Chilton* indicate most importantly, however, is that a key claim of Celtosceptics – that the ancient Britons were never called Celts – is almost certainly wrong. It may be that some of these settlements were named after people called Celtius or Celtus rather than Celts plural (although *Celtius* was only employed in Roman Spain as what seems to be an ethnic designation) or were described as 'covered' in Brittonic (even if a cognate of Middle Irish *celt* rather than *Celt* might not explain all the *i*-umlauted forms). But the best paralleled interpretation is that the *Chilt-* and *Chelt-* names of southern England were derived from an ethnic description, much as are the many place-names that, although being Old English formations, include the elements *walh* 'foreigner, Welsh', *Cumbre* 'Welsh, Cumbrian' and *Brettas* 'Briton'.

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SÉOL

Abstract

Following brief observations on the derivation of Old Irish *séol* and its cognates, various terms which are arguably based on *séol* 'sail', or its derivatives, are discussed, including *crann siúil*, *ben siúil*, *bard siúil*, *Mag Séola* and *Mag Siúil*.[1]

Opinions have differed on the relationship between Celtic and Germanic words for 'sail' – Old Irish *séol*, Old Welsh *huil*, Middle Welsh *hwyl*, Old High German *segal*, German *segel*, Old English *segel*, etc. The traditional derivation has been from the PIE root **sek-*, 'to cut (cloth, etc.)', with borrowing posited from Germanic to Celtic.[2] Peter Schrijver, on the other hand, has characterized the connection with **sek-* as 'semantically arbitrary', and pointed out that a borrowed Germanic **segla-* would give Welsh **heil*; he proposes instead to trace from Proto-Celtic **siglo-*: 'In Ir., **siglo-* > **siɣlo-* became **seɣlo-* by lowering, which yielded OIr. *séol*. In Gm., **siglo-* > **siɣla-* became **seɣla-* by *a*-umlaut'.[3] However he does not suggest an etymology for **siglo-*.

An attractive etymology has been proposed by Helmut Birkhan.[4] He traces from Celtic **seglo-* to the Indo-European root **seg-* 'to attach', with an instrumental/agentive *l*-suffix, in the sense of 'was man an-, auf- oder umhängt'. In Irish, **seglo-* (later **segla-*) resulted in *seɣ'la* through lenition, and, following compensatory lengthening for the loss of *-ɣ-*, and final syllable loss, in **sēl*. Professor Birkhan accepts that the Old Irish nominative singular *séol*, with diphthongization of earlier *-ē-*, is modelled on nouns such as *céol*, genitive singular *cíuil*,[5] and he explains the vocalism of the Welsh forms as resulting from the borrowing of *sēl* into Welsh as *Σēʲla* in the sixth century, before this diphthongization occurred, developing in the mid-seventh century to Old Welsh *huil*, and later to Middle Welsh *hwyl*.[6]

Birkhan notes that the direction of borrowing between Celtic and Germanic cannot be determined from linguistic evidence alone, since one might argue equally for the derivation Germanic **segla-* > Celtic **seglo-*, or Celtic **seglo-* > Germanic **segla-*, but he maintains that the wealth of archaeological, pictorial and written evidence for the use of sails in the Celtic-speaking world in the

[1] I thank the anonymous reviewer for many helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

[2] *GOI*, 574; *IEW* II, 895; *GPC Online* s.v. *hwyl*; Wolfgang Meid (ed.), *Die Suche nach der Traumfrau: Aislinge Óenguso/Oengus' Traum. Eine altirische Sage* (Innsbruck, 2017), 75–6.

[3] Peter Schrijver, *Studies in British Celtic Historical Phonology* (Amsterdam, 1995), 357.

[4] Helmut Birkhan, 'Segel', in Werner Bauer and Hermann Scheuringer (eds), *Beharrsamkeit und Wandel: Festschrift für Herbert Tatzreiter zum 60. Geburtstag* (Vienna, 1998), 27–38.

[5] Cf. *GOI*, 574 (§924).

[6] Birkhan, 'Segel', 28–30.

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Iron Age, while there is little or none for their use by Germanic-speaking people until much later, possibly as late as the sixth century, clearly points to borrowing from Celtic to Germanic rather than the reverse. Other authorities concur with him on this.[7]

The derivation proposed by Birkhan for 'sail', from PIE **seg-* 'to hang', seems highly apt since sails were indeed hung.[8] In the North Atlantic world, sails were commonly made from entire or multiple widths of cloth (occasionally from animal skins), typically of woollen cloth which had been woven on looms.[9] These widths were likely to be stitched together, rather than cut: another reason to prefer PIE **seg-* to PIE **sek-* 'to cut'. It is striking that in Modern Irish, *séol* has replaced earlier *garman* as the common term for 'loom', and it is easy to see why sails, and particularly square sails, were associated with cloth hung from the top beam of a loom.[10]

A number of Irish terms based on *séol* will now be discussed. In Old Irish *séol* is a neuter o-stem, later masculine (or neuter and masculine).[11] *eDIL* identifies its primary meaning as 'a sail, a covering', and gives 'a bed, couch' as a secondary meaning, but indicates doubt as to whether this secondary meaning also underlies the term *ben siúil* which it defines as 'a woman in childbed'.[12] Any doubt on this seems unwarranted. It is likely that *séol* came to mean 'bed' from its use as an abbreviation of terms for beds such as *crann siúil* and *lige siúil*, which I take to mean 'wooden bed with a *séol*' and 'couch with a *séol*'.[13] I suggest that *séol* in these terms refers to a kind of vertical

[7] Ibid., 31–3. Unaware of Birkhan's article, and following Schrijver's suggested pre-form of **siglo-*, Katrin Their also concluded that the documentary and archaeological evidence indicated an origin for the word and technology in the Celtic world: see Katrin Their, 'Sails in the North—new perspectives on an old problem', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 32/2 (2003), 182–90. See also two recent studies, based on large collections of Celticisms and Celto-Germanicisms (including words for 'sail'): David Stifter, 'With the back to the ocean: the Celtic maritime vocabulary', and Paulus van Sluis, Anders Richardt Jørgensen, and Guus Kroonen, 'European prehistory between Celtic and Germanic: the Celto-Germanic isoglosses revisited', both in Kristian Kristiansen, Guus Kroonen and Eske Willerslev (eds), *The Indo-European Puzzle Revisited: Integrating Archaeology, Genetics and Linguistics* (Cambridge, 2023), at 172–92 and 193–243 respectively.

[8] It has been suggested that Gallo-Roman *sagum*, meaning 'coarse woollen cloak' made from square cloth, may derive from the same root: see Birkhan, 'Segel', 35.

[9] See Lise Bender Jørgensen, 'The introduction of sails to Viking Scandinavia: raw materials, labour and land', in Ragnhild Berge, Marek E. Jasinski and Kalle Sognnes (eds), *N-TAG TEN: Proceedings of the 10th Nordic TAG conference at Stoklestad, Norway 2009*, BAR International Series 2399 (Oxford, 2012), 173–81; Bill Cooke, Carol Christiansen and Lena Hammarlund, 'Viking woollen square sails and fabric cover factor', *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 31/2 (2002), 202–10. Direct archaeological evidence for sail-making in the North Atlantic world outside of Scandinavia is extremely scarce and mainly inferential.

[10] The references in *eDIL* under 1 *séol* (c) 'a weaving implement, a loom' are in Modern Irish.

[11] *eDIL* states 'Poss. neut. in one or other sense (only in chevilles)', but note nom. sg. *a séol ndobróin* 'der Schleier der Trauer' in a short elegy for Máel Sechnaill (†862) son of Máel Rúanaid (in Kuno Meyer (ed. and trans.), *Bruchstücke der ältern Lyrik Irlands* (Berlin, 1919), 47 §105), and nom. sg. *séol mbuide … séol nglas* (siul mbodhe…seol n*h*glas) 'velo flavo, velo viridi' in Paul Grosjean (ed.), 'S. Columbae Hiensis cum Mongano heroe colloquium', *Analecta Bollandiana* 45 (1927), 78–83, at 78.

[12] S.v. 1 *séol*: '(b) a bed, couch: séol .i. leabha, O'Cl. siul .i. imda, ut est fech sin ar siul tuas, O'Dav. 1426 … ? To this in phr. ben siúil … a woman in childbed …'

[13] Conversely, *crann*, literally 'tree, wood', also occurs as an abbreviation of *crann siúil* in '*luid*

hanging, reminiscent of a sail, which gave privacy to the person lying in bed. To give an example, readers of *Aislinge Óenguso* will recall that when Óengus, son of Bóann and Dagda, first beholds the beautiful female visitant with whom he falls in love, he is lying in his *crann siúil*. She continues to visit him there for a full year but is never seen by anyone apart from Óengus. This may be because where he lies is shielded from other people's sight.[14] The tale relates that on first meeting her, Óengus tried to take his visitant's hand to draw her to him in his *imdae*.[15] This word is not a synonym for *crann siúil*, though it may be used loosely as such;[16] it signifies 'a compartment or cubicle' (cf. *eDIL*). Literary texts such as *Fled Bricrenn*, *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* and *Suidigiud Tellaig Temra* portray royal banqueting halls and hospitallers' hostels as having various *imdai* which were used for sleeping, resting or feasting, and typically were occupied by a number of people at a time. As William Sayers has pointed out, literary descriptions convey that these *imdai* were semi-enclosed compartments, mounted on daises or platforms called *airide* (< *air-suide* 'fore-seat'), with side-partitions 'over which diners could view others in the hall'.[17] Evidently then, their primary function was not to afford privacy. In real life, the higher a person's rank, the greater the number of *imdai* in his house. For example, according to the eighth-century law tract *Críth Gablach*, a *bóaire*'s house had one *imdae*, the houses of the *aire désa* and the *aire ard* had eight, and the king's house had twelve.[18]

While Óengus had privacy, perhaps, on account of his *crann siúil* (as well as the separation afforded by an *imdae*), there are not many other references associating males with a *crann siúil*. O'Davoren's Glossary provides one, in the entry for *fochlae*, a term used figuratively to mean 'seat of honour': *Fochlu .i. fēinnidh[a], ut est ar siúl ar bēlaib .f. .i. ar crann siū[i]l ⁊ i n-airidhiu*, 'Seat of honour, i.e. of the champion, i.e. on a *séol*-bed (*séol*) in front of the seat of

do c[h]runn ⁊ do uaitni', said of Deichtire as she was about to give birth (in '*Compert ConCulaind* nach D. 4. 2', ed. with German translation in Rudolf Thurneysen, *Zu irischen Handschriften und Litteraturdenkmälern* (Berlin, 1912), 41–8, at 43 and 46 (§6)). While translating the phrase literally as 'Stamm und Pfosten', Thurneysen asked: 'Soll das "Gebärstuhl" oder "Bett" heißen?' (p. 46). In the absence of references to the use of birthing stools in the early medieval period, I suggest that the woman giving birth may simply have braced herself against an *úaitne* which formed part of the *imdae* or the wall of the house.

[14] Alternatively, as the anonymous reviewer suggests, one might understand Óengus's supernatural visitant as being selectively visible to him alone, and comparable in this to the supernatural visitant to Connlae who remains invisible to his companions in the tale *Echtrae Chonnlai*, see Kim McCone (ed.), *Echtrae Chonnlai and the Beginnings of Vernacular Narrative Writing in Ireland* (Maynooth, 2000), 125, and 137.

[15] *do gabáil a llâmae dia tabairt cuci inna imdai:* cf. Meid, *Aislinge Óenguso*, 54 (restored text), 63 (German translation), and 78–9 (on the inflexion and derivation of *imdae*, earlier *imbith*, *immid* < *imb-* + *buith*, comparable to *lepaid* < *leth-* + *buith*).

[16] For an example, see footnote 15. Conversely, *crann siúil* may also be used loosely as a synonym for *imdae*: in one of the tableaux set within the many different *imdai* in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, the description of the *imdae* of the under-charioteers (*imda na forarad*) begins *Atchonnarc nonbur for craund siúil dóib* 'I saw nine men in a *crann siúil*', *LU* 233, l. 7607.

[17] William Sayers, 'Charting conceptual space: Dumézil's tripartition and the fatal hostel in Early Irish literature', *Mankind Quarterly* 34/1–2 (Fall/Winter 1993), 27–64, at 41.

[18] D. A. Binchy (ed.), *Críth Gablach*, Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series 11 (Dublin, 1970), ll. 229, 234, 337, 401, and 575.

honour, i.e. on a wooden *séol*-bed (*crann siúil*) and in the fore-seat (*airide*)'.[19] But in many cultures some degree of privacy is seen as desirable for parturient women, regardless of rank,[20] and it is noteworthy that *séol* features prominently in the specialized sense of 'childbed, birthing bed', in terms such as *lige siúil* 'childbed', *lén siúil* 'travail of childbed', *nert mná siúil* 'the strength of a woman in childbed'. The abstract *iā*-stem *séolae* is also well attested in the meaning 'the state of being in childbirth', e.g. *ni fil mo niachus … dar aindir liuin seolæ* 'My prowess does not exceed that of a woman in travail'.[21]

The practice of using sails to create privacy for parturient women is attested in our own time in Irish coastal communities, as the following passage from a memoir written by the Blasket islander Seán Ó Criomhthain (1898–1975) shortly before his death shows:

> I gcúinne an tí sa chistin a bhíodh an leaba luí sheoil. Seol báid, agus cheanglófaí in airde de na fraitheacha é, déanfaí fé mar bheadh seomra beag de, agus líonfaí istigh é d'easair nó de thuí nó de raithneach thirim, agus ansin ligint don bhean a bhí chun an leanbh a shaolú bheith ag iomlasc leí. Is mó fear agus bean mhaith a tháinig ar an saol seo ar an Oileán Tiar sa leaba luí sheoil seo. Ó shaolaíodh an bhean an leanbh ní raibh sí le feiscint arís go mbeadh na naoi lá caite aici, oiriúnach chun ráis arís.[22]
>
> 'The birthing bed used be in the kitchen, in the corner of the house. The sail of a boat used be secured to the rafters, made into something like a little room, and the inside of it filled with packing or straw or dry bracken. Then the woman who was about to give birth to the child was left to roll around. Many a good man and woman was born on the Western Island in this kind of birthing bed. When the woman had borne the child, she was not to be seen again until the end of her nine days, when she was ready for action once more.'[23]

Screens and hangings other than sails were also used. The following is from an account given by Máire Ruiséal (1855–1949), from the parish of Cill Mhaolcéadair in Corca Dhuibhne, to the folklore collector Seosamh Ó Dálaigh:

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[19] *CIH* iv, 1498, l.18; W. Stokes (ed. and trans.), 'O'Davoren's glossary', *ACL* 3 vols (1900–07), vol. ii (1904), 337 §841. Trans. here is mine.

[20] For European perspectives see, for example, Katharine Park, 'Managing childbirth and fertility in medieval Europe', in Nick Hopwood, Rebecca Flemming and Lauren Kassell (eds), *Reproduction* (Cambridge, 2018), 153–66; Alisha Rankin, 'From private ritual to public good: childbirth and midwifery in the writings of Anna of Saxony (1532–85)', in Natacha Klein et al., *Privacy in Early Modern Saxony: Perspectives on Architecture, Culture, Health, Law, and Religion* (Berlin, 2025) 15–39.

[21] R. I. Best, 'The battle of Airtech', *Ériu* 8 (1916) 170–90, at 172 and 180. See *eDIL* s.v. *séolae* for further examples.

[22] S. Ó Criomhthain in Pádraig Tyers (ed.), *Leoithne Aniar* (Baile an Fhirtéaraigh, 1982), 54. I owe this reference to my colleague Dr Pádraig Ó Héalaí.

[23] My translation.

> Tithe beaga a bhíodh ann cúpla glúin ó shin – cistin agus seomra síos ón gcistin ag formhór na ndaoine. Is minic ná raibh deighilt in aon chor ann ach aon tseomra amháin, an chistin in uachtar an tí agus dhá leaba in íochtar an tí. Nuair a saolaítí leanbh shocraíodh duine éigin leaba sa chúinne fén mbean bhreoite, leaba tuí, agus crochtaí fé mar a bheadh *screen* timpeall na leapan ach amháin go mbíodh slí ón dtaobh istigh den *screen* seo don bhanaltra, don bhean chabhartha uaireanta agus don leanbh.[24]
>
> 'A few generations ago, houses were small – most people had only a kitchen and a room down from the kitchen. Often there was no division of any kind, just a single room, with the kitchen up at one end and two beds down at the other. When a child was coming, someone would fix a bed in the corner for the sick woman, a straw bed, and something like a screen would be erected around the bed, leaving just enough room on the inside for the nurse, and sometimes the handy woman, and the child.'[25]

An unusual use of *séol* in reference to cattle is found in the Old Irish tale *Erchoitmet Ingine Gulide*.[26] This tells of a visit by Feidlimid mac Crimthainn, king of Munster, and his retinue to the house of Gulide, a famously stingy *cáinte*. Gulide sends his daughter out to convey to the visitors that they have in fact come at the worst possible time: their house is in disarray, their 'old food' supplies are exhausted and their 'new food' has not yet come. Among other examples of scarcity she cites this: *Englasa inar lilachaib iar n-dísca inar n-gamnachaib. Ar mna asiul, ar m-bæ ansiul.*[27] I take *asiul* to stand for *i siúl* 'in childbed', here used somewhat loosely to mean 'giving birth', and *ansiul* as its antonym, formed from *an-* 'non-' and the dative singular of *séol*, used adverbially. One might translate as 'Watery milk in our milch cows on top of dryness in our strippers. Our women giving birth, our cattle not giving birth'. A *gamnach* or stripper is a cow with a yearling calf whose milk-production is at an end.[28] The point is that the visiting party can expect little or no milk and 'white food' (*bánbíad*) since the cows with yearling calves have ceased to produce milk, while the cows that have not calved – the cows that are *ansiúl* – have yet to come into milk. To make matters worse, as the women of the house are *i siúl* 'giving birth', there is no one to attend on the guests.

The contrast between the strength of warriors and the weakness of women in childbed is a prominent theme in tales and verse of the Irish heroic cycle,

[24] University College, Dublin, Coimisiún Bhéaloideas Éireann MS 0469, pp. 123–5. I am indebted to Dr Pádraig Ó Héalaí for this reference also.

[25] My translation.

[26] Ed. and trans. by Kuno Meyer, in K. Meyer, *Hibernica Minora, Being a Fragment of an Old-Irish Treatise on the Psalter with Translation, Notes and Glossary and an Appendix Containing Extracts Hitherto Unpublished* (Oxford, 1894), 65–9.

[27] Ibid., 66 §6. Meyer translated as 'There is water in our milchcows after our heifers have run dry. Our women are pregnant, our kine barren' (ibid., 68).

[28] On the *gamnach*, and this passage, see Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming* (Dublin, 1997), 354, and 526.

and presumably underlies the unusual description of an army as a *slúag siúil* 'feeble host' (literally 'childbed-host') in the following quatrain, reputedly addressed to Áed Allán (†743), king of Tara, to incite him to attack Áed Róin (†735), king of the Ulaid:

> Abair re hAodh Allán n-ūar
> dom-riacht forrán la slūagh siūil,
> rom-n-elacht Aedh Róin arraír
> im Chonna Cill an chaín chiúil.
>
> 'Say unto cold Áed Allán that I have been oppressed by a feeble army;
> Áed Róin insulted me last night at Cill Chonna of the sweet music.'[29]

However *séol* remained in use as an unmarked term for 'bed', as in the following quatrain from a poem attributed to Muirchertach Mac Líag (†1016), in which he is portrayed as leaving his patron, Brían Bóraime, to spend the next half-year with another patron, Tadg Mór Úa Cellaig, entertaining him as his *bard siúil*, which I take to mean 'poet of the bed-chamber':

> Leithblīadhoin damh is'tīr tīar
> ag Brīan ar Sionainn, ar Siúir,
> is bīad leithblīadhain oile ag Tadg
> in Āth Lūain ina bard siúil.[30]
>
> 'One half-year in the land to the west with Brían, by the Shannon and the Siur, and I will be another half-year with Tadg in Athlone as his *bard siúil*.'[31]

The word *séol* is used not only of vertical hangings but also of coverings laid flat, as sails would often have been while being made or repaired.[32] I suggest that an io-stem collective *séolae* in the sense of 'coverings (of soil)' may underlie the placename *Mag Séola*. This is the name of a flat, fertile plain lying east of Lough Corrib between Galway and Tuam which features only one small hill, 170 metres in height, named Knockmaa (Cnoc Meadha). The late-seventh-century *Collectanea* of Tírechán identifies a church founded by St Patrick on this plain as *ecclesia magna Saeoli*,[33] later called *Domhnach Mór Maige Séola*, and anglicized Donaghpatrick. There are other attestations of *Séolae* without *mag* which refer to this plain, including *hi Séolu* (in *Do*

[29]Text and trans. (here with minor changes in presentation) from *AFM* s.a. 733.

[30]From *Samhoin so, sodham go Tadg*, ed. Kuno Meyer, 'Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften', *ZCP* 8 (1912), 222–5, at 222, quatrain 6, lightly modified.

[31]My translation.

[32]E.g. *a séol ndobróin* 'der Schleier der Trauer' in n. 8 above. For a recent overview of the production of textiles in Ireland see Elizabeth Wincott Heckett, *Textiles of Ireland: Archaeology, Craft, Art*, ed. by Mary Ann Williams (Cork, 2024).

[33]Ludwig Bieler (ed. and trans.), *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin, 1979), 140 §22.1. Bieler translates as 'the great church of Seól'. The place is called 'Domnach Mór Maigi Seolae' in the later *Vita Tripartita* (cf. Kathleen Mulchrone (ed.), *Bethu Phátraic: The Tripartite Life of Patrick* (Dublin, 1939), 59, and Whitley Stokes (ed. and trans.), *The Tripartite Life of Patrick*, 2 vols (London, 1887), i, 96–7.

Fhlathiusaib Hérend in *LL*),[34] *cath Airrthir Sēola* 'the battle of Airther Séola' (in the Annals of Tigernach, for the year 652),[35] and *Uí Briúin Séola* (*passim*), the name of the branch of the Uí Briúin who occupied this territory.[36] *Mag Siúil* occurs as a variant name of this *Mag Séola*,[37] but only in Middle Irish and later sources and is unlikely to be the earlier form. Substitution of *séol* for collective *séolae* was liable to happen, and seems to be evidenced also in *a Sēolaib*, dative plural of *séol*, in apparent reference to (*Mag*) *Séola*.[38] *Séol* is also attested in the name for the low-lying land of *Mag Siúil* in Eliogarty, between Cloughjordan and Roscrea.[39]

In outlining the semantic development of *séol* from its primary meaning 'sail' to 'bed', 'hanging', 'covering', and 'childbed, parturition', it is hoped that this article has eliminated the uncertainty regarding the meaning of *ben siúil* expressed in *eDIL* s.v. 1 *séol* (b). Some rare usages of *séol* are discussed, and an io-stem collective *séolae* has been adduced and identified as occurring in a number of placenames.

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[34] *LL* i, 85, l. 2717 (= *i Seólmag*, ibid., 86, l. 2741).

[35] Identified in Diarmuid Ó Murchadha, *The Annals of Tigernach: Index of Names* (London, 1997), as 'prob. E. side of Mag Seóla, in bar. Clare, Co. Galway'.

[36] Later descendants were known as 'Muintir Mhurchadha', and a Middle Irish tract detailing their lands, families and occupations survives. For and edition and translation, see Nollaig Ó Muraíle, 'A tract on the Connacht territory of Muintir Mhurchadha', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 113 (2008), 90–100; for comment on the names *Mag Séola*, *Uí Briúin Séola* and the variant *Uí Briúin Eola*, see ibid., 99.

[37] E.g. in the poem without attribution (but arguably by Aurard (†990) mac Coisse) which begins *A Mór Maigne Maige Siúil* (ed. and trans. in Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics* (Oxford, 1956), 88–91).

[38] Found in R. I. Best (ed. and trans.), 'The settling of the manor of Tara', *Ériu* 6 (1908/10), 121–72, at 162 §24. This is from the version of the tale in the Book of Lismore. The corresponding section in the Yellow Book of Lecan version of the tale (ibid., 146 §24) lacks the words *a Seolaib* but has words *a Meada*, which seems likely to refer to the area around *Cnoc Meadha* (the only hill on the plain of *Mag Séola*), with this area being either the same as *Mag Séola* or a portion thereof.

[39] Mentioned in Kenneth Jackson (ed.), *Cath Maighe Léna* (Dublin, 1938), ll. 243, 260, and 289.

OIR *i*^{N} 'WHEN, SINCE': AN ALMOST FORGOTTEN CONJUNCTION

Abstract

The rare conjunction OIr *i*^{N} was identified in its causal meaning by Strachan (1904: 12) and was also mentioned by Thurneysen (*GOI* 559). In *DIL* and *eDIL*, some forms are listed under the heading of the copula (s.v. 1 *is*) combined with the preposition *i*^{N}, with a note 'in many exx. has the force of conjunction' and a reference to Strachan (1904). Temporal *i*^{N} 'when' seems to have been first recognised by Meyer in his edition and translation of the Old Irish poem *Song of Créde* (Meyer 1905). It is given a paragraph in *eDIL* in the section on the preposition *i*^{N} 'in' (*eDIL* s.v. *i* under II, *1), but without a cross-reference to the attestations of causal *i*^{N} mentioned under the copula.

Many editors and translators render the forms correctly, sometimes remarking on them in notes or a glossary. The aim of this article is to offer a comprehensive discussion of the conjunction OIr *i*^{N} in both its functions by presenting the evidence found in Strachan (1904) and *eDIL* and by offering some additional attestations.[1]

Introduction

In the very first volume of *Ériu*, John Strachan published a short note under the heading 'Indid, Innách' (Strachan 1904: 12). Starting from a passage in the first recension of the *Táin Bó Cuailnge* containing the form *innách* (cf. (18) below), he suggested to interpret this as 'since it is not', adding three attestations, all from the saga text *Togail Bruidne da Derga*, of the same element *in-* 'since' combined with an indicative present of the copula, but without a negative particle (3 sg. *inid, inad* and 2 sg. *inda*). The forms *indid* and *innách* are mentioned in a paragraph on causal conjunctions by Thurneysen (*GOI* 559, with a reference to Strachan), who adds 3 pl. *indat* attested in the Würzburg Glosses (cf. (13) below).

In *DIL*, these forms and some more attestations of 3 sg. *in(d)id* are mentioned under the heading of the copula combined with the preposition *i*^{N} 'in', with a note 'in many exx. has the force of conjunction' and a reference to Strachan (1904) (*DIL* I: 308.34–56 = *eDIL* s.v. 1 *is*). Similarly, the form attested

[1]This article resulted from the project 'Adjunct subordination in Old and Middle Irish' based at the University of Zurich and financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation. Thanks are due to my colleague Bernd Vath, who collated the database. – I am very grateful to the editors and to an anonymous reviewer for helpful comments and especially for drawing my attention to a number of additional attestations of *i*^{N}.

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in the Würzburg Glosses, *indat*, is mentioned in Kavanagh and Wodtko (2001: 587) as containing the 3 pl. *-dat* of the present indicative of the copula 'with prep. i^{N} and rel. used as causal conjn'. On the other hand, only the form is mentioned under the heading *i*^{N}, but not the special use it has in this instance.

It is more difficult to pinpoint who first recognised *i*^{N} in its temporal function, which is mentioned neither by Strachan nor by Thurneysen. The first scholar to translate *i*^{N} as temporal 'when' seems to have been Kuno Meyer in his edition of the poem *Song of Créde* (Meyer 1905), published a year later than Strachan's note. Both Murphy (*EIL* 279) and Carney (*Blathm.* 153) commented on *i*^{N} 'when', and further examples were adduced by Uhlich (2006: 41 with n. 58).[2] These seem to form the basis of an entry in *eDIL*, where a paragraph on temporal *i*^{N} is added in the section on the preposition *i*^{N} 'in' (*eDIL* s.v. *i* under II, *1), but without mentioning the term conjunction, merely listing '(With verb) when'. As a conjunction, *i*^{N} is not granted a separate entry in *eDIL*, and there is no cross-reference between the attestations mentioned under the copula and those under the preposition *i*^{N}.

Editors and translators of the texts in which the conjunction *i*^{N} is attested seem to be aware of its meaning and often translate it as a temporal or causal conjunction, sometimes even remarking on it in notes or a glossary, with or without an explicit reference to Strachan (1904). In some early translations, on the other hand, scholars were apparently baffled by it and translated the forms in various more literal ways. The aim of this article is to offer a comprehensive discussion of the conjunction *i*^{N} in both its functions by presenting the evidence found in Strachan (1904) and *eDIL* and by offering some additional attestations.

Attested forms and etymology

When standing on its own, the conjunction *i*^{N} has the form *i*, *hi* or *in* (before a vowel: *in·n-accatar*, cf. (11) below). In combination with an infixed pronoun 3 sg.f. we find *inde·* (*AM*), with 3 sg.n. *indid·* (*Gospel of Thomas*). Frequently, *i*^{N} occurs with a prosodically incorporated form of the copula as *in-*. The most common form is the combination with the 3 sg. pres. ind., which takes the shape *indid* (*Hail Brigit*, *AU*), more often *inid* (*LFC, TBC, Aided Óenfir Aífe, SCC, BDD; FM*: *inidh*) or *inad* (*BDD*). Of the indicative present we also find 2 sg. *inda* (*BDD*) and 3 pl. *indat* (*Wb.*). In addition, *im-* is attested before copula forms with initial *b-*, cf. *imbsa*, *imsa* and *imba* (*Tec. Corm.*; *imsa* also *Song of Créde*), all forms of the 1 sg. pret. with and without an added emphasising pronoun *-sa*, and 3 sg. pret. *imbu* (*Gospel of Thomas*). Similarly, a 2 sg. fut. *imbe* is found in *Verba Scáthaige*. Finally, the form *inraptar* 'when they were' (*TBC-I*^{2} 537, (12) below) shows an etymological spelling *in-* before *r-* (cf. Uhlich 2006: 41).

The combination with a negative particle and the 3 sg. of the copula is found as *innách* (*TBC-I*). The saga text *Togail Bruidne da Derga* offers an

[2]Two of his examples (see (11) and (12) below) were listed under the heading 6 *a* in *DIL* (conjunction *a*^{N} 'when'); they were taken out in the respective section of *eDIL* (s.v. 6 *a*).

example of *i*^{N} amalgamated with the negative particle alone to give *innád,* whereas the variant *innach* is found in *Tenga Bithnua.*

As already observed by Strachan (1904: 12) and Thurneysen (*GOI* 559), there can be little doubt that the element *i*^{N} contained in all these forms is identical in origin with the relative form of the preposition *i*^{N} 'in'. This preposition is special in that it does not combine with the usual particle *-(s)a*^{N} to form relative clauses, but is used in relative function in the same form *i*^{N} (cf. *GOI* 312; 521). The original meaning of the conjunction *i*^{N}, then, must have been 'in which, wherein' (cf. Strachan 1904: 12; *GOI* 559). A close typological parallel is German *indem*, literally 'in which', used as an instrumental or modal conjunction 'by which'.

The oldest use of *i*^{N} as a conjunction was probably temporal 'in the time when' → 'when'. Most likely, the conjunction developed from relative clauses relating to an expression of time, as Uhlich (2006: 41, n. 58) suggested: 'The transition from "in which" to temporal "when" is best illustrated by *ind am*[*sir*?] *i tochumlat* "at the time when they are swarming", *Bechbretha* §27, where after the temporal antecedent a more literal rendering "in which" would be equally possible'. An example from the glosses for such a context would be *ind aimser hiro·gabad in salm* (*Ml.* 24d14) 'the time in which/when the psalm was sung' (Ó hUiginn, p.c.).

The causal use of *i*^{N} could have developed secondarily out of the temporal one as happened with Engl. *since* or German *weil* and *da.* On the other hand, a direct development from relative 'in which' to 'because' is not impossible either, since the preposition *i*^{N} 'in' is sometimes used in a way that could be interpreted as causal, as already observed by Strachan (1904: 12). He adduces two examples from the *Milan Glosses*: *is follus rund·gabsat t'ērchoilti-siu indium-sa · isindí arndam·roichlisse hua bás* (*Ml.* 74d7) 'it is clear that Thy determinations are in me, in that Thou hast guarded me from death' (*Thes* i, 255) and *im·folŋgi molad dait-siu ón isindí rondann-ícais-ni dind erchoiniud hī sin* (*Ml.* 89a6) 'that causes praise to Thee, in that Thou hast saved us from that despair' (*Thes* i, 298). Perhaps a translation 'because Thou hast guarded me' and 'because Thou hast saved us' respectively would render the meaning of those two glosses equally well. The direct development from local 'in which' to causal 'because' has a parallel in Modern Irish, where *áit* 'place' can be used in such a way, cf. *an áit nár labhair sé liom* 'because he did not speak to me' (Ó Dónaill 1977 s.v. *áit*).[3]

There are three other conjunctions in Old Irish that etymologically go back to prepositional relatives, namely *ara*^{N} 'that, so that, in order that' from *ar* 'for, before' + relative particle *-(s)a*^{N}, *dia*^{N} 'when, if' from *di* 'from' + relative particle *-(s)a*^{N} (cf. *GOI* 552), and *co*^{N} 'that, so that, in order that'. The latter is said by Thurneysen (*GOI* 299) to contain the particle *-(s)a*^{N} as well. However, phonologically this is difficult to justify. If the underlying preposition is *co*^{H} 'to, until', as Thurneysen seems to assume (*GOI* 554), the expected outcome would be *cossa,* a form that is indeed attested as relative form of *co*^{H} 'to, until'

[3]This was pointed out to me by Ó hUiginn (p.c.).

(*GOI* 502). It seems thus preferable to connect the conjunction *co*^{N} with the preposition *co*^{N} 'with', as Hamp (1973: 243) and Ó hUiginn (1989: 429–31) suggested, and interpret it as the preposition used in relative function, just as in the case of *i*^{N}.[4] In fact, relative forms of *co*^{N} 'with' are not attested in Old Irish, but only in very late texts, where they can be secondary (cf. *eDIL* s.v. 2 *co*).

OIr *dia*^{N}, *ara*^{N}, and *co*^{N} share a number of traits: they function as conjunct particles and thus combine with dependent, i.e. conjunct or prototonic verb forms (cf. *GOI* 28). This is consistent with their etymology as prepositional relatives, since the latter also show the same syntactic behaviour (cf. *GOI* 28). In addition, the type of negative particle employed after these three conjunctions and prepositional relatives is identical, both groups using *ná* (cf. *GOI* 539).

Furthermore, the three conjunctions *dia*^{N}, *ara*^{N}, and *co*^{N} can be amalgamated with further elements to form a single proclitic unit. Thus, *co*^{N} and *ara*^{N} combine with the negative particle into *conna* and *arna* respectively. For *dia*^{N}, *dena* and *dina* are attested in old sources, while later it is replaced by *mani* belonging to *má*^{L} 'if' (cf. *eDIL* s.v. 1 *día n-*). All three conjunctions can combine with conjunct forms of the copula into a single proclitic unit (cf. *GOI* 485; Strachan 1949: 72), the 3 sg. of the present indicative appearing as *condid*/*conid*, *arndid*/*arnid* and *diandid* respectively (*GOI* 485). With *co*^{N} we also find 2 sg. *conda* and 3 pl. *condat* (cf. ibid.).

OIr *i*^{N}, already associated with this small group of conjunctions on the basis of their common etymological background as prepositional relatives, fits this syntactic pattern. The forms containing the indicative present of the copula, 2 sg. *inda*, 3 sg. *indid*, *inid*, and 3 pl. *indat*, are exactly parallel to those given above for *dia*^{N}, *ara*^{N}, and *co*^{N}. *innách* with negative particle and 3 sg. pres. ind. of the copula corresponds to the equivalent form of *co*^{N}, which is *connách* (cf. *GOI* 486).

As negated form of *i*^{N} without copula we would strictly speaking expect **inna*, parallel to *conna*, *arna* and *dena*/*dina*.[5] Actually attested are *innád* (*BDD*, varia lectio *innat*) and *innach* (*Tenga bithnua*). The first variant contains the negative particle *nád* usually found in nasalising relative clauses and after conjunctions that are constructed with the latter. However, *ná* and *nád* seem to have been confused sometimes as early as the Old Irish glosses, with *ná* also being found in nasalising relative clauses, where *nád* would be expected (cf. Ó hUiginn 1987: 179). The opposite, *nád* for *ná*, does not seem to occur in Old Irish, but is occasionally found with *co*^{N} in later texts, cf. *conat coimgeonadh*

[4] García-Castillero (2020: 160) also sees a parallel between *i*^{N} used relatively and the conjunction *co*^{N}. However, I cannot follow his suggestion that they have 'elided the form of this conjunct particle' (i.e. *-(s)a*^{N}). This seems to imply a phonological process, which is hard to justify. In his latest publication, García-Castillero adopts Thurneysen's explanation of the conjunction *co*^{N} (García-Castillero 2026: 206–9 and 274–8) and again touches on 'the idea that *i*^{N}- "in which" is a sort of simplification of the combination of this preposition with the conjunct particle *-s(a)*^{N}' (ibid., 275). – For a more detailed study on *co*^{N} cf. Stüber, forthcoming.

[5] *inna* is actually attested as the combination of the prepositional relative *i*^{N} 'in which' + negative particle, cf. *tech inna fera flechod* (*Thes* ii, 294.15) 'a house wherein wet rain pours not' (*Thes* ii, 294.22), as pointed out to me by Ó hUiginn (p.c.; cf. also Ó hUiginn 2004: 114).

nech 'so that no one knew' (*CCath.* 4800f., with a varia lectio *cona*). The form *innád* is probably to be explained along the same lines. Alternatively, it might have been influenced by the homophonous negated interrogative particle *innád*, as suggested to me by Ó hUiginn (p.c.; on the form cf. Ó hUiginn 2004: 116).

The variant *nach* of the negative particle is regular before infixed pronouns. It is occasionally found instead of *nád* in nasalising relative clauses, even when no infixed pronoun is present (cf. Ó hUiginn 1987: 181; Ó hUiginn 2004: 117). In Middle Irish, *nach* spreads further, cf. *ó nách damhthur* 'since it is not granted' (*CCath* 609) with *nách* instead of expected *ní*. Thus *innach·dortai* in the early Middle Irish text *Tenga bithnua* (cf. (26) below) could either simply stand for expected *inna·*, or could be interpreted as containing a proleptic infixed pronoun 3 sg.m.

With regard to etymology as well as syntactical behaviour, then, i^N 'when, since' can be grouped with three well known Old Irish conjunctions, dia^N, ara^N, and co^N, to form a coherent set, which was named 'type 2 conjunctions' by Stüber (2023) and which introduces clauses called type IIIc by García-Castillero (2020: 160–2). This group of four conjunctions contrasts on the one hand with conjunctions combining with absolute or deuterotonic forms and negated by *ní*, like $ó^L$ 'since', $má^L$ 'if', etc., and on the other hand with those that are followed by a nasalising relative clause like a^N 'when', *amal* 'as', etc.

Evidence: temporal i^N

Temporal i^N is not attested in the Old Irish glosses, but it is found in some early poetic texts. Thus, the well-known poem on the scholar and his cat, dating from the early ninth century and found in a contemporary manuscript (Codex S. Pauli), offers two examples in the same stanza.

(1) *faelid-sem cu ndēne dul* | ***hi·nglen*** *luch ínna gērchrub* | ***hi·tucu*** *cheist ndoraid ndil* | *os mē chēne am faelid.* (*Thes* ii, 293.24f.)

'He [scil. Pangur the cat] rejoices with swiftness in movement when a mouse sticks to his sharp claw; when I understand a difficult, dear question, as far as I myself am concerned, I am joyful.'[6]

Lines 1 and 2 of the stanza are parallel to lines 3 and 4, the two pairs being arranged in the form of a chiasmus, so that in the first instance the subordinate clause follows the matrix clause while in the second instance it precedes the latter. The authors of *Thes* ii, which was first published in 1903, translate *hi·* here more literally as 'where': 'He is joyous with speedy going where a mouse sticks in his sharp claw: I too am joyous, where I understand a difficult dear question.' Murphy, on the other hand, in his collection of early poetry, translates 'when' (*EIL* 3 §6) and lists both attestations in the vocabulary under the heading '**i**$^{\mathbf{n}}$ "in", "in which", sometimes means "when" '.

[6]Here and in the following translations are the author's, unless otherwise stated.

Murphy was not the first, however, to translate *i*^{N} with 'when'. In his vocabulary, he lists another example found in his collection, this one from the *Song of Créde*, also dated to the early ninth century (cf. *EIL* 212). In this instance, *i*^{N} is combined with the 1 sg. pret. of the copula to give *imsa.*

(2) ***imsa*** *naídiu robsa náir* (*EIL* 86 §5)
'when I was a child I was modest' (trans. Murphy, *EIL* 87)

This text was first edited by Kuno Meyer in 1905, and he already translates the form *imsa* as containing a temporal conjunction: 'When I was a child, I was bashful' (Meyer 1905: 17). This seems to be the first time the temporal conjunction *i*^{N} was translated as such.

Murphy's observation on temporal *i*^{N} was taken up by James Carney in his edition and translation of the *Gospel of Thomas*, probably composed around 700 AD (cf. Carney, *Blathm.* xix). It contains two more attestations of temporal *i*^{N}, one in combination with the 3 sg. pret. of the copula (*imbu*), the other with a 3 sg.n. infixed pronoun.

(3) ***imbu*** *macán cóic bliadnae | Ísu mac Dé bí | sénais da huiscén deac.* (*Blathm.* 90, § 1a-c)
'When Jesus, son of the living God, was a small boy, five years of age, he blessed twelve small pools.' (trans. Carney, *Blathm.* 91)

(4) ***indid·acatar*** *int sluaig | gatsait láma de.* (*Blathm.* 104 § 44cd)
'When the crowd saw it they released him.'
(trans. Carney, *Blathm.* 105)

In his notes, Carney remarks on *imbu*: '*I* is best taken as the preposition *i* used as a temporal conjunction (see Murphy, *EIL*, Glossary, s.v. *i*). Similarly in *indid accatar* §44^{c}.'

Two instances of temporal *i*^{N} are also found in *Fiacc's Hymn* from the *Liber Hymnorum*, edited in *Thes* ii.

(5) *Succat a ainm* ***i·tubrad.*** (*Thes* ii, 308.18)
'Succat was his name when he was carried off.'

(6) *ba sén gaire* ***i·ngénair.*** (*Thes* ii, 321.3)
'It was a blessing of piety when he [scil. Patrick] was born.'

It was Jürgen Uhlich who suggested to understand *i·* as a temporal conjunction 'when' in these two passages (Uhlich 2006: 41 n. 58). The editors of *Thes* ii translated more literally as 'Succat (was) his name in which he was carried off' (*Thes* ii, 308.21) and ' 'twas a pious hap wherein he was born' (*Thes* ii, 321.7f.) respectively.

Besides poetry, gnomic texts are another genre that makes use of temporal *i*^{N}. Uhlich (2006: 41 n. 58) mentions two parallel instances found in *Audacht Morann* 'The Testament of Morann', which is dated by Kelly (*AM* xxix) to around 700 AD. In both cases *i*^{N} is combined with an infixed pronoun 3 sg. f. to give *inde·*.

(7) *fris·tibi fírinni* ***inde·cluinethar****, coten·ocaib* ***inde·n-aici***
(*AM* 18 §59)

'he [scil. the true ruler] smiles on the truth when he hears it, he exalts it when he sees it' (trans. Kelly, *AM* 19)

Kelly (*AM* 79) has a remark on this section in his vocabulary under the heading of the preposition *i*, noting that the latter is used as a conjunction 'when' here.

Two more attestations in gnomic texts can be added to that. In a passage from *Tecosca Cormaic* 'The instructions of Cormaic', dated by Meyer (*Tec. Corm.* xi) to the first half of the ninth century, *i*^{N} is found five times in combination with the 1 sg. pret. of the copula. This attestation is not mentioned by Uhlich, nor has it made its way into *eDIL*.[7] It is referred to, however, by Dillon (*SCC*^{2} p. 31) in his notes on *inid* in the passage from *Serglige Con Culainn* quoted as (24) below.

(8) *no·gonainn muic, no·lenainn lorc* ***imba*** *m'oénur,* | *no·cinginn ar chuire cóicir* ***imba*** *cóicer* | *ba-sa oirgnech* ***imbsa***[8] *dechenborach,* | *ba-sa indredach* ***imbsa*** *fichtech,* | *ba-sa cathach* ***imbsa*** *cétach.*
(*Tec. Corm.* §8.4–8)

'I used to slay a boar, I used to follow a track when I was on my own, I used to march against a company of five when I was one of five, I was ready to slaughter when I was one of ten, I was ready to go raiding when I was one of twenty, I was ready to do battle when I was one of a hundred.'

The first instance of *imba* 'when I was' offers two manuscript variants (cf. *Tec. Corm.* 18, note 2), the *Book of Leinster* reading *i mbiind* (*LL* 45917), the *Book of Ballymote i mbeind* (*BB* 63a27). In both cases the substantive verb is used instead of the copula, in the first instance a 1 sg. impf., in the second a 1 sg. past subj. The reason for these textual variants might be that the form *-ba* is very unusual as 1 sg. pret. of the copula.[9] The common form is *-bsa*, containing the emphatic pronoun *-sa* (cf. Strachan 1949: 72; *GOI* 490), so that *imbsa* or *imsa* as in (2) is the expected outcome of the combination with *i*^{N}. *-ba* is listed as a variant in *eDIL* (s.v. 1 *is*), but no examples are given.

Perhaps the very oldest attestation of temporal *i*^{N}, also not found in *eDIL*, is from *Verba Scáthaige* 'The words of Scáthach', a short gnomic text adressed to *Cú Chulainn* that formed part of the early Old Irish collection *Cín Dromma Snechta*.[10]

(9) ***imbe*** *eir hengaile* | *arat·ossa ollgabud*
(Thurneysen 1913: 487, lines 1–2)

[7] In fact, *imbsa* from (8) as well as *imsa* from the *Song of Créde* (cf. (2) above) are found in *eDIL* as forms of the 1 sg. pret. of the copula, but without any reference to the nature of the element *im-*.

[8] LL has the reading *imsa*.

[9] I owe this observation to an anonymous reviewer.

[10] I am grateful to Ruairí Ó hUiginn for drawing my attention to this attestation.

'when you will be a warrior of single combat, great peril awaits you'

There are three more instances of temporal i^N mentioned by Uhlich (2006: 41 n. 58), found in various genres. (10) is from the Old Irish law tract *Córus Béscnai*, (11) from the *Laud Genealogies and Tribal Histories* edited by Meyer in 1912.

(10) *dliged tuaithe i n-eclais* ***i·mbi*** *ina coir cuindligiud cuingid urtechta ō eclais…* (*CIH* ii, 529.20f.)

'The claims of State upon Church, when it is in its propriety and fair entitlement, (are) the request for rights from the Church…' (trans. McCone 1990: 26)

(11) ***in·n-accatar*** *ba hamræ a n-indbas ar·foitea hi tír.* (Meyer 1912: 312.18f.)

'When they [scil. the men of Ireland] saw that their treasure was wonderful, they were let into the land.'

In the saga texts, where we find a number of examples for causal i^N (cf. the following section), temporal i^N is not common. There is a single instance found in the first recension of *TBC*, mentioned by Uhlich (2006: 41). It shows a combination of i^N with an augmented preterite of the copula in the 3 pl.

(12) *fer do·rigni inna gníma-sin* ***inraptar*** *lána a chóic blíadna* (*TBC-I*^{2} 537)

'a man who did those deeds when his five years were full'

O'Rahilly translates *i·* as conjunction 'when' here (*TBC-I*^{2} p. 140), but does not comment on it in her notes.

In summary, it can be stated that temporal *i* is essentially confined to texts from the Old Irish period, with the exception of (11) and (12). It principally occurs in poetry and in gnomic literature.

Evidence: causal i^N

The earliest attestation of causal i^N, combined with the 3 pl. ind. pres. of the copula to give *indat*, is found in the *Würzburg Glosses*:

(13) .i. ***indat*** Iudei *itir·roscar(sat) fri hiris n-Abarche* (*Wb.* 5b34)

'i.e. since it is the Jews who have separated from Abraham's faith'

The gloss consists only of the subordinate clause. It seeks to clarify the Latin sentence *si enim deus naturalibus ramis non pepercit* 'if, then, God did not spare the natural branches'. The expression *naturalibus ramis* 'natural branches' is explained in the gloss as meaning the Jews, and the reason that God did not spare them is that they separated from their inherited faith.

It was apparently Thurneysen in his *Grammar of Old Irish*, published in 1946,[11] who first identified the element *in-* of *indat* with the one described by Strachan (*GOI* 559). In the first volume of the *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus,* originally published in 1901 and thus before Strachan's article, the translation tentatively given is 'i.e. who are (?) *Iudaei*', with a reference to Pedersen (1899) (*Thes* ii, 528). Pedersen (1899: 380) understands *indat* as preposition *i*^{N} 'in' + copula and translates 'welche (Prädikatsnomen) die Juden (Subjekt) sind',[12] comparing the Modern Irish construction *tá sé 'n-a rígh* 'he is king' (literally 'he is in his king'; ibid., 377). In view of the forms found in later texts, Thurneysen's solution is certainly to be preferred, and it is also adopted in Kavanagh and Wodtko (2001: 587; 600).

The majority of attestations of causal *i*^{N} are found in early saga texts, especially in *Togail Bruidne da Derga*, where it occurs four times. Three of those occurrences are already mentioned by Strachan (1904: 112), though he cites the manuscripts (*LU* and *YBL*) without mentioning that the references all belong to the same text. We find two instances of *i*^{N} combined with the 3 sg. ind. pres. of the copula, appearing as *inid* and *inad*:

(14) *atar lind is coll ro·coillead ar tarbḟeis* ⁊ *ar n-ór fírindi* ***inad*** *gilla óc amulchach tarfás dúnn and.* (*BDD*^{2} 160f.)

'It seems to us that our bullfeast and our spell of truth are a failure, since it is a young, beardless lad that has appeared to us here.'

(15) *nī fil nád·ró dam-sa, ol Ingchel,* ***inid*** *mo māthair* ⁊ *mo athair* ⁊ *mo .uii. nderbrāthir ortabair-si lim-sa.* (*BDD*^{2} 737–9)

'There is nothing that will come to me, said Ingchel, since it is my mother and my father and my seven brothers you have slain with me.'

Strachan (1904: 12) also offers an instance of the 2 sg. *inda* from the same text:

(16) *cid at·chí dūnd* ***inda*** *fisid.* (*BDD*^{2} 545)

'What do you see for us, since you are a wizard?'

There is a fourth attestation of *i*^{N} from *Togail Bruidne da Derga*, one that is not mentioned by Strachan. Negated *innád* is found in combination not with the copula, but with the augmented preterite of the substantive verb, which is part of a progressive construction in the following passage:

(17) *ro·cirred ocus ro·hathcummad ocus ro·créchtnaiged ocus ro·criathrad …,* ***innád·rabae***[13] *in sciath* ***oca imdegail****.* (*BDD*^{3} 536–8; cf. *BDD*^{2} 1531–4)

'It [scil. the right arm] was mangled and struck and wounded and pierced …, since the shield had not been protecting it.'

[11] The conjunction is not yet mentioned in the corresponding paragraph of his *Handbuch des Alt-Irischen*, cf. Thurneysen (1909: 509).

[12] 'who (predicate) the Jews (subject) are'

[13] *BDD* and *BDD*^{2} have the varia lectio *innát; innád* is the variant found in *LU.*

Stokes's edition and translation (*BDD*) were published in 1902 and thus before Strachan's article. Nevertheless, in the passage quoted as (17), Stokes translates *innád* as a negated causal conjunction: 'since the shield had not been guarding it'. On the other hand, (15) is rendered more literally as 'There is nothing that will come to me […] in place of my mother and my father […]'. The other two instances of i^N are translated by Stokes as conditional clauses, (14) as 'if it be only a young, beardless lad […]' and (16) as 'if thou art a wizard'.

In her edition of 1936 (*BDD²*), on the other hand, Eleanor Knott was clearly aware of Strachan's contribution. In her notes on *inad* in (14) we find the remark: 'O. Ir. *indid* "since it is". See *Ériu* 1, 12.' (*BDD²* p. 75). This note is referred to also when remarking on *inda* in (16), translated as 'since thou art' (*BDD²*, p. 82). The passage in (17) is translated in the notes as 'since the shield was not protecting it' (*BDD²* p. 95), perhaps following Stokes in *BDD*, and *innát*, Knott's reading for *innád*, is given its own entry in the vocabulary as 'since … not' (*BDD²* p. 132). However, there is no cross-reference to *inad* or *inda.*

Similarly Meid, in his shortened edition from 2021 (*BDD³*), has an entry *innád·* 'Konjunktion *da nicht*'[14] in his vocabulary, but without further references. It seems thus that the connection between the forms mentioned by Strachan (1904: 12), containing the copula, and *innád*, the combination of i^N with the negative particle, has not heretofore been made, at least not explicitly.

This is all the more surprising as Strachan (1904: 12) already mentioned the form *innách*, containing both a negative particle and the 3 sg. of the copula. It occurs in the first recension of the *Táin Bó Cuailnge*:

(18) *cid do·géntar fríu, ol Ailil,* ***innách*** *maith a n-anad nách a techt.*
(*TBC-I²* 160f. = *LU* 4634f.)

'What should be done to them, asked Ailil, since neither their staying nor their going is appropriate?'

It is the only occurrence of causal i^N in this text and is translated by O'Rahilly (*TBC-I²* p. 129) as a causal conjunction ('since neither their staying nor their going pleases you'), but not commented on in the notes.

Another example of causal i^N that was recognised early on is found in an Old Irish poem transmitted in the *Book of Leinster* and edited by Kuno Meyer in 1912 (*Hail Brigit*).

(19) *is bréc uile iarna thur* | ***indid*** *Alend is dún fás.*
(*Hail Brigit* § 14 = *LL* 7203f.)

'Everything is a falsehood after having been investigated, since it is Alenn that is a deserted fort.'

In his notes, Meyer (*Hail Brigit* p. 22) explains the Old Irish form *indid* as 'literally "in which is" […], generally used in the sense of "when, since".' He then refers to Strachan (1904: 12) for further examples and adds an additional

[14] 'conjunction *since not*'

one, found in the saga text *Aided Óenfir Aífe*, first edited by himself in the same issue of *Ériu* that also contains Strachan's article (Meyer 1904). The passage runs as follows:

(20) ***inid*** *ed so file and, inchoisc dom-sa na firu amrai fil isin bailiu, corom·chelebra dóib.* (*Comp. CC* 15 §12 = Meyer 1904: 120 §12)

'Since that is what is there, point out to me the famous men that are in the village, so that I may take leave of them.'

Already in his own translation, Meyer (1904: 121) renders *inid* as a causal conjunction: 'since it is as it is'. Van Hamel in his edition from 1933 has an entry *inid* in the vocabulary, defining it as a conjunction 'since' and explaining its origin (*Comp. CC* p. 191). The attestation quoted as (20) is significant in showing that a causal clause introduced by *i*^{N} does not necessarily have to follow the matrix clause, but may also precede it.

There is one more instance of *i*^{N} as a causal conjunction cited in *eDIL* (s.v. 1 *is*), occurring in a metrical passage in the *Annals of Ulster* and showing the Old Irish form *indid* with the 3 sg. of the copula.

(21a) *caiti māil iarthair betha, | caiti grāin cech airm-ghretha |* ***indid*** *Niall crōdha Cnucha | ro·malart a mōr-thriucha.* (*AU*^{2} s.a. 919.3)

'Where are the princes of the west of the world, where is the horror of every clang of arms, since it is brave Niall of Cnucha who has ruined his great cantred?'

The verses belong to a short poem lamenting the death of Niall, a king, which as a whole is placed in the upper margin of the manuscript (cf. *AU*^{2} p. 370, n. 919, k) and thus probably does not belong to the original text. The poem has a parallel in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, and some missing parts, including the beginning of the quatrain cited as (21a) (up to *grāin*), are actually supplied in the editions of the *Annals of Ulster* from that text (cf. *AU*^{2} p. 370, n. 919, k). The parallel version runs as follows:

(21b) *caiti māil iarthair betha | caiti grāin cech airm-greatha |* ***inad*** *Niall crōdha Cnucha | ro·malairt a mór-trucha.* (*FM* s.a. 917.7)

'Where are the princes of the west of the world, where is the horror of every clang of arms, since it is brave Niall of Cnucha who has ruined his great cantred?'

The relevant form here is *inad*, a later variant of OIr *indid* as found in the *Annals of Ulster*. The earliest translation of the passage is O'Donovan's in his edition of the *Annals of the Four Masters* from 1856. He apparently understood *inad* as the neuter noun *inad* 'place' and translated verses 3 and 4 as a main clause: 'The place of great Niall of Cnucha | Has been changed ye great wretches!' (*FM* ii, p. 597).

Hennessy, likewise, published his edition of the *Annals of Ulster* years before Strachan's article, in 1887, and thus was probably not aware of the

existence of a causal conjunction *i*^{n}. He helped himself by interpreting the element *in-* as the interrogative particle and translating: 'Is it the great Niall of Cnucha' (*AU* i, p. 439). It is only Mac Airt and Mac Niocall, in their edition from 1983, who render the passage as a causal clause: 'Since valiant Niall of Cnucha | Has brought desolation to his great cantred' (*AU*^{2} p. 371).

There are two other poems to be found in the *Annals of Ulster* that show a great resemblance to this one. In (22a), the death of an abbot is lamented in a quatrain using similar words:

(22a) *cudú andud indbais huaigh,* | *cudu allud ēiges lōir* | ***indid*** *Flathbertach finn fial* | *ro·scar fri miadh Cluana Moir.* (*AU*^{2} s.a. 921.10)

'Where is the grave of the inspiration of wealth, where is the repute of a great scholar, since it is fair, generous Flaithbertach who has parted with the preferment of Clúain Mór?'

These verses are not added in the margin and thus seem to be in their original place. They, too, have a parallel in the *Annals of the Four Masters*:

(22b) *caitte annadh innmais uaigh,* | *caitte alladh ēcces lóir,* | ***inidh*** *Flaithbheartach find Fáil* | *ro·scar fri miadh Cluana Móir.* (*FM* s.a. 919.10)

'Where is the grave of the inspiration of wealth, where is the repute of a great scholar, since it is Flaithbertach, the fair one of Fál, who has parted with the preferment of Clúain Mór?'

Since the transmitted form here is *inidh*, not *inad*, O'Donovan provides a different interpretation in this case. He again takes verses 3 and 4 as a separate main clause: 'Behold Flaithbheartach, the fair of Fail, | has separated from the honours of Cluain-mor.' (*FM* ii, p. 603). He is followed by Hennessy in his translation of the parallel from the *Annals of Ulster* given as (22a): 'Behold, Flaithbertach the fair, generous, | Has separated […]' (*AU* i, p. 443), while Mac Airt and Mac Niocall again opt for causal 'since fair hospitable Flaithbertach | Has parted […]' (*AU*^{2} p. 374). There can be little doubt that here, too, *indid*/*inidh* is to be interpreted as causal *i*^{N} and the 3 sg. of the copula.

Finally, a similar lament on another king's death is found in an earlier part of the *Annals of Ulster*:

(23) *cedu rīghe, cedu recht* | *ce(du) nert for rīghradha,* | ***inid*** *Colman Rīmidh rī* | *ro·mbī Lochan Dithnadha.* (*AU*^{2} s.a. 604.1)

'Where is kingship, where is law, where is power over princes, since it is king Colmán Rímid whom Lochan Dithnada has slain?'

This quatrain, like the one quoted as (21a), is also written in the margin, this time below the main text (cf. *AU*^{2} p. 100, n. 604, e). Here, too, Hennessy rendered the last two verses as a main clause: 'Behold! Colman Rimid, a king – | Locan Dithnada slew him!' (*AU* i, p. 81). Mac Airt and Mac Niocall, on the other hand, translate the causal clause as 'Since it is king Colmán […]' (*AU*^{2} p. 102).

The three quatrains quoted as (21a/b), (22a/b), and (23) are so similar that they can hardly be independent of each other. They seem to stem from a poetic tradition of death laments in which the conjunction *i*^{N} in its causal meaning had a fixed place.

Further search reveals some more examples of causal *i*^{N} not mentioned in *eDIL*. The first is from a passage in the saga text *Serglige Con Culainn*:

(24) ***inid*** *i lobrai* 7 *i n-ingás dano atá, is móo de as chomairche airthiu.* (*SCC*^{2} 94f.)

'Since he is in weakness and sickness, then, he is an even greater protection for them.'

Again, like in example (20), the subordinate clause here precedes the matrix clause. In his notes, Dillon (*SCC*^{2} p. 31) translates *inid* as 'when it is' and refers to Strachan (1904).

A further instance of *inid* is found in the second of the two *Lough Foyle Colloquy Texts*. It is a conversation between Bran's druid and Febul's prophetess, written in verse, and dated by Carey to the Old Irish period (cf. *LFC* p. 53).

(25) *mad fri gnáthu na·choíni | ara tesstis ar ndoíni |* ***inid*** *glassfairrce chlochach | Mag Febuil, a findscothach.* (*LFC* 76 §7)

'If it be to companions that you lament it, that our people fled, since Mag Febuil of the white flowers is a stony grey sea.' (trans. Carey, *LFC* p. 77)

In his edition from 2002, Carey translates the clause as causal. There is, however, no reference to the form in the notes.

One of only two examples of causal *i*^{N} in combination with a verb other than the copula (for the other cf. (17) above) is the following passage from the cosmological treatise *In Tenga Bithnua* 'The evernew tongue', which is dated by Stokes to the tenth or eleventh century, 'when Old Irish was merging into the Early-Middle Irish of the Book of the Dun and the Book of Leinster' (Stokes 1905: 97).[15]

(26) *ainmnetach rēt, ol se, cride co rād rīg nime* ***innach·dortai*** *in doman ar mod cacha huairi i fudomnuibh pian.* (Stokes 1905: 118, §56)

'A patient thing, said he, is the heart full of grace of the king of heaven, since he does not pour the world into the depths of torments for the work of every hour.'

Stokes himself translated the form *innach·* more literally as 'in that He doth not spill', but a causal reading seems preferable.

In summary, then, it can be stated that the causal conjunction *i*^{N} is found in Old and early Middle Irish texts and chiefly occurs in two genres. On the one hand, we find it in saga texts, notably four times in *Togail Bruidne da*

[15] I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for drawing my attention to this attestation.

Derga, but also once each in the first recension of *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, in *Aided Óenfir Aífe*, and in *Serglige Con Culainn*. On the other hand, it seems to be part of a poetic tradition found in the Old Irish poem *Hail Brigit*, in the second of the *Lough Foyle Colloquy Texts*, and in three laments in the annals, where it appears to be formulaic.

Meaning and syntax

The conjunction *i*^{N} occurs in two meanings, temporal 'when' and causal 'since, because' that will be discussed separately. Temporal *i*^{N} seems to be used more freely: it is found with various verbs, including the copula and the substantive verb, and thus found several times in the form *(h)i·* without any added proclitic element. In two thirds of cases (12 examples), the subordinate clause is following the matrix clause, but preposed subordinate clauses are by no means uncommon (6 examples). With causal *i*^{N}, on the other hand, preposed subordinate clauses are rare (2 out of a total of 14 examples). Moreover, in a causal meaning, the conjunction *i*^{N} occurs almost exclusively with the copula, the only exceptions being the two passages quoted as (17) and (26) above.

Just as the preposition *i*^{N}, used with nouns of time, expresses a point in time (*i tossuch* 'in the beginning' *Wb.* 5c16), repeated points in time (*hi cach láo* 'every day' *Wb.* 4b21) or a span of time (*isin bliathain* 'within the year' *Fél. Prol.* 281; for the examples cf. *eDIL* s.v. *i*), a subordinate clause headed by the temporal conjunction *i*^{N} may contain a punctiliar, a repeated punctiliar or a continuous state of affairs. What all three clause types have in common is that they show simultaneousness or temporal overlap with the matrix clause (for the term cf. Kortmann 1998: 464; Longacre 2007: 379f.).

A punctiliar state of affairs in the past is expressed by a preterite as in (4), (5), (6), and (11). While in the case of (4) and (11), the matrix clause is also punctiliar, in (5) and (6) it is continuous. Repeated punctiliar states of affairs are found in general statements in the present as in (1) (twice) and (7) (twice). In all remaining examples, the subordinate state of affairs is continuous and contains either a form of the copula as in (2), (3), (8) (5 times), (9), and (12), or one of the substantive verb as in (10). This continuous state of affairs can be the background of a punctiliar matrix state of affairs as in (3) and (12), both set in the past. In (2), (8), (9), and (10) on the other hand, the matrix clause denotes a temporally overlapping continuous state of affairs.

In a causal sense, the conjunction *i*^{N} occurs almost exclusively with the copula, more precisely with a present indicative of the copula. Since the copula is used to describe a permanent property of the subject, the subordinate state usually shows temporal overlap with the matrix state of affairs. The cause is presented as a state that starts before the matrix state of affairs and continues during and sometimes also after the latter. In this way, the present of the copula can be combined with a matrix state of affairs in the present as in (16), but also with one in the past as in (25) or even in the future as in (18).

An important and very frequent use of the copula in Irish is to introduce a cleft sentence in order to put part of a sentence in focus. This is also the case

in the majority of clauses (9 out of 12) introduced by the causal conjunction *i*^{N} and containing a form of the copula, i.e. in (13), (14), (15), (19), (20), (21), (22), (23), and (24). As a rule, the 3 sg. *in(d)id* is found in these examples, with the exception of 3 pl. *indat* in (13) from *Wb.* Where the cleft construction also denotes a state expressed by an indicative of the present, we find the same temporal overlap as with direct copular clauses. This is the case in examples (19), (20) and (24).[16]

In other examples, the clause following the fronted copula clause contains an augmented preterite. It thus refers to an action in the past, and the entire cleft construction denotes an attained state as a consequence of this action, which is given as the cause of the matrix state of affairs. We find this in the example from the *Würzburg Glosses*, (13), in two attestations from *Togail Bruidne da Derga*, (14) and (15), and in all cases found in the annals, (21)–(23).

There are only two examples of causal *i*^{N} used with verbs other than the copula, the passages quoted as (17) and (26) above. In the case of (26), the predicate of the subordinate clause is *·dortai*, the prototonic form of *do·fortai* 'destroys'. Although 'destroy' would usually be a punctiliar action, the fact that the clause is negated turns the subordinate state of affairs into a continuous state. Matrix clause and subordinate clause are both continuous and show temporal overlap.

(17) contains an augmented preterite of the substantive verb that is part of a periphrastic progressive with *oc* and the verbal noun (on the construction cf. Stüber 2013). The subordinate clause thus expresses a continuous state of affairs in this case as well. However, this attestation of causal *i*^{N} differs from all others in that the subordinate state of affairs is anterior to the matrix state of affairs. The relationship of the two clauses is classically causal in that the subordinate state of affairs (the shield not protecting the arm) is presented as the reason for the matrix state of affairs (the arm being mangled). However, the two states of affairs show no temporal overlap, but temporal succession. This is all the more noteworthy since temporal *i*^{N} is used exclusively with clauses that show temporal overlap.

Conclusion

This article has tried to show that while *i*^{N} 'when, since' no doubt originated from the prepositional relative *i*^{N} 'in which', as a temporal and causal conjunction it has its own lexical identity. It thus joins the ranks of a small group of conjunctions also going back to prepositional relatives, namely *ara*^{N} 'that, in order that, so that', *co*^{N} 'that, in order that, so that', and *dia*^{N} 'when; if', with which it also shares syntactical properties. All four conjunctions have in common that they serve as conjunct particles, being followed by conjunct or prototonic verb forms, and that they combine with forms of the copula or with negative particles to form a single proclitic unit.

[16] In the case of (24), Dillon (*SCC*^{2} p. 31) translates *inid* as 'when it is', assuming a temporal relationship. However, a causal interpretation seems preferable.

The conjunction *i*^{N} has two distinct uses, a temporal one expressing temporal overlap and a causal one. In temporal meaning, *i*^{N} is used freely: While postposed subordinate clauses are more frequent, preposed ones are also well attested. Temporal *i*^{N} is combined with a variety of verbs and thus can head punctiliar as well as continuous clauses. On the other hand, causal *i*^{N} is so far only attested as denoting continuous states of affair, and moreover is largely confined to copular clauses. Many of them are introducing cleft sentences, and indeed the combination with the 3 sg. pres. ind., *in(d)id*, seems to become formulaic. The only example of *inid* used outside a cleft sentence is (25) from the *Lough Foyle Colloquy Texts*. With causal *i*^{N}, preposed subordinate clauses are only found twice (cf. (20) and (24) above).

The occurrence of the conjunction *i*^{N} is largely confined to texts that date from the Old Irish period and seems to have gone out of use during Middle Irish. While the Old Irish glosses offer only a single attestation, *i*^{N} seems to have had a place in the poetic tradition, in gnomic texts and in sagas. As shown in previous sections, the distributions of temporal and causal *i*^{N} respectively are not identical. Both are found in poetic texts, temporal *i*^{N} only occurring in poetry from the Old Irish period. In narrative texts, there are only two instances of temporal *i*^{N} (cf. (11) and (12)), while causal *i*^{N} is more widespread in the sagas. On the other hand, only temporal *i*^{N} is found in gnomic literature.

The article gives an overview of all attestations of *i*^{N} that have come to the notice of the author. However, it is by no means impossible and indeed to be hoped that other scholars will eventually add to the material collected here.

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DRY-POINT MARKS IN CODEX SANGALLENSIS 904: A PRELIMINARY LIST

Abstract

Approximately 250 marginal entries in dry point occur in Codex Sangallensis 904, the well-known copy of Priscian's grammar made in Ireland in the mid-ninth century. These entries consist of marks that range from the abstract and indeterminate to letters, words and a variety of drawings. In contrast to the marginalia in ink, the dry-point marks have received little attention to date. A preliminary listing of these marks is presented in this paper, together with brief background notes and analysis.

Since brought to general attention in Zeuss's *Grammatica Celtica*,[1] the copy of Priscian's *Institutiones grammaticae* in the St Gallen Stiftsbibliothek that is designated Codex Sangallensis 904 has attracted the attention of scholars, as much for its glosses and marginalia as for the text itself. In the years preceding the foundational work of Stokes and Strachan in *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*,[2] Zeuss's work drew the attention of Irish scholars and historians such as Charles Graves, John O'Donovan, Eugene O'Curry, and John Gilbert.[3] It also prompted in-depth analysis by the Italian scholars Constantino Nigra[4] and Graziadio Ascoli.[5] Since the *Thesaurus*, scholarly attention has been primarily and understandably directed to the glosses[6] and also to the well-known marginal poems.[7] Other important matters have also been the subject of scholarship: the date of the manuscript (October 850 to August 851)

[1] J. C. Zeuss, *Grammatica Celtica e monumentis vetustis tam Hibernicae linguae*, 2 vols (Lipsiae, 1853), i, pp. xiii–xx; ii, 1010–37.

[2] Whitley Stokes and John Strachan (eds), *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus: A Collection of Old-Irish Glosses, Scholia, Prose and Verse*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1901, 1903) (henceforth *Thes*), ii, pp. xix–xxiii, 49–224, 290.

[3] Charles Graves, 'On certain notes in the Ogham character on the margin of an ancient MS of Priscian', *PRIA* 6 (1853–7), 209–16; John O'Donovan, 'Zeuss's "Grammatica Celtica" ', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 7 (1859), 11–32, at 19–21; Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History* (Dublin, 1861), 27; John T. Gilbert, *Account of Facsimiles of National Manuscripts of Ireland* (London, 1879), 27.

[4] *Reliquie Celtiche raccolte da Costantino Nigra I: Il Manoscritto Irlandese di S. Gallo* (Firenze, 1872).

[5] *Il codice irlandese dell'Ambrosiana edito e illustrato da G.I. Ascoli volume secundo: Appendici e illustrazioni* (Firenze, 1879).

[6] Maartje Draak, 'The higher teaching of Latin grammar in Ireland during the ninth century', *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde* 30 (1967), 107–44; Pierre-Yves Lambert, 'Notes on Saint Gall glosses', *Celtica* 18 (1986), 77–86; Rijcklof Hofman, *The Sankt Gall Priscian Commentary Part 1*, 2 vols (Münster, 1996).

[7] Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics: Eighth to Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1956), 4–5; James Carney, *Medieval Irish Lyrics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), 22–3; Anders Ahlqvist, 'Deux poèmes vieil-irlandais du Codex Sangallensis 904 de Saint-Gall', in Marc Baratin, Bernard Colombat

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has been established ingeniously by Pádraig P. Ó Néill;[8] and, following the ground-breaking work of Maartje Draak, attention has also been paid to the marginal and interlinear reading- and interpretative-marks that abound in the manuscript.[9]

The history of lithographic and photographic reproductions from the manuscript is of relevance to the scholarship of Codex Sangallensis 904. One of the earliest was the montage of letters and words from the codex that appeared in Ferdinand Keller's *Bilder und Schriftzüge* of 1851, and which was subsequently reproduced by William Reeves in 1860.[10] Other scholars such as Nigra provided sample illustrations as lithographs, and in the twentieth century they were followed by W. M. Lindsay, who reproduced a partial photograph of p. 182.1–18.[11] Later publications, including those of Draak, Lambert and Hofman, were also accompanied by sample reproductions in greyscale, arguably the most successful being the images from nine pages published in *Irish Miniatures* in 1954.[12] None of these samples and illustrations gave any impression of the extent and form of the manuscript, however, details essential for obtaining as complete a view of the book as is possible without seeing it in person, and an understanding of the nature of the annotations and commentary present in this extraordinary manuscript. In latter times, however, studies of the manuscript have been revolutionized by its digitization and display in 2006 by Professor Christoph Flüeler and the e-Codices project.[13] One outstanding result of this can be seen in how digitization has facilitated the work of Dr Pádraic Moran and colleagues on the excellent online St Gall Priscian Glosses project.[14] Likewise, though based in the first place on in-person examination of the manuscript, the present paper is very much indebted to the availability of the digital images.

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and Louis Holtz (eds), *Priscien: transmission et refondation de la grammaire de l'antiquité aux modernes*, Studia Artistarum 21 (Turnhout, 2009), 57–64; idem, 'Miondán Sean-Ghaeilge', in Eoin Mac Cárthaigh and Jürgen Uhlich (eds), *Féilscríbhinn do Chathal Ó Háinle* (Indreabhán, 2012), 1–10.

[8]Pádraig P. Ó Néill, 'Irish observance of the Three Lents and the date of the St Gall Priscian (MS 904)', *Ériu* 51 (2000), 159–80.

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[10]Ferdinand Keller, 'Bilder und Schriftzüge in den irischen Manuscripten der schweizerischen Bibliotheken', *Mittheilungen der Antiquarischen Gesellschaft in Zürich* 7/3 (1851), 58–96; William Reeves, 'Early Irish caligraphy', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 8 (1860), 210–30, 291–308, Plate IV.

[11]W. M. Lindsay, *Early Irish Minuscule Script* (Oxford, 1910), Plate X.

[12]Johannes Duft and Peter Meyer, *The Irish Miniatures in the Abbey Library of St. Gall* (Olten, Berne and Lausanne, 1954), Plates XXXIX, XL and XLI; a bibliography of publications containing reproductions up to that date is on p. 74; a list of reproductions is also in Hofman, *The Sankt Gall Priscian*, i, 13–14.

[13]www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/csg/0904 (accessed February 2025).

[14]www.stgallpriscian.ie (accessed February 2025).

Anyone viewing Codex Sangallensis 904 today will appreciate how it may be regarded, perhaps more than any other Irish manuscript from the medieval period, as a prototype of vellum manuscripts from both the Irish ecclesiastical and secular traditions. Apart from being among the biggest of the large-format manuscripts created in Ireland,[15] the features displayed by this manuscript are recognizable from their re-appearance in manuscripts of much later date, even, in the case of some – such as the informal and well-documented personal marginalia[16] – extending into the paper era. While the primary importance of its text and glosses cannot be overstated, features ranging from vellum defects and pre-writing scribal repairs to the ubiquitous pen-tests or stint-markers (frequently in the form of personal names, invocations to saints[17] and comments on ink and vellum) and matters of ruling, layout and decoration[18] will be instantly recognizable from other manuscripts by readers familiar with the long tradition of the Irish hand-made book. These features, combined with the excellence and clarity of the script, mean that Codex Sangallensis 904 is a ready-made teaching aid for an introduction to the history of the Irish manuscript.

One feature that sets the manuscript apart, however, and that has received little attention to date, is that of the dry-point marks in which it abounds. These constitute a stratum of evidence of user-interaction with the book that is distinct from all other marginal matter therein – the commentary, glosses, technical notes and personal marginalia noted above. Dry-point notes and glosses are a familiar feature of medieval scholastic manuscripts,[19] and are present in one of the earliest manuscripts to which an Irish provenance has been attributed, 'Usserianus Primus' (TCD MS 55).[20] Few if any of the dry-point marks in Codex Sangallensis 904 could be classified as glossarial in purpose, however. Most, if not all, might be categorized as doodles, a feature of medieval

[15] Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'Continuity and change in bindings and book-size from vellum to paper in the Gaelic manuscript', in Silvia Hufnagel, Þórunn Sigurðardóttir and Davíð Ólafsson (eds), *Paper Stories: Paper and Book History in Early Modern Europe* (Berlin, 2023), 145–70, at 154.

[16] *Thes* ii, pp. xx–xxii.

[17] Including seventeen invocations to Brighid, to which number should probably be added the comments on pp. 158, upper margin ('sen anoibingen'), and 211, lower margin ('uch mochliab anóib ingen').

[18] Discussed by the present authors in 'Material and decorative features of Codex Sang. 904', in Griffin Murray (ed.), *Routeways and Reflections in Insular Art* (forthcoming).

[19] Bernhard Bischoff, 'Über Einritzungen in Handschriften des frühen Mittelalters', in idem, *Mittelalterliche Studien: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Schriftkunde und Literaturgeschichte*, 3 vols (Stuttgart, 1966, 1967, 1981), i, 88–92. For further examples see Herbert Dean Meritt, 'Old High German scratched glosses', *American Journal of Philology* 55/3 (1934), 227–35; idem, 'Old English glosses, mostly dry point', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 60/3 (1961), 441–50; Philip Rusche, 'Dry-point glosses to Aldhelm's "De Laudibus Virginitatis" in Beinecke 401', *Anglo-Saxon England* 23 (1994), 195–213; Christine Wallis, 'Unpublished dry-point annotations in a manuscript of the Old-English "Bede": Oxford, Corpus Christi College 279b', *Medium Ævum* 85/1 (2016), 15–32.

[20] Pádraig P. Ó Néill, 'The earliest dry-point glosses in Codex Usserianus Primus', in Toby Barnard, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín and Katharine Simms (eds), *'A Miracle of Learning': Studies in Manuscripts and Irish Learning. Essays in honour of William O'Sullivan* (Aldershot, 1998), 1–28 (MS 904 mentioned p. 2); idem, 'Dry-point glosses in Codex Usserianus Primus: addenda and corrigenda', *Peritia* 14 (2000), 430–1.

manuscripts that has yet to be subjected to a comprehensive study. That such markings are present in manuscripts from other traditions – Anglo-Saxon for example – is well known.[21]

The most recent scholar to draw attention to these marks in Codex Sangallensis 904 is Dr Dagmar Bronner, who has characterized them as

> drawings, sketches, or mere scribblings on the margins or between the columns. There are human faces, heads of animals, some kind of interlace ornamentation, but also initials or capital letters (some of which are letters in rustic capital, i.e. in continental script).[22]

In preparation for the exhibition of some of the St Gallen manuscripts in the National Museum of Ireland in 2025, the present writers had an opportunity to examine the dry-point markings in Codex Sangallensis 904 under raking light, and we have drawn attention to their presence in the manuscript in our contribution to the exhibition catalogue.[23] This analysis was followed up with close inspection of the digital images on the e-Codices site. This confirmed what was reported by Dr Bronner, that these marks fall into loose categories of letters and/or initials, figures-of-eight and simple interlace patterns, representational figures (mainly heads and faces), and miscellaneous markings of an indeterminate nature.

Many of the markings have no discernible function or relation to the text. These include quasi-geometric patterns such as triangles, parallel lines, quatrefoils, solar crosses and gridded circles and squares with dots added. Other markings are not entirely unconnected. The most prevalent is the marginal or intercolumnar 'X', which may have been used to indicate points of significance in the text.[24] These marks may correspond to the use of the obelus or cross in ink that occurs throughout the manuscript. In size, the x-marks are generally small, with letter-height averaging 5–10 mm. Samples also occur that are much larger, however, and whether these might have a similar function, or are just random scoring, has yet to be established.

[21] Dieter Studer-Joho, *A Catalogue of Manuscripts Known to Contain Old English Dry-Point Glosses* (Tübingen, 2017), 37–8.

[22] Dagmar Bronner, 'Dry-point glosses in Irish manuscripts' (Gloses bibliques et para-bibliques du haut Moyen Âge – Gloses à l'encre et gloses à la pointe sèche, Oct. 2014, Université Paris Sorbonne, France), p. 5 (online publication: https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01137740v1, accessed February 2025).

[23] Pádraig Ó Macháin, Fenella France, Meghan Hill and Anna Hoffmann, 'Writing and colouring the Irish manuscripts in the Abbey Library of St Gall', in Matthew Seaver, Diarmuid Ó Riain and Maeve Sikora (eds), *Words on the Wave: Ireland and St. Gallen in Early Medieval Europe* (Dublin, 2025), 93–100, at 96.

[24] Cf. 'Selbst zu einfachen Merkzeichen in Büchern, wie sie während der Lektüre gemacht werden, hat der Griffel oft gedient; stehen doch in vielen Codices eingeritzte schräge Kreuze oder ähnliche wiederkehrende Zeichen am Rande' ['Even for simple marks in books, such as are made during reading, the stylus has often been used; after all, in many codices there are incised oblique crosses or similar recurring signs in the margin']: Bischoff, 'Über Einritzungen in Handschriften', 88. For dry-point x-marks in a sixteenth-century English paper manuscript see Jason Powell, 'Secret writing or a technology of discretion? Dry point in Tudor books and manuscripts', *The Review of English Studies* 70/293 (2019), 37–53, at 48–9.

Another frequent marking is the simple 'interlace' patterns generally created from figures-of-eight or interlocking ellipses ('Celtic knots'). Such figures occur in isolation and in combinations side by side or in a vertical sequence. The combination of three interlocking figures-of-eight between the columns on p. 134 is exemplary. We might also note two other examples on p. 187 located to the left and right of the initial 'Q' that begins Book XI of the *Institutiones*. To the bowl of this initial letter has been added in dry point a crude design of the 'Celtic knot' variety. A comparable example is the initial 'G' on p. 200 where the loop of the letter has had a knot added to it in dry point.[25] To all such shapes we apply the not altogether accurate term 'interlace' in the list below.

Similar connections and intrusions are to be seen in another relatively frequent dry-point mark, namely single letters, generally uncials, none of which are of an overtly insular identity[26] except on a rare occasion when imitating a scribal initial.[27] While most of these letters appear to be randomly inscribed, some can be loosely associated with letters in the text. For example, two letters A between the columns on p. 168 appear to be attempted replicas of an initial in column *b*, lines 38–9. Others have been inserted in blank spaces on the page that are neither marginal nor inter-columnar. On p. 170, for instance, an 'S' has been inserted in a rare example of an unfilled initial-space (column *a*, lines 7–9). Comparable to this is the faint 'C' inserted in what the inscriber must have thought was another unfilled letter-space in the last two lines of column *b* on p. 172. In this case, however, the space was caused by an indentation rather than by the omission of an initial.[28] The space left unfilled for a rubricated title on p. 197, column *a*, is occupied by a large dry-point 'X'. Combinations of letters also occur sometimes, replicating text in some cases, as in the faint letters in the upper margin of p. 71, column *a*, which imitate letters in the rubricated title. Many of the letter-combinations are difficult to decipher. Dr Bronner only detected one such combination that could be identified as a gloss: on p. 210, right-hand margin, line 19.[29]

Among the most recognizable categories of dry-point markings on the manuscript are the representational drawings and sketches. These drawings include miscellaneous items such as a leaf (3, 95), reverse-S serpents (185), a bird-claw (176), and a lion (176). Male genitalia feature prominently between the columns on p. 180, accompanied by a diamond-design possibly representing the female organ; other possible examples, weaker and less well executed, occur on pp. 120 and 166 between columns. Depictions of humans are confined to notable drawings of heads and faces on p. 199 between columns, and especially

[25]Dry-point additions have also been made to initials on pp. 185 (V) and 190 (T).

[26]This applies also to the four examples of the letter F written in ink on p. 5, two in the right-hand margin, two in the lower margin.

[27]The two insular letters A on p. 168 are the only true instances of this. The lower terminal of an initial Q is imitated on p. 61.

[28]Text is continuous from 'IN leo disinentia' to 'composita' (172*b*.x–z). Comparable indentations occur at pp. 154*b*, 183*b*, and 210*b* (cf. 208*a* for a reverse arrangement); initial-indentations in these positions occur at pp. 27 and 190.

[29]Bronner, 'Dry-point glosses', 5.

p. 200, column *a*, where four such drawings occur at the start of the section of Book XII of the *Institutiones* beginning 'Genera pronominum sunt .v.': three in the left-hand margin, and one between lines in the space generated by the presence of the large scribal initial 'G'. This sequence was probably initiated by the attempted replication of the decorative face (profile) that rests on the left terminal of the head-stroke of the G; immediately below it a face has been added in dry point to the left of the curved shaft of the initial, together with the interlace in the upper loop, as noted above. Two faces have been inscribed in dry point in the margin below this again, one in profile one in portrait; and another face (profile), less elaborate than the others, occupies the space to the right of the head-stroke of the initial, along with multiple letters 'D' (non-insular), and other jottings. The lowermost face in the margin, shown in profile with what seems to be a cravat beneath the chin, was inscribed so deeply that it generated a replica on the recto of the leaf underneath, p. 202.[30]

These faces are contextualized by the marginal, non-textual ink-drawings of heads or faces that also occur in the manuscript. These are to be seen on p. 25 lower margin (two facing heads, in the style of those found decorating many of the initial letters); p. 31 intercolumnar, lines 7–9 (head (with hat) and torso); p. 121 lower margin (head in profile); and p. 224 upper margin (profile of head with elongated chin and ear). Of these, the simple representation of a head that is drawn in ink on the lower margin of p. 121 is the one most comparable to the heads inscribed in dry point on pp. 199 and 200. In the upper margin of p. 238 is an ink-drawing of a flying quadruped with claws, the only marginal drawing in the manuscript that was obviously executed prior to writing, and probably, therefore, to be regarded as an elaborate pen-test and pointing to the function of the other ink-drawings in the manuscript.

A broader context is supplied by the evidence of Prof. Andreas Nievergelt for the presence of a 'surprising density' (*überraschender Dichte*) of dry-point glosses and marks among the manuscripts in the Abbey Library of St Gall.[31] Many of the glosses are in Latin, but by far the greatest number are in Old High German, found in 47 manuscripts in the Library and in a small number of manuscripts that were once in St Gall are but now located elsewhere.[32] The working proposal is that the dry-point glossing of all of these manuscripts took place at the Abbey of St Gall. Prof. Nievergelt also includes scrawls and drawings in his survey, bringing him closer to the situation in Codex Sangallensis 904, and indeed finding a parallel, though somewhat less focused, in another ninth-century manuscript for the item inscribed on p.180 of Sang. 904 as mentioned above.[33]

[30] An error in the nineteenth-century pagination resulted in all rectos after p. 78 bearing even numbers.

[31] Andreas Nievergelt, ' "Sie wussten auch ohne Dinte zu schreiben und zu zeichnen" – Griffeleintragungen in St. Galler Handschriften', in Franzsika Schnoor, Karl Schmuki and Silvio Frigg (eds), *Schaukasten Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen: Abschiedsgabe für Stiftsbibliothekar Ernst Tremp* (St Gallen, 2013), 58–65.

[32] Ibid., 60.

[33] Ibid., 64.

Preliminary list

Such is the prevalence of the dry-point markings in Codex Sangallensis 904 that a preliminary listing of these marks seems worthwhile. This is presented below.[34] The impression made by the stylus is of variable strength. It can be quite faint in many places, and strong enough in others to carry through to the other side of the folio, sometimes also leaving its mark on the folio immediately underneath. Even under raking light the fainter marks are difficult to detect, and it is probable that not all occurrences have been recorded in the list that follows. These markings cannot be said to evince much by way of artistic merit. They bear nothing of the obvious deliberation involved in the practice of dry-point glossing recorded elsewhere in Irish and medieval tradition, sharing with it only the use of the stylus as the reader or readers worked their way through the grammar. With the possible exception of the x-marks, they appear to be random markings that bear, at best, a tenuous connection to the text on the page, as outlined above.

As one might expect, the distribution of the dry-point markings across the fifteen quires that make up Codex Sangallensis 904 varies from quire to quire.[35] With the caveat that some marks may have passed undetected in this preliminary study, the accompanying bar-chart shows a heightened concentration of dry-point markings in quires 10–12 (pp. 154–69, 170–85, 186–201). Quires 11 and 12 in particular have markings on nearly every page. It is impossible to say definitively whether this feature of the manuscript represents the work of a single individual or an accumulation of the traces of different readers over time. Two strata of marks suggest themselves: the x-marks, which may relate to the reading and interpretation of the text, and the sketches, designs and amorphous marks, which may reflect reader distraction or fatigue. Though devoid of artistic or linguistic significance, these dry-point marks and drawings still have something to contribute to our understanding of the use made of the manuscript, especially considering its suggested presence in the monastic classroom.[36]

Although we have no way of dating the markings, the apparent lack of use of the manuscript in the later medieval period,[37] combined with the opinion of Nievergelt as to the origins in the Abbey of St Gall itself of the dry-point activity evident in the eighth- and ninth-century manuscripts in the Library, may mean that in the dry-point markings in Sang. 904 we are looking at the handiwork of monastic students of the high medieval era. This is reenforced by the fact that the non-insular letters among those of the markings that are not imitative suggest that the dry-point inscriptions were made after the book had left Ireland. A picture is conjured, therefore, of the continental student, stylus in hand, his mind possibly wandering from the combined challenges of

[34]The following less obvious abbreviations are used: cols = intercolumnar; rhm = right-hand margin; lhm = left-hand margin; as explained above, the designation of 'interlace' covers a variety of interlocking designs, principally figures-of-eight and ellipses.

[35]See collation in Hofman, *The Sankt Gall Priscian commentary*, i, 12.

[36]Ibid., 49.

[37]Ibid., 31.

the subject matter and the insular script before him. If we may be permitted to extrapolate in this way, and to interpret many of the dry-point marks in Codex Sangallensis 904 as a reaction to the subject matter and textual presentation, we are left with a view of the book in exile that is far removed from the idyll depicted in the famous verse in the lower margin of p. 203, which pictures a blackbird warbling in the tree that overlooks the scribe with his ruled manuscript.

Page	Location	Description
1	rhm lines 8–10	X (boxed)
3	upper marg. col. *a*	C
3	upper marg. col. *b*	E *and* R
3	cols 5–7	indeterminate
3	cols lines 11–13	A
3	cols line 25	leaf
11	cols lines 11–13	X
23	cols lines 3–5	X
23	cols lines 25–7	indeterminate
27	cols lines 9–11	multiple indeterminate markings
30	lhm lines 11–12	X
30	lhm lines 14–15	X
30	cols line 13	three fingers (?)
32	clos lines 4–8	X
36	cols lines 20–2	interlace
41	cols lines 3–7	geometric initial letter (P?) design
41	upper marg. col. *a*	M
44	lower marg. cols	indeterminate
44	lower marg. col. *b*	four pointed ‘fingers’
44	lhm lines 18–20	X
52	lhm lines 26 – 7	X
53	rhm lines 9–10	X
53	lhm lines 31–3	X
55	upper marg. col. *a*	A
60	rhm 5–7 and 8–12	interlace
60	lower marg. col. *b*	indeterminate (letter O?)
60	cols lines 9–11	interlace (boxed)
61	cols lines 7–10	X
61	lhm lines 8–9	spiral imitating terminal of scribal initial Q
61	cols lines 16–19	Q (repeated 26–7, 33–5)
62	cols line 9	X
67	cols lines 26–7	M
71	upper marg. col. *a*	faint capital letters repeating letters from rubricated title
73	cols line 12	X
74	cols line 13	O

Page	Location	Description
74	cols line 24	Q
74	cols lines 34–5	S
76	cols lines 3–4	indeterminate
76	cols lines 31–2	Q (inverted)
77	upper marg. col. *a*	double vertical lines (also visible p. 78)
92	lhm lines 14–17	X
94	cols lines 24–7	indeterminate
94	cols lines 36–8	indeterminate (face?)
95	lhm lines 27–9	N
95	cols 18–21	leaf
100	cols line 6	X
102	cols lines 14–17	X (showing through on p. 103 also)
104	cols lines 21–2	X
106	upper marg.	uncial letters (inverted)
106	cols lines 10–11	X
106	cols line 19	X
106	cols lines 25–7	interlace
107	cols lines 31–3	flower (?)
108	cols lines 25–7, 33–6	indeterminate
112	cols line 3–5	interlace
112	cols line 17	X
113	cols lines 22–3	interlace
114	upper marg. col. *a*	interlace and indeterminate marking
114	cols	multiple indeterminate markings
114	cols line 5	'[.]or'
114	rhm line 10	X with small, initial-terminal (face) attached
114	lhm lines 14–17	two floral/interlace designs above scribal initial T
115	lhm lines 9–11	X
116	cols lines 6–7, 9–11, 36–7	interlace, repeated
120	cols line 11	male genitalia (?)
121	lhm lines 7–11	three animal heads
121	cols lines 8–10, 14–17	interlace
124	upper marg. col. *a*	triangle
125	cols lines 5–6	face (front)
125	cols lines 9–10	face (profile)
125	cols lines 13–16, 23–6	interlace
128	cols lines 35–6	R
132	rhm line 8	interlace
133	rhm lines 35–6	interlace
134	cols lines 22–4	interlace
134	cols lines 40–2	interlace
135	cols lines 20–2	interlace

Page	Location	Description
135	cols lines 25–6	X
136	lower marg. col *a*	interlace
139	cols lines 2, 3, 15, 17	X
140	lhm lines 36–8	'ladder'/vertical boxes
143	cols lines 25–8	indeterminate
143	cols lines 34–5	figure-of-8
146	rhm lines 14 and 28	indeterminate
148	cols line 18	M
150	lhm line 30	N
150	lhm line 31	OM
153	cols lines 3–5, 24–5, 28, 40	X
154	rhm lines 19–29	sequence of three (?) large letters N
154	lhm	multiple vertical lines, single and double
154	lhm line 39	X
154	cols lines 15–17	M
154	cols lines 40–4	vertical parallel lines
154	cols lines 11 and 40	X
156	lhm line 2	X
156	cols line 40	X
156	lhm and cols	X (very long)
158	lhm line 3	X
160	rhm line 8, lower marg. (col. *a*), cols lines 37, 39, 41–2	R repeated a number of times
164	lhm lines 35–6	P
165	cols lines 16–17	V
166	cols lines 18–20	male genitalia?
166	cols line 40	'P*er*' ?
167	cols line 29	'o th a'?
167	cols lines 31–3	capital A[38]
167	cols lines 36–7	3 parallel vertical lines
168	rhm lines 5–11	series of zig-zag lines
168	rhm lines 24–6	indeterminate
168	cols line 24	D[. . .]
168	cols lines 28–9	O
168	cols lines 33–4 and 37–9	two insular letters A [replicating initial, col. *b* line 39]
169	cols	multiple indeterminate squiggles
170	col *a*, lines 7–9	S in blank space left for initial
170	cols line 13	Evπ
170	rhm lines 10 to end	zig-zags and multiple indeterminate squiggles

[38]This presents a good example of the impression of a dry-point inscription being visible on the other side of the leaf (p. 166).

Page	Location	Description
170	lhm lines 26–32	three large replicas of marginal 'v' siglum; series of letters in vertical succession: S, N, N, IN
170	lhm lines 37–8	indeterminate
171	rhm line 17	V
171	rhm lines 19–20	V
172	rhm lines 20–1	X, with indeterminate marks beneath
172	rhm line 31	circular elaboration around *oculus* siglum
172	cols lines 17–18	N
172	cols line 28	X
172	cols line 35	indeterminate double-line mark
172	col. *b* lines 41–2	faint initial C occupying space before indented text at end of column, not intended for an initial.
172	rhm lines 33–5	interlace
173	lhm line 5	indeterminate letters[39]
173	lhm lines 34–5	P with interlace (?)
173	cols line 7	indeterminate letters
173	cols lines 9–10 and 16–18	indeterminate
173	cols lines 22–7	interlace
174	rhm lines 17–18 and 23–4	indeterminate
174	lhm lines 35–7	'S' with smaller 's' beside and interlace (?) beneath
174	cols lines 1–4	indeterminate
174	cols lines 33–9	flower on stem and base (?)
175	cols line 16	qu[. . .]
176	rhm lines 21–2	interlace
176	lhm line 29	V (imitating *v* siglum above)
176	lhm lines 39–40	interlace
176	upper marg. col. *a*	fish (tail and fin)
176	cols lines 14–15	letter 'A'
176	cols lines 23–7	bird claw
176	cols lines 26–33	indeterminate design
176	cols lines 34–7	lion
177	upper marg. col *b*	indeterminate letters
177	cols line 16	M
177	cols lines 19–22	indeterminate design
178	cols lines 23–5	quatrefoil
178	cols lines 33–40	indeterminate design
180	cols lines 29–34	male (and female?) genitalia

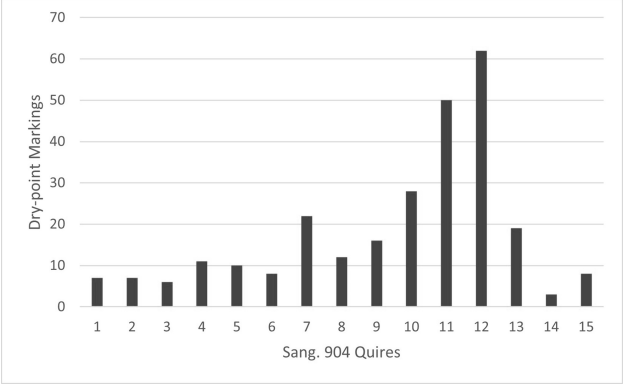
[39] Possibly 'cleo', copying word in text; impression visible on reverse (p. 172).

Page	Location	Description
182	rhm lines 21–8	solar cross with a smaller version above and below
184	rhm lines 30–3	interlace
184	rhm lines 35–7	N
184	lower marg. col. *b*	M
185	lhm lines 30–3	interlace
185	lhm lines 34–6	A
185	lhm lines 37–40	indeterminate
185	col. *a* lines 38–9	dry-point cross added to interior of scribal initial V
185	lower marg. col. *a*	NV
185	cols lines 33–6	reversed S (serpent?)
187	rhm line 22	A
187	rhm line 32	N
187	cols lines 23–6	interlace; also added to bowl of adjacent scribal initial Q; and between title and first line of Book IX
187	cols lines 30–4	interlace (repeated)
187	cols lines 39–40	S
188	upper marg. col. *a*	interlace
188	rhm line 8	interlace
188	rhm lines 9–10	inverted teardrop shape (visible also on verso, 189)
188	rhm lines 13–15	closed S or figure-of-8
188	rhm lines 20–3	interlace with solar cross
188	rhm lines 24–8	head (profile) over interlace
188	lhm line 11	M
188	lhm line 16	M
188	lhm lines 27–8	N
188	lhm lines 32–5	*questa* symbol (in imitation of scribal sign above) with 'ladder' device attached to terminal (visible also on verso, 189)
188	lhm lines 38–41	triangular device on sphere (carrying through to p. 190)
188	lower marg. col. *a*	triangular device (unfinished A?) with broad parallel lines
188	lower marg. col *a*	six wavy lines coming to point at either side
188	cols lines 10–21	indeterminate
188	cols lines 21–5	indeterminate
188	cols lines 35–6	interlace (as in upper marg.)
188	col. *b* (interlinear) lines 18–25	indeterminate
189	lhm lines 35–6	figure-of-8 with V attached

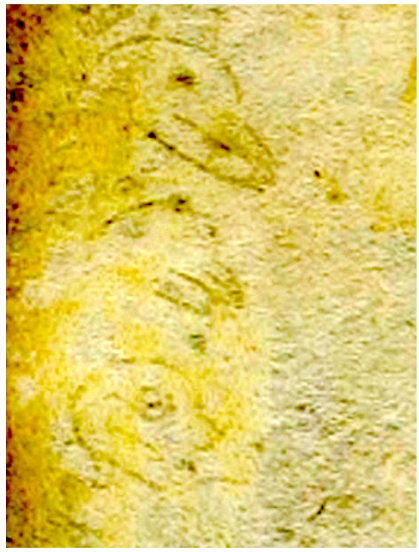
Page	Location	Description
189	cols	intersecting lines running virtually length of column
190	rhm lines 17–19	indeterminate
190	lhm lines 5–8, 11–16, 29–35	sequence of three large formations with double lines connected by single meandering line extending from upper to lower margin
190	lower marg. col *a*	indeterminate (visible in part on verso, p. 191)
190	cols	continuous intersecting lines
190	cols lines 38–41	double-line device beside scribal initial T, bearing dry-point addition to interior
191	cols lines 22–9, 30–6	indeterminate
191	cols line 40	v
192	lhm lines 28–32	S
192	cols lines 25–9	interlace (four figures-of-8, two over two)
192	cols lines 32–5	animal letter-terminal above human head (?)
197	col *a*, lines 6–7	large X in space left for rubricated title
198	upper marg. col. *b*	figures-of-8 cropped
199	cols lines 15–19	face (profile)
200	rhm lines 15–17	circle with grid and dots in square frame (visible also on verso, p. 201, and on p. 202 rhm)
200	lhm line 9	IN
200	lhm line 13	HIER
200	lhm line 14	CHO
200	lhm lines 16–18	face (in profile) attached to left of scribal initial G in imitation of scribal face on the left terminal of the cross-bar, with interlace addition to loop and outline of G[40]
200	lhm lines 20–4	face (in profile)
200	lhm lines 25–9	face (front) with cravat (?), visible also p. 202
200	interlinear, col. *a*, lines 15–16	face in profile flanked by two letters D
200	cols line 11	AUE
200	cols line 13	MA
200	cols lines 14–16	D
200	cols lines 17–18	circle with grid and dots (visible also on verso, p. 201, and on p. 202)
200	cols lines 22–3	circle with grid and dots, with spiral above (visible also on verso, p. 201)
200	cols lines 25–6	square with triangular grid and dots
200	cols line 29	circle with grid and dots
200	cols lines 35–7	indeterminate
201	lhm lines 15–17	circular grid with dots
201	cols lines 17–18, 22–3	circular grid with dots

[40] Impression visible on p. 202 (lhm).

Page	Location	Description
202	lhm lines 30–2	interlace
202	rhm lines 7–9	four vertical lines bunched together under diagonal score
202	rhm lines 24–30	indeterminate
202	cols lines 1–5	twin lines
202	cols lines 30–5	indeterminate
204	upper marg. (col. *a*)	indeterminate (vessel?)
204	rhm lines 22–4	X
206	cols lines 17–19	M v (?)
206	cols lines 24–5	AN
206	cols lines 32–4	indeterminate
207	lhm line 12	X
207	lhm lines 15–16	O or teardrop
207	cols lines 17–19	AU / CAR (?)
207	cols lines 20–3	X / X
207	cols lines 29–42	indeterminate
208	cols lines 13–14	X
210	rhm line 19	nōa (see n. 29 above)
211	rhm lines 22–8	two parallel lines meeting in point
220	lower marg. col. *a*	M
223	cols lines 24–6	indeterminate
233	cols line 2	X
235	rhm line 15	small circle with dot above half circle with dot
235	rhm line 27	X
235	lower marg. col. *b*	sequence of vertical strokes
236	lhm line 27	X
241	cols lines 6–7	X
244	cols line 29	X
245	rhm lines 37–40	A (without crossbar)
247	cols line 28	faint lettering



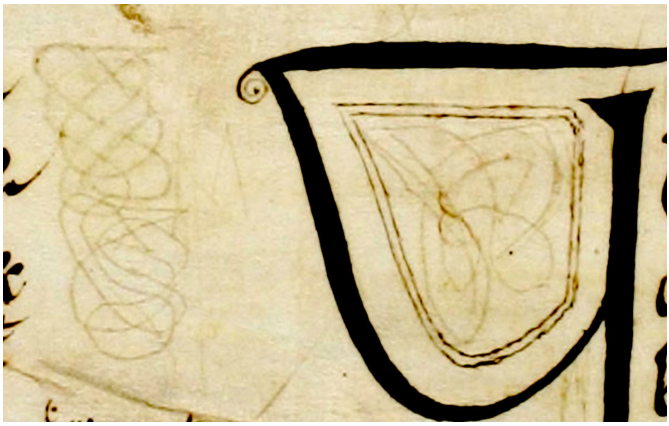
1. Number of dry-point markings per quire in Codex Sang. 904.



2. Codex Sang. 904, p. 121: animal heads in dry-point (enhanced).



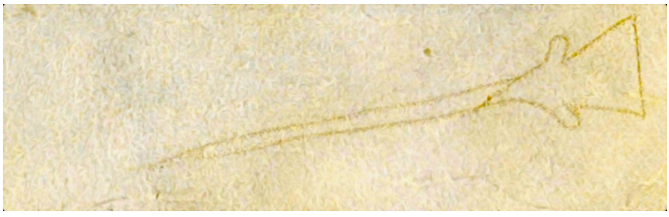
3. Codex Sang. 904, p. 180: genitalia in dry point (enhanced).



4. Codex Sang. 904, p. 187: dry-point 'interlace' between columns and in bowl of letter (enhanced).



5. Codex Sang. 904, p. 200: face in dry-point (enhanced).



6. Codex Sang. 99, p. 23 (detail): dry-point drawing of stylus (enhanced), identified by Andreas Nievergelt.



7. Codex Sang. 904, p. 224: face in ink.



8. Codex Sang. 904, p. 234: beast in ink.

Images from St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 904: Prisciani grammatica (https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/csg/0904), CC BY-SA.

Image from St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 99: Ambrosius in Lucam (https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/csg/0099), CC BY-SA.

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MARGINAL VERSES IN MEDIEVAL IRISH MANUSCRIPTS

Abstract

In this paper I discuss some of the main features of marginal verses, as well as touching on other single-verse compositions, and the somewhat neglected genre of manuscript anthologies of single verses, and in the appendices I provide editions of four of these anthologies.[1]

One of the first poetic texts that the beginner in Old Irish will encounter is the well-known verse on the storm at sea written on the margin of a ninth-century manuscript copy of Priscian's Latin grammar, which has been in the monastery of St Gall in Switzerland since the early Middle Ages. The text and translation are taken from the edition in *Thes* ii, 290:[2]

> Is acher in gaíth innocht,
> fu-fúasna fairggæ findf̂olt:
> ní ágor réimm mora minn
> dond láechraid lainn óa Lothlind.
>
> 'Bitter is the wind to-night: it tosses the ocean's white hair: I fear not the coursing of a clear sea by the fierce heroes from Lothlend.'[3]

Unsurprisingly, marginal verses such as this, along with lyrical and nature poems form a significant part of the selections made of Early Irish verse in modern anthologies,[4] as any attempt to make an anthology representative of the wide variety of the subject matter of Early Irish verse[5] will have to be balanced against the interests of the general reader. On the other hand, one might expect a different approach in the case of the selection of poetic texts for Thurneysen's *Old Irish Reader* (1949), a work which is not an anthology in the conventional sense of the term. While restricting the selection to texts

[1]This paper is a revised and expanded version of the Statutory Lecture of the School of Celtic Studies delivered at UCD on the second of November 2018. My thanks are due to an anonymous reader for a number of improvements, while all remaining shortcomings are my responsibility.

[2]I add punctuation, and normalise word-division, capitalisation and placement of the length-mark. In the fourth line I restore the MS reading *óa*, which the editors of *Thes* replaced with *ua*.

[3]A good example of a freer translation is that by Carney (1967: 23): 'Bitter and wild is the wind to-night / tossing the tresses of the sea to white. / On such a night as this I feel at ease: / fierce Northmen only course the quiet seas.'

[4]For example, those edited by Murphy (1956) and Greene and O'Connor (1967). The anthology in Carney (1967) stands apart from these in including a number of Hiberno-Latin poems.

[5]Including 'genealogy, history and pseudo-history, prophecy, didactic verse, topography, law, metrics, satire, praise-poetry, lyrics, hymns, devotional poems, calendars, monastic rules, and translations of Scripture and apocrypha' (Breatnach, 1996: 65).

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found in manuscripts written before 900 AD is entirely reasonable, confining the selection to the above-cited verse on the storm at sea, the marginal verses on the scribe out of doors and on the vanity of pilgrimage, a poem put into the mouth of Suibne Geilt, and the very well-known poem on the scholar and his cat, *Messe ocus Pangur bán*, fails to bring out the variety to be found even in this comparatively small corpus.[6] Thus, for example, the earliest surviving manuscript copy of a praise-poem in Irish, which appears in the same manuscript as *Messe ocus Pangur bán*, is not included.[7] Also passed over are the two substantial riddling poems in the Milan Codex,[8] and almost all the verses on religious themes. Indeed two of the latter verses were not even recognised as being in verse until comparatively recently.[9]

The question of how well selections made for anthologies represent, or can be expected to represent, the nature of early Irish verse as a whole is also relevant for the sub-category of marginal verses.[10] For example, the verse cited at the beginning of this paper is marked by the contrast with the Latin of the central text, and the edition in *Thes* could give the impression that it is a spontaneous composition. This, however, is not something that can be said for all marginal verses, as will be clear even from the survey undertaken here, which will of necessity be limited.

The corpus of marginal verses in medieval Irish manuscripts is very large, yet many verses remain unpublished or even uncatalogued. A comprehensive survey would require editions, translations and extensive explication beyond the scope of this paper; even as it is, roughly half of it is taken up with the editions, translations and notes on a total of 56 items in the four appendices.

In manuscript catalogues usually only the first lines of marginal verses are cited and these are registered in the indexes of initia, as for example, in the catalogues of manuscripts in the British Library,[11] the Franciscan Library now at UCD,[12] King's Inns Library Dublin,[13] and Oxford libraries.[14] In the catalogue of the Royal Irish Academy manuscripts,[15] however, the marginal verses are not consistently noted,[16] while in that for the manuscripts in Trinity

[6]Thurneysen (1949: 39–41). The verse selection is the same in the earlier German version (Thurneysen, 1909).

[7]In the Codex St Pauli (*Clavis* §812); it was most recently edited by Ó Cathasaigh (2014). See also Bronner (2014).

[8]Edited and translated in *Thes* ii, 291–2, and almost completely ignored until the recent edition and translation by Ahlqvist (2018).

[9]See p. 72 below.

[10]On this question see Boyle (2017).

[11]O'Grady (1926) and Flower (1926 and 1953); the first lines of the marginal verses are included in the index of initia in Flower (1953).

[12]Dillon et al. (1969), with the first lines of the marginal verses included in the index on pp. 137–56.

[13]de Brún (1972), with the first lines of the marginal verses included in the index on pp. 75–80.

[14]Ó Cuív (2001 and 2003); the first lines of the marginal verses are included in the index of initial lines of verse in the second volume.

[15]O'Rahilly et al. (1926–70).

[16]Nor are other marginal entries consistently registered. For example, the entry on pp. 2060–2 of the catalogue makes no reference to any of the marginalia in D v 2; these include a verse on the upper margin of fol. 4r.

College, Dublin,[17] they are hardly ever noted.

Complete editions of all the marginal verses in a particular manuscript are few in number. In the diplomatic edition of Lebor na hUidre, the marginal verses are edited (without translation) below the main text and above the footnotes,[18] and the same policy is for the most part followed in the diplomatic edition of the Book of Leinster.[19] In contrast to these, the earlier edition and translation of the Book of Fenagh by Hennessy and Kelly (1875) included amongst the footnotes editions and translations of marginal verses in a haphazard fashion.[20]

Otherwise, marginal notes and verses are edited separately and accompanied by translations, as for example, the editions of those in BL Harley 1802, a MS written in 1138, by Stokes (1887),[21] those in the late eleventh-century Codex Palatino-Vaticanus No. 830 by Ó Cuív (1990), those in the fifteenth-century H 2. 12 by Culverwell (1913), those in the fifteenth-century 3 B 23 by Gwynn and Purton (1911: 118–20), and those in the fifteenth-century Laud 610 by Dillon (1963). An edition without translation is that of the marginal verses in H 3. 18, vols 2–4, in Kobel (2020: 192–7).

To these can be added various selective editions,[22] and here probably the greatest contribution was made by Kuno Meyer, who published a large number of marginal verses either without a translation, for example in Meyer (1910c and 1913: 167), or with one, for example in Meyer (1889–94 and 1899b).

The focus of this paper will be on marginal verses found in manuscripts dating from the early to the late medieval period, and in particular on those verses which can be dated to the Old and Middle Irish periods. I will begin by setting out some of the principal characteristic features of these verses,[23] and follow on with a discussion of the EModIr term for a marginal verse, *rann marbháin*, and an account of manuscript anthologies. For later manuscripts, the standard anthology is O'Rahilly's *Dánfhocail* of 1921. While the verses are selected mostly from manuscripts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,[24]

[17] Abbott and Gwynn (1921).

[18] Best and Bergin (1929). The marginal verses are as follows, noting the manuscript page followed by the page of the diplomatic edition in parentheses, the number of verses in each case and the hand (following Best and Bergin) in square brackets: 5a–b sup. (11) 1 v. [M], 11a sup. (28) 3 vv. [M], 21b inf. (56) 3 vv. [H], 38b sup. (92) 2 vv. [H], 50a sup. (124) 1 v. [M], 69a inf. (178) 1 v. [late (? sixteenth-century) hand], 83b inf. (208) 1 v. [sixteenth-century hand], 87–9 sup. (216) [H], 116a sup. (289) 2 vv. [H].

[19] Best et al. (1954–83). The differences are that later entries are excluded (for these see Manning, 2003) and that in volume 3 some of the marginal verses are printed with the main text and included in the line-numbering thereof (see pp. 718, 720, 723 and 728–9 of the edition).

[20] Viz. on pp. 14, 17, 22, 27, 33, 73, 100, and 106–7, amounting to 15 of the total of 32 marginal verses in this manuscript. The omitted verses are only occasionally noted in Hennessy and Kelly (1875), e.g. 47 n. 9 and 53 n. 6, but were subsequently registered by Macalister (1939: 92–112). Some are now very difficult to make out due to the use of re-agent, as Macalister (1939: 4) noted. The first lines of all the verses are given in *RIA Cat*, p. 1288.

[21] See also *Clavis* §648 and Sharpe (2017). Not all the verse in this MS is in the margins; see Flower (1926: 430–1).

[22] See n. 4 above.

[23] Prose marginalia are a different matter; for these see Plummer (1926).

[24] As for dates of composition, O'Rahilly (1921: 59) stated that 'the great majority of these

they are not confined to marginal verses, some of them being extracted from longer poems by the editor himself.[25]

I. EARLIEST ATTESTATIONS

The practice of writing verses in the margins of manuscripts is well established in the Old Irish period. Marginal verses are found in four manuscripts which survive from the period before 900 AD, and, as far as I know, all of these early marginal verses have by now been edited and translated.

Interestingly two verses, both in rare metres, and with religious and didactic themes, were overlooked for a long time. One is the verse cited in the notes on item 2 in Anthology B below, which was printed as prose in *Thes* ii, 235, among the glosses in the Berne MS of Servius and first identified as verse by Ó Cuív (1986). The other, in the rare metre *treöchair*,[26] was printed as prose in *Thes* ii, 7, among the glosses in the Carlsruhe MS of St. Augustine's *Soliloquia*, and was first identified as verse by James Carney (1964: xv n. 21). I cite here the edition and translation of the latter in Carney (1967: 10):[27]

> Is mebul
> élúd Ríg na fírinne
> ocus chairte fri demun.
>
> 'It's evil
> to shun the King of righteousness
> and make compact with demon.'

The other early marginal verses are those in the St Gall Priscian (*Clavis* §805), edited and translated in *Thes* ii, 290, and the two verses in the Codex Boernerianus (*Clavis* §487), edited and translated in *Thes* ii, 296. These last two are on the lower margin of the same page, and are an early instance of the practice common in later manuscripts of writing two unconnected verses in the same marginal space.[28] On the other hand, the two verses of the short poem beginning *Domfarcai fidbaidæ fál* are distributed over the lower margins of pp. 203 and 204 of the St Gall Priscian.[29] In later manuscripts all the verses of such short poems can also be written in the same marginal space.[30]

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quatrains, one may safely say, belong to the period 1400–1700; but a few go back to the Early Middle Irish period, and, on the other hand, one or two may be as late as the 19th century'.

[25] See O'Rahilly (1921: 62–3). In some cases it is impossible to make out from O'Rahilly's notes exactly what his sources were. The recent edition by Doyle and Ó Donnchú (2026) contains the texts as in O'Rahilly accompanied by translations, but without O'Rahilly's notes.

[26] See Carney (1970: 99).

[27] In his translation Carney achieves a close imitation of the metrical pattern of the original.

[28] See, for example, the comments on the verses in the Leabhar Breac and the Book of Fenagh on p. 74 below.

[29] See *Thes* ii, 290. An instance in a later manuscript is the copy of the poem of two verses on Cú Chuimne of Iona in the Book of Fenagh, with the first verse on fol. 7v inf. and the second on fol. 8r inf. Other copies are in *AU* s.a. 747 and the *Liber Hymnorum*, ed. Bernard and Atkinson (1898: i, 32), and the poem is edited and translated by Kelleher (1979: 12).

[30] For example, the poem of three verses on the lower margin of p. 102 of the Leabhar Breac, beginning *In lá oc sinud suairc in mod*, and ending with a *dúnad*.

While the main text in three of these early manuscripts is in Latin, they also contain interlinear OIr glosses on the Latin texts. Most of the fourth manuscript, the Codex Boernerianus, consists of the Greek text of the epistles of St Paul with an interlinear Latin translation, and, apart from the marginal verses, the only Old Irish material it contains is a number of personal names in the margins.[31]

It is worth emphasising, however, that not all OIr verse in manuscripts written before 900 AD is placed in the margins. The rest of this corpus consists of the verse in the colophon to the copy of the Gospel of John in the Book of Dímma,[32] as well as a number of poems which occupy the centre of the page, namely those in the Milan codex and in the St Paul codex.[33]

The writing of marginal verses in Irish in manuscripts where the main text is in Latin continued into the MIr period, for example, in Harley 1802,[34] and Oxford Bodleian Auct. F. 3. 15,[35] both of which manuscripts also contain Irish glosses on the Latin text. Marginal verses (three in all) are also found in the twelfth-century Drummond Missal, where the main text is in Latin without Irish glosses.[36] On the other hand, there is no connection between the main hand and marginalia in BL MS Royal 6B. III, where the Latin text is from the early thirteenth century and the four verses and two *probationes pennae*, all in Irish, were added in the lower margins in more than one hand in the sixteenth century.[37]

By the eleventh century, at the latest, marginal verses had become a feature of manuscripts written entirely (or almost entirely) in the vernacular. They are found in two of the earliest such manuscripts which survive, the late eleventh-century Lebor na hUidre and the twelfth-century Book of Leinster,[38] and in subsequent centuries it is usually the case that manuscripts in the vernacular will have at least one or two marginal verses also in the vernacular. There is, however, a good deal of variation in the density of marginal verses. Thus, for example, the marginal verses in Lebor na hUidre are even less numerous when we exclude those two which were added much later (probably in the

[31]See *Thes* ii, xxxiv.

[32]A partial reading and translation was published in *Thes* ii, 257, where it was mistakenly assigned to the Book of Durrow (see the corrigenda on p. 422). For the full text and translation see Best (1926: 85–6).

[33]Edited and translated in *Thes* ii, 291–5.

[34]See above, p. 71 with n. 21.

[35]See Ó Cuív (2001: 308–11). The single marginal verse, together with the prose marginalia and glosses in this manuscript, was most recently edited and translated by Shaw (1956–7). See also Ó Néill (1997: 22–4).

[36]The only text in Irish in the centre of the page is the two verses on fol. 108r (the last leaf of the manuscript), but this may be have been added by a later scribe. See Oskamp (1977), who edited and translated all the verses and included plates of the relevant manuscript pages, and Ó Riain (2002: 10–12). For the first of the marginal verses see the notes on item 9 in Appendix 3 below.

[37]As Flower (1926: 24) notes in his description: 'The MS. is in a good English hand of the early 13th cent., and was probably written in Ireland […] it is probable that the *Irish* entries were made […] after the Dissolution'.

[38]See p. 71 above.

sixteenth century),[39] whereas the early fifteenth-century Leabhar Breac is richly adorned with marginal verses, the vast majority in the hand of the main scribe,[40] and in many cases a verse is entered in both the upper and the lower margins of the page,[41] or two verses are entered in the lower margin.[42]

The marginal verses concentrated in the lower margins of fols 2 to 10 of the Book of Fenagh are in a different hand to that of the main texts;[43] this set of verses, beginning with a single verse on fol. 2r, followed by two verses on the verso and recto of every folio from 2v to 10r, and ending with a single verse on fol. 10v, gives the impression of being a partially executed plan to embellish the whole of the manuscript with marginal verses. A similar concentration of marginal verses, this time in the hand of the main scribe, is the thirteen verses at the foot of fols 49 to 52 of BL MS Egerton 91.[44]

Occasionally a degree of planning for marginal verses is evident in other ways. Thus, for example, the very layout must have been carefully planned in the case of the four verses in the lower margin of fol. 24r of Harley 5280, which 'are interwoven into an intricate pattern', and the six verses in the lower margin of fol. 46v of the same MS, which 'are written in and out of one another in a curious intricate pattern'.[45] Compare also the verse in the lower margin of p. 6 of H 3. 18, written in a zig-zag frame.[46]

II. Circulation

Marginal verses tend to circulate. Some are found in the margins of just two manuscripts, for example the verse beginning *Fuil trí ní* in 23 Q 10, fol. 46r inf., and the Leabhar Breac, p. 238 inf.; the latter copy was edited and translated by Meyer (1906: ix) as:[47]

> Fuil trí ní
> ná dlegair do bocht Dé bí:
> dimmda da bethaid cipé,
> cesacht ocus aibéle.
>
> 'Three things there are which do not behove the poor of living God:
> ingratitude for his life whatever it be, grumbling, and flattery'.

[39] See n. 18.

[40] For a general survey of the marginal verses in this MS see Downey (2015: 128–9).

[41] For example, on pp. 77, 176 and 188.

[42] For example, on pp. 76 and 164. Note also p. 78 with one verse in the upper, and two in the lower margin.

[43] See above, p. 71 with n. 20. Apart from these are the single verse on fol. 31r inf. and the single verse on fol. 41v inf., each in a different hand.

[44] See Flower (1926: 446–7). For the scribe see Herbert (1988: 211).

[45] Flower (1926: 322). To mark the verses on fol. 46v as separate, each one is preceded by the abbreviation *.r.*, which I take to stand for *rann* 'quatrain, verse'.

[46] See Kobel (2020: 190), where 'p. 16' is a slip for 'p. 6'.

[47] The only variants of any significance in the copy in 23 Q 10 are *dlegur*, in the second line, and *dia bethuid cid be*, in the third.

Another instance is the verse in 3 B 23, p. 16 inf. and Add. 30512, fol. 19r inf.; the former copy was edited and translated by Gwynn and Purton (1911: 119) as:[48]

> Is maircc breichem beres gáoi
> ar an truadan ac nach bi ní,
> ar atchonnacsa a locc ruad
> anbad mór don tsluag dusgní.
>
> 'Woe to the judge who judges falsely against the wretch that has naught; for I have seen in the fiery place a great multitude of people that do the like.'

Other verses are more widely attested. The most frequently recurring verse I have so far noted is the verse in the lower margin of fol. 1r of Part 9 of H 2. 12, which was edited and translated by Culverwell (1913: 133) as:[49]

> An ba maiden, an ba fuin,
> an ba for tír nó for muir;
> acht ro-fetar rachat d'éc
> – mór an bét – ní fetar cuin.
>
> 'Be it morning, be it sunset, be it on land, be it on sea (I know not); but I know that I shall go to death – great the deed – I know not when.'

There are at least six further cases where this recurs as a marginal verse, namely, the Book of Uí Maine, fol. 77r (136) marg. inf.,[50] YBL (Part 6), cols 293–4 marg. inf., Harley 5280, fol. 46v marg. inf.,[51] Laud 610, fol. 115r marg. inf.,[52] the Leabhar Breac, p. 172 marg. inf.,[53] and H 3. 18 fol. [iv]v marg. inf.[54] There is also a copy on fol. 73v (lines 7–9) of the miniature MS G 1.[55] The most significant variant is in the copy in Harley 5280; where all the other copies have *rachat*, *raghad*, etc., in the third line, in this copy it is replaced by its Latin equivalent, *ibo*.

Another frequently recurring verse is that beginning *Mairg cuinges ní ara charait*. The version in the Book of Fenagh, fol. 4r inf., was edited and translated in Hennessy and Kelly (1875: 33) as:

[48]The following variants in Add. 30512 may be noted: *breithim* and *goi* in the first line, *ogna bí* in the second, *atconnarcsa* in the third, and *anba* and *dogní* in the fourth line.

[49]See Breatnach (2020: 83–6).

[50]In a different hand to that of the main scribe.

[51]This copy was edited and translated by Meyer (1889–94: 114).

[52]This copy was edited and translated by Dillon (1963: 150–1).

[53]In a different hand to that of the main scribe.

[54]The first two and a half lines are now missing due to physical damage; what remains is edited by Kobel (2020: 192).

[55]See p. 92 below.

Mairg cuinges ni ara charuid,
muna loinn leis a tabairt;
is e dede nos bia de,
miscais ocus oirbhire.

'Woe to him that asketh of a friend,
Unless that friend to giving be inclined.
Of all such asking two things are the end,
Bitter reproaches, and an hateful mind.'

It is found also in the lower margins of YBL, cols 343–4, the Leabhar Breac, p. 90, and Laud 610, fol. 3v,[56] as well as being entered into an empty space at the bottom of col. *a* of fol. 87v of D iv 2,[57] and included in the anthology in H 3. 18, p. 151.[58]

There are many more instances of recurring verses, some of which will be referred to in what follows below, and they serve to remind us that the presence of a verse in the margins of a manuscript is in itself no guarantee that it was composed by the scribe who entered it there.

III. Early Irish verses in later manuscripts

Marginal verses in manuscripts of the Old and Middle Irish periods can reappear in manuscripts of the post-Norman period. Among them are two verses written in manuscripts of the OIr period located on the Continent since the early Middle Ages, which reappear in manuscripts of the post-Norman period which were written in and remained in Ireland. One is the verse beginning *Mór baís mór baile* in Codex Boernerianus, fol. 145b (edited and translated in *Thes* ii, 296), which appears also as a marginal verse in H. 2. 12 [9], fol. 4v inf., and in the anthology in Add. 30512, fols 32v–33r.[59] The other is the verse in Codex Bernensis, fol. 117a sup. (edited and translated in *Thes* ii, 235), a copy of which appears as the second verse in the anthology from RIA MS B iv 2 edited in Appendix 2 below (see the notes thereon).

While it is virtually impossible that the two continental manuscripts are the immediate source of the later copies, the exact line of transmission between the earlier and later copies is not immediately obvious. If both the Codex Boernerianus and the Codex Bernensis were written in Ireland, two possibilities can be considered. If we assume that the scribes were the authors of the verses,

[56]The edition and translation in Dillon (1963: 136–7) is impaired by the misreading *tuinges* for MS *cuinges* in the first line.

[57]This copy was edited and translated by Meyer (1889–94b: 134).

[58]For the anthology in H 3. 18 see p. 91 below. The only notable variants are *minab laind*, YBL, *minab lainn*, D iv 2, *minap laind*, Leabhar Breac, *mainab lainn*, H 3. 18, *minbá lónd*, Laud 610, for *muna loinn* in the second line, *nos tá*, D iv 2, *nos ta*, Leabhar Breac, H 3. 18, *ro thá*, Laud 610, for *nos bia* in the third line, and the unique variants *is e ni bis do de* for the third line, and *ecraite* for the final word, in YBL.

[59]For the later copies see Breatnach (2020: 82, 84). The copy in Add. 30512 was printed by Meyer (1907: 215) with the comment 'Vgl. und verbessere Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus, S. 296', as noted in Stokes (1910: 78).

then in both cases the verse would have to have been copied from these manuscripts before they were moved to the Continent. If we do not make this assumption, the verses must have been copied from pre-existing manuscripts which remained in Ireland and became the ultimate source of the copies in the post-Norman manuscripts. It has, however, been argued that both manuscripts were written on the Continent,[60] and if this is the case, the marginal verses would have been taken from manuscripts which had come to the Continent from Ireland, and again the ultimate source of all the copies must have been (at least for some time) in Ireland. The question of transmission would become even more complicated if it could be shown that one of these manuscripts was written on the Continent and the other in Ireland, and the only thing that is virtually certain is that the verses were not composed on the Continent.[61]

As for the other verse in Codex Boernerianus, fol. 145b, there is a remarkable similarity between the first couplet *Téicht do Róim: / mór saído, becc torbai*, 'To go to Rome, much labour, little profit',[62] and an expression in an anecdote about Brigit in the commentary on Broccán's Hymn in the Liber Hymnorum. This relates how after she had sent seven men to Rome to learn the rule of Peter and Paul (*d'oglaim uird Petair 7 Pōil*), and they returned to her without remembering a single word of it, she said to them *nī mōr uar tarba, cid mór for sāethar*, 'your profit is not great, though your labour be great'.[63] If they are in fact connected, then it is almost certainly the case that the anecdote contains a direct echo of the poem, rather than that, as Bernard (1895) proposed, the verse refers to the anecdote.[64] This in turn would mean that this verse also was not composed on the Continent.

A comparable problem of transmission from the Middle Irish period is the verse in the late eleventh-century Codex Palatino-Vaticanus No. 830, fol. 39v marg. sin., which was edited and translated by Ó Cuív (1990: 57) as:

> Dech bliadna bae Eua
> d'és Ádaem i n-imneda
> ac coí dēr ro rīg nimi
> co ros-ruc serg sīrligi.
>
> 'For ten years after Adam [died] Eve was in tribulations lamenting tearfully to the king of heaven until a wasting of long illness took her off.'

[60] See Kenney (1929: 559–60) and *Clavis* §487 and §459.

[61] The possibility that the two verses were copied on two separate occasions by Irish scholars on the Continent, who then brought them back home to Ireland and into circulation there, is a very remote one.

[62] Edited and translated in *Thes* ii, 296.

[63] Edited and translated in *Thes* ii, 328.37, 329.15. There is another copy of the anecdote in MS 5100–04, fol. 43r, in scholia on *Félire Óengusso* for 1 February, where the phrase in question reads: *ní mór bar ttorba dúinn cidh mor bar saethar*, fol. 43r4. The versions corresponding to this in the Leabhar Breac, edited and translated by Stokes (1880: xlvii), Rawlinson B 512, edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 64–7), A 7 (fol. 8v), G 10 (p. 28) and Laud 610 (fol. 62r) do not contain the relevant sentence.

[64] See also Mac Cana (2002: 74–5).

This manuscript was certainly written on the Continent, yet, as noted by Ó Cuív, the verse recurs on the lower margin of p. 90 of the Leabhar Breac,[65] written in Ireland in the early fifteenth century.[66]

In other cases, verses in Middle Irish manuscripts which remained in Ireland until the present day recur in manuscripts from the post-Norman period. The first of the two verses in the upper margin of p. 116 of the late eleventh-century Lebor na hUidre (Best and Bergin, 1929: 289) recurs as a marginal verse in the H 1. 18 copy of the Annals of Ulster s.a. 649;[67] in both cases there is a connection with the battle of Carn Conaill.[68]

The verse (preceded by the paragraph mark) on the lower margin of p. 31 of the twelfth-century Book of Leinster recurs on the upper margin of fol. 22v of G 3. It was edited on p. 131 of the diplomatic edition of *LL* as:

> ¶ Ro bíth oss la Tadc mac Céin.
> Tadc mac Céin la oss ro bith;
> la oss ro bíth Tadc mac Céin.
> Tadc mac Céin i rRoss na Ríg.
>
> 'A deer was slain by Tadg son of Cían, Tadg son of Cían was slain by a deer; by a deer was slain Tadg son of Cían, Tadg son of Cían at Ros na Ríg (Rosnaree).'[69]

Not only does the verse in the upper margin of p. 122 of the Book of Leinster reappear as a marginal verse in later MSS, but it is also cited in the main text of the seventeenth-century *Trí Biorghaoithe an Bháis*. I give the text from p. 451 of the diplomatic edition of *LL*, with the addition of macrons, along with my own translation:[70]

> Nī bīa a chland la nech i nnirt
> cipē bas gand breth ar bocht.
> na ndēnat na haithre d'ulc
> don lucht assa n-aithle is olc.
>
> 'Anyone who treats a poor person meanly will not have children that prosper; the evil that the fathers do is evil for those after them.'

[65]The only significant variants are *ro boi* (which gives the correct number of syllables) for *bae*, in the first line, and *corus marb* 'killed her' for *coros ruc*, in the fourth line.

[66]The two attestations can be accounted for by assuming that the verse was already in circulation in Ireland in the eleventh century, and was found in one of the books that Mael Brigte (Marianus Scottus) brought with him to the Continent.

[67]Edited in Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill (1983: 126–7) with a translation which is wide of the mark. For the marginal verses in the Annals of Ulster see Simms (2009: 106–7).

[68]The main text in this part of Lebor na hUidre is *Cath Cairn Chonaill*, and the verse in the Annals of Ulster is attached to the notice therein of that battle.

[69]I supply the translation. The copy in G 3 was edited by Ní Shéaghdha (1967: 25), and the only variant reading of any significance is *ag Ros* in the fourth line.

[70]I modify the translations of this copy by Meyer (1889–94b: 134) and Murphy (1957: 270). In the second line Meyer misread *cipé basgand*, and translated 'whoever breaks'; for the meaning of *bas gand breth* see Dillon (1963: 143 n. 2).

It appears again in two fifteenth-century manuscripts, namely in BL MS Egerton 91 (fol. 51r marg. inf.),[71] and Laud 610 (fol. 43r marg. inf.). The latter copy was edited by Dillon (1963: 142) as:

> Ni bi clann o nech a nirt
> cun ti as gann breth ar in mbocht;
> a nde[inid] na haithre d'ulc
> don lucht asa haithle as olc.
> Ni bi clann o nech a nirt.

A copy which is closer to that in the Book of Leinster is found in the lower margin of fol. 27r of BL MS Sloane 3567, a manuscript written in 1664–5:[72]

> Ni bhia clann in neich i niort,
> gibe bus gann breith ar bocht.
> i ndingnaid na haithre d'ulc,
> don lucht as < >aithle as olc.

Ascribed to *file éigin* 'a certain poet', in Keating's *Trí Biorghaoithe an Bháis* the verse has moved from the margins into a central text. It is edited by Bergin (1931: 168.5352) as:[73]

> Ní bhí a chlann ó neach i neart
> 'gon tí bhus gann breath ar bhocht;
> a ndéinid na haithre d'ulc,
> don lucht as a haithle is olc.

While this version shares some variants with Laud 610 (*ó neach*, line 1; *gon tí*, line 2; *asa haithle*, line 4), it shares others with *LL* (*a chlann*, line 1, *bhus* and *ar bhocht*, line 2). It would seem then that Keating took his text from yet another source.

These verifiable instances raise the possibility that quite a few more of the marginal verses in manuscripts written after 1200 AD are copies of verses composed in the Old and Middle Irish periods.

IV. Marginal verses and longer poems

Occasionally a marginal verse can be shown to have originated as a constituent element of a longer poem. Since such verses could have been extracted from the longer poems at any point in the course of transmission, it follows that marginal verses in later manuscripts which can be dated linguistically to the OIr period were not necessarily marginal verses already in the OIr period.

While the main focus of this paper is on Old and Middle Irish sources, I may note in passing two instances of marginal verses extracted from EModIr

[71] See Flower (1926: 447), who cites the first line only, *Ni bia clann la nach a nirt.*

[72] See Flower (1926: 27–32).

[73] The version in *Trí Biorghaoithe an Bháis* was also edited by O'Rahilly (1921: 22 no. 110), who refers in his notes (73–4) to the copy in the Book of Leinster.

sources, viz. v. 28 of *Mairg mheallas muirn an tsaoghail*, by Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh,[74] cited in the upper margin of p. 196 of the Leabhar Breac (in the hand of the main scribe), and v. 1 of *Cionnas atá m'ēnghrādh-sa*, a poem of eight verses in *Eachtra Uilliam*,[75] cited in the upper margin of p. 140 of Laud 615.[76]

An instance of an extract from a late OIr or early MIr poem is the verse cited in the lower margin of p. 114 of the Leabhar Breac as:

In ri consníat a righi.
ge beth co méid mbrighi.
ni cuimhgead ní la mac nDe.
achd a cumud don íre.

This is a variant of a verse in the long poem beginning *Imma-rédind-sea márgraige* in *Síaburcharpat Con Culaind*,[77] which I edit and translate as:[78]

Ind ríg con-sniat a rríge
cía beit co mméit a mbrīgi
ní cumcat nī la mac nDé
acht a cubatt i nd-īre.

'The kings who strive for the kingship, however mighty they may be, at the hands of the son of God they can get no more than the length of their body in earth.'

This verse of four heptasyllabic lines is in a loose form of *rannaigecht*, while most of the rest of the poem is in a metre, found also in the *Irish Gospel of Thomas* and a number of other early OIr poems, which can be 'described as a mixture of *rannaigecht* and *lethrannaigecht*'.[79] While the total number of syllables per line is regular, viz. 7 + 5 + 7 + 5, the number of syllables in the endwords is not fixed, apart from the fact that the rhyming words at the end of lines *b* and *d* must, of course, be of the same length. A good deal of variation is found in early compositions in *rannaigecht*,[80] so that the minor difference in metre of the verse in question here can hardly be taken as an indication that it is an interpolation.[81]

On the other hand, the metre is somewhat problematic in the case of the verse cited in the upper margin of cols 70–1 of H 3. 17:[82]

[74]Edited in Mac Cionnaith (1938: 109–13), it has a total of 46 verses.

[75]Edited and translated by Cecile O'Rahilly (1949: 46–7, 165–6).

[76]The source was identified by Ó Cuív (1990: 92).

[77]According to Thurneysen (1921: 567), this text is hardly earlier than the tenth century.

[78]Adding macrons over long vowels, I follow the edition in Best and Bergin (1929: 284.9455–8), apart from re-dividing the last two words (*i ndire* in *LU*), and reading the preposition *i* followed by nasalisation of the OIr dat.sg. of *íriu* 'land, soil, earth' (for the spelling *nd-* see *SnaG* 238 §4.10).

[79]Carney (1964: xxxiv).

[80]See Murphy (1961: 52), and note that one of the early poems with the structure 7 + 5 + 7 + 5 that Carney (1964: xxxiv) refers to begins with a verse of four heptasyllabic lines (O Daly 1960: 187).

[81]Note that although the copy in British Library MS Egerton 88 varies somewhat from that in *LU*, it does also contain this verse (ed. Meyer 1910d: 55.26–7).

[82]The first word is illegible due to rubbing of the vellum.

< > ro genuir a mBethel
do-rad beth*aid* do marb*aib*
nicon relge gle no gó
Ued no No gein samhl*aid*

This is a variant of v. 4 of the poem of 8 verses, *Maire máthair in maic bic*, edited and translated by Carney (1964: 108–9) as:[83]

Gein ro-génair re mbethaib
do-rat bethaid do marbaib;
nícon réil, ced glé nád gó,
hi Fet ná Nó gein samlaid.

'A being who has been born before worlds, who has given life to the dead; there is not apparent – though it is clear that it is not falsehood – in the *Vetus* or the *Nouum* a being like him.'[84]

Noting that this verse is in a form of *rannaigecht*, while the rest of the poem is in *deibide*, Carney (1964: xxxiv) suggested that it is 'possibly an early interpolation', while in the notes on p. 164 he stated that he regarded it 'as an early marginal quatrain which had been accidentally incorporated in the poem'. Certainly, variation between *deibide* and *rannaigecht* is more difficult to account for than variation between different forms of *rannaigecht* in the same poem, and given that it is actually attested as a marginal verse, it may well be that Carney's assessment is correct. Nevertheless, as we do occasionally find variation between *deibide* and *rannaigecht*,[85] the different metre does not make it absolutely certain that this verse is an interpolation in the poem *Maire máthair in maic bic*.

Verse 25 of the MIr poem of 63 verses, *Aimirgein Glúngel tuir tend*,[86] is cited in the lower margin of cols 341–2 of YBL as:

Fithil m*ac* Fachtna ba fl*aith*.
fir naicenta leis ba lanmaith.
co mb*er*ead breith ba bechta.
lasin nintlecht naicenta.

An instance which has been noted elsewhere is verse 6 of the poem of ten verses, *A Chormaic coisc do maicni*,[87] which appears both in H 3. 18, p. 21

[83]The only known copy of the poem is on pp. 121–2 of MS G 50.

[84]The marginal verse invites us to reconsider the interpretation of the third line. As Carney pointed out in his notes (1964: 164), it differs from that in his first edition of the text (Carney, 1958: 26–7), where he edited and translated the line as *nícon reilced, glé nád gó* 'there has not been presented – it is clear that it is not falsehood'. The reading of the verse in H 3. 17, where *relge* is clearly written as a unit, suggests that Carney's first interpretation should in fact be reinstated.

[85]A small number of instances in the Metrical *Dindšenchas* are noted in Breatnach (2015: 59).

[86]Edited and translated in Smith (1994: 128, 136).

[87]Edited in *LL* 19124–63. There is another copy in col. 811 of YBL, which lacks v. 5 of the *LL* copy.

marg. sup., and in Harley 5280, fol. 46v marg. inf.[88]

Occasionally more than one verse is excerpted from a poem. I have noted two verses from the MIr poem of 27 verses, *A chuirp, not chaith fri crábud*,[89] appearing as marginal verses, namely, verse 5 in the upper margin of cols 148–9 of H 3. 17 as:

> Srian frid bruinn buaidh re mannaibh.
> srian frid cridhe cruaidh cungaibh.
> srian do tab*air*t fri teangaidh
> gen mennair is ciall cunnail,

and verse 14 in the upper margin of fol. 22r of Harley 5280 as:

> Ifernd dend doer in ditreb
> ro mell mor laech co luathcor
> carcair cruaid corr crom casrach
> na loc lom lasrach luachdub.

Similarly, two verses were excerpted from the MIr poem of 41 verses, *Cinnus atá do thinnrem*, edited in Breatnach (2008). Verse 8 appears as a marginal verse in H 3. 17, cols 150–1 marg. sup.,[90] and verse 12 appears in the lower margin of p. 47 of H 4. 22 as:[91]

> Foimne cloine ⁊ celga.
> foimne biasta belder*g*a.
> imgaib if*er*n dub drech.
> baile bithseng buiredach ⁊rl–

Occasionally lines from separate verses of a longer poem are combined to form a new verse. An example is the verse beginning *Colladh gairit gafidhe*, in Laud 610, fol. 6v.[92] This derives from two verses of the poem *M'óenurán im aireclán*;[93] the first line is taken from the first line of v. 6 and the rest from the last three lines of v. 8.[94]

When, however, a marginal verse can be identified with a verse cited in a learned treatise, such as a grammatical or metrical tract, a glossary or a commentary on another text,[95] or with a verse forming part of a prosimetric

[88]Kobel (2020: 195), who edited the text of the H 3. 18 copy. The only significant variants are in the last line, where the H 3. 18 copy (*ní main mogh gan mhittaine*) and the Harley 5280 copy (*ni main modh gan mitaine*) agree in the last word with YBL (*olc main mod cen mitaine*, 811.34) against *LL* (*olc moín mog cen bithdine*, 19147), but against both in the first word.

[89]Edited by Meyer (1908: 264–6).

[90]The text of this copy is supplied in the notes in Breatnach (2008: 24).

[91]The latter was identified subsequent to publication of the edition.

[92]Edited and translated by Dillon (1963: 136–7).

[93]Edited and translated by Murphy (1956: 18–23).

[94]As noted by Dillon (1963: 137 n. 1). For another example see pp. 90–1 below.

[95]In the case of the commentary on *Amrae Coluimb Chille*, the task of locating verses is greatly facilitated by the tables in Bisagni (2019: 446–70), which list the verses cited in all the manuscript copies of the text.

text, it is often impossible to determine whether it began as a marginal verse or as a verse composed for the longer text or whether both occurrences derive ultimately from another source (not necessarily a longer poem). An example is the verse in the lower margin of cols 116–17 of H 3. 17, which I edit and translate as:

> Mós g*ach* sobés sīdamhuil
> mōs tuili ⁊ mōs aithbhé
> mōs cach cīul caīn cīchamhuil
> nāch crīnann cumsccud– caithmhe.
>
> '*Mos* is used of every peaceful good conduct, *mos* means flood, *mos* means ebb; *mos* is used of every fair melodious (?) music which … of use does not wear out.'[96]

This is a variant of a verse cited in commentary on the Rawlinson B 502 copy of *Amrae Coluimb Chille*,[97] and it recurs also in a glossary in MS H 3. 18.[98]

A similar example is the verse in the lower margin of cols 106–7 of H 3. 17, which I edit and translate as:

> Doctus forche cach rachta
> isna leabhruibh lāncerta
> ⁊ dinn caín cach cnūasuigh
> dinn ainm cach fir ardūas*ail*.
>
> '*Doctus* learned in every law, in the fully correct books, and *dinn* the fair one of every cluster, *dinn* the name of every high noble man.'

This is a variant of another verse cited in commentary on the Rawlinson B 502 copy of *Amrae Coluimb Chille*,[99] and it recurs in the same glossary in H 3. 18 as the preceding example.[100]

A further instance of a verse moving between the margin of a manuscript and a glossary is that in 23 Q 10, fol. 37v inf., recurring in O'Mulconry's Glossary §857,[101] and for an example of a verse circulating between the manuscript margin, commentary on a law text, and a fabrication of disparate verses, see Breatnach (2020: 87).

[96] I normalise word-division and add macrons over long vowels. The only significant variants in the copy in H 3. 18 are *ciúin* (for *cain*) in line 3 and *cumscar* (for *cumsccud–*) in line 4, and the copy in Rawlinson B 502 agrees with H 3. 18 in both of these, with *ciuin* and *cumscor*, but differs from the other copies in the second line, with *dona bi tuili is taithbe* 'which has neither flood nor ebb'. I can make no sense of either of the variant readings for the penultimate word of the last line.

[97] Edited and translated by Stokes (1899: 174–5, §36).

[98] On p. 612a; it is cited in Stokes (1893: 3).

[99] Edited and translated by Stokes (1899: 168–9, §27); I follow word for word his translation of the first three lines.

[100] On p. 611b. The verse, where the final line corresponds to that in H 3. 17, as against *is dinn ainm cach ardhuasail* in Rawlinson B 502, is cited in Stokes (1893: 3).

[101] Edited and translated by Moran (2019: 242).

On the other hand, there is a little more certainty in the case of the following verse in 23 Q 10, fol. 37r inf.:

> Alla alla criaa criaa.
> benedig f*or* mo duana.
> carais Rechtabrad a dinge
> ar lar cille Cluana.

This corresponds to the first of the two verses cited to illustrate the variety of satire designated *tár molta* 'outrage of praise', in the tract *Cis lir fodlai aíre*.[102] The two verses are complete in themselves,[103] so that there is no need to assume that they were taken from a longer poem.[104] The single marginal verse, then, must derive from the satire of two verses. What is not certain is whether it was taken from the tract *Cis lir fodlai aíre* or from some other source.

A good example of a prosimetrum where most of the poems consist of a single verse is the version of the Life of Colum Cille edited in Herbert (1988).[105] As is pointed out in the notes, the verse at lines 405–8, beginning *Cetrachai sacart a lín*, corresponds to the marginal verse in Lebor na hUidre, p. 5 sup. (ed. *LU* p. 11), and that at lines 264–7, beginning *Criss Mo Bíí*, corresponds to a marginal verse elsewhere in the Leabhar Breac itself.[106]

While the examples cited above of verses extracted from longer poems could probably be added to, it seems unlikely that they would ever amount to a significant proportion of the total. The majority of those compositions which have come down to us as a single verse in all likelihood began as such. As Ó Macháin (2010: 83–7) has shown, single-verse compositions are explicitly acknowledged in the later period by Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn, and it is reasonable to assume that this form was practised from the Old Irish period in a variety of contexts and not confined to marginal verses.

V. Marginal verses and main text

In some cases there is an obvious connection between the subject-matter of the main text and that of the marginal verse. Following on from the preceding discussion we may note first an instance of a marginal verse which has been excerpted from a longer poem, namely verse 13 of the poem *A fhir, ná híad*

[102] Edited and translated by McLaughlin (2008: 56–7 §12).

[103] See Breatnach (2006: 66 n. 15).

[104] Certainly the line *taithaīrid āenrand airdrī* 'a single verse dishonours a high-king', in the probably MIr verse 9 of Anthology C (Appendix 3 below), acknowledges that an effective satire can be expressed in the shortest of poems.

[105] The edition is based on the copy in the Leabhar Breac, with variants from other copies. Only three poems have more than one verse, viz. the poems of two verses each in §§14, 59 and 63.

[106] In the copy of the Life of Colum Cille in the Leabhar Breac the verse is at p. 32a15, while the marginal verse is at p. 235 inf. As Herbert (1988: 279) notes, a version of this verse is found also in the preface to the hymn *Noli pater* in the Liber Hymnorum (Bernard and Atkinson, 1895, vol. i, 87), and another version is found in 'Brussels MS 5100–4, fol. 46 [leg. 4v], q. 5 of a collection of six quatrains headed "Itinerarium na fairrge ó Choluim in onóir chresa Mo Bhí" '.

dreich Temrach,[107] which is concerned with the *círmaire* 'combmaker'. A variant of this is cited in the lower margin of fol. 44v of G 3, under the section of the text of *Uraicecht Becc*, which mentions the *círmaire*.[108] At the same time this verse is not appended to any of the other manuscript copies of *Uraicecht Becc*, and so represents a particular engagement with the text on the part of this scribe alone.[109]

Indeed on occasion the connection is so close that one could envisage the marginal verse deriving directly from the main text of the manuscript page on which it is found, as in the case of my next example. The verse in the lower margin of p. 188 of the Leabhar Breac appears under a prose account of the passion of John the Baptist, which includes the following passage:

> Cuirset na man*aig* in cend ina téig libuir. ar dāig a br*eithe* lēo dīa tír fesin. Acherunda didiu .i. isin Arāip ainm in luicc inro díchenta Ēoin ⁊ Sebastēn ainm in fhícha inro adnacit a chorp. Ōro dígset na man*aig* fora sét do shaigid a n-ath*ar*da. ecmaic aroli fer chucca isin slig*id*, 188b51.[110]
>
> 'The monks placed the head in their book-satchel to bring it to their own land. Acherunda, then, i.e. in Arabia, is the name of the place where John was beheaded and Sebasten is the name of the village in which his body was buried. When the monks had set off for their native land, they happened to meet a certain man on the road.'

I edit and translate the marginal verse as:

> Dīchennad Ēoin **inmain āin**.
> **i n**Aicherundai i nArāip.
> Sebastēn **is scrībtha sel**.
> ainm in fīcha ar hadnaiced.
>
> 'The beheading of splendid dear John was in Acherunda in Arabia; Sebasten, it is written for some time, is the name of the village where he was buried.'

One could easily conclude that the verse derives from the prose, with the additional elements (marked in bold) completing heptasyllabic lines and supplying rhymes and alliteration, but a complicating factor is that the verse recurs in another context, without the corresponding prose. This is the commentary on the verse for 29 August, the Decollation of John the Baptist, in *Félire Óengusso*,

[107] Edited and translated in Breatnach (2023: 165, 170). The poem dates from some time between the late MIr and EModIr period.

[108] The relevant section of the main text is edited in *CIH* 2281.3, and the verse in *CIH* 2281.8–9, and the verse is edited and translated in Breatnach (2023: 180–1). For *Uraicecht Becc* see Breatnach (2005: 315–18).

[109] The scribe who wrote *Uraicecht Becc* in G 3 is unidentified; see Ní Shéaghdha (1967: 13).

[110] This corresponds to *PH* 925–9. I normalise word-division, capitalise proper nouns, and add macrons over long vowels, here and in the following verses.

where it appears in four of the manuscript copies. The earliest manuscript is the Leabhar Breac itself, where in its other appearance, on p. 94, it has two further verses attached to it:

> Dīchendad Ēoin inmain āin.
> i nAcirunda i nArāib;
> Sebastēn is scrībtha seal.
> ainm in fhīcha ar hadnaiced.
>
> Mā ro būailed mā ro bīth.
> mā ro tūagad tend in fāth;
> a mac samla sūairc in līa.
> nī bīa ar brūach Amra co brāth.
>
> Mnā domain acht mād bec dīb.
> i tenid brāth breoid;
> labra frīu noco tēchta.
> i ndegaid ēchta Eoin.

The additional verses can be translated as:[111]

> 'If he has been struck, if he has been slain, if he has been axed, harsh the matter; his like, pleasant the champion (?), will never be on the bank of Amra (?).
>
> The world's women, save a few of them, in the scorching fire of Doom [leg. *brátha*], to speak to them is unmeet after the murder of John.'

The same three verses are appended to the scholia on the verse for 29 August in the copy of *Félire Óengusso* in Rawlinson B 512, fol. 61rb27,[112] whereas in A 7, fol. 31r, and MS 5100–04, fol. 62v1, the first verse appears alone without the additional misogynistic verses.[113] As the first verse is in the *deibide* metre and the second and third are in *rannaigecht*,[114] the latter two are probably originally separate. These other attestations make it likely that the verse was in circulation before the writing of the Leabhar Breac, so that in the case of the copy on p. 188 we have in fact to do with a marginal verse influencing the wording of the main text. Looking again at the prose, the part which corresponds to the verse (*Acherunda didiu … a chorp*) certainly has the appearance of

[111]The translation by Stokes (1905: 191) of the almost identical second copy is superior to his earlier translation (1880: cxxxiii–cxxxiv), and I follow the later translation for the most part here.

[112]Edited and translated in Stokes (1905: 190–1). This copy has *Banba* for the problematic *Amra* in the last line of the second verse, and the superior reading *bratha* in the second line of the third verse. Stokes took *breoid* as a 3 pl. verbal form, but it is rather the gen.sg. (with *o*-stem inflexion) of the corresponding verbal noun (*bréoïd*), as fixed by the rhyme with *Éoïn*; see *DIL* s.v. *breóad*, where the line *a teinidh brātha breoïd* is cited from the early MIr poem edited in O'Keeffe (1907: 30 v. 11).

[113]In MS 5100–04 it is included among the verses for June.

[114]Verse 2 is in *rannaigecht mór* and verse 3 in a metre which, apart for the first line, conforms to *rannaigecht bec*.

a parenthetical comment interrupting the flow of the narrative, and may well be simply a précis of the verse, perhaps even introduced by the main scribe of the Leabhar Breac himself.[115]

A somewhat different case is the verse on the lower margin of p. 60 of the Leabhar Breac. This appears under a copy of the Middle Irish translation of the Life of Martin of Tours, and while it clearly relates to that text, there is nothing matching it in the prose.[116] I edit and translate as:

> Mārtain mīlid mod nāch dis.
> do Gallīa Lúgdanēsis.
> gormac grādshūairc de claind rīg.
> mac Mānūailt is Abrasín.
>
> 'Martin, a soldier, a function which is not paltry, from Gallia Lugdunensis, a noble pleasant dutiful son from a family of kings, son of Manualt and of Abrasin.'

This is yet another instance of a verse which circulates between margins and commentary, in this case again, even in the same manuscript, as it appears on p. 99 marg. sin. of the Leabhar Breac among the scholia on *Félire Óengusso*, specifically the scholia relating to Martinmas, the eleventh of November.[117] However, the fact that it is found in the commentary on most copies of the *Félire*, makes one disinclined to see any special connection between its two appearances in the Leabhar Breac.[118]

Among other instances of a definite connection between the subject-matter of a marginal verse and the main text on the same page are the two verses in the upper margin of p. 38 of Lebor na hUidre relating to *Aided Nath Í* (Best and Bergin, 1929: 92),[119] and the two verses in the upper margin of p. 117 of the Book of Leinster on the killing of Mes Gegrae by Conall Cernach, an incident also narrated in the main text, *Talland Étair*.[120] Indeed the majority of the marginal verses in Lebor na hUidre bear some relationship to the main text of the page on which they appear,[121] the exceptions being the two verses added in later hands.[122]

[115]Identified by Ó Concheanainn (1973) as Murchad Ó Cuindlis.

[116]For example, Martin's parents are nowhere named in the main text.

[117]This copy, where the only significant variant is *do síl rig* in the third line, was edited and translated by Stokes (1880: clxviii).

[118]Subsequently Stokes (1905: 240–1) edited and translated the variants in Rawlinson B 512 and B 505, and variants of the verse are also cited in the scholia for 11 November in the copies of the *Félire* in Laud 610 (fol. 69v), MS A 7 (fol. 40r), MS 5100–04 (fol. 63v) and MS 5057–59 (fol. 46r).

[119]See Ó hUiginn (2024: 28). See also p. 78 above on the two marginal verses in the same MS relating to an incident in the tale *Cath Cairn Chonaill*.

[120]The verses are edited in *LL* p. 432, and *Talland Étair* is edited and translated by Ó Domhnaill (2005).

[121]In this regard there is no significant difference between those in Hand M and those in Hand H. The verses are listed in n. 18 above.

[122]The glossed verse in the upper margin of p. 50, in the hand of M, is probably to be connected with the final paragraph of *Serglige Con Culainn* on the same page (see Findon 2007), although it recurs in a different context in the early sixteenth-century MS Egerton 1782 (see Flower 1926: 297–8, and 275).

Nevertheless, while practice may vary from one manuscript to another, there is by no means always a connection between marginal verses and the main text. As we have seen above many marginal verses recur in more than one manuscript, and the fact that the main text is not the same in each manuscript[123] serves to remind us that it is not necessary to look for a connection in all cases.[124]

VI. RANN MARBHÁIN

In the collection he made in MS 5100–04, fols 58r–65r, of verses connected with a copy of *Félire Óengusso*, Mícheál Ó Cléirigh ends the verses connected with the prologue with the note *Rainn marbhain an chédbrólaigh don Fheilire ind sin*, fol. 58r7, 'Those are the marginal verses of the prologue to the *Félire*'. At the end of the collection he introduces an important terminological distinction when he refers to what he has written as *na roinn marbhain 7 chnis sin bhenus le corp an feilire.*[125] Here we have *cnes* 'skin; surface' opposed to 'margin', and as none of the verses are taken from the main text of the *Félire*, the 'skin' or 'surface' must be the apparatus of gloss and commentary usually written all around the copy of the main text. Accordingly I would translate 'those verses in the margins and in the commentary which belong with the canonical text of the *Félire*'.[126] Ó Cléirigh makes this distinction once again when he marks the verses for April with *Cuid April dona rannaibh cnis, 7 marbhain*, on fol. 60v2.[127]

There is a brief note on *marbhán* as a form of the word for 'margin' in Breatnach (2007: 34 n. 9),[128] and the most important addition to be made to it relates to the following example, poem No. V of the poems on the Butlers, a poem which consists of one verse only, and is in fact in the margin of the manuscript.[129]

[123]See, for example, the verse mentioned in n. 122, as well as the verse *Mairg cuinges ní ara charait*, cited above p. 76, which appears under a king-list in the Book of Fenagh, under the *Félire Óengusso* in the Leabhar Breac, and under *Betha Senáin* in Laud 610.

[124]Here may be noted the ingenious connection made by Ford (1999) between the margin and the main text in the case of marginal verse in the St Gall Priscian. See also Melia (2005) and Toner (2009: 12 n. 37).

[125]Fol. 65r. This is the sole example of the term for marginal verse cited in *DIL* s.v. *margan*, but with *roinn* misprinted as *roinni*, and *7 chnis* omitted. See also the note by Ó Cléirigh cited in the introduction to Anthology B in Appendix 2 below.

[126]Previously translated 'those marginal and contiguous (?) verses which belong with the body of the *Félire*', in Breatnach (2007: 34).

[127]In the course of a discussion of the difficulties with an instance of *raind marghan* in *IGT* V, Ó Riain (2025: 38 n. 120) cites a further example of the term *rann cnis*, but I cannot agree with his suggestion that 'the terms *roinn marbhain agus chnis* … in a general way … [refer] to "scholia" or "commentary", perhaps not necessarily in verse' (p. 38), nor with the suggestion that 'the two may be roughly synonymous' (p. 38 n. 120).

[128]The headword *marbán* in *DIL* relates solely to the homonym meaning 'dead person', and there is no reference to the three instances of *marb*(*h*)*án* noted s.v. *margan* 'margin', where they are described as misspellings.

[129]In the lower margin of p. 5 of RIA MS 23 F 21. The manuscript belongs to the later sixteenth century; see Carney (1945: xiii–xv, 112).

Āit mo roinn gan rann oile
nī frīth feadh do dhuanaire –
a dhreach bhúidh fān barrlān coill –
dūinn, acht marbhān an mheamruim.

'There is no place in thy *duanaire* for my quatrain without other quatrains there – O thou of the loving countenance about whom is a wood rich in produce (*lit.* about whom a wood is heavy-topped) – there is but the margin of the parchment.'[130]

In his note on this verse, Carney (1945: 112) offers a convincing explanation of the form: 'RIA Contribb., fasc, M, gives examples of this word under *margan*, "a margin (of a book)", and describes it as a misspelling. It is rather to be taken as a new word meaning "margin", a contamination of *margan* and *bán* "white, blank".' An instance in a satirical verse in the Book of the O'Conor Don is *tainm ar imioll a marbháin* 'your name on the edge of its margin',[131] and a number of instances in the fifteenth-century MS now bound as two, King's Inns 12 and 13, are listed by de Brún (1972: 31). The earliest example I have so far come across, again in the genitive sg. qualifying *rann*, may be as early as the thirteenth century, but is certainly no later than 1309. It is in verse 14 of the poem *Gabh mo chomhairle a mheic mhín*, by Giolla na Naomh Mac Aodhagáin, which was edited and translated by Ní Dhonnchadha (1989: 166, 169) as:

Meabhraigh gach rann marbhdhán mín,
giodh camdhán é nó giodh cóir,
do-bheirim fan dTréidhe thuas
nach budh séimhe an buas ón Bhóinn.

'Memorise all stanzas of the well-wrought poems of the dead, whether it be a flawed poem or a faultless one; I swear by the Trinity on high that the knowledge from the Boyne would be no more benign.'

The edition follows the text of MS H 4. 22,[132] and the version in one other copy is cited in the apparatus (p. 168), namely, the single verse in the miniature MS G 1, fol. 72v7:

Meabhraig gac rann marbhain mín.
madh camdhán hé madh dán cóir.
s dobherr fan tréighe.
nac budh reidhe an buas on mbóind.

While adopting the variant *marbdan*, Ní Dhonnchadha (1989: 172) suggested that the variant *rann marbhain* might mean 'elegy'. In the light of the further versions discussed below, all of which point to *marbhá*(*i*)*n*,[133] as well as the

[130]Edited by Carney (1945: 19), with the translation on p. 112; *mo roinn gan rann oile*, lit. 'of my verse without another verse', means, of course, a single-verse composition.

[131]Edited in Ó Macháin (1998: 31 no. 48c).

[132]There is a diplomatic edition of this verse in *CIH* 1584.27.

[133]For the gsg. in either *-án* or *-áin*, see *GOI* §280 (with Translators' note 58) and *SnaG* 242, 370.

evidence presented above for *marbhán* 'margin', I propose that we revise the translation of the first line to 'Study every polished marginal verse'.[134] The author of the poem, who died in 1309, was a noted legal scholar,[135] and the poem is one of advice to a student of law which includes a list of both general topics and specific texts that should be studied. With the proposed reading of the first line of verse 14, it will have included marginal verses among the texts to be studied, and their inclusion is a relatively early confirmation of the importance attached to them in medieval Irish literary culture.

It is, then, entirely appropriate that this verse on marginal verses became in turn itself a marginal verse. What is essentially the text of verse 14 appears in 23 Q 10, fol. 45r inf., as:

> Mebraig cach rand marban min.
> cid quamdan he no cid coir
> do-beirim fan treide tuass
> conach seim< > on Boinn.

The copy in the miniature manuscript G 1 is cited just above, and the verse recurs with an interesting variant for the first word in Rawlinson B 485, fol. 91v inf. as:[136]

> Léigh gach rand marbháin mhín.
> ciodh camdhán é giodh dán cóir
> do bheirim ar mo thréidhe thúas.
> nach b*ud*h séimhe an búas ón mBóinn

In addition, I know of two copies of an alternative version, which combines the first couplet of v. 14 with the second couplet of v. 3 of *Gabh mo chomhairle a mheic mhín*. Verse 3 was edited and translated by Ní Dhonnchadha (1989: 164, 168) as:

> Lean dot fhoghlaim – béara bhuaidh!
> ná déana doghraing do dheoin,
> gach ní ná tuigfe, tuig féin
> agus bu léir duid fa dheoidh.
>
> 'Persevere in your study – victory will be yours! Do not create difficulty of your own design; pay attention to everything that you will not understand and it will be clear to you eventually'.

[134] *DIL* s.v. *mebair* (c) notes that in EModIr it can be used in the sense 'reason, intelligence', and I take it that the corresponding verb *mebraigid*, rather than meaning 'memorises', is used here in the sense 'fathoms the meaning of', that is 'studies', a meaning closer to that of the variant *léigh* 'read' in the version in Rawlinson B 485 cited below.

[135] For accounts of his work see Kelly (2001 and 2020).

[136] Cf. Ó Cuív (2001: 118).

The combination of the originally separate couplets appears as a marginal verse in Laud 615, p. 138 inf.:[137]

> Mepruicch gach rand marbhain mhín.
> madh quamdan hé mad dhán coir.
> gach ní nach tuicfir tuic fen.
> & bud ler duit fa dheoicch.

and on the upper margin of C ii 3 (a) p. 13:[138]

> < >uid gach rann marbhan min
> ma camdan no ma coir
> gach ní nach tuigfir tuig fein
> ⁊ b*ud* leir duit fa dheoidh

VII. Manuscript anthologies of verses

It is fair to say that the best known single-verse compositions in medieval Irish are marginal verses, and most readers will also be familiar with them in commentaries, learned treatises and prosimetrical texts. Probably the least familiar context in which single-verse poems are found is where they are brought together in manuscript anthologies. All the examples that I know of are in manuscripts which date from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. These anthologies are treated as the main text and placed in the centre of the manuscript page, and here also there is a degree of circulation between the margins and centre-page text. The most striking instance is the almost complete correspondence between an anthology of eight verses in Add. 30512 and the eleven verses in the margins of H 2. 12, for which see Breatnach (2020: 81–6).

Another instance of close correspondence is between the anthology of six verses in H 3. 18, p. 151, and four verses on the margins of the Leabhar Breac (all on pages where the main text is *Félire Óengusso*). The first (beg. *It finna ferta feil*) recurs in the Leabhar Breac, p. 77 inf.,[139] the third (*Tri bliadna <xxx>it tri mís*) and the fourth (*Inn aimsir-sin ail iar ngrein*) recur together in the Leabhar Breac, p. 78 inf., while the fifth (*Mairg cuinngis ni fora carait*) recurs in the Leabhar Breac, p. 90 inf., and elsewhere.[140] On the other hand, the second (*Acht co saethraib fri serc nDe*) recurs as a marginal verse in Laud 610, fol. 121r inf., as well as in the commentary on *Amrae Coluimb Chille*,[141] and the sixth verse (beg. *Is he in forus in forba*) recurs in both MS 5100–04, fol.

[137]It is followed by another copy in a different hand. See O'Sullivan and Herbert (1973: 182), where the third line is mistranscribed as *gach ní tuicfiter tuic fen*. The first copy actually has *gach ní nach tuicfit tuic fen*, with the correction *nó r* above the final *-t* of *tuicfit*, and this correction was adopted in the second copy, which reads *gac ni nac tuicfer tuic fén*.

[138]This second example was brought to my attention by Dr Gordon Ó Riain.

[139]The latter copy was edited and translated by Meyer (1889–94c: 193).

[140]See pp. 75–6 above.

[141]The former copy was edited and translated by Dillon (1963: 154–5), and the Rawlinson B 502 copy of the latter by Stokes (1899: 268–9); for other copies see Bisagni (2019: 463).

58r, and MS 5057–59, fol. 44r, among verses appended to the prologue to *Félire Óengusso*.[142] One other anthology containing early material which may be noted here is that of three prose triads and four verses (all marked as separate) in H 3. 17, col. 855.

A special case is the sixteenth-century MS G 1, a miscellany of prose and verse items. Its dimensions are so small (6.8 by 5.4 cms) that the difference between centre and margin becomes irrelevant for the single verse items included in it, most of which are concentrated in fols 71v to 74v.[143] Mention may also be made here of a substantial anthology of single-verse compositions from the Early Modern Irish period, the collection of 79 verses in the Book of O'Conor Don, fol. 22, edited in Ó Macháin (1998: 25–25).[144]

To draw further attention to what I consider to be an important variety of text, and to illustrate in more detail the nature of anthologies, I edit a sample of four of them in Appendices 1–4 below. Anthology A exemplifies an anthology with a high degree of overlap with verses cited in the commentary on a single text. The vast majority of the verses in Anthology B are unique to that text. Anthologies C and D exhibit a large degree of overlap with marginal verses and with other anthologies, and both are in hands other than that of the main scribe of the relevant manuscript. Anthologies A, with a total of 22 verses, and B, with 20 verses, are quite substantial, as opposed to Anthologies C, with 9 verses, and D, with 7 verses. In all cases the individual verses can be distinguished on the basis of subject-matter and metre, while additional markers serve to distinguish more clearly the verses in Anthologies A and D, and most of those in C.[145] Even where the verses in anthologies are not clearly marked as separate, we can take it that they were not intended to be read as the component verses of a single poem. Nevertheless, in at least two cases, both works of the fifteenth-century scribe Uilliam Mac an Leagha, we have to do with a deliberate attempt to pass off a string of disparate verses as a unitary poem, in one case by arranging the verses in such a way as to contrive a *dúnad*, and in the other by inventing a title for the verses, *Ríagail na Manach Líath* 'The Rule of the Grey Monks'.[146]

Conclusion

Marginal verses are first attested in manuscripts of the Old Irish period and are a characteristic feature of manuscripts of the Middle Irish and later periods. In

[142]This set of verses in H 3. 18, p. 151, is followed by a legal fragment, edited in *CIH* 678.16–20, and then by three verses on almsgiving, apparently in a different hand, all three of which occur together among verses appended to *Félire Óengusso* in the Leabhar Breac, p. 85 (under 15 April, omitted in Stokes, 1880), in MS 5100–04, fol. 60v, and in MS 5057–59, fol. 45r. The first two of the latter three verses are adaptations of verses 6 and 9 of the dialogue between Cummaine Fota and Comgan edited and translated by O'Keeffe (1911: 22–3).

[143]For this manuscript see Ní Shéaghdha (1967: 1–12), and for a general account and thematic analysis of the contents see Cunningham (2004).

[144]Ó Macháin suggested (pp. 8–10) that Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn was the author of all these verses, but subsequently (2010: 83–7) revised his views.

[145]For details see the introductory notes to Appendices 1, 3 and 4.

[146]See Breatnach (2020: 87–8 and 89–97), for editions and translations of both of these works.

the context of medieval Europe in general, it is only in Early Welsh manuscripts that anything comparable can be found, but even there the practice of writing verses in the margins was abandoned quite early.[147] In most cases we have to do with a single verse.[148] They vary widely in subject-matter, ranging from epigrams to mnemonic verses and prayers. Occasionally more than one single-verse poem can appear in the same marginal space.

Single-verse compositions are not confined to the margins of manuscripts. They can be cited in works such as glossaries and the scholia on major texts, or form elements of prosimetric texts. They can be brought together to form anthologies of varying length. They can then be moved from one of these locations to another.

Many of the verses can be shown to be earlier than the manuscript source in which they are found, so that the study of marginal verses and anthologies in manuscripts of the Early Modern period is also of relevance for the earlier medieval period. Not all marginal verses are originally single-verse compositions, and the fact that some are extracted from longer poems[149] raises the possibility that, conversely, single-verse compositions could occasionally be incorporated into longer poems.[150]

Some manuscripts, for example, Add. 30512, contain both marginal verses and anthologies.[151] In other cases single verses are concentrated in every margin of a sequence of a few MS pages,[152] so that the distinction between marginal verses and anthologies can be blurred.[153]

Although first attested in manuscripts of the EModIr period, it is quite possible that anthologies of single-verse compositions were being compiled at an earlier date.[154] The question of when anthologies began to be put together is relevant to the wider question of how single-verse poems were transmitted. They certainly were being transmitted from quite early on,[155] and while they may have simply been copied from one margin to another, other possibilities at least deserve consideration.

[147]It has been suggested that the Welsh practice derived from the Irish; for the arguments and counter-arguments see Sims-Williams (2011: 31–3).

[148]For the rare instances of two-verse poems and one instance of a poem of three verses see p. 72 above.

[149]It is remarkable that even in more recent times O'Rahilly took some of the verses of his collection in *Dánfhocail* (1921) from longer poems; see pp. 71–2 above.

[150]See, for example, the discussion of v. 4 of the poem *Maire máthair in maic bic* on p. 81 above, and the note by Eleanor Knott (1958: 79) on v. 18 of the poem *Trēdhe nach fuilngeand rīgh rēil*: 'This stanza breaks the continuity of the discourse. It looks like a marginale included through accident from the exemplar'.

[151]For the marginal verses see Flower (1926: 504–5), and for the anthology see Breatnach (2020: 81–3).

[152]See p. 74 above on the Book of Fenagh and Egerton 91.

[153]Even in the case of the anthology just mentioned, in Add. 30512, the first five-and-a-half verses are in col. b of fol. 32v, but the remaining three-and-a-half verses are written in the lower margin of fol. 32v and the upper margin of fol. 33r.

[154]These might have been on centre page, as in the case of the anthologies edited in the Appendices here, or in miniature MSS like G 1.

[155]See section III above.

A great deal remains to be done in the work of identifying and editing marginal verses and anthologies, but I hope at least to have shown in this paper that they were a central element of medieval Irish literary culture. Not all marginal verses are as fine examples of poetry as the verse with this paper opens. Given the mobility of marginal verses, it is of course difficult, if not impossible, to prove that it is the work of the scribe of the manuscript in which it is found. Furthermore, this verse appears in the MS with two corrections,[156] which according to Stifter (2018: 224), 'give it the hallmarks of a copy'.[157] If the verse was copied from another manuscript, it can at least, as Stifter noted, be dated within a fairly narrow range, between 795, the date of the first recorded Viking raid on Ireland,[158] and 850–1, the date of writing of the manuscript.[159] Nevertheless, it is quite possible that, if one has to do with a copy, the exemplar was simply a draft or a fair copy made, for example, on a wax-tablet, and that the verse was indeed composed by the scribe who wrote it into the St Gall Priscian.

APPENDIX 1: ANTHOLOGY A

This anthology of 22 verses takes up most of col. 675,[160] and all of col. 676 of section 4 of TCD MS H 3. 17.[161] Six of the verses, viz. 14, 15, 20, 7, 8 and 11, in that order, were edited (without translation) in Meyer (1910: 297). It exemplifies two, by no means universal, features of verse anthologies; firstly, most of the items are clearly marked as separate, and secondly, almost all the items are taken from a single text with its scholia and marginalia. It is, however, a selection and is thus entirely different from a comprehensive collection of all the marginal and commentary verses connected with a single text, such as that by Mícheál Ó Cléirigh in MS 5100–04, referred to above, p. 88.

Twelve of the twenty items are marked as separate by placing the 'paragraph or distinguishing mark',[162] printed here as ¶, beside them.[163] Two of these also have an ascription of authorship,[164] while three are marked by an ascription alone.[165] In addition, a number of short prose passages relating to

[156]One of these is a correction of an omission: *minn* in the third line is a supralinear addition preceded by two dots (:) which are also placed at the point where *minn* is to be inserted. The second is a substitution of one spelling for another: *fairggæ* in the second line was first written *faircæ*, then a dot was placed under the *c* and a suprascript *gg* (now partly cut away) added. Given the variation in the spelling of the voiced stops in word-internal position in OIr in general, and particularly in the same manuscript (contrast *foirrce*, *Sg.* 67b9, with *foirrgae*, *Sg.* 124a1), it is difficult to see why it was felt necessary to make this correction. Yet it was still made.

[157]Similarly Etchingham (2025: 228), without reference to Stifter.

[158]*AU* s.a. 795; see Etchingham (2025: 87).

[159]See Ó Néill (2000).

[160]Items 9 and 12 each have two verses, and the rest have a single verse. The first 14 lines are taken up by a note on the canonical hours, edited and translated by Best (1907).

[161]It is dated to the sixteenth century. For the make-up of this composite manuscript see Breatnach (2005: 7).

[162]It is so described by Anne O'Sullivan in *LL* vi, p. xii.

[163]Items 1, 2, 6, 9, and 13–20.

[164]Items 1 and 16.

[165]Items 4, 10 and 11.

the subject matter of the verse which they accompany are included in items 2, 5, 6, 10, 11 and 19.

Most of the items appear to have been taken from a copy of *Félire Óengusso* which was fairly close to that in the Leabhar Breac, both in its apparatus of scholia as well as in its marginal verses. The verse in no. 5 derives from the main text of *Félire Óengusso*, and most of the rest have a connection with the *Félire*, either as verses cited in the scholia (a total of 9) or as verses on the margins of pages containing the *Félire* (a total of 5).[166] Six items recur in the scholia in the Leabhar Breac (usually in other copies also), namely 1, 2, 10, 12, 16 and 19.[167] Three recur in the scholia on the *Félire* as found in other manuscripts only, namely, 6, 9 and 18. Five recur on the margins of the pages of the Leabhar Breac which contain a copy of *Félire Óengusso*, namely 3, 4, 11, 15 and 17. Two recur among the verses extracted from scholia and marginal verses on the text of the *Félire* in MS 5100–04, namely, 7 and 13.[168]

This leaves only four items which cannot be connected with the *Félire*, namely 8, 14 and 20, and the genealogy in no. 5; while the verses in 14 and 20 recur elsewhere, and some parallels can be adduced for the genealogy, I have found no other copy of the verse in 8.

In the edition below unambiguous abbreviations are expanded silently and expansions of suspension-strokes are italicised. I reproduce the punctuation of the manuscript, but divide words according to current standards and capitalise proper names. A few items are accompanied by interlinear glosses, which are printed separately and cross-referenced by suprascript letters.

1. ¶ Mael Gemr*id* cecinit

   Bendchor idan.
   lochan dilguda chinad
   biaid uair do brig na n-apud
   bid adba matad mbirach

2. ¶ O gabais mac u Elta
   Brenaind gu lin a ferta
   acht mas ferr ni mesaiti
   o sin ile Cluain F*er*ta.

   Braen find m*a*c Findloga m*a*c u Alta do Chiarraige Luachra

3. Teora saeba sanasa
   Lethe Cuind ro charusa
   Mu Cutu cona clamraid
   d'indarbu a Raithin raglain
   dichur Col*uim* Cille caid
   timdibe saegail Ciarain

[166] Four of these (items 3, 11, 12 and 13) can be shown to have had a wider distribution; for details see the notes.

[167] As does the first prose passage in no. 5.

[168] Whether these two verses appeared among the scholia or in the margin in Ó Cléirigh's exemplar cannot be determined.

4. Comgall d*ix*i*t*

   Ainmne aine figell airc.
   narup saithech narup goirt.
   foss is fethamla gen bais
   mesrug*ud* crais comet cuirp

5. Lasar grene ane.
   apstal Erend uaige
   Patraic co met mile
   rop ditiu diar truage

   Ocus Nesan Corcaige c*u*m P*at*ricio in h̄ die

   Patraic m*ac* Calpuirn m*ei*c Fotaidhe m*ei*c Odisi m*ei*c Lebuirn m*ei*c Mercuid m*ei*c Ota m*ei*c Murich m*ei*c Oric m*ei*c Maxim m*ei*c Encreti m*ei*c Fresa m*ei*c Fereni m*ei*c Brita m*ei*c Hisicon m*ei*c Eloi m*ei*c Doi m*ei*c Baath m*ei*c Ibath m*ei*c Gomer m*ei*c Iafeth m*ei*c Nae

6. ¶ Finan Cam tuc cruithnecht[a] les i nErind ar dus ⁊ Declan tuc secal[b] ⁊ Mo Domnoc[c] tuc beochu ⁊ i n-aenluing tucad iat
   [a] .i. lan a asai [b] .i. lan a cluic [c] .i. lan a cluic

   Dligid Finan fircuarta
   med do tuirn cach trebi[a]
   lan a asa umaidi
   cis na ruc ranaem remi
   [a] .i. i nErind

7. IS bes do m*ac* De tacu
   ni sraiglend a lesm*a*cu
   meic neich aile nocha n-airg
   acht a meic fen ros timairg

8. Imad fesa finnad nech.
   mor a maith don aes craidbech
   tuilled digla is *ed* ros ta
   don lucht nachat comaillfea

9. ¶ Cach naem ro bui fuil bias
   co brath brigach bobhaid
   i caemtech Crist credail
   ro beat acum cobair

   ro bet acar cobair
   for nim ⁊ talmain
   gu tisat na mbudnib
   do chungnam ler n-anmain
   A Isucan inmain
   ro comailt*er* amlaid

10. Ang*e*lus dx ⁊ gibe gabus in rand-sa i n-uair a bais niba ifernach

Berach[a] is Mo Chaem
romellach a gnais
gibe nus gude ri beolu bais
ni*con* raga bas
[a] .i. o Cluain Cairpthi i ndithrub Cenel Lobta ⁊ caectigis d'errach a feil

11. Caemgen d*ix*i*t*
Sonus f*or* cach n-esair ara ngebtair in rand-sa sis

IS maith main mesrugud
in trath ric co longud
ferr aruda imud
at-cota bith bronnud

12. Pet*ar* Andrias is Matha
Partol*on* Tomas Tatha
Simon Madian Pil*ip* Pol
Eoin ⁊ na da Iacob

Da apstal dec tire Herend

Da Findean da Col*um* caid
Ciaran Caindech Comgall cain.
da Brenaind Ruadan co li
Ninded Mo Bi M*a*c Nad Fraich[a]
[a] .i. Mo Laisi Daminse

13. ¶ Osraige o Gabran go Gren
tuctha i n-eric Etirsceil[a]
ra Mumain togaide tair
is Conairi ros cengail
[a] . athair Conair Moir

14. ¶ IS fo lim-sa mu laiget
do talmain tairnes cach cland
ce no beith nech ni bud isliu
do thoillfed serc Isa ann

15. ¶ Collud ⁊ sadaili.
longud gibe tan tairi
if*er*n cona ilpianaib
is s*ed* do-b*er*ar airi

16. ¶ Findcua adubairt
IS í itge guidim-sea
armo scarud risin sas
narop ifernach cach dune
acht curum gude ri bas

17. ¶ Crabud cen uaill cen secda
cen somataid cen bochta
ol cen itaid cen mesca
proind seim gen saith gen gorta

18. ¶ Feil Coluim[a] feil Giric[b] gil.
⁊ k*al*a*nd* Septimper
feil Partoloin[c] baig co mbrig
ge*m*ín Muiri ⁊ feil Michil
[a] .i. Cilli [b] . macaim [c] .i. for aenlaithi bit

19. ¶ Lupaid ⁊ Tigris tend
feib do-ruirmius is Ricell
Dar Erca is Liamain na lend
gabsat diamair cen dichell
anmann sin re srethaib sell
sethar Patraic na primcell

Secht n-espoic dec im espoc M*a*c Cairtind ro genair o Dar Erca ⁊ da naeboig .i. Aice ⁊ Lalloc

20. ¶ Lepaid uar
⁊ clerchin tana truag
smacht ar col*ainn* snige der
ac rig nell bid mor a luag

Notes

1. The metre is *rannaigecht bec*, with a shortened first line. A variant of this, with the same ascription, appears in the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* for 10 May, and was edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 130–1) from MS A 7 as:

Mael-geimridh dixit:
Bennchor alaind idhan
loc dilgudha na cinadh:
biaidh uair do brigh na n-apadh
bid adhba madagh mbirach

'Mael-geimrid dixit: Bangor delightful pure, place of forgiveness of crimes: a time will be for the power of the abbots: it will be a dwelling of sharp-nosed dogs.'

For the similar copy in the Leabhar Breac see Stokes (1880: lxxxv); this also has *alaind* in the first line, and for the second line reads *loc dílguda cinad*, and the copy in MS 5100–04, fol. 61r, agrees with the Leabhar Breac in both cases.

The version here in Anthology A has the superior *Bendchor idan* in the first line, with the final of the shortened line rhyming with the finals of the second and fourth lines (see Murphy, 1961: 55 no. 24), whereas the addition of *ālaind* in the other copies still does not manage to convert it into a heptasyllabic line. In the second line, *lochan* (written *plene*) is clearly an error for *locán*, the diminutive of *loc*. The substitution of *loc* for *locán* gives a hexasyllabic line in the Leabhar Breac and Brussels copies, while the missing syllable is supplied

in the copy in A 7 by the addition of the gen.pl. article *na*. The last two lines are better translated as 'there will be a time because of the abbots that it will be a dwelling place of sharp-nosed dogs'.

2. The metre is a variety of *rannaigecht*, conforming to the pattern of *rannaigecht bec* except in the third line. A variant of this appears in the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* for 16 May, and was edited and translated by Stokes (1880: lxxxvi) from the Leabhar Breac as:

> O gabais mac .h. alltai
> brenaind colín aeltai
> acht mas ferr nis mesaide
> ósin cose cluain fertai.
>
> 'Since the son of Hua Alltai took it, Brenann with the multitude of his flocks, if it is not better, it is not the worse, Clonfert, from that to this.'

The copy in MS 5100–04, fol. 61r19, does not differ significantly from that in the Leabhar Breac, except for the end of the third line, where it has *ni mesa de*, with spaces between the words. This provides strong support for restoring OIr *ní mesa dé*, with *dé* making *aicill* rhyme with *sé* (or *lé*, as in the version here in Anthology A).

The prose also appears in the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* for 16 May, and was edited by Stokes (1880: lxxxvi) from the Leabhar Breac as: *do chiarraige luachra .i. braen find mc findlogai mic .h. allta.*

3. 'The three perverse counsels of Conn's Half (of Ireland), which I have loved: the expulsion of Mo Chutu with his lepers from bright Rahen, the sending away of holy Colum Cille, the shortening of the life of Ciarán.'

The metre is *deibide*, with an additional couplet. A variant of this, differing in the fifth line ('sending Colum Cille across the sea') is found on the lower margin of p. 87 of the Leabhar Breac, the first of the two pages containing the text of the *Félire* for May, but it is not included in Stokes' edition of 1880:

> Teora saebu sanusa.
> Lethi Cúind ro charusa;
> Mo Chuda cona chlamr*aid*
> d'indarba a Rathin raglain.
> cur Chol*uim* Cil*le* tar sál.
> timdibe saegail Chiaran.

The copies in MS 5100–04, fol. 61v3, edited by Meyer (1906: ix n. 1), and in MS 5057–59, fol. 45r25, edited by Grosjean (1951: 104 n. 2), agree with that in the Leabhar Breac.

In the story of the expulsion of Mo Chutu from Rahen, this extended six-line verse was modified to give a pair of quatrains, edited in Plummer (1922: i, 302) as:

Teora saobha sanasa
Clainni Cuind imraga sa
cur Colum Cille tar sal,
timdibhi sáogail Ciarain.

Mochutta cona chlamhraidh
d'innarbadh a Rathain roglain;
forbais doibh ar clannaib Cuinn
tarraid do siol Muoluim.

4. The metre is *rannaigecht mór*. Another copy of the verse, with the same ascription, appears on the upper margin of p. 88 of the Leabhar Breac, the second of the two pages containing the text of the *Félire* for May, and it is included in Stokes' edition and translation (1880: lxxxv) as:

Comgall cecinit
Ainmne aine figell airc
narub saithech narub goirt
foss is fethamla cenbáis.
mesrugud cráis coimet cuirp.

'Patience of fasting, watching the ark, let him not be sated; let him not be sour, rest and stillness without folly, moderation of appetite, protection of the body.'

The Leabhar Breac copy actually has *guirt* at the end of the second line, whereas the almost identical copy in MS 5100–04, fol. 61v6 has *goirt*; for rhyme we must read *goirt* and *coirp* in the second and fourth lines, respectively. I would translate the first two lines as 'Patience, fasting, vigil, hardship; let him not be sated, let him not be hungry'.

The verse is also included in Anthology C (Appendix 3, no. 4).

5. The verse is a variant of that for 17 March in the main text of *Félire Óengusso*, edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 82–3) as:

Lassar gréne áne,
apstal Hérenn hóge,
Pátraic co méit míle,
rop dítiu ar tróge!

'The flame of a splendid sun, the apostle of virginal Erin, may Patrick, with many thousands, be the shelter of our wretchedness.'

The first prose item appears in the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* for 17 March, and was edited by Stokes (1905: 98) from Rawlinson B 512 as: ⁊ *Nesan Corcaige cum Patricio in hoc die*; similarly Stokes (1880: lxiv), from the Leabhar Breac. The MS here has the abbreviation $\bar{h}$ for *hec* (Classical *haec*), instead of that for *hoc*.

I know of no exact parallel to the genealogy. Usually the medieval Irish genealogies of Patrick trace him only as far back as Britt, as for example those in the Homily on Patrick in the Leabhar Breac (Stokes, 1887b: 432) or in the scholia on Fíacc's Hymn (*Thes* ii, 308), and the first part of the genealogy here

(as far as *meic Brita*) is close to these. As for the second part, four separate genealogies of Britt are given in item 689 of the corpus of medieval Irish Saints' genealogies (ed. Ó Riain, 1985: 125), and only the second of these is in any way comparable to the second part of the genealogy here in Anthology A.

The only other genealogy I know of which traces Patrick all the way back to Noah is that edited as item 1 by Ó Riain (1985: 1), and while it mostly agrees with that here in Anthology A as far as Britt, the second part is entirely different. For the genealogies of Patrick see also Anscombe (1912).

6. A variant of the prose appears in the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* for 7 April, edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 112–13), from Rawlinson B 512 as:

> Finan Cam tuc cruithnecht i nErinn .i. lan a assa tug. Deglan tug in segal .i. lan a assa. Modomnóg tug beocha .i. lan a cluic, ⁊ a n-aen luing tucaid.
>
> 'Fínán Camm brought wheat into Ireland, i.e. the full of his shoe he brought. Declán brought the rye, i.e. the full of his shoe. Modomnóc brought bees, i.e. the full of his bell; and in one ship they were brought.'

The verse also appears in the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* for 7 April, and was edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 112–13), from Rawlinson B 512 as:

> Dligid Finan fírchuarta,
> med do tuirind cech treibe
> lan a assa umaide,
> císs nach ruc ronaem reime.
>
> 'Fínán is entitled to true circuits, a measure of wheat for every household, the full of his brazen shoe: a tribute that no great saint had taken.'

The metre is *aí ḟreisligi*.

7. There is another copy of this, with only minor variants, among the verses associated with *Félire Óengusso* for March in MS 5100–04, fol. 59v19:

> Is bes do mac De taccu.
> ní sraighlend a lesmacu.
> meic neich oile nocho n-oirg.
> acht a mheic féin nos timaircc.

This was translated by Meyer (1899: 120 n. 1) as 'It is the custom of the Son of God, I declare, that He does not scourge His stepsons: the sons of anyone else He does not strike, but His own sons He chastises'. In all three cases one might better translate as 'children' rather than 'sons'. The metre is *deibide*.

8. 'Abundance of knowledge, as everyone knows, is of great benefit to those who are devout; increased punishment is what it has for those who will not act accordingly.'

That is, with greater knowledge comes a greater responsibility to act correctly. The metre is *deibide*. In the first line *finnad nech* is lit. 'let anyone discover', and in the fourth line I take *nachat comaillfea* to be for *náchid chomaillfea*, lit. 'will not fulfil it', with the 3 sg. pronoun referring to what one has learnt. I know of no other copy of this verse.

9. This derives ultimately from lines 289–96 of the Epilogue of the main text of *Félire Óengusso*, edited by Stokes (1905: 277) as:

> Cech nóeb bói, fil, bías
> co bráth, brígach fodail,
> i coimthecht Críst credail,
> ro bet ocom chobair.
>
> Ro bet ocom chobair
> for nim ocus talmain,
> co tísat i ṁbuidnib
> do chuṅgnam frimm anmain.

A copy of these two verses appears at the end of the scholia for December in the copy of *Félire Óengusso* in MS A 7, fol. 46ra (with *ro bui* instead of *boí* in the first line), and a further adaptation of them, with the addition of a couplet to the second verse, appears at the end of the scholia for December in the copy of *Félire Óengusso* in Rawlinson B 512, fol. 64rb, edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 262–3) as:

> Cech noem ro bói fil bias
> co brath mbuadach fodail
> i coemthecht Críst credail
> ro bet ocum cobair.
>
> Ro bet ocum cobair
> for nim ocus talmain
> co tisad 'na mbuidnib
> do chongnum frimm anmain,
> a Isucan inmain
> ro comalltar amlaid!
>
> 'May every saint who has been, is, and will be till doom – victorious division – in Christ's pious company, may they be helping me!
>
> May they be helping me in heaven and on earth, and come in their bands to work along with my soul. O dear little Jesus, may it thus be fulfilled!'

The additional couplet conforms to the rhyming scheme of the second verse (*amlaid* rhymes with *talmain* and *anmain*, and *inmain* consonates with these).

The copy here in Anthology A is a variant of this adaptation, but which, in replacing singular with plural in the second verse (*acar cobair* in line 1, and *ler n-anmain* in line 4) is at a further remove from the original text of the Epilogue to *Félire Óengusso*.

10. The marginal and interlinear prose together with the verse are a variant of part of the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* for 15 February, edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 74–5) from Rawlinson B 512 as:

> Berach [...] Caicidis d'erreach a feil, ⁊ a ndithraib Cineil Dobtha i Connachtaib ata .i. i Cluain Coirpthi. Angelus dixit in rannsa, ⁊ cipe nos-gaba fri uair mbais ni ba ifernach:
>
> > Berach is Mo-choem
> > ropa mellach a ngnais,
> > cipe nos-guide fri beolu báis
> > ni con raga bás .i. iffern.
>
> 'Berach [...] A fortnight before spring is his festival, and in the desert (hermitage?) of Cenél Dobtha in Connaught he is, i.e. in Clúain Coirpthi. An angel said this stave, and whoever recites it at the hour of death will not be a dweller in hell:
>
> > Berach and Mo-chóem, pleasant was their society: whoever entreats them at death's lips will not go to death, i.e. hell.'

The copies in the Leabhar Breac (see Stokes, 1880: li–lii) and MS 5100–04, fol. 59r21, have *rop* for *ropa* in the second line, and *ragba* for *raga* in the fourth line, while that in G 10, p. 31, agrees with Anthology A in reading *romell*ach in the second line. All however agree in reading a plural possessive in the second line against *a gnais* here in Anthology A.

While end-rhyme is achieved by reading *gnás* in the second line, against the manuscript reading with *-is* in all copies, and lines 1, 2 (reading either *rop mellach* or *romellach*) and 4 each have five syllables, the third line has nine syllables in all the copies. If, however, the last three words (*ri beolu bais*, etc.) were dropped, we would have a quatrain which, apart from the disyllabic ending of line 3, would conform to the pattern of *lethrannaigecht mór*. With regard to Stokes' translation of *Caicidis d'erreach* in the prose, since *de* (or *do*) cannot mean 'before', and as the feast of Berach is on 15 February, we have rather to do with an instance of dating by forward counting as opposed to the Roman method usually followed in medieval Ireland, so that the translation should be revised to 'The fifteenth day of spring is his festival'.

11. 'Cáemgen uttered [this]. Good fortune on every meal at which this verse below will be recited.
A good gift is moderation, when it comes to eating; restraint is better than abundance, existence begets consumption.'

I take *aruda* in the third line as a figurative use of *aradu* 'rein'; see *DIL* s.v. *aradu* (b). Apart from the trisyllabic ending of line 1, the metre conforms to the pattern of *rannaigecht bec*.

A copy of this verse (not included in Stokes' edition of 1880) is found in the lower margin of p. 90 of the Leabhar Breac, the second of the two pages containing the text of the *Félire* for June, as follows:

Coemgin cecinit

IS maith main mesrugud.
in trath ric co longad.

Berach cecinit

Ferr aruda immad.
at-coda bith brondad.

Further copies are found among the verses relating to the *Félire* in MS 5100–04, fol. 62r6, and in G 10, p. 31, where it is also presented as a dialogue between Cóemgin and Berach. The only significant variant reading is in line 2, where the Brussels MS has *ticc* and G 10 has *thic*, for *ric* of the other two.

A modified version appears in the Life of Berach, where, as here in Anthology A, the whole verse is put into the mouth of Cóemgin. It was edited and translated by Plummer (1922: i, 29; ii, 28) as:

Gonadh dó sin ro raidh Caoimhghin:–

As ferr gach proinn mesruccadh
in úair tig go longadh;
As ferr áradhu immat
atcota bith-bronnadh.

'So that it was of this that Coemgen said:

"Better than any refection is moderation, when one comes to eat; better is pain than the abundance which obtains eternal destruction." '

12. The metre of the first verse is *deibide*, and that of the second is *rannaigecht mór*. A variant of these verses appears in the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* for 15 July, edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 168–9) from MS A 7 as:

Simon, Madian is Matha
Partalon, Tomas, Tatha,
Petur, Andrias, Pilib, Pol,
in da Iacob ocus Eoin.

.xii. apostoli Hibernie:
Da Ḟinnian, da Colum caidh,
Ciaran, Cainnech, Comghall cain,
da Brenainn, Ruadan co lli
Ninnidh, Mobi, Mac Natfraich .i. Molaisi.

'Simon, Madián and Matthew, Bartholomew, Thomas, Thaddaeus, Peter, Andrew, Philip, Paul, John and the two Jameses.

Ireland's twelve apostles:
Two Finniáns, two chaste Columbs, Cíarán, Cainnech, fair Comgall, two Brénainns, Rúadán with beauty, Ninnid, Mo-bí, son of Natfraech, i.e. Molaise.'

For the similar copy in the Leabhar Breac see Stokes (1880: cxviii).

Both verses are also found in RIA MS 23 N 10, p. 56, where they occupy space left before the beginning of *Immram Brain* on p. 57, and these were edited by Meyer (1910: 299). A variant of the first verse is also found, as a later addition, on fol. 31b of the TCD Liber Hymnorum, and was edited in Bernard and Atkinson (1898: i 159). All of these other copies agree in reading *Simon, Madian* in v. 1a, and *Petur, Andrias* in v. 1c, whereas these are transposed in the version here in Anthology A.

13. The metre is *deibide*. There is another copy of this among the verses associated with *Félire Óengusso* for March in MS 5100–04, fol. 63r20:

> Ossraighe ó Ghabran go Grein.
> tuccta i nd-éraic Etirsceil.
> ra Mumain togaidhe tair.
> is Conaire ro cengail

The only notable differences are the lack of the gloss in the second line ('the father of Conaire Mór'), and *ro* for *ros* in the final line.

The verse was also cited by Keating in his *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, replacing *tair* 'in the east' with *thoigh* in the third line, and modernising *tuctha* to *tugadh* and *ra* to *lé* in the second and third lines, respectively. This was edited and translated by Dinneen (1908: 230–1) as:

> amhail adeir an seancha san rann-so:
>
> > Osruighe ó Ghabhrán go Gréin
> > tugadh d'éiric Eidirscéil,
> > lé Mumhain toghuidhe thoigh,
> > is Conaire ros ceangoil
>
> 'as the seancha says in this stanza:
>
> > Osruighe from Gabhran to Grian was joined, on account of Eidirsceol's eiric, with Munster, select her choice, it was Conaire who made the agreement.'

14. 'I am happy with my lowliness; to the earth every family sinks; however lower a person might be, the love of Jesus would find room in him.'

No matter how noble one's family is, death and burial reduce all to the same level, and in any case all are equal in the eyes of God. This verse also appears in the scholia on *Amrae Coluimb Chille*; the copy in the TCD MS of the Liber Hymnorum is edited and translated in Bernard and Atkinson (1898: i, 166; ii, 59) as:

> Is fó lemm-sa mo lagat
> do thalmain thairnes cach cland
> cía no beth nech ní bad isliu
> do aillfed sercc Ísu and.
>
> 'Good I deem my smallness; to earth descends each race, though any one were placed somewhat lower, the love of Jesus he would merit there.'

It is found in most other copies of the *Amrae*, in some cases twice. Thus, for example, the copy on p. 58 of G 50 is introduced (line 13) with *ar ata fo .i. cuma ut dixit As fo …* , while that on p. 89 is introduced (line 6) with *amail asbert Brighid As fó …* For details see the tables in Bisagni (2019: 457, 467).

The third line in the copy here in Anthology A (as well in the Liber Hymnorum and in YBL, col. 697) has a syllable too many, whereas both copies in G 50 have *cia beith neach nib*ad*h isli.* Adopting the latter reading gives a metre mixing two lines of *rannaigecht mór* (2 and 4) with two lines of *rannaigecht bec.*

The first couplet is also cited in a glossary as: *Is fó lium-sa mo laighet* / *do thalmain toirnis cach clann .i. tślechtus*, *CIH* 1096.20, where *toirnis* is glossed with the 3 sg. rel. pres. of *sléchtaid* 'prostrates'.

15. 'Sleep and repose, eating whenever the opportunity arises, Hell with its many tortures is what is given in return.'

The metre is *aí ḟreisligi.* This verse is also found on the upper margin of p. 102 of the Leabhar Breac, the second of the two pages containing the text of the *Félire* for December:

> Codlud ocus sadaile.
> longad cipe tan tair.
> if*er*n cona ilphianaib
> is s*ed* do-b*er*air aire.

In Stokes' edition (1880: clxxxvi) the final of the second line is silently corrected to *taire*, the form required for syllable-count and rhyme. Another variant appears among the verses associated with *Félire Óengusso* in MS 5100–04, fol. 64r1; this has *Suanaige is sadaile* for the first line, and *taire* for the final of the second line.

16. A variant of this verse appears in the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* for 25 November, edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 246–7) from MS A 7 as:

> Inde dixit Finnchu:
>
> > Is i so ittghe chonaigim
> > ar mḟuaslucud as in sas
> > na rob iffernach nach duine
> > beas agam guide fri bas.
>
> 'Then said Findchú: "This is the one prayer that I pray on my parting from the engine (of torture), that no one be a dweller in hell, who shall beseech me at (his) death".'

The variant in the Leabhar Breac, edited in Stokes (1880: clxxii), is closer to that here in Anthology A:

> Inde dixit findcu
> IShi oenitge notguidim
> armoscarad frissin sás
> narub ifernach cechduine
> acht coramguide fribás.

As for the metre, however, both of the above copies mix two lines of *rannaigecht mór* (2 and 4) with two lines of *rannaigecht bec*, whereas the version here in Anthology A departs from these in having an irregular trisyllabic ending in the first line.

17. The metre is *rannaigecht bec*. This verse is also found in the lower margin of p. 100 of the Leabhar Breac, the second of the two pages containing the text of the *Félire* for November, and is not included in Stokes' edition of 1880. It was edited and translated by Meyer (1889–94b: 133) as:

> Crábud cen úaill, cen shecdai,
> cen sommatu, cen bochtai,
> ól cen ítu, cen mescai,
> proind shéim cen sáith, cen gortai.
>
> 'Devotion without pride, without harshness, without richness, without poverty, drinking without thirst, without drunkenness, a slender meal without surfeit, without hunger.'

The copies which appear among the verses associated with *Félire Óengusso* in MS 5100–04, fol. 64r, and MS 5057–59, fol. 46r, contain no significant variants.

18. The metre is *deibide*. This is an abbreviated version of a verse found in the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* for 30 September, edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 212–13) from Rawlinson B 512 as:

> Feil Coluim feil Giric gil,
> ocus kalaind Septimpir,
> feil Partolain, baig co mbrig,
> gein Muire, feil Michil,
> oirches a rim in cach tig
> for oen la na feli sin.
>
> 'Columb's feast (June 9), the feast of bright Quiriacus (June 16), and the calends of September (Sep. 1), Bartholomew's feast (Aug. 25), say vigorously, Mary's nativity (Sep. 8), Michael's feast (Sep. 29), 'tis meet to reckon those feasts in every house on the same (week-) day.'

The omission of the final two lines here in Anthology A is compensated for by the gloss *for āenlaithi bīt* 'they are on the same day of the week'. For the first word of the last line the manuscript has *geín* with an erroneous *m*-stroke over the *e*.

19. The metre is *deibide n-imrinn*, extending over the additional couplet. This verse appears in the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* for 6 February, edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 68–9), from Laud 610 as:

> Lupait ocus Ticris tend
> feib ro rimis is Richell,
> Darercca is Liamair na lend
> gabsat diamair gan dichell.

anmand sin re srethaib seall
sethar Patraic na primchell.

'Lupait and Tigris the severe, as thou hast recounted, and Richell, Darerca and Liamain of the mantles, took a secret place without neglect: those (are the) names at ranges of … (?), of the sisters of Patrick of the chief churches.'

The version here in Anthology A has the earlier form *do-ruirmius* 'I have recounted' in the second line (similarly *doruirmess* in the Leabhar Breac copy), and in the fifth line *re srethaib sell* is probably to be translated 'see in sequence', taking *sell* as the 2 sg. imperative of *sellaid*.

In the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* in Laud 610 this verse is followed by two other verses, and the prose here in Anthology A corresponds to parts of the two sentences introducing them; they were edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 68–9) as:

Secht n-espoic déc ro geinetar ó Darercca .i. im espoc Mac Cartaind ó Chlochur ⁊ im espoc Meal ⁊ di oig, ut dixit […] Is iat na hogha, Aiche ⁊ Lallóc, ut dictum.

'Seventeen bishops were born of Darerca, including bishop Mac carthinn of Clochar and bishop Mel, and two virgins, as (the poet) said […] These are the virgins: Aiche and Lallóc, as hath been said.'

For the similar copy in the Leabhar Breac see Stokes (1880: xlviii–xlix).

20. 'A cold bed, and a thin wretched little cleric; restraint of the body, shedding of tears, the reward for it from the King of the Clouds will be great.'

The metre is *rannaigecht gairit dialtach*. Another copy of this appears as a marginal verse in Add. 30512, fol. 45r inf., as:

Leabaidh fúar.
⁊ clerchín tana trúagh.
smacht ar choluind snidhe dér
ag rí nél is mór a lúag.

Yet another appears as a marginal verse in King's Inns MS 17, fol. 2v sup., as:

Eaglas fúar
⁊ cléircín tana trúagh
maith don colainn sníghe dér
ag rídh na nel budh mor a lúagh

Further copies are found in Anthology C below (verse 8) and in Anthology D (verse 4). As in the copy in King's Inns MS 17, these latter two copies have *Eclus*/*Eglus* as the first word instead of *Lepaid*.

Appendix 2: Anthology B

This anthology of twenty verses takes up all of fol. 130r and 12 of the 22 lines of fol. 130v of RIA MS B iv 2. The verses were edited by Meyer (1910b), with the exception of 8, which, as he makes no reference to it, he appears to

have overlooked. Although he did not supply a translation, Meyer proposed a number of emendations to the text, and noted the other versions of nos. 2 and 20, as well as a parallel for the ideas expressed in nos. 3 and 4.

It is clear from Meyer's title ('Altirische Reimsprüche') and introductory comments that he understood that this is an anthology of verses, not a single poem, whereas in *RIA Cat*, p. 3027, they are described as '*In rannán do gniath samh.* 17 + 3 qq.', with no mention of Meyer's edition, although with an accurate count of the verses. There is a gap before the last three verses on fol. 130v, but otherwise there is no indication given in the MS that the verses are separate. Nevertheless, with the exception of numbers 9 and 10 (see notes), the variety both of subject matter and metre makes it quite clear that this is a collection of separate verses.[169]

Apart from the work of another scribe on fols 92v–93v, B iv 2 was written by Mícheál Ó Cléirigh in the years 1627 and 1628 (see *RIA Cat*, p. 3022), and he has two shorter collections elsewhere in this MS. The four verses at the beginning of fol. 151r, with a gap between the third and fourth verse, were edited by Meyer (1913: 167) as two items, and similarly are described separately in *RIA Cat*, p. 3028, as 'Tolcc do tolccaib simenn. 3 qq.' and 'Flann gac air gac narad núarteid. 1 q.'. All four are in fact separate, and a variant of the first recurs in *De Origine Scoticae Linguae* §815, edited and translated by Moran (2019: 235). The two verses on fol. 147r13–14 have a space before and after them, but none between them. The first, beginning *Fuarus lus*, is a variant of the verse in the Leabhar Breac, p. 91 marg. inf., edited and translated by Meyer (1889–94b: 133), in H 2. 12, 2r inf., edited and translated by Culverwell (1913: 134), and in Laud 615, p. 135. The second, beginning *Gid maith mellca no reba*, is a variant of the verse in the Leabhar Breac, p. 93 marg. inf. There are also three isolated verses included in the MS, viz. *Diamad meisi an truagan truagh*, fol. 128v16–17, *Ba muca eich caoirigh gabair*, fol. 147v8–9, and *Bad e an tinad oirdnide*, at the end of fol. 155r.

It is likely that the contents of B iv 2 derive from a number of exemplars, although only one, the Book of Leinster, has been identified so far. It is of particular interest that Ó Cléirigh included the two verses which are the only marginal verses on the pages of the Book of Leinster from which the nine long poems on fols 101r–123v were copied.[170] On fol. 108v he added a note on the source of both verses to the second marginal verse: *aran marbhán chuires an seinliub*ar *an rann-sin* 7 *an rann ele thuas* 7 *ni faicim* < > 'it is in the margin that the old book places that stanza and the other stanza above, and I do not see …'.[171] Unfortunately, Ó Cléirigh gives no indication of the source of any of the other verses noted above, but it is quite likely that some at least were

[169] I number all the verses separately; Meyer numbered 3 and 4 as one item, and also 9 and 10.

[170] See *LL*, i, pp. xii–xiii. The poems were taken from three sections of the Book of Leinster, viz. pp. 127a–135a, 31a, and 146b–147a. In the Book of Leinster the verses are on the lower margins of pp. 129 and 130 (edited in *LL* p. 490), and in B iv 2 on the lower margins of fols 107v and 108v, respectively.

[171] The remainder of the note has been trimmed, leaving only the tops of letters visible. The note is not included in the account of B iv 2 in *RIA Cat*, pp. 3021–9.

marginal verses in the exemplar or exemplars.

As for the verses edited below, a number of possibilities can be considered. First, the anthology could have been put together by Ó Cléirigh himself from a single source or, given the space before the final three verses, two sources. It is worth noting, however, that there appears to be no significant linguistic difference between the final three and the rest. Second, it could have been put together from marginal verses in a plurality of sources. These would not necessarily be the same as the sources of the main texts in B iv 2, and some indeed could have been copied from mainly Latin manuscripts. Third, it may have been copied wholesale from a pre-existing anthology.

While all of these possibilities must remain in the realm of speculation, the idea of anthologies of short compositions of no more than one or two verses not necessarily connected with marginal verses is one that in my view deserves particular consideration. Certainly, Anthology B contrasts with Anthology A in that only a small proportion of the verses are attested elsewhere.[172]

Almost all of the verses contain linguistic features which allow us to date them to the Old or Early Middle Irish period, and of these five at least are OIr.[173] Words and inflexional forms not attested elsewhere are *tablanna*, 3d, *domuīn*, 17a, *eser*, 18a, and *ro féis*, 19b, while *manuc*, 5b, as interpreted here, is otherwise attested only in glossaries; see the notes for details. The orthography usually conforms to the norms of Old and Middle Irish, but with a few peculiarities. Meyer (1910b: 268 n. 2) commented on the scribe's predilection for writing *o* for *a* in unstressed syllables, some examples being *slemoin*, 2b, *ālcho*, 6b, *thúaro*, 18b, and *bfágoibh*, 19d. In five instances either *u* (*do-uéradh*, 5a, *do-uéra*, 15c) or *u* with a suprascript spiritus asper (*n-íathoiuh*, 1b, *garuh*, 2b, *iuhidh*, 10d) is written for a lenited *b* (otherwise written here as *b* or *bh*).

In the edition below I retain the length-marks of the MS even when irregular (e.g. *nó*, 5c, *dot-mél*, 19c),[174] and otherwise mark long vowels with macrons. Punctuation and capitalisation are introduced, and emendations necessary for the syllable count are placed in square brackets.

1. In rannán do-gníat-samh
   sán cán a n-íathoiuh Íli,
   is form-sa dus-líat-somh:
   for coin līter cech ndíbhe.

2. Īssiol fri hard, ní bec búaidh;
   slemoin fri garuh cáich ar n-úair;
   in tí di-róindi saml*aid*,
   bidh réidh riëm cech n-aimhreidh.

[172] Namely, nos. 1, 2, 14, 20; for details see the notes.

[173] See the notes on 1, 2, 4, 14 and 19. When Meyer (1910b: 268) described them as 'Die folgenden fast alle noch der altirischen Periode entstammenden Reimereien', he would have had in mind the earlier periodisation which set the boundary between Old and Middle Irish at 1100 (see *SnaG* 221).

[174] For the special case of *tablanná*, 3d, see the notes.

3. Cīall do duine *ocus* cruth,
mo génor dían suidhiughadh;
madh an cruth ālainn namá,
is corrthoir gan tablanná.

4. Duine teimhen co cēill ngl*ain*,
mo gēnor fris tibhe gen;
madh in roálainn cen céill,
ni mad aicci grēin dia len.

5. Diamad mē do-uéradh fuiriocc,
robadh mēth cech manuc,
nó betis [a] dēra geiredh
dar eneach gach caratt.

6. A duine trūaigh, dirsan duit,
it olc[a] ālcho do c*hoir*p:
tan it sāithech not geb ūaill,
it toirsich trūag [tan] it g*oir*t.

7. Is gnāth do neoch iar tōchall
toidecht ina athbōthar;
sūaill in ní as buide le bocht
cen co n-aro acht athgort

8. Fo-fūair muic mairb māir.
hi faitche Cille Bēcāin
muinter Pātraic tar muir sīar.
denat do laígh a Rōdāin

9. Ní cóir.
indus berdar in coidh.
nī rop cōra dech in rí.
isin tír ataat in bí

10. Is coir
indus berdar in coidh.
sellaidh [intiu] in tí nāt ibh.
iuhidh in tī dīan cóir

11. Co ndig ind anim for coí
coro scara frisin crí.
coro deglat immalē
nocha dernat bith gan ní.

12. Is mo rí.
is mo tigerna do-gnī.
is ferr guth in gobair mairbh
inā gairm in ghobair bī.

13. Bidh Buccaiti ainm do mheic.
bidh Minsech mad ingen dit.
bid Gobairsich t'ainm fadēin

14. Ní dot choiriucchadh, a Dé.
trúagh an sainiugh*ud*h do-gní
marbaí in rī fo-loing in sl*ūag*.
aingi in trūagh nāt tūarteit ní.

15. Tēid[i] mo menma don mīr.
fil i lláimh rígh Temra tréin
madh maith lais do-uéra im láim.
mad ferr lais do-méla fēin.

16. Dīa mo ruire Dīa mo rī.
Dīa mo duine Dīa mo día
nī nom sainmescca ō m*a*c Dē.
di-rairmescca m*a*c Dé, Dia.

17. Domuīn gach sētach is rí.
dāigh fo-gnī in bréccach bith cé
ecmaing is dó nach terc ní.
cech rí día tecmoing serc Dē.

18. Eser ní rē ndol ar fecht.
do thúaro nīrob imterc
acht ma tresoide do nert.
níba mesoitti t'imthecht.

19. Treab*ar* do-berar do grés.
is ē a bés cīa ro féis
beiridh a buidhe dot-mél.
f*or*-beir a bfágoibh día éis.

20. A Cath*ail* m*a*i*c* Finngoine.
fō lim cacha ērbara
ceat olca na hairchinnig.
it maithe na hērlamha.

Notes

1. This was translated by Carney (1964: 155) as: 'The verses they make all over the lands of Íle, they attribute them to me: every bad thing is put down to the dog'.

The metre is *aí ḟreisligi*, with rhyme between the disyllabic end-words of lines *b* and *d*, as well as between the trisyllabic end-words of lines *a* and *c*.

The rhyming hiatus forms (normalised *do-gniät* and *dus-liät*) indicate an OIr date.

Another copy is found on the lower margin of folio 3v of King's Inns MS 13:

An rannán dogníadsan.
sán cán a niath*aib* ile.
is ormsa roslíadsan.
ar coin líter g*ac*h nd< >

Note that this copy, which appears to be in a different hand from that of the main text, also has length-marks over both vowels in *sán cán*.

2. 'Lowly towards the high, it is no small accomplishment; gentle towards a rough person, to every one his turn; the one who has behaved thus, every rough will be smooth before him.'

A version of this verse appears on the upper margin of fol. 117 of the ninth-century Codex Bernensis (Clavis §459) as:

> Brigit dixit.
>
> > Isel friart
> > tailciud. frigargg. cáich a uuair.
> > cachóin dodgéna samlid
> > bid reid riam cach. namreid

It was printed as prose in *Thes* ii, 235, and translated as:

> 'Lowly towards the high, a yielding to the fierce, every man's in turn: whosoever shall do thus, every rough will be smooth before him.'

The second couplet of the version in *Thes* is regular *deibide guilbnech* with seven syllables in both lines (note OIr hiatus in *riäm*), but the first couplet is somewhat loose metrically. Normally one would expect the final word of the first line, whether or not it is shortened, to rhyme with the final of the second line, but *art* would appear to rhyme with a word in the middle of the second line, *gargg*. The version here in Anthology B, with the additional *ní bec búaidh* in the first line, has none of these irregularities, so that either a half line is missing in the earlier copy, or the later copy represents the regularisation of a looser earlier metrical form. For discussion see Ó Cuív (1986: 111–12), who comments on the striking spelling of the final word with *-ei-* in the final syllable, even in the ninth-century copy, where the rhyme with *samlaid* fixes the earlier form *n-amraid*. Ó Cuív would translate *cáich a uuair* as 'to every one his turn'.

The verse as a whole finds an echo in v. 13 of the Rule of Ailbe, edited and translated by O Neill (1907: 98–9) as:

> Ná rrucca Satán for lurg
> gníad ísel fri hard,
> is ed as olc la demon
> mad slemon fri garg.
>
> 'Lest Satan carry him off on his track let him act lowly against loftiness – that is what the devil hates if one is gentle towards a rough person.'

The last line is closer to the variant *slemoin fri garuh* here in Anthology B than to *tailciud fri garg* in the Codex Bernensis. The other major divergence between the two copies is in the third line, where *cach oín dod-géna* of the earlier MS has been modernised in the later MS.

3. 'A person having sense and physique, fortunate is anyone for whom it is the case; as for the beautiful physique on its own, it is a fringe without a garment (?).'

The metre is *deibide*. The theme of this verse is similar to that of the next verse, and they were numbered as a single item in Meyer's edition. However, as they differ in metre, I take them to be independent. A more extended treatment of these themes is found in the Old Irish poem of 14 verses, *Nīm geib format fri fer find*, edited by Meyer (1908: 267–8) under the heading 'Verstand geht über Schönheit', and referred to in Meyer (1910b: 268 n. 2).

My translation of *tablanná* is, to say the least, tentative; I know of no other examples, nor can I suggest an emendation. The spelling with a final *-á* is to highlight the rhyme (see *SnaG* 230 §2.11), and the form might be singular or plural. If the word with which it is linked, *corrthoir*, has its usual meaning of the fringe of a garment, then *tablanna* would mean some kind of a garment or some part (or parts, if plural) of a garment. It can, however, be used of the edge or border of other things (see *DIL* s.v. *cor*(*r*)*thar*). The manuscript form here, *corrthoir*, is an instance of the acc./dat.sg. of an *ā*-stem replacing the earlier nom.sg.

4. 'A swarthy person with pure sense, fortunate is the one at whom such a person smiles; as for the exceedingly beautiful person without any sense, the one to whom such a person attaches themselves is unfortunate to have ever seen the sun.'

The metre is *rannaigecht mór*, with *aicill*-rhyme in the second couplet. The headless relative clauses *fris tibhe gen*, 4b, and *dia len*, 4d, point to an OIr date of composition. For the syntax of these see Ó Cathasaigh (1990).

5. 'If I were the one who provided refection, every meat dish would be full of fat; his tears of lard would be [streaming] across the face of every friend.'

The metre is *dechnad mór*. As it stands, the verse is a syllable short in the third line, and this is most easily rectified by supplying a 3 sg. possessive adjective before *dēra*. I translate the text as so emended.

The only other problem in this verse is the meaning of the word *manuc* at the end of the second line. This can be normalised as *manac*, the final voiced stop being fixed by rhyme with *carat* (MS *caratt*), as well as by consonance with *fuirec* (MS *fuiriocc*). *DIL* s.v. cites *manuc* as the sole example, referring to Meyer's (1912: §33) explanation of it as a hypocoristic form of *manach*. However, the small number of examples of a diminutive suffix *-uc* cited by Meyer include some doubtful instances, and no comparable instance of the replacement of final *-ach* by *-uc*; in any case, if this verse is Old Irish, the ending should be *-ac*. Furthermore, a meaning 'every little monk (or 'church vassal') would be fat' is somewhat unsatisfactory in the context of what is said in the second couplet. Accordingly I propose a different interpretation of *manac*, namely that it is an actual attestation of a word otherwise known only from glossaries. The sole example cited in *DIL* s.v. *mandac* is *Mandac quando manducatur*, *CormY* 261. This entry in *Sanas Chormaic* begins with an etymology of the headword *carnae*, and goes on to distinguish between *carnae*,

féoil and the word in question here. The latter is spelled *mandac* in the copy in YBL, Franciscan MS A 12, p. 8, and TCD MS H 2. 15B, p. 158, but *mandach* in H 2. 15B, p. 94. The only copy where it is spelled with a single *-n-* is that in the Book of Uí Maine, which has *manac* (Meyer, 1919: 300). The entry in *Sanas Chormaic* ends by introducing a further distinction, viz. *Manic in tan is lāmaind is ainm ab eo quod est manica* '*Manic* when it is a name for a glove, from the word *manica*'. The related entry in *Dúil Dromma Ceta*, *Manach .i. feoil bruithe .i. a manuucando .i. o tomailt*, *CIH* 1075.16, sim. *CIH* 617.19 (with *manducando*), '*M.* i.e. cooked meat, i.e. from *manducando*, i.e. consuming', also has a single *-n-*, although the final syllable has been assimilated to the common adjectival suffix *-ach*. The spellings with *-nd-* may be simply taken from the Latin etymology, or may represent a variant form, but here in Anthology B the form with a single *-n-* is confirmed by rhyme. While more examples would be welcome, the fact that the word is explained in the glossaries is an indication that it actually existed in OIr. Furthermore, the proposed interpretation gives a smoother progression of cause and effect from the first to the second couplets of the verse, and eliminates the somewhat jarring equivalence of 'monk' (or 'church vassal') and 'friend' implied by Meyer's interpretation. The presence of this rare word could in itself point to an early date, and another early form is the 3 pl. conditional *nó betis*, 5c (with erroneous accent).

6. 'O wretched mankind, it is a pity for you; the ways of your body are dreadful: when you are sated, pride takes hold of you, you are sorrowful and wretched when you are hungry.'

The metre is *rannaigecht mór*. The manuscript copy is a syllable short in both the second and third lines, and I adopt the emendations proposed by Meyer. Also, as Meyer noted, we should read *úall* at the end of the third line for *aicill* rhyme with *trúag* in the fourth.

The 3 pl. present copula form *it*, 6b, and the 2 sg. *it*, 6c, 6d, point to an Early Irish date.

7. 'It is usual for anyone after a journey to return by a second road; the poor man is thankful for little, even if he only ploughs a second field.'

The metre is *deibide*. For the third word in the last line Meyer read *n-ap*ar, but neither the (MIr) passive sg. present, or any other form of *as-beir* 'says' would make good sense here. The manuscript reading is in fact *naro*, written as *n* + the *ar*-compendium (that is, a *q* with a horizontal stroke through the descender) + *o*. However, as the *o* touches the *ar*-compendium, this sequence can easily be misread as consisting of *n* + ligatured *ap* + stroke through the descender of *p*.

As I understand the verse, it amounts to saying that not only are the wealthy free to travel about but they have the luxury of returning by a different route, whereas the most by way of variety that the poor man can hope for is to plough a different field. I take the prefix in both *athbóthar* and *athgort* to have the literal meaning 'second, a further', given in *DIL* s.v. *aith-*, *ath-*, although the other examples in *DIL* s.vv. *athbóthar* and *athgort* appear to have more specific meanings, which I cannot go into here.

A MIr date is indicated by the conjunction *cen co* (see *SnaG* 281 §11.9) in the last line.

8. 'Patrick's clergy coming back across the sea found a large dead pig on the green of Cell Bécáin; let your calves suck, o Ródán.'

The first three lines seem to be nonsense verse, although the mention of *muinter Pátraic* is significant (see below); the import of the quatrain is in the fourth line. There are two metrical problems: the first line has only five syllables as against seven in the others, and the end-rhymes are not perfect. Although the first couplet appears to conform to the pattern of *deibide*, the second does not. The best I can suggest is that it is a looser form of *rannaigecht* with the rhyming words *Bēcāin* and *Rōdāin* matching in the second syllable and the medial consonant, but in the first vowel only in quantity, and would compare the OIr rhymes *benar* : *-canar*, and *celar* : *galar*, noted in Carney (1964: 159 n. 25b). For this reason I take the name of the church to contain the name *Bécán*, rather than *Becán*; the spellings with *-t-* and *-dd-* in the passage cited below show that the medial consonant in *Rótán* was a voiced stop.

The final line is almost identical to the first line of a couplet found in the *Vita Tripartita* of St Patrick, which I cite along with the preceding prose from the edition in Mulchrone (1939: 87.1641), and my own translation:

> Epscop Rótán, búachaill [Pátraic], forácaib Pátraic hi Muirisc [Aigli] hi cill epscoip Róddán. Ní déndais a loíg acht aní conarléiced-som dóib. Is dó sein atberat in chruitire ⁊ int ṡenmaire i ríaraib:
>
> Denait do laíg, a Róddán,
> ra léic dóib dinetán.
>
> 'Bishop Rótán, the herdsman of Patrick, Patrick left him in Muiresc Aigli, in Cell Epscuip Róddán. His calves used only suck what he allowed them. It is with reference to that that the harpers and musicians say when their needs are being attended to:
>
> "Your calves are sucking, o Róddán, who has allowed a little to them".'

I take *i ríaraib* to be an instance of the meaning 'supplying physical needs, attendance, hospitality, maintenance' given in *DIL* s.v. 1 *ríar* (d); for an alternative suggestion to translate as 'in songs', see *DIL* s.v. 2 *ríar*. I take the second line of the couplet as a relative clause qualifying *a Róddán*; reading *doïb* will give a heptasyllabic line.

The context in the *Vita Tripartita* indicates that the musicians are identifying themselves with Rótán's calves. There the common line has the 3 pl. indicative of the verb *denaid* (registered under the headword *dinid* (*denid*) in *DIL*, improved to *denaid, dinid* in *eDIL*) whereas the verse here in Anthology B has the 3 pl. imperative, and I suggest that, whatever the point of the preceding lines is, the verse as a whole amounts to a request by musicians for food and drink.

9. 'The way that the mugs are brought is not proper; it would not be more proper that the king should go into the land in which the living are.'

Although the metres are different, the complementary first lines and identical second lines indicate that 9 and 10 probably belong together. The metre in verse 9 is a somewhat irregular variant of *deibide guilbnech*, with a shortened first line. The various spellings and case-forms listed in *DIL* s.v. *cúad* show that it must have been a hiatus word in OIr; the final word in line 9b can then be read as *coïd* to give a heptasyllabic line, and as a consequence the final of the first line will have to be read as *coïr*, giving a trisyllabic line. The forms with hiatus point to an early date, as does the npl. masc. article *in* (*SnaG* 258 §7.4) in *in coidh* (OIr/MIr *in choïd*) and *in bí*. On the other hand, in the third line the use of *dech* as a relative form is a MIr feature (*SnaG* 286 §11.31), while in the fourth line as it stands, *ataat* has to be read without hiatus, unless *isin tír* is emended to *is' tír*.

While the final line probably refers to Heaven, the full import of this and the following verse would be clearer if we knew the context in which they were set.

10. 'The way that the mugs are carried is proper; the one who does not drink gazes into them, the one for whom it is proper to do so drinks.'

The metre appears to be a variant of *rannaigecht*, with a shortened first line making end-rhyme with the second and fourth lines. The finals of the second and fourth lines can be read with hiatus to give heptasyllabic lines, and the final of the first line will then have to be read as *coïr*, giving a trisyllabic line. At the same time, it could be taken as a form of *deibide*, with full rhyme in the first couplet and *rinn ocus airdrinn* rhyme between *ib* and *coïr* in the second couplet. It is only in the third line that an addition is necessary in order to get the required seven syllables. Meyer solved the problem of the missing syllable by supplying *ind* 'into it' after *sellaidh*, but as *coïd* is plural, I supply instead *intiu* (allowing for elision of the vowel of the following *in*); the MS reading would then have arisen through haplography (*intiu inti* > *inti*).

11. 'Until the soul goes away, until it parts from the body, until they both separate, they cannot make do with nothing.'

The metre is *rannaigecht mór*; the finals of both *a* and *c* make *úaitne* with the end-rhyme, and *deglat* (OIr/MIr *dedlat*) in *c* rhymes with *dernat* in *d*. Features which point to a date in the early MIr period are the negative *nocha*, 11d, *coro* (rather than *cor*) fixed by syllable count in 11b and 11c, and the nom.sg. fem. article in *ind anim*, 11a (cf. Uhlich, 2022).

12. 'It is my king, it is my lord who brings it about; better is the sound of the dead goat than the cry of the live goat.'

The metre is *rannaigecht gairit dialtach*, with rhyme between the finals of lines *a*, *b* and *d*, and *aicill*-rhyme in the second couplet. In the third line the *o* in *gobair* appears to have been altered from an *a*; Meyer has *gabair*.

13. 'Your son's name will be Buccaite, it will be Minsech, if a daughter of yours, your own name will be Gobairsech.'

It is safe to assume that these three heptasyllabic lines with monosyllabic endings are a defective copy of a quatrain. On the assumption that the metre

of the quatrain was *deibide*, Meyer read *d*[*e*]*it* for the final of the second line to rhyme with *mheic*, although the full quatrain could well have been in *rannaigecht mór*.

The suggestion in *DIL* s.v. *Buccaite* that it is a comic male name is doubtless correct, and the same applies to the other two names. They are all derived from terms for goats: the second and third have the feminine suffix *-sech* added to *3 menn* 'kid' and *2 gobar* 'goat', respectively, while the first syllable of *Buccaite* contains a variant of *2 boc* 'he-goat'. Murphy (1956: 176 n. 3) pointed out that the latter name represents an earlier form of Modern Connacht Irish *pocaide* 'he-goat', and sees the same suffix in the personal name *Líathaite*, and in the Modern Donegal Irish *sreamaide* (*coileáin*) 'an abusive term for a pup'.

14. 'It is not to find fault with you, o God [that I say this], the distinction which you make is a pity; you kill the king who supports the host; you save the wretch who has nothing to spare.'

The metre is *rannaigecht mór*; the final of line *a* makes *úaitne* with the end-rhyme, the final of line *c* makes *aicill*-rhyme with *trūagh*, and there is an internal rhyme in the first couplet (reading Old or Middle Irish *chairigud* : *sainigud*). I take the relative clause *nāt tūarteit ní* in the last line as having a dative function, lit. 'to whom nothing remains over'. or in other words 'who has nothing to give to others'.

There is another copy of this among the verses extracted from scholia and marginal verses on the text of the *Félire* for March in MS 5100–04, fol. 60r23:

> Ní dot cairiucch*ud*h a Dé.
> truagh in sainiug*ud*h do-ngní
> marbha in rí foloing in sl*ua*gh.
> aince an trúagh ná cobrand ní

The most significant variant is *ná cobrand ní* in the last line; this can be translated 'who is of no help to anyone' (lit. 'who helps nothing'). Note also the nasalising relative *do-ngní* in the second line; this and the deuterotonic *fo-loing* in the third line (in both copies) point to an OIr date.

15. 'My mind wanders off to the piece of food which is in the hand of the king of Tara; if he wishes, he will put it in my hand; if he prefers, he will eat it himself.'

The metre is *rannaigecht mór*; the finals of both *a* and *c* make *úaitne* with the end-rhyme, and there is internal rhyme in both couplets.

The first line is a syllable short in the MS, and Meyer (1910b: 269 n. 2) suggested reading *menma-sa* with a *nota augens*, while noting the consequences for rhyme. The internal rhyme with *Temra* can however be retained if the missing syllable is supplied by taking *téid* to be an error for *téiti*, the 3 sg. present with a neuter suffixed pronoun, and I translate the text as so emended. This emended form and the verbal form in the fourth line (= OIr *da-méla*) point to a relatively early date.

16. 'God my overking, God my king, God my man, God my sufficiency; may God, the son of God, prevent anything which sets me apart from the son of God.'

The metre is *rannaigecht mór*. The deuterotonic 3 sg. perfective present subjunctive form *di-rairmescca* in the fourth line points to an early date, although the *di-* is a pseudo-archaism; the prototonic stem *tairmesc-* (see *DIL* s.v. *do-airmesca*) shows that the first preverb was *to-*. The verb with which it rhymes is a compound of *sain* 'distinct, separate' and *mescaid* in the sense 'mixes', and the instance here is the only example in *DIL* s.v. of *sain* compounded with a verb.

17. 'Anyone devoted to wealth who is a king is poorly off, since he serves the false present world; it happens that he who wants for nothing is every king who encounters love of God'.

The metre is *rannaigecht mór*; the finals of *a* and *c* make *úaitne* with the end-rhyme as well as making *aicill*-rhymes, the first couplet has one internal rhyme (*sētach* : *bréccach*), and the second has two (*ecmaing* : *tecmoing* and *terc* : *serc*).

I can see no alternative to taking the first word of this verse as an adjective, as suggested in *DIL* s.v. *domaín*. The abstract noun *domaíne* and its antonym *somaíne*, are well attested, and going by the other compound of *maín*, *dímaín* 'vain' beside *dímaíne* 'vanity', the corresponding adjectives should have been *domaín* and *somaín*, but apart from the example here, I know of no examples of either of them used as adjectives. The fact however that the analogical nom.sg. forms *domaín* and *somaín* (see Breatnach, 2017: 96) came to be used for *domaíne* and *somaíne* probably led to the replacement of the earlier adjectival forms by *domaínech* and *somaínech*.

While *DIL* s.v. 1 *sétach* gives 'having treasures, rich' as the meaning, it cites one early example (from the marginalia on the Martyrology of Tallaght) where it means 'treasure-loving', and a meaning along these lines best suits the context here.

In the second line as it stands *bréccach* is a preposed adjective, but the word order could be emended to read *in bith bréccach cé*, without affecting the metre.

The prototonic form *ecmaing* (see *DIL* s.v. 1 *ad-cumaing*) in line *c* and the deuterotonic *fo-gní* in *b* point to an early MIr date.

18. 'You are to eat something before going on a journey, your food should not be too meagre; if indeed your strength is not all the greater, your progress will not be any worse for it.'

Eating before setting out on a journey will certainly not do you any harm.

The metre is *deibide*. A more literal translation of the third line is 'unless your strength is more powerful as a result of it'. Hull (1964: 104–5) identified *eser* as the OIr 2 sg. present subjunctive of *ithid* 'eats'; it is the only attestation so far known of this form and can be added to the paradigms in *GOI* §621 and §766 and in *DIL* s.v. *ithid*. This early form does not sit well with the MIr forms *tresoide* and *mesoitti* (*SnaG* 257 §6.13) in lines *c* and *d*, but I can see no

objections on metrical grounds to emending to the OIr forms *tresa dé* and *mesa dé*, respectively.

19. 'A careful person who is assigned to [manufacture] an article, this is what usually happens, if you observe: the person who makes use of it gives thanks for it; when he leaves [it] behind him, it (viz. giving thanks) multiplies.'

The well-made article will be appreciated by its owner, and if it is really well made it will last and be appreciated by subsequent generations.

The metre is *rannaigecht mór*, with *aicill*-rhyme in both couplets. I take *a bfágoibh* in line 4 to be for OIr *i fácaib*. For *dotmél* in the third line read *dod-meil*, a headless relative with a 3 sg. Class C infixed pronoun; *aicill* rhyme with the *-beir* of *for-beir* in the fourth line shows that the accent in *-mél* is erroneous. A further pointer to an OIr date is *ro féis*, 2 sg. perfective present subjunctive of *1 fethid*.

20. 'O Cathal son of Finguine, I am happy with whatever you say: although the (church) superiors may be bad, the patrons are good.'

The metre is *casbairdne*. Another version, with significant differences in the first couplet, appears in an anecdote in H 3. 17, col. 678, which was edited by Meyer (1910: 299) and Plummer (1910: 40 n. 3). Plummer edited and translated the verse as:

> A Chormaic mic Cuilennáin,
> ad fíra na hebertha:
> gid olca na hairchinnig
> is maithe na herlumha.
>
> 'O Cormac son of Cuilennán, true are the sayings: "though erenaghs be evil, patron saints are good".'

Here we have another (and later) Munster king as the addressee, but also a problematic second line, in that keeping to Plummer's translation will entail reading *eperta*, which will not rhyme with *hērlumha*. I have no alternative to suggest, but it may be noted that there are no such difficulties with the version here in Anthology B, where *érbara*, 2 sg. perf. present subjunctive of *as-beir*, makes perfect rhyme with *hērlamha*. The version here in Anthology B also has the earlier 3 pl. copula forms *ceat* and *it*, in the third and fourth lines, respectively, and, taking into account *na* for the masc.nom.pl. article in lines 3 and 4, could be dated to the MIr period.

Appendix 3: Anthology C

This anthology of nine verses takes up lines 13 to 30 of fol. 10 (46) vb of the Book of Uí Maine, and is one of four texts on the lower part of col. *a* and all of col. *b* written in three hands differing from that of the main scribe. Much of it is worn and difficult to read. While the verses are written as a block, the ascriptions appended to nos. 3 to 8 serve to clearly mark all except the first two as separate.

Six of the verses recur at least once elsewhere. Nos. 1, 4, 8 and 9 are attested as marginal verses, and no. 4 is also in Anthology A. Nos. 5 and 8 are found also in Anthology D, and nos. 1 and 2 correspond to the first two verses of a fabrication by Uilliam Mac an Leagha; for details see the notes.

1. ISāeth lim an āes lēigind
   do dol a n-if*ern* pīanuch.
   is an tī n< >d lēig eagnaid
   do dul a parrthas ngrīanuch

2. Is *ed* as deac do senōir.
   ēirgi romoc ōn degōil.
   cētal na salm dīa irāil
   ēgnaircc na marb do gabāil.

3. Cu cuiri romut anund.
   fāicfi indmas cu hobund.
   nī ticfa anall gidh āil duid
   f*or* do cūla cod caruid.
   Findēn c*ecinit*

4. Ainmni aīne fighill aircc
   nīrbo sāithic nīrbo goirt.
   fos is fēthamla cen baīs.
   measrug*ud* craaīs coimēd cuirp
   Comgall .c*ecinit*

5. Mairc nāc < >e< >i fo guth cluic
   mairc nāc codail um cāelcu< >
   maircc īadas lāim um c< >d faind.
   mairc do-ber < > ar sāercloind.
   C*olum* C*ille* c*ecinit*

6. Nā tarda tarcaisin trēin.
   ar doinib do comceinēl.
   bēs as sē bīas a nirt slūaig.
   saīfid an bith re āenūair.
   Comgall .c*ecinit*

7. An tī renas altōir nDē
   ⁊ eclus f*or* maīne.
   do-b*eir* la comaidh ngr < >
   Findēn .c*ecinit*

8. Eclus fūar
   ⁊ clēir < >
   < > f*or* colaind teistiu dēr dēr
   la rīg na nēl rod bē a lūag
   Senān d*ixit*

9. Salcuid āencāeb anart līn
taithaīrid āenrand airdrī.
tic mill*iud* rīagla do rup.
do-fāeth < > āencluc.
Fineid. sin

Notes

1. The metre is *rannaigecht bec*. Nos. 1 and 2 here in Anthology C correspond to the first two verses of the four-verse fabrication by Uilliam Mac an Leagha in Add. 30512, fol. 34vb1, edited and translated in Breatnach (2020: 87–8). There the first verse appears as:

ISaoth lem int aos lēighind
do dul i nd-ifern phīanach,
is ind tī nāt lēg ecna
do dhul hi parrthus ngrīanach.

'I find it distressing that learned people should go to torment-filled Hell, and that the person who never studied learned works should go into sunny Paradise.'

It also appears as a marginal verse in the Book of Fenagh, fol. 4r inf., as:

Is saoth lem int áos leigind
do dul a n-ifern pianach
is in ti nach legh egna
do dul a parthus grianach.

2. 'What is best for an elder is to rise very early at daybreak, to chant the psalms to commend him, and to recite the intercessory prayer for the dead'.

The metre is *deibide nguilbnech*, but with an incomplete rhyme *irāil* (v.l. *erāil*) : *gabāil* in the second couplet. The second verse of the fabrication by Mac an Leagha, where the fourth line is defective, is edited in Breatnach (2020: 87–8) as:

IS ed is dech do senōir
ērge romoch ōn degdōil,
cētul na salm dīa erāil,
ecc na marbh do gabāil.

3. 'Along with a host [of others] before you, [when going] yonder, you will leave behind wealth suddenly; you will not return from there back to your friend, however much you wish.'

After you die, you will never again see the wealth which you so love. The metre is *deibide*.

4. This, in all cases ascribed to Comgall, recurs as a marginal verse in the Leabhar Breac, and in Anthology A, no. 4; see the note on the latter.

5. This appears also in Anthology D, no. 1, but without the ascription to Colum Cille. Both copies are in part illegible, but it is only at the end of the second

line that they are both illegible. There the requirements of rhyme (the metre is *deibide*) make the restoration of *caelcuit* (or better *cáelchuit*) virtually certain, and with the help of the second copy most of the gaps in the copy here in Anthology C can be filled in, macrons added over long vowels, and the result translated as:

> Mairc nāc … fo guth cluic
> mairc nāc codail um cāelcuit
> maircc īadas lāim um crod faind.
> mairc dober sār ar sāercloind.
>
> 'Woe is he who does not … the call of a bell; woe is he who does not sleep on short rations; woe is he who seizes the property of a powerless person; woe is he who insults a noble family.'

The outstanding problem is the third word in the first line. The reading *tēid* in Anthology D gives good sense ('who does not respond to the call of a bell'), but if it were to be retained, an emendation elsewhere in the line would necessary to get a heptasyllabic line. All I can suggest is altering *cluic* to *a chluic* 'of his bell'. In the Book of Uí Maine copy this word is badly rubbed and difficult to read, although *RIA Cat*, p. 3328, gives *Mairc nac teiti fo guth cluic* as the first line, without comment. If *tēiti* were to be retained, it would have the same sense, and would fulfil the metrical requirement for seven syllables, but, as a conjunct form of *téit* 'goes', instead of OIr *tét*, MIr *téit*, it would require some explanation. The only parallel I can adduce for a vocalic conjunct ending is the compound *dotháeti* 'who comes', *TBC 1* 55.1810, cited in *DIL* s.v. *do-tét*. The MS reading here may well be *teiti*; the second and final letters are fairly certain, but the first letter could be either a *t* or a *d*, and the third and fourth letters either *it* or *rg*. It is perhaps then possible that the first line should be read as *Mairc nāc dērgi fo guth cluic* 'Woe is he who does not make his bed within reach of the call of a bell'.

The verse shares its final line with *mairg dobeir sar for saerchlaind*, *LL* 37893, the final line of a verse in a poem in the *Bórama*, every other line of which, while also beginning with *mairg*, is quite different.

6. 'You are not to treat with severe scorn the misfortune of your equal; he may well be in power over a host, the world will turn around in a single moment.'

The metre is *deibide*. I take *doinib* in the second line to be a variant, or perhaps a corruption, of *dainim*, for the meaning of which see O'Rahilly (1942: 201–3). Rhyme with *trēin* confirms that *comceinēl* is to be read as a gen. sg. form, and the rhyming words could be normalised as *tréin* and *chomcheinéil* or earlier *tréoin* and *chomcheinéoil*.

7. 'He who sells the altar of God and the church for treasures …'.

The rest is badly stained, and I know of no other copy.

8. This recurs twice as a marginal verse and is included in Anthologies A and D, all of which copies are fully legible. See the note on item 20 in Appendix 1. The version here in Anthology C has the unique variants *teistiu* 'shedding' as against *snige* in the third line, and *rod bē a lūag* 'may you have a reward

for it', as against *bid mór a lúag* (vel sim.) in the fourth line. The instance of dittography at the end of the third line is perfectly legible.

9. A variant of this appears as one of the marginal verses in the Drummond Missal (see above p. 73), and was edited and translated by Oskamp (1977: 88) as:

> Salcaid aenchaep anart lín
> t<h>athaeir[id] aenrand ardríg
> tic millud riagla do rut
> dothoet escone don cluc.
>
> 'A single clod soils a sheet of linen;
> a single verse dishonours a highking;
> violation of a rule comes by a strong man;
> from the bell comes malediction.'

The metre is *deibide*. The full end-rhyme in the second couplet in the copy in the Drummond Missal is somewhat irregular, whereas the copy in Anthology C has *rind ocus airdrind* rhyme in both couplets. The end of the fourth line should probably be restored as *d'āencluc* 'from a single bell'. On the other hand *do rup* 'by an animal' is inferior to the reading *do rut* of the Drummond Missal.

Appendix 4: Anthology D

This anthology of seven verses takes up all of the second col. of p. 28 of National Library of Scotland MS 72. 1. 40. There is a brief account of it in Grosjean (1927: 169–71), where the text of nos. 4, 5 and 6 is printed.

Each verse is separated from the next by an empty line. Much of it is worn and difficult to read, but, apart from nos. 2 and 3, what is illegible here can be supplied from copies elsewhere of the verses.

Nos. 1 and 4 recur in Anthology C, and no. 4 also in Anthology A, while no. 6 recurs in yet another anthology. Nos. 4 and 6 are also attested as marginal verses, and nos. 5, 6 and 7 appear among verses in the scholia and marginal verses on the text of the *Félire*. For details see the notes.

1. Mairg n*ā*c*h* tēid fo g< >
   mairg nāch coduil < >
   mairg īadus lām im crod< >
   m*airg* do-b*eir* sār ar sāer< >
2. Gebē techtus i negluis
   < > techt ō cill do chill.
   < >nība crīn.
   bid hē a dīl < > rind.
3. Bīaidh a c*or*p s*er* < >uasach si< >
   iard– i< >asach ūar.
   bīadh a hanim dubach dīan.
   ag fulang p< > tre bi< >

4. Eglus fūar.
   ⁊ clēirech tana trūagh
   smacht for coluinn snighi dēr.
   ag rīgh nēl mōr a lūagh
5. Fuil trēighi.
   dīana buighech Rī grēine
   āentha brāitrech fodhail cert.
   altōir Dē do timthirecht.
6. Fuil trēighi.
   dānāch buighech Rī grēine
   crābadh ūall*ach* coised serb.
   eg< > duine mādh inderb.
7. Mīrīn arāin ēorna āin
   fa hē mo cuitigh ar < >
   gas biruir is < >
   fa h< > mo cuit< > noid< >

Notes

1. There is another copy of this verse in Anthology C, no. 5; see the note thereon.

2. I can make no useful suggestion regarding the interpretation of what can be read of this verse.

3. 'His body will be … his vehement gloomy soul will be suffering torments throughout everlasting existence (?).'

Apart from the opening words, I can make nothing of the first couplet. What I expand as *ser* is written as *s* with the suprascript compendium which can stand for *er* or *ir*, and so could also be expanded as *sir*.

My translation of the second couplet is based on the conjectural reading of the defective line 4 as *p<hían> tre b<ith búan>*, a reading that at least supplies an end-rhyme with *ūar* at the end of line 2, and an *aicill* rhyme with *dīan* at the end of line 3.

4. This recurs twice as a marginal verse and is included in Anthologies A and C; see the note on no. 20 in Appendix 1.

5. A variant of this verse appears in the scholia on the prologue of *Félire Óengusso* in MS 5100–04, fol. 58r6 as:

> Fail a tri.
> danab buidhech mac Dé bí.
> oenta brathar comrad cert.
> altoir Dé do timthireacht

Meyer (1906: ix n. 3) gave a variorum edition of the verse, following the copy here in Anthology D for lines 1, 2 and 4, and the Brussels MS for line 3, and

translated: 'Three things for which the King of the sun is grateful: union of brethren, upright conversation, serving at the altar of God'.

The variant *fodhail cert* here in Anthology D can be translated 'correct sharing'.

6. 'There are three things with which the King of the sun is not pleased; vainglorious piety, bitter rebuking, slandering of a person if it be uncertain.'

The verse recurs as v. 5 of the anthology in Add. 30512, edited in Breatnach (2020: 82), as a marginal verse in H 2. 12, edited and translated in Culverwell (1913: 135), as a marginal verse in the Leabhar Breac, p. 225 marg. inf., and among the verses relating to the *Félire* in MS 5100–04, fol. 58r7 (see Meyer, 1906: ix n. 2), immediately after the copy of no. 5 above. The copy in the Leabhar Breac reads:

> Fuil .iii. ní.
> donach buidech M*a*c Dé bíí.
> crabud uallach coisced serb.
> ecnach duine mad inderb.

The other three copies agree with the Leabhar Breac against Anthology D in the reading *Mac Dé bíí* in the second line. For *tréide* 'triad', the Brussels copy has the synonymous *a trī* in the first line, while the other copies again agree with the Leabhar Breac. The only other significant variant amongst all five copies is *maídhmech* in the third line in Add. 30512, against *úallach* in all the rest.

7. A variant of this verse appears in the commentary on *Félire Óengusso* for 4 April, and was edited and translated by Stokes (1905: 110–11) from Rawlinson B 512 as:

> Mírín aráin eorna án
> ba sí mo chuitid for clár,
> gass birair is usci té
> ba si mo chuit cach n-aidchi.
>
> 'A bittock of a cake of bright barley, this is my portion on the board:
> a sprig of watercress and warm water, this is my share every night.'

The variant in MS 5100–04, fol. 60v8, differs from the other two in having present tense forms:

> Mirin arain eorna áin.
> is hí mo chuitigh for clar
> gass biruir is us*ce* te.
> is hí mo chuitt cech n-oidche

Abbreviations

CormY Kuno Meyer, 'Sanas Cormaic', *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts* 4 (1912), 1–128.
PH Robert Atkinson, *The Passions and Homilies from Leabhar Breac*, Todd Lecture Series 2 (Dublin, 1887).
RIA Cat T. F. O'Rahilly et al. (1926–70).

MS references

A 7	UCD Franciscan MS A 7.
Add. 30512	BL MS Additional 30512.
Book of Fenagh	RIA MS 23 P 26 (479).
Book of Leinster	TCD MS H 2. 18 (1339).
Book of Uí Maine	RIA MS D ii 1 (1225).
B iv 2	RIA MS B iv 2 (1080).
C ii 3	RIA MS C ii 3 (a).
D iv 2	RIA MS D iv 2 (1223).
D v 2	RIA MS D v 2 (670).
G 1	NLI MS G 1.
G 3	NLI MS G 3.
G 10	NLI MS G 10.
G 50	NLI MS G 50.
H 1. 18	TCD MS H 1. 18 (1282).
H 2. 12	TCD MS H 2. 12 (1309).
H 3. 17	TCD MS H 3. 17 (1336).
H 3. 18	TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337).
H 4. 22	TCD MS H 4. 22 (1363).
Harley 5280	BL MS Harley 5280.
Laud 610	Oxford Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 610.
Laud 615	Oxford Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 615.
Leabhar Breac	RIA MS 23 P 16 (1230).
Lebor na hUidre	RIA MS 23 E 25 (1229).
MS 5057–59	Brussels KBR, MS 5057–59.
MS 5100–04	Brussels KBR, MS 5100–04.
Rawlinson B 485	Oxford Bodleian MS Rawlinson B 485.
Rawlinson B 502	Oxford Bodleian MS Rawlinson B 502.
Rawlinson B 505	Oxford Bodleian MS Rawlinson B 505.
Rawlinson B 512	Oxford Bodleian MS Rawlinson B 512.
YBL	TCD MS H 2. 16 (1318), the Yellow Book of Lecan.
3 B 23	RIA MS 3 B 23 (1227).
23 Q 10	RIA MS 23 Q 10 (1233), an Leabhar Donn.

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A NEW EDITION AND TRANSLATION OF *DÚAN IN CHETHRACHAT CEST*[*]

Abstract

This article contains a new edition, translation, and discussion of *Dúan in chethrachat cest* 'the poem of the forty questions' attributed to Eochaid úa Céirín (fl. *c.* 1050) from British Library, Egerton MS 1782 (*s.* xvi^{in}). The text is a sixteen-stanza poem accompanied by interlinear glosses. The stanzas pose questions to the audience, which the glosses answer. These questions primarily regard figures from Irish legendary history, and the answers are of interest for their frequently unique details on the matters which they treat. The introduction includes discussions of the surviving manuscript copies, the poet, some of the material in the text, and the poem's language and metre.

Dúan in chethrachat cest (*DxlC*) 'the poem of the forty questions' is a Middle-Irish poem attributed to the poet Eochaid Éolach úa Céirín (fl. *c.* 1050). The poem consists of a series of questions regarding Irish legendary history, Biblical matters, and miscellaneous lore, accompanied by prose interlinear glosses which answer the questions posed in the verse. It is of particular interest for its divergent and often unique details regarding the invasion legends, which speak to otherwise lost versions of these tales.

Since its first and only modern edition by Thurneysen in 1921, *DxlC* has largely been overlooked in scholarship. Thurneysen's edition includes a brief introduction and a translation into German, but no commentary on the text's language, metre, or content. The most significant recent discussions of the text include that by Jaski (2006) who, in discussing the conflation between the characters Fénius Farsaid and Aeneas, draws on the first three stanzas of *DxlC*, and by McMullen and Darwin (2024), who analysed the poem's metre in an article about the poet Eochaid Éolach úa Céirín. The present edition includes a discussion of the language and metre of the poem, textual notes which aim to elucidate editorial decisions and difficulties with the text, and a stanza-by-stanza commentary on the content of the poem and its glosses.

[*]This article is based on my MA dissertation which was written for Maynooth University in 2025. An earlier version of a portion of this article was presented at the **Widame* conference in Maynooth University on the 8th of November 2025 and at the *Tionól* in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies on the 14th of November 2025. I am grateful to Prof. David Stifter for his advice and supervision both during the MA and as I re-worked the dissertation into this article. I thank Dr Christina Cleary for reading drafts of this article and providing helpful feedback and advice. I also wish to thank the anonymous readers for their suggestions and corrections, and the editors of this journal, Prof. Barry Lewis and Prof. Ruairí Ó hUiginn. I am responsible for any remaining errors or short-comings.

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Many questions about this poem and its glosses remain unanswered and it is my hope that this new edition will generate further scholarly interest in this curious text.

Manuscript copies[1]

There are four surviving manuscript copies of *DxlC*. The oldest is in the sixteenth-century manuscript known as Egerton MS 1782 (hereafter E). Two are in eighteenth-century manuscripts and were copied from E: TCD MS H 5. 12 (1384)[2] (hereafter T) and NLI MS G 130[3] (hereafter G). In the late stages of preparing this article, a third modern copy was brought to my attention, in Longford, Coláiste Naomh Mel, ML 11 (*s.* xix). I have unfortunately not been able to access it, but the catalogue states that its copy of *DxlC* and a number of other poems are all from E (Ó Fiannachta 1980: 68). The text in E is the basis for this edition, and one of its copies, TCD MS H 5. 12 (1384), will be used to aid reading the text where the vellum is stained.

Egerton MS 1782

DxlC is found at fols 53va16–54rb7 of Egerton MS 1782, held in the British Library, London. Digital images of the manuscript have been published online by the British Library.[4] It was discussed most extensively by Flower (1926) in the second volume of the *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum* (pp. 259–98). A shorter entry was later published by Watson (1979) in his *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c. 700–1600 in the Department of Manuscripts: The British Library* (p. 113). Scribal notes indicate that it was written in 1517 (Flower 1926: 262) by members of the Ó Maolchonaire family.

The material in E varies in date from the Old Irish period through to the Early Modern and is grouped by subject or theme. This grouping can be demonstrated by looking at the texts surrounding *DxlC*. Flower (1926: 263) categorises this section as 'a series of school poems bearing on general knowledge, the history of Ireland, etc.' The text immediately preceding *DxlC* is the poem *Fianna bátar i nEmain* (ed. and trans. in Stokes 1902) which recounts how a number of Irish heroes died, with interlinear glosses expanding on the information given in the poem. The poem immediately following *DxlC* is *Ádam athair sruith ar slúag*, which gives an account of antediluvian Biblical history and of the invasion tradition found in *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (*LGÉ*), thus having much in common thematically with *DxlC*. It is also found in two manuscripts

[1] I wish to thank the British Library for allowing me to view Egerton MS 1782 before it was re-digitised and the Library of Trinity College Dublin for giving me access to MS H 5. 12 (1384). I was only able to view NLI G 130 on microfilm.

[2] On this manuscript see Abbott and Gwynn (1921: 245). It was written by Aodh Ó Dálaigh in 1749, and the majority of the material contained in it, including this text, was copied from E. *DxlC* is on pp. 64–5.

[3] On this manuscript see Ní Shéaghdha (1977: 47–51). It was mostly written by a scribe named Michael Ó Broinn, who was writing from 1725 to 1727 (Ní Shéaghdha 1977: 47). *DxlC* is on pp. 58–9, and has been copied from E.

[4] iiif.bl.uk/uv/#?manifest=https://bl.digirati.io/iiif/ark:/81055/vdc_100184117577.0x000001

that are older than E: the Book of Uí Mhaine (RIA MS D ii 1 (1225)), fols 150rb–151rb and the Book of Lecan (RIA MS 23 P 2 (535), fols 30vb–31vb. In E we also find the two other 'question'-poems, *Dúan in chóicat cest* (fol. 49va) (ed. and trans. in Tristram 1985: 285–93; ed. in Meyer 1903: 234–7) and *A fhir thall tríallus in scél* (fol. 50vb) (ed. in Meyer 1921: 3–7), both of which are poems of questions with answers given in interlinear glosses. *Dúan in chóicat cest* is more religious in topic than *DxlC*, while *A fhir thall tríallus in scél* is similar in topic to *DxlC*, mentioning people such as Fénius Farsaid and the sons of Míl, but also more recent figures such as Flann Fína mac Ossu (Meyer 1921: 6).

The title

Despite the title, it seems that there are only thirty-one questions, possibly thirty-two, included in the poem. There are two possible reasons for this discrepancy: either the title of 'forty' questions was used to represent an approximate amount, or some of the poem is missing. As there is a *dúnad* closing the poem, if something is missing it is more likely to be from the middle of the poem. It is also possible, however, that the final stanza was altered or added after the poem's composition to make up for the loss of material at the end. There are four pairs of stanzas with no *fidrad freccomail* (linking alliteration; see Carney 1981) linking them, but in one of these pairs, stanzas 12 and 13, the latter is clearly referring back to the topic of the former, and so the lack of linking alliteration is not a reliable way to identify gaps. The absence of any mention of Nemed could indicate that his section was removed, but there is no clear motivation for removing it.

Dúan in chóicat cest, mentioned above, does have fifty questions as the title states and it mentions its *cóecait cest* 'fifty questions' in the first line (Meyer 1903: 234). These two poems both appear in the same section of E, so they could have been transmitted together and in the course of this transmission, *DxlC* could have been given its title from its association with *Dúan in chóicat cest*. It cannot be confirmed whether or not these poems were associated with each other before the sixteenth century, as there is no earlier copy of *DxlC*, and only one earlier copy of *Dúan in chóicat cest*, which is in the fourteenth/fifteenth-century 'Book of Ádhamh Ó Cianáin' (NLI MS G 3). That copy has no title.

The poet

Dúan in chethrachat cest is attributed to the poet Eochaid (Éolach) úa Céirín in the heading of the poem. As will be discussed below, there is no reason to disagree with this attribution on linguistic grounds. There are three other surviving works attributed to him: the metrical *dindṡenchas* of Loch Garman (ed. and trans. in *MD* iii, 168–83), the poetic retelling of *Esnada tige Buchet* that begins *Cathaír cenn cóicid Banba* (ed. in Greene 1955: 32–41), and the prosimetric *Aided Nath Í* (ed. and trans. in Bănăţeanu 1930), where he is said to be a compiler alongside Flann Mainistrech in the colophon accompanying the *LU* and Yellow Book of Lecan (TCD MS 1316 (H 2. 16)) versions (*LU* p.

39a15–20; Yellow Book of Lecan col. 910 l. 22–8; Bănăţeanu 1930: 178–9, 181). Little is known about Eochaid úa Céirín besides what can be gathered from the references to him in these texts. From the colophon to *Aided Nath Í* we can tell he was a contemporary of Flann Mainistrech, who died in 1056 (Hennessy 1871: 52): *Fland tra 7 Eochaid eolach hua Cérin is iat rothinolsat so* …, 'Fland nun, und Eochaid der kundige, Enkel Cerin's, sind es, die dies sammelten …' (Bănăţeanu 1930: 178–9). This colophon also says that the material for the text came from a number of books in Armagh and in *Manister*, likely Monasterboice (Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Mainistir* 1): *a llebraib Eochoda hui Flandacan in Ard Macha 7 a llebraib Manistrech 7 asna lebraib togaidib archena .i. asin Libur Budi testo asin carcar in Ard Macha 7 as in Libur Girr boí im Mainistir* …, 'von den Büchern Eochaid's, Enkel des Flannachan zu Armagh, und von den Büchern des Klosters und von den andern auserwählten Büchern überdies, d.h. vom Gelben Buche, welches nunmehr in der Zelle zu Armagh fehlt und aus dem Kurzen Buche, welches sich im Kloster befand …' (Bănăţeanu 1930: 178–9). From this, we can say he was probably in the Oriel region at least for the duration of his collaboration with Flann Mainistrech. His family had a connection to the Uí Cheinnselaig, who traced their ancestry to the legendary king Cathaír Már (McMullen and Darwin 2024: 73), a fact which would explain the prominent presence of this king in two of the texts attributed to him, the *dindṡenchas* of Loch Garman and *Cathaír cenn cóicid Banba*.

The format of the text

It is well known that medieval Irish scholars were fond of the question-and-answer format. An extreme example of this would be the Old Irish treatise on the Psalter (ed. and trans. in Meyer 1894), which is entirely structured around a series of questions which introduce each topic under discussion. If we look at the poem as the core text here, what we have in *DxlC* is less like this question-and-answer format and more like a quiz. One voice (the verse/poet) is asking the questions, and another voice (the prose/audience) is answering them. The audience is addressed directly by the poet on a number of occasions through 2 pl. verbs: 1a/13d/14c/16d *apraid* 'speak'; 1c/10b *·fetab*air 'do ye know?'; 13d *ēistig*h 'listen'; 16c *innisid* 'recount'. Further, we find a vocative plural noun and two other collective nouns: 1a *a éolchu Elga* 'O sages of Elg'; 1b *a shlúaig Fōtla fīrergna*' 'O host of truly famous Fótla'; 13c *a áes dāna na ṅdúan dil* 'O artisans of the precious poems'. It is clear that the audience is a group and not an individual because of these plural verbs and vocatives, though in one instance there is a 2 sg. imperative, 8c *ab*air.[5]

Who this audience is meant to be is a question inherently tied to the context that the poem was written for. The poem itself provides very little evidence on this, and the following discussion will be largely speculative. The three possibilities I can see are a didactic context, a performative/competitive context

[5]This may have been the result of a suspended syllable being incorrectly expanded at some point in the poem's transmission, as it is hard to explain why the poet would switch to a singular verb in just this line when the plural, *apraid*, is used everywhere else.

or entertainment: is this a summer exam, a table quiz, or the crossword in *The Irish Times*? A didactic context is possible, but the terms that the poet uses to address his audience (see previous paragraph) seem to be addressing a group of peers, not students. They are almost laudatory, especially the latter example from 13c. As well as this, the line 15b *nī·fhetatar na dóerbaird* 'the lower bards do not know …' sounds like the poet is challenging the professional grade of his audience. This does not entirely exclude the possibility that the poem was written to be used in teaching, but it is a point against that interpretation.

The competitive or performative interpretation is not suggested by anything within *DxlC* itself, but to examine this we need to draw on evidence from *Dúan in chóicat cest*.[6] The first couplet indicates that the questions are to be asked *do clár Temra* (Meyer 1903: 234) 'to the plain of Tara' and the second stanza refers to the audience as a 'host' or 'crowd': *socaide fāgbus a brat / icon cōicait imchomarcc* (Meyer 1903: 235), 'a host loses its cloak at the fifty questions' (Wright 2013: 215). In *A New Commentary on the Old English* Prose Solomon and Saturn *and* Adrian and Ritheus *Dialogues*, these stanzas are interpreted as describing a contest that took place at Tara, and it is suggested that the reference to Tara could be referring to the *Feis Temro* 'feast of Tara' (Wright, Hall and Hill 2024: 50). Evidence for the existence of such contests is difficult to come by, and *Dúan in chóicat cest*, by positioning its audience in Tara, may just be creating an imaginary or dramatic context for the poem. Such contests would be a plausible application for poems such as these, however. Of course, just because we can interpret *Dúan in chóicat cest* as having a certain context for its composition, it does not necessarily mean we can apply the same to *DxlC*. The poems are similar in form, which makes it tempting to think of them as a genre, but the poets who wrote them could have had entirely different intentions for them.

A fhir thall tríallus in scél is a bit different to *DxlC* in that it is addressing an individual, but it is somewhat provocative in tone, challenging the answerer with lines such as *abair frimm masat éolach* (Meyer 1921: 3), 'say [it] to me if you are knowledgeable'; *inniss mas imdo th'ēolus* (Meyer 1921: 4), 'recount [it] if your knowledge is abundant' (my translations); *dotrala f[o] ainēolass* (Meyer 1921: 3), 'thou art ignorant' (*eDIL* s.v. *do-cuirethar* II b). This tone could make it a candidate for the competitive context, but the singular addressee could also be understood as referring to the reader. Perhaps this text was composed simply to be a challenge for whoever wished to answer it. If we understand the plural audience in *DxlC* as referring to the scholarly community as a whole, this interpretation could be applicable to *DxlC* also. There is nothing to support this particular interpretation within the poem, but the idea that it could have been created entirely for entertainment, be that for individuals or groups, seems possible.

[6] I wish to think Prof. Charles D. Wright for sharing his materials on *Dúan in chóicat cest* with me and for pointing me in the direction of some useful publications, including *A New Commentary*.

Commentary[7]

Stanzas 1–3: Fénius Farsaid, Íar son of Néma, and Bélait

The first three stanzas of *DxlC* deal with the deaths of the three characters Fénius Farsaid, Íar son of Néma, and Bélait daughter of Laiten. Fénius Farsaid is well known from medieval Irish legends of the tower of Babel and the creation of the Irish language, and he features in *Auraicept na nÉces* (Calder 1917). For a discussion of his complicated ancestry see Carey (1990) and for different traditions about his role in the creation of alphabets see McLaughlin (2009).

Bélait, Fénius's wife, is mentioned in two other texts which also reference her death from the sun. The metrical *Bansenchas* has *Bás Belbaiti ro fes feli, do thes na gréni sin glind* (Dobbs 1930: 290), 'The death of Bélait from the sun's heat in the glen is known in poetry' (Dobbs 1930: 317). In the prose *Bansenchas*, the parents of Nél are said to be Lavinia and Aeneas rather than Fénius and Bélait (Dobbs 1931: 167). This represents the conflation of the characters of Fénius and Aeneas that Jaski (2006) discusses. Part of this conflation seems to lie in the name of Bélait's father (Fénius's father-in-law) Latinus (here *Laiten*) which is both the name of a figure at the tower of Babel and the name of Lavinia's father (Aeneas's father-in-law) (Jaski 2006: 24). The other reference to Bélait is in a stanza quoted in *Auraicept na nÉces*: *Bellat mathair Niu[i]l neimnigh […] Fuair bas i llo grene glain* (Calder 1917: 60, 213), 'Bellat mother of envenomed Nél […] Died on the bright day of the sun' (Calder 1917: 61). Neither text shares the references to an affair with Íar, her dying 'from love', or her burial in a place named Carn Bélaite which feature in the gloss to stanza 2. Without further details on the story, it is unclear whether or not Bélait's death *do grád* in the gloss to stanza 2 is meant to be a different explanation for her death, or whether it is connected to her death by sunlight. It could be that her love for Íar or Fénius lead to the scenario where she was killed by the sun.

Wherever he is mentioned, Íar son of Néma is associated with Fénius Farsaid. The most attention is paid to him in *Auraicept na nÉces* (Calder 1917: 8, 16, 82–4, 102, 174, 178–9, 229, 244), but there is not much information about him there besides that he worked with Fénius on the *Auraicept* and is associated with *íarmbérla* in the sense of 'cryptic speech' (Calder 1917: 102). In *Lebor Ollaman*, he is said to have brought either Greek or Latin to Fénius (McLaughlin 2009: 11). He is absent from the prose text of *LGÉ*, but is mentioned in the poem beginning *Athair cáich, coimsid nime*, which is included in some recension 2 and 3 manuscripts as well as independently in the Book of Uí Mhaine (*LGÉ* i, 172). There, he is listed alongside other linguists at the school of languages in the city of Ibiténa (= Eipithéna in *DxlC*) on the plain of Shinar (*LGÉ* i, 194). He remains a small part of the legend in later sources, as he is said to have introduced *íarmbérla* (here meaning 'unstressed words') to Irish in *IGT* (i, 4; Mac Cárthaigh 2014: 58) and is mentioned alongside Fénius in *Foras Feasa ar Érinn* (Dinneen 1908: 6). There is little information in these sources about Íar's life, or that of any other character, as the extant texts are more concerned

[7] Stanza 16 will not be discussed as it is lacking a gloss. The reason why it has no gloss is not clear.

with the characters' linguistic activities. However, it is evident from this poem that other stories about these characters existed. Here we have the bones of a narrative about a betrayal and affair that is not attested elsewhere.

Jaski (2006: 31) has a discussion of the material in these three glosses which accounts for the parallels in the manner of Bélait and Íar's deaths with those of Ham and Abel in apocryphal traditions found in Ireland. The reference to Ham being killed *do thes grēne* only features in the copy of the third redaction of *LGÉ* that is found in the Book of Lecan (*LGÉ* iii, 36) and it is difficult to see any connection between the characters of Ham and Bélait. Ham and Bélait are not the only characters to be killed by the sun in Middle Irish sources. Another example is found in the poem beginning *Éstid a éolchu cen on*, where the poet Cairpre mac Etaine is said to have been killed *de gai grēne glaine* 'of a stroke of the pure sun' (*LGÉ* iv, 226–7).

The location of *Eipithéna ciuitas* has not been identified with certainty. In Thurneysen's edition of *DxlC*, he did not comment on the name but directed the reader to *Auraicept na nÉces* (Thurneysen 1921: 134 n. 1). Macalister calls the city 'an echo of the name of the Median city of Ecbatana' in the notes to his edition (*LGÉ* i, 268). Specifically, he is commenting on the poem beginning *Athair cáich, coimsid nime*. There, the city's name is spelled variously between manuscripts: *Ibit(h)ena(e)*, *Imbithena*, *Hebotena*, *Eba tena* (*LGÉ* i, 194). This poem places the city in Shinar.

Jaski (2006: 31) brings *Auraicept na nÉces* into the discussion. He references the text's statement that the five divisions of Irish were created *apud Eotenam (uel Athena) ciuitatem* (Calder 1917: 16). He comes to the conclusion that the city of Eipithéna/Ibithéna etc. resulted from a confusion between Athens (*Athena(e)*) and Achaia, which *Auraicept na nÉces* mentions as a place where writing may have been invented (Jaski 2006: 31; Calder 1917: 20). This would explain why a place with a name derived from the Latin *Athenae* (and not, seemingly, the Irish *Athain*; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Athain*) came to be situated in Shinar. However, an identification with Athens does not explain the *-b-* or *-p-* found in forms of the name in *DxlC* or *Athair cáich, coimsid nime*.

Jawbone of a camel?

The unusual weapon used by Fénius to kill Íar has parallels in Biblical and extra-scriptural sources. The phrase *lecca/glaine chamaill* has been used in Irish sources to describe the impromptu weapon Samson used to kill a thousand Philistines in Judges 15.[8] However, in the Bible and other early Christian

[8]The earliest such reference is found in the Turin glosses: *Tur.* 110a *.i. honglaini inchamul… inna ilslogu .i. na ilfiṡ.. hoglaini inchamul*, 'i.e. with the jawbone of the camel (he laid low) the many hosts, i.e. the many Philistines with the camel's jawbone' (*Thes* i, 492). A further example can be found in the Middle Irish *Scél Saltrach na Rann*: *.i. lecca chamaill boī ina lāim* (RIA MS 23 P 16 (1230), p. 127b6–8), 'i.e. [it was] a camel's jawbone that was in his hand' (my translation). It also features in the tale *How Samson slew the Gesteda*: *7 rogab a airm ningnathach nallmardha .i. a chromchuarcholtur do lecain camaill*, 'and he seized hold of his uncouth, outlandish weapon – to wit, his crooked, bend coulter of the jawbone of a camel' (Marstrander 1911: 156–7; see also Ehrmantraut 2022).

sources, this weapon was the jawbone of an ass (Vulgate *mandibula asini*, Septuagint *σιαγων όνου*). In medieval English art and literature, the jawbone of an ass is also the weapon used by Cain to kill Abel (Wright, Hall and Hill 2024: 186–8). The poem *Athair cáich, coimsid nime* agrees that Cain killed Abel with a jawbone, though again it is that of a camel rather than an ass: *Rogab Cāin n-a lāim luind / lecain cintaig in chamuill* 'Cain took in his savage hand / the guilty jaw-bone of the camel' (*LGÉ* i, 180–1). The second recension of *LGÉ* references Cain killing Abel *do lecain chamaill* (while also providing the alternative theory that he strangled him) (*LGÉ* i, 28) and the third recension is less specific, saying *do fid chnāma chamaill* 'with a shank/shaft of a camel-bone' (*LGÉ* i, 84–5, 144–5). The first-recension text bound with the Book of Fermoy (RIA MS 23 E 29 (1134)) has *co fid cnāma camaill* also, while *LL* may or may not say *lasin cnāim chamaill* (*LGÉ* i, 18–19).[9]

How a jawbone came to be Cain's weapon is not clear. As the Bible does not specify how he killed his brother, there was much speculation on the topic in the medieval period. This issue is too complex to address fully here: see the most recent discussion by Wright, Hall and Hill (2024: 186–8). The use of this motif in the story of how Fénius killed Íar could be transferring the sense of betrayal associated with the Cain and Abel story, if it was that jawbone that was on the mind of the author and not the one Samson used as a weapon. It could also echo the jealousy that Cain experienced when his brother's offerings to God were favoured.

This association could also go further. There was an extra-scriptural legend that one of the reasons why Cain killed Abel was because he was jealous that Abel was intended to marry Cain's twin sister. This legend was certainly known to the medieval Irish as it is alluded to in *Dúan in chóicat cest* and *LGÉ* (Wright 1987: 138; Meyer 1903: 236; *LGÉ* i, 158). It is possible then that Fénius was portrayed as killing his colleague Íar with a jawbone because it represented betrayal or jealousy, both of which make sense considering that Íar had an affair with Fénius's wife Bélait. If the author was thinking of Samson's jawbone, then the use of the motif here could represent an act of revenge for a wrong-doing as it does in the Samson story, perhaps insinuating that Fénius is a righteous figure in this story.

There are few discussions of the discrepancy between the camel-bone in Irish sources and the ass-bone elsewhere. Schapiro (1942: 206 n. 14) suggests that 'it is possible that the connection of the ass and camel as symbols of the giant descendants of Cain in the Book of Enoch is a factor in this substitution', but it seems that he was not aware of the extent of the Irish evidence, nor that the camel's jawbone is also used by Samson. In Macalister's notes to the first volume of *LGÉ*, he asks: 'Did the old Irish historians fully comprehend the difference between an ass and a camel?'. He concludes that because the two animals were 'equally unfamiliar' in ancient Ireland 'it is quite possible that

[9]Due to the condition of the MS, it has not been possible to verify Macalister's reading here. He was uncertain in his reading of *lasin cnāim chamaill*, saying that it 'is the best that [he] can make of the faint traces in L' (*LGÉ* i, 209). The diplomatic edition of *LL* (26–9) has quite a different passage that does not mention Cain's weapon. The passage is left blank in the facsimile.

they were supposed to be similar or identical' (*LGÉ* i, 209). This is possible, but not quite satisfactory. There are few early references to asses in medieval Irish writing, besides those in religious contexts which occur due to the frequent appearance of asses in the Bible. In *Early Irish Farming*, Kelly (1998: 131–2) says the 'earliest explicit reference to an ass on Irish soil' that he is aware of is from the twelfth century. I am not aware of any other examples of asses and camels being confused by the medieval Irish and there is no reason to think they would confuse them, but the issue requires further research.

Stanza 4: Lúam, Medar and Meal

A reference to three men associated with Cessair will immediately lead one to the three men who accompanied her to Ireland in *LGÉ* and related stories of her journey, but those men were named Bith, Ladra, and Fintán, and only one might have been her brother (*LGÉ* ii, 200). The gloss may suggest that they travelled separately to Cessair (if that is what is meant by *nīro·aiccillsit itir Cess*air, 'they did not speak to Cessair at all') so perhaps this is a separate trio that is absent from the tale in other sources.

Medar and Meal remain a mystery, but Lúam has a connection to Cessair's companion Ladra, who is often found with the epithet *lúam* 'pilot. This epithet is found in *LGÉ* (e.g., *LGÉ* ii, 182, 188, 200) and the Prose *Banṡenchas* (e.g. RIA MS 23 P 2 (535), fol. 203v14; TCD MS H 3. 17 (1336), col. 870 l. 44)[10] and he is called *lúam*air*e cach lir*, 'the pilot of every sea' in *Ádam athair sruith ar slúag* (E fol. 54vb11). One could speculate that these men are linked to other figures who took the forms of birds, such as Tuán mac Cairill, who is also associated with (Benn) Boirche (Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.vv. *Benna Bairche*, *Boirche*, *Bairrche*; Ó Riain, Ó Murchadha and Murray 2005: 158) in both the *Martyrology of Tallaght* and *Scél Tuáin meic Chairill* (Best and Lawlor 1931: 29; Carey 1984: 97, 101) or Fintán mac Bóchra and Suibne Geilt in the later texts *The Colloquy between Fintan and the Hawk of Achill* (ed. Meyer 1907) and *Buile Shuibne* (ed. O'Keeffe 1931), but without further information on the story of Cessair's brothers, no conclusion can be reached.

The poem and the gloss disagree with each other about when the men came to Ireland. The poem says it was *d'éisi na díleann* 'after the Flood' while the gloss says *āenadaig rīa ndílin*n 'one night before the Flood'. In *LGÉ* and other accounts, Cessair and her companions, Bith, Ladra and Fintán, arrive in Ireland before the Flood (e.g. *LGÉ* ii, 176) and if this was on the mind of the glossator, it could explain the discrepancy.

Stanza 5: Partholón

The numbers of his party vary, but the story of Partholón's people being wiped out by plague, with or without the detail of it being a punishment for kinslaying, is well-attested elsewhere. The earliest reference to it is in *Historia Brittonum*: *Primus autem venit Partolomus cum mille hominibus, de viris et*

[10]Here the manuscripts are cited rather than Dobbs's edition, as the edition has *luain*, a misreading for *luam*.

mulieribus, et creverunt usque ad quattuor milia hominum, et venit martalitas super eos, et in una septimana omnes perierunt et non remansit ex illis etiam unus (Morris 1980: 61), 'Partholon came first with a thousand, men and women, and they grew until they were four thousand, and a plague came upon them, and in one week they all died, and there remained not a one of them' (ibid., 20). One version of the Middle Irish adaptation of *Historia Brittonum* known as *Lebor Bretnach* gives the further detail that they were killed by plague *a ndigail na fingaili doroindi for a athair ⁊ for a mathair* (van Hamel 1932: 21) 'in revenge for the kinslaying he did to his father and to his mother' (my translation). The story is mentioned in all three of Macalister's redactions of *LGÉ*, but the kinslaying aspect is only present in redactions 2 and 3 (*LGÉ* ii, 272–3 and iii, 8–9). The Lecan *dindṡenchas* of Inber mBúada tells us that Partholón left Greece *iar marbad a athar ⁊ a mathar ⁊ a braithrech um chenn a forba* 'after his father and mother and brothers had been killed for sake of their heritage' (Stokes 1895: 141), with the addition of the detail that his brothers were also killed.

The wording of the gloss in *DxlC* is interesting in that it very closely resembles that of a similar section of redactions 2 and 3 of *LGÉ*. Below are the two passages:

> *LGÉ*: Mad āil a ḟis cid ara tānic Partholōn assa thīr, ninsa. Partholōn ro marb a māthair ⁊ a athair, ic iarraid rīge dia brāthair: co tāinic co Hērind ar teched a ḟinghaile. Conid īarom luid tāimlechta fair ina finghail. Nōi mile fri hāen sechtmain adbath do cinaidh a fingaile. (*LGÉ* iii, 8)

> 'Wouldst thou know wherefore Partholon came forth from his land, 'tis easy. Partholon slew his mother and his father, seeking kingship for his brother: so he came to Ireland fleeing from his kin-murder. And so thereafter plaguings came upon him in his kin-murder. Nine thousand in one week died for the guilt of his kin-murder.' (*LGÉ* iii, 9)

> *DxlC*: *Con*id *air*e at·berar Parrtholōn mac Sera f*r*iss .i. mac fingalach, cera .i. fi*n*gal .i. Parrtholōn ro·marb a athair ⁊ a māthair ac īa*r*air rīg*h*e dia brāt*h*air co·tānicc co Ērinn *ar* teched a f*h*ing*h*aile *con*id īa*r*um luid tai*m*lé*ch*ta ina fi*n*gail .i. noí míli do ēc f*r*i oínshechtmai*n* díb.

> 'So it is therefore that that he is called Partholón son of Sera, i.e. a kinslaying son, *cera*, i.e., 'kinslaying', i.e. Partholón killed his father and his mother seeking kingship for his brother and he came to Ireland fleeing from his kinslaying and afterwards a plague came because of [lit. 'in'] his kinslaying, i.e. nine thousand of them died in one week.'

Ignoring the initial question in the *LGÉ* passage, as this would be superfluous in a gloss that is answering a question in the poem itself, and putting aside the

etymological part of the gloss for a moment, the two passages are strikingly similar. The only significant difference lies in the final sentence, which could have been changed to remove the repeated information in *do cinaidh a fingaile*. In his notes to the text, Macalister states that this 'is what may be called a "germinal" paragraph, which tells the gist of an entire narrative in a few words: and was probably culled by the compiler from some brief historical abstract' (*LGÉ* iii, 90). The similarities between these two passages, the 'brief historical abstract' suggested by Macalister, and the source of the etymology for *Sera* could be explained by another text, one version of which from TCD H 4. 22 (1363) Macalister prints in his notes to *LGÉ* (*LGÉ* ii, 264–5). Another version of that text also appears in TCD H 3. 18 (1339), fol. 46a1–23 (Kobel 2020: 203). Like the passage in *LGÉ*, both copies begin with *mad āil a Ḟis cid ara tānic Partholōn assa tīr*. This text is a longer version of the story of the events leading to Partholón's arrival in Ireland and the plague that followed. It includes additional details such as genealogical information, Partholón's exile, and the injury to his eye. The phrasing of the parts of this text which overlap with the passage in *LGÉ* and the gloss in *DxlC* are, again, startlingly familiar. For the sake of brevity, the entire text is not included here but the parts which correspond to the *LGÉ*/*DxlC* passages have been pieced together to highlight the similarities. The version from TCD H 3. 18 (1337), which has never been published, has also been included as its language is somewhat closer to the texts to which we are comparing it:

> TCD H 4. 22 (1363): Parrtalón do marb [a] athair ⁊ a mathair […] ac iarraid righi da derbrathair […] Ocus tanic fein co Heirinn ar teichim na finghaile sin. Ocus is inand Sera isin berla Grecda 'fingalach' isin berla teibide. Is aire aderar Parrtalon mac Sera fris […] conid aire sin tainic taimlecht forra ina fingail…
>
> (*LGÉ* ii, 264–5)

> 'Partholon slew his father and his mother […] seeking kingship for his brother […] he himself came to Ireland, fleeing that kin-murder. Now *Sera* means in the Greek language what "fingalach" (= parricide) means in the Chosen language [Goidelic]. That is why he is called Partholon son of Sera […] wherefore there came a plague upon him in kin-bloodguiltiness …' (*LGÉ* ii, 265)

> TCD H 3. 18 (1337): P*a*rrt[h]olōn ro·m*a*rb a māthair ⁊ a athair […] ī*a*rair rīge dia b*r*āthair […] co·tai*n*ic co hÉirinn *ar* teithed [a] ḟingaile ⁊ is i*n*an*n* Sera isin tengaid Grégda ⁊ fi[n]ggal isin bērla teipide ⁊ is *air*e si*n* at·ber*ar* Parrt[h]olōn m*a*c Sera f*r*is […] *con*ad*h* ī*arum* luid tamle*cht*a *for*ro …
>
> 'Partholón killed his mother and his father […] seeking kingship for his brother […] and he came to Ireland fleeing [his] kinslaying and 'Sera' in the Greek language is the same as 'kinslaying' in the selected language [Irish] and it is because of that that he is

> called Partholón son of Sera […] and afterwards a plague came upon them.' (my translation)

As well as being similar in wording to our other two passages, this text also provides a source for the etymology of *cera*, abbreviated though it is in *DxlC*. As the text found in TCD H 4. 22 (1363) and TCD H 3. 18 (1337) was transmitted independently, a version of it was likely used as a source for both the compiler of *LGÉ* recension 2 and the glossator of *DxlC*. With the other glosses having such unique details, it can be said with some certainty that the glossator of *DxlC* was not working from *LGÉ*, at least not the compilation as we know it.

Stanza 6: Énna Airgdech

The origin of Énna Airgdech's epithet is explained in *LGÉ*, which says *is leis dorōnta scēith airgdidi ar tūs riam, 7 in Airgedros do rindead, comad dē itā Ēnna Airgtheach fair; 7 dorad do airechaib Ērenn iad*, 'by him were silver shields made first of all, and in Argatros were they made, whence is he named Énna Airgdech; and he gave them to the leaders of Ireland' (*LGÉ* v, 228–9). This is followed by the long version of *Cóir Anmann*, which also associates him with silver shields: *is dó doronta scéith airgdidi a nAirgetros* (Arbuthnot 2007: 2), 'for him silver shields were made in Airgetros' (Arbuthnot 2007: 79). The gloss to *DxlC* is missing any mention of silver shields and is likely referring to a different tradition where he is more generally associated with wealth and abundance. However, the phrase *fross airget* could also be referring to the same event as *LGÉ* and *Cóir Anmann*, just in a more figurative way. An adjective derived from *argat* should have an internal */d/*, i.e. *airgtech*/*airgdech* (cf. *eDIL* s.v. 1 *airgdech*).[11] While there is no mention of Airgetros (Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Airgetros*; Ó Riain, Ó Murchadha and Murray 2003: 46) in *DxlC*, it is possible that *fross airget* was intended to be an etymology for this place-name.

Stanza 7: Óengus son of the Dagda, Conchobar, Cú Chulainn, Conall, Celtchar

These characters do not need much of an introduction, but the tale itself is obscure. I have to follow Thurneysen in saying 'von dieser Sage ist mir nichts bekannt' (1921: 134 n. 3). We can only speculate on the context of this attack. Óengus is not typically associated with these Ulster heroes. While *Aislinge Óengusso* says that he joined Medb and Ailill on the *Táin* (Meid 2017: 59), he does not feature in *Táin Bó Cúailnge* itself. Óengus's attack seems to be personally motivated, since it is spurred by something that Conchobar says, and this and the positioning of the Ulster heroes at Emain Macha (and not 'on the road') might mean that we should understand this tale as taking place outside of the context of the *Táin*, but there is no way of confirming this.

[11] In this entry it is suggested that some of the examples should belong to 1 *aircthech*. The spelling varies between attestations of Énna's epithet: *LGÉ* v, 228: the Book of Lecan (RIA MS 23 P 2 (535)) recension 3 text has *airgtec*h (fol. 290rb8), *airgtheach* (fol. 290rb13) and *airctig* (fol. 290rb16), all in the same passage, while the recension 1 text in *LL* has air*gdec*h (LL 2308).

Stanza 8: Etan daughter of Dían Cécht, Senbecc, Abcán grandson of Ebrecc, Óengus

Etan daughter of Dían Cécht is mentioned in the Prose *Banṡenchas* where she is called *ban-fhile* and is said to be the wife of Cermat Milbéoil, son of the Dagda, and the mother of Mac Cécht, Mac Cuill and Mac Gréne (Dobbs 1931: 168). In *LGÉ* she is said to be a *banfile* or *banéices* and has a son named Cairpre who is also a poet (*LGÉ* iv, 122). The Book of Ballymote's list of famous authors names her and her son Cairpre (Stokes 1901: 16). In the synchronistic tract *Adam primus pater* her death is mentioned as if contemporary with that of her son Cairpre (Mac Carthy 1892: 292), while she is said to have died of grief for Cairpre in the poem beginning *Éstid a éolchu cen on*, found in recensions 1, 3, and *Míniugud* of *LGÉ* (*LGÉ* iv, 226). She is named as one of the nobles of the Túatha Dé Danann who is buried *isin Brug* in *Aided Nath Í* (Bănăţeanu 1930: 176),[12] which, according to its colophon in *LU* and the Yellow Book of Lecan, was compiled by our poet Eochaid úa Céirín alongside Flann Mainistrech (Bănăţeanu 1930: 178, 181). *Lebor Bretnach* calls her *muim**i** na filed* (van Hamel 1932: 22), 'foster-mother of the poets'. None of these sources links her to Abcán or Senbecc.

Senbecc is best-known from the two versions of a story known as *Comrac Con Culainn re Senbecc* in which he meets Cú Chulainn. One version was edited and translated by Meyer (1883–85) and the other is part of *Bretha Nemed Dédenach* (Gwynn 1942: 26–7). In both versions of this story, as well as in the list of famous authors, he is said to be *hua Ebricc* (Stokes 1901: 16; Meyer 1883–5: 182; Gwynn 1942: 26), which is also said of his father Abcán in *DxlC*. He is also mentioned briefly in the *dindṡenchas* of Brug na Bóinde I: *cenn indias ui úabrig úaib* / *Senbic a túaim immais áin*, '… from you of the proud grandson / of Senbec from the stead of noble poesy' (*MD* ii, 16–17).[13]

Abcán's identity is less straightforward. There is a character of this name in *LGÉ* and he is a poet, but his genealogy does not mention Ebrecc: *Abcan mac Bicc Felmais meic Con meic Dein Cecht, fili Loga* (*LGÉ* iv, 130, 156, 194). The same Abcán is mentioned in *Cath Maige Tured* as a harper of the Túatha Dé Danann (Gray 1982: 38). The aforementioned poem beginning *Éstid a éolchu cen on*, attributed to Flann Mainistrech (who, according to the colophon to *Aided Nath Í*, collaborated with Eochaid úa Céirín on that text (Bănăţeanu 1930: 178–9)), states that he was killed by Óengus: *Abcan mac Bicfelmais ūair* / *fili Loga co lān-būaid,* / *do cher la Hoengus cen āil* / *inair Midir mōr-glonnaig*, 'Abcan son of cold Bic-felmais / the bard of Lug with full victory, / he fell by the hand of Oengus without reproach / in front of Midir of mighty deeds' (*LGÉ* iv, 232–3).[14] While this poem agrees with *DxlC* in saying that Óengus killed

[12]i.e. Brúg na Bóinne; see Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Brug* 1; Ó Riain, Ó Murchadha and Murray 2005: 205–7.

[13]Gwynn suggests in his notes to the text that *uaibrig* should be *Ebric* (*MD* ii, 94).

[14]Here Macalister translates *inair* as the adverb meaning 'from the front, before' (*eDIL* s.v. 2 *anair*). An alternative translation of this line is found under *eDIL* s.v. *áer*, where it is understood as the preposition *i* and noun *áer* meaning 'satire/satirising' and translated as 'because he satirised M[idir]'. If we take this alternative interpretation as the correct one, it would indicate that this

Abcán, there is no mention of Etan in this stanza and it may not be referring to the same story. There is also an Abcán *ard-ḟile* mentioned in the *dindṡenchas* of Ess Ruaid (*MD* iv, 4; Stokes 1892: 505; Stokes 1895: 31).

In the version of *Comrac Con Culainn re Senbecc* in *Bretha Nemed Dédenach*, Senbecc refers to himself as *Abhcánsa saoí fealbhais, file a Seghais, Senbhecc mo ainm. ua Ébhric a siodhaibh* (Gwynn 1942: 26), '[I am] Abcán, a sage of sorcery, a poet from Segas, Senbecc [is] my name. Grandson of Ébric from *síde*' (my translation). Gwynn (1942: 222) suggests in his notes to the text that Senbecc's name 'was perhaps originally *Senbecc in t-abacc ua Ebric*' because a monument named *Lighe an abhaic* (Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Lige ind Abaic*) was named after him and suggests two different ways of reading *Abcán-sa*: 'I am A.' or 'I am the dwarf, my name is S. ua Ebric' (Gwynn 1942: 222). The word *abcán* is a diminutive derived from *abacc* 'dwarf' and so does not necessarily have to be a name, but, if this is what is intended, it is possible that this was an alternative name for Senbecc, which got split into a second character or conflated with the Abcán in *LGÉ* who then became the father of Senbecc.

Stanza 9: Three feigned sounds, foxfire, and the Resurrection

There are two questions in this stanza: the first asks for the names of the three 'feigned sounds' (*anmonn na trí son ndoilbthe*) and the second is regarding the origin or cause of foxfire. These are answered in two separate glosses. I have found no parallel to the triad *gó 7 ainfír 7 ainfiss* 'falsehood and untruth and ignorance', nor to the term *son doilbthe* 'feigned sound' elsewhere. As a rule, each stanza of this poem deals with one topic. Even where there are multiple questions in a stanza, those questions are related somehow. One possible exception to this is stanza 12, but at least the answers position both questions as being related to figures from the Book of Genesis. This raises the question of whether the triad should be understood as being related to foxfire, Christ or the Resurrection, but it is impossible to tell with certainty if this is the case without further evidence.

There are some issues in interpreting the gloss regarding Christ and foxfire. These are discussed in the notes to the text, and it will suffice to say here that Christ is either said to have tread on the rotten wood or sang a psalm on it, but either way he is being linked to the creation of foxfire. There are two other references to foxfire in early Irish sources. The first is from *Aided Máelodráin*, where the foxfire is used as a trail of breadcrumbs to follow: *Tucthar lib lān mo chlera-sa do thenid sinnaig ocus at·bēr-sa is ē m'ētach-sa fil ann ocus biat-sa ina diaid et lāifet-sa in tenid im diaid, 7 toīt-si iarmo ślicht* (Greene 1995: 52), 'fill my bag with foxfire and I will say that my clothing is in it and I will go after him and I will throw the fire behind me and you should follow me' (my translation). The second reference to foxfire is from the poem beginning *Nīm·geib format fri fer find* in the Book of Ballycummin (RIA MS 23 N 10 (967)), where it is used in describing the beauty of a person who is false on the inside: *as tine*

stanza is referring to a different tale of Abcán's death from the one accounted in the gloss to *DxlC*, as the latter implies that Óengus killed Abcán because of his assault on Etan.

ṡindaig sechtair / fïad c[h]ách is blāth selestair / lān menge a corp co mbāine / cia rothibe findgāire (Meyer 1908: 267), 'he is foxfire on the outside, in front of everyone he is a yellow iris flower, even though he may laugh a bright laugh, his white/pure body is full of deception' (my translation).

As interesting as these two references to foxfire are in their own right, they do not shine a light on the reference in our gloss. The strong association between Jesus and light could be an element in his association with foxfire here. It might be relevant that in the Old Irish poem beginning *Is ór nglan, is nem im gréin*,[15] a person who does not follow the will of God is described as a 'withered tree': *is én immoniada sás / is nau tholl dianteslinn guas / is lestar fás is crann crín / nad déni thoil ind ríg thuas*, 'he is a bird round which a trap closes, / he is a leaky ship to which peril is dangerous, / he is an empty vessel, he is a withered tree, / whoso doth not the will of the King above' (*Thes* ii, 294). This could be a coincidence, as the *crann crín* is just one of many images employed by the poet, but it could be related to the fig tree which Jesus causes to wither in Matthew 21 and Mark 11. It may be that the image of Jesus literally bringing light to rotten wood is meant to represent his resurrection figuratively bringing light to non-believers or sinners.

Stanza 10: Seth, Adam, Michael, and the Devil

The poem[16] continues with mysterious extra-scriptural references, but now we turn to figures from Genesis. The notion that Seth was the first person to be hospitable (or generous) may be unique to this text. However, the question of Biblical 'firsts' has been noted as a common feature of Irish Biblical exegesis (Bischoff 1976: 102; Wright 1987: 124–5) and of *joca monachorum* texts (Wright 2013: 200). Various items of this sort are found in the margins of Harley MS 5280, including one similar in theme to ours, where the first feast is attributed to Methuselah: *Mathasaleam isē dorigne an cétcuir*m 7 *an cétfleid ar t*ús, 'Methuselah, it is he who made the first beer and the first feast originally' (fol. 41r marg. sup.; my translation). This is also found in TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), p. 46a24–5, alongside other similar items shared with those in the margins of Harley MS 5280.

The second half of this stanza/gloss pair deals with the archangel Michael warning Adam about the Devil's temptation, as well as the origin of sweetness and bitterness. I have found no source or close parallel to these elsewhere.

Stanza 11: Tríath son of Amur and the battle of Mag Tuired

LGÉ is consistent in naming Eochaid (or Eochu) son of Erc as the final king of the Fir Bolg who was defeated at the first battle of Mag Tuired (e.g. *LGÉ* iv, 8–10, 18, 20, 32). Other sources that mention the final king of the Fir Bolg agree on this name, such as *Cath Maige Tuired* (Gray 1982: 24) and the late

[15]This line is the beginning of the poem only in the longer version found in the commentary to *Félire Óengusso* (Stokes 1905: 156). The Reichenauer Schulheft (St. Paul im Lavanttal, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 86a/1) contains the first two stanzas, but in reversed order, beginning *Is én immo n-íada sás*.

[16]Or at least, the glosses. The stanza itself does not overtly reference religious matters.

account of the first battle of Mag Tuired (Fraser 1916). Tríath mac Amuir is an obscure figure. *Tochmarc Étaine* has a character named Tríath, son of Febal or Gobar who is one of the Fir Bolg (Bergin and Best 1938: 142), but besides his name and race there is little connecting him to our Tríath. He also features in *Tochmarc Treblainne*, with the name Tríath son of Faebor (Meyer and Pokorny 1921: 166–75).

Stanzas 12–13: the daughters of Midir and Goibniu and the sons of Míl

Wives of members of the Milesian invasion are occasionally mentioned in *LGÉ*, but none of these names feature in the list we have in *DxlC*. The women mentioned in *LGÉ* are Líben, Fíal, Tea, Fás, Odba, Scota, and Scéne (*LGÉ* v, 72, 98, 130), and they do not correspond to the women named in *DxlC*: Lían, Liphe/Aífe, Lemain, Aillenn, Cuilenn, and Cairche. Unlike *DxlC*, the women in *LGÉ* are not said to be of the Túatha Dé Danann. This aspect of *DxlC* could be related to the implication that the sons of Míl were given women by the Túatha Dé Danann in the Old Irish poem *Can a mbunadus na nGáedel?*: *Nis bátar mná soirbe soíre* / *ce a n-oglea* / *Ar n-gait a m-ban gabsat clemnas* / *Tuath Dea*, 'there were no charming, noble wives / for their young men; their women having been stolen, they made alliance / with the Tuatha Dea' (Todd 1848: 250–1).

There are only two male characters in these glosses who have a named wife in *LGÉ*: Fúat, who is said to be married to a woman named Líben rather than Aífe or Liphe, and Lugaid, whose wife's name is Fíal, not Aillenn, though we do hear of Fíal's death in *LGÉ* (*LGÉ* v, 32, 60, 74, 94, 130). Fíal is also mentioned in *Can a mbunadus na nGáedel?* (Todd 1848: 248). In the gloss to stanza 13, Liphe is replaced by Aífe. Aífe is more likely to be the error here, since it is a very common name, though Midir has a daughter named Aífe in *Acallam na Senórach* (Stokes 1900: 12). The rest of *DxlC*'s Túatha Dé Danann women are unknown to me.

The characters named as husbands to the Túatha Dé Danann women are all attested in *LGÉ* as Milesians. Cúailgne, Fúat and Muirthemne are sons of Bregon (*LGÉ* v, 24). Surge and Sobairche are listed as two of the ten 'champions' of the Milesians (*LGÉ* v, 26). Our Lugaid could be Lugaid son of Íth, who comes to Ireland to avenge his father (*LGÉ* v, 22). Alternatively, in one place in *LGÉ* 'Lugaid' is given as a variant for Aireach, one of the sons of Míl, so there may have been another tradition where one of the sons of Míl has this name (*LGÉ* v, 96).

It is worthy of note that many of the names in this gloss appear to be related to place names. In fact, the section of *LGÉ* about the sons of Míl shows a particularly strong concern with the origins of place names. See, for example, the names of the men mentioned in *DxlC*: Cúailgne is said to be the source of the name Slíab Cúailgne (*LGÉ* v, 22, 62; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Sliab Cuailgne* 1), Fúat of Slíab Fúait (*LGÉ* v, 22, 62; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Sliab Fúait*), Muirthemne of Mag Muirthemne (*LGÉ* v, 22; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Mag Murthemni*), Sobairche of Dún Sobairche (*LGÉ* v, 210, 212; Ó Riain, Murray and Nic Cárthaigh 2020: 132–3; Hogan and Ó Corráin

2017 s.v. *Dún Sobairche*) and Lugaid (son of Íth) of Loch Luigdech (*LGÉ* v, 60, 74, 95; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Loch Lugdach*). The same applies to the aforementioned women named as wives of Milesian men in *LGÉ*, most of whom also have places named after them: Tea is the eponym of a place named Temair (*LGÉ* v, 40, 63, 83, 168; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Temair*), Inber Féile is named after Fíal (*LGÉ* v, 32, 60, 74, 126; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Inber Féile* 2), Odba is the eponym of Odba (*LGÉ* v, 40, 56, 82; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.vv. *Odba* 1–3), Scéne has Inber Scéne named after her (*LGÉ* v, 30, 60, 70–2, 92, 110; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Inber Scéne*) and Fás has Fert Fáise (Ó Riain, Murray and Nic Cárthaigh 2024: 106; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Fert Faise*) and/or Glenn Fáise (*LGÉ* v, 32, 58, 60, 74; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Glenn Fáis*). It could be speculated that the women named in *DxlC* played a similar role in the version of the invasions that the glossator was working from and their names do resemble certain place names. Unfortunately, attempts to link the sons of Míl or these women to places that have names related to theirs have been largely unsuccessful as we do not know their stories. Liphe may be the one exception, as some versions of *LGÉ* mention a *cath Lifi* 'battle of Liffey' where Érimón's steed was killed (*LGÉ* v, 34, 74–6; Hogan and Ó Corráin 2017 s.v. *Life*).

Stanza 14: Góla, king of the Túatha Dé Danann

I have been unable to identify Góla or the place named Slíab nGóla. He seems to share a name with the Philistine Goliath (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *Góla*). The consonants of the name *Góla* are suspiciously similar to the start of the name *Gáiléoin*, and it might have been the product of a medieval etymology. *LGÉ* says there were only nine kings of the Túatha Dé Danann (*LGÉ* iv, 112–126, 164, 184),[17] not thirteen, and says that Mac Cuill, Mac Cécht, and Mac Gréne were the final three kings, sharing the kingship until the arrival of the Milesians (e.g. *LGÉ* iv, 124–6, 146–52, 164–6). I have not found any sources that disagree with this.

It is interesting that the glossator answers a question about the final king of the Gáiléoin with a Túatha Dé Danann figure. The Gáiléoin are typically associated with the Fir Bolg, this relationship being described in varying ways in *LGÉ*. The Fir Bolg section says that the five sons of Dela, the Fir Bolg leaders, split into three groups, the Fir Bolg, the Fir Domnann and the Gáiléoin (*LGÉ* iv, 6–7 16–17, 28–9).[18] The Fir Bolg, Fir Domnann, and Gáiléoin share Nemed as an ancestor (*LGÉ* i, 22–3, 156–7, 166–7; iii, 146–7, 152–5). The same information is found in *Lebor Bretnach* (van Hamel 1932: 21). Sometimes Séméon, another descendant of Nemed, is named as the ancestor of these groups (*LGÉ* iii, 148–9, 156–7, 178–9; iv, 12–13, 26–7,[19] 38–9). In recensions 1 and 3 of the genealogical material found near the beginning of *LGÉ*, the Túatha Dé Danann are included

[17]This part of the third-recension text describing the lengths of each king's reign omits Bres, though later the names of the kings are given again, in what Macalister considers to be 'an interpolation' (*LGÉ* iv, 310).

[18]The three divisions also appear in the *dindšenchas* of Loch Garman, attributed to Eochaid úa Céirín, though they are not named there (*MD* iii, 170).

[19]Only three of the recension 2 manuscripts say this, and they do not mention the Fir Bolg.

alongside the Fir Bolg, Fir Domnann and Gáiléoin as descendants of Nemed (*LGÉ* i, 22–3, 156–7) and this comes up again in the poem beginning *Éistet, aes écan aíbind* (*LGÉ* iv, 254–6). These latter genealogies may echo the tradition found in *Scél Tuáin meic Chairill*, which says that the Fir Bolg and Fir Domnann are related to Séméon, while the Túatha Dé Danann and Gáiléoin are related to Beothecht mac Iordanen: *Gabais Sémión mac Stairai in n-insi seo. Is díb Fir Domnand 7 Fir Bolg […] Gabais Beothecht mac Iordanen in n-insi seo forsna cenéla bátar inti. Is díib in Gáliún 7 Tuatha Dé 7 Andé* (Carey 1984: 102), 'Sémión son of Stairai took this island. Of them are the Fir Domnann and the Fir Bolg […] Beothecht son of Iordanen took this island from the peoples that were in it. Of them are the Gáilióin, and the Tuatha Dé and Andé' (Carey 1984: 106). Perhaps this gloss on *DxlC* is referring to the same or a similar tradition, which associated the Gáiléoin with the Túatha Dé Danann instead of the Fir Bolg.

Stanza 15: Adair daughter of the Dagda and the Mórrígan, wife of Éber
Adair does not seem to be attested elsewhere. Her husband Éber is most likely the son of Míl, as he and Érimon shared the kingship of Ireland after the Túatha Dé Danann were defeated (e.g. *LGÉ* v, 46, 64, 86, 165) and including him after a stanza about the final king of the Túatha Dé Danann makes sense in the roughly chronological order of this poem. Other sources do not name Éber's wife. As Adair is the daughter of the Dagda and the Mórrígan, this fits in neatly with the account in stanzas 12 and 13 of other Milesians marrying the daughters of other prominent Túatha Dé Danann figures, Midir and Goibniu.

Metrics

Dúan in chethrachat cest consists of sixteen stanzas in *deibide scaílte* (Murphy 1961: 65). The poem has a *dúnad*: *apraid*. This word also ends stanza 13. Four lines require elision to meet a count of seven syllables (5c, 6c, 16a, 16d). *Rinn 7 airdrinn* rhyme is present in all but one couplet (13a/b *trā* : *mnā*) and the tendency is for the second rhyming word to have one syllable more than the first, but there are five instances of an increase of two syllables, all $7^1 + 7^3$ (3a/b, 6b/c, 7c/d, 10c/d, 16a/b).

Alliteration
33/64 or 51.6% of lines have *uaimm*, with nine of those having either three alliterating words in one line or multiple pairs of alliterating words (27.3% of the lines with alliteration and 14% of lines overall). There are only three examples of linking alliteration within a stanza: 1b/c, 3b/c, and 9c/d. *Fidrad freccomail* (see Carney 1981) is present in all but the following stanzas: 4/5, 6/7, 12/13 and 14/15.

Rhyme
a) End-rhyme: The end-rhyme is generally unproblematic throughout the poem, though there are four complicated examples to discuss:

(1*a*/*b*) *Elga* : *fīrergna*: the problem with this rhyme is the *-g-* in *fīrergna*. There are two very easily confused words, *airgnae* (often spelled *ergna*) which is an adjective meaning 'evident, famous' (*eDIL* s.v. *airgnae*) and *érgna*, a noun meaning 'understanding' (*eDIL* s.v. *érgna*). The adjective has an internal -/ɣ/-, clear from a rhyme with *sedlaig* (*MD* iii, 106) (in a form with *-id*) and an internal rhyme with *slemna* in *Saltair na Rann*, ll. 5951–2 (Stokes 1883: 87). There is also an example in this poem that proves that the *-g-* is a voiced continuant, with a different form of the word, in 6a/b *Temraig* / *airdergnaid*. The noun *érgna*, which would be less likely in this case with its long vowel anyway, also seems to have a /ɣ/ as is shown by the rhymes *érgna* : *combérla* (*MD* iii, 386) and *érgna* : *bérla* (*LL* 4423–4).The /ɣ/ cannot rhyme with the /g/ of *Elga*, which is well-attested in spellings with *-gg-* and rhymes like *Elgga* : *bergga* (van Hamel 1917–19: 335) and *ndeirgg* : *Eilgg* (Meyer 1913: 30).

(2*c*/*d*) *·gegai*n : *ilbērlaib*: the *-e-* in *·gegai*n, a 3 sg. reduplicated preterite form of *gonaid*, was short, and thus would not rhyme with the long *-ē-* of *ilbērlaib*. There is the possibility that the first syllable was intentionally treated as long by the poet, as occasionally we find length marks on the first syllable of reduplicated verbs in manuscripts of the Middle Irish period. For example, this length mark is found on *cachain* (3 sg. preterite of *canaid* 'sings') in *LU*: *cách**ai**n* (p. 77a11; p. 121a18; p. 125b8; p. 143b28).[20] The same form, but augmented, is found in Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 502, fol. 59vb18 *ro·cháchai*n. In *LL* (p. 223a18–19) there is a 3 pl. *ro·réraigset*ar (< *rigid* 'stretches; rules). In the fifteenth-century manuscript Egerton MS 93, there is the 3 sg. form *consélsat* (< *con·slá* 'departs') (Mulchrone 1939: 142).[21]

(3c/d) *sea*n : *ainteam*: this will be discussed further in the notes to the text.

(8c/d) *glicc* : *Seinbicc*: *Senbecc* contains the adjective *bec* 'small' as its second element, and as such, a /*g*/ would be expected for the final consonant, which does not rhyme with the /*k*/ in *glicc*. Murphy (1961: 33) gives such rhyme between a class *g* and class *k* consonant as an example of an 'unusual exception' to the rules of rhyme, whereas in Meyer's (1909: 7) looser classification of rhyming consonants, this would be perfect rhyme. We have visual rhyme here with *-cc*.

b) Internal rhyme: cases where a word is repeated in two consecutive lines like 12a/b *anmunn* and 15c/d *ainm* are excluded from the following as two identical words do not usually rhyme with each other in any position. There

[20]The diplomatic edition has two others at l. 3796o (p. 48b31) and l. 10619 (p. 128b32) but due to the condition of the manuscript, I was unable to confirm the presence of the length mark.

[21]This manuscript is not digitised and I could not verify this reading.

are only three examples of internal rhyme in *DxlC*: 5c/d *līn* : *dīth* is a rhyme between consonants from Murphy's (1961: 32) class *l* and class *χ* but it seems to be echoing the rhyme from the first couplet, which is *th*ír : *mórgním*, 9c/d *sun*d : *crunn*, and 13c/d *ṅdúan* : *úan*.

c) *Aicill*: there are only two examples of *aicill*: 12c/d *múaid* : *th*úai*th*, with rhyme between consonants in class *l* and *χ* and seemingly supporting the rhyme of this couplet through assonance (*múaid* : *d*rech*rúaid*) and 16a/b *allē* : *Dē*. *Aicill* is not a regular feature of *deibide*, so these may be accidental or additional ornamentation.

Language

The language of this poem is unmistakably Middle Irish, and so the discussion below will be carried out with a view to identifying innovative and conservative features and highlighting forms of interest.

Nouns

There is some evidence of case syncretism. The *s*-stem (neuter) noun *glenn* 'valley' has a palatal final consonant in what should be an accusative form with a neutral final consonant in 5c *i nglinn*, implying confusion of the dative and accusative cases. The same phenomenon may explain the nasalisation after a dative singular noun in 7a *co mét ṅglon*n, but this will be discussed further in the notes to the text.

There appears to be nasalisation following a nominative singular neuter noun in 7c *mon*ar *ṅglē*, though I am hesitant to use this as proof of the retention of the neuter gender since it is in a cheville. The *eDIL* entry for *monar* describes it as being 'common in chevilles' and states that it is usually neuter when used in a cheville (*eDIL* s.v. *monar*). Unexpected or ahistorical instances of nasalisation are found in Middle Irish texts (Cleary 2024: 345–6). Chevilles, as stereotyped or stock phrases, are prime candidates for the retention of neuter nasalisation, even after its loss elsewhere in the language. Strachan (1906: 207–8) gave a number of examples of nasalisation in chevilles from *Saltair na Rann*, where it is found seemingly regardless of the gender of the noun. He suggests that the nasalisation spread from neuter nouns such as *búaid*, *érim*, and *réim* which are frequently found in chevilles. In *DxlC*, the only other historically neuter noun that might have shown some evidence of its gender is 8d *ainm athur*, where the lack of nasalisation indicates it is no longer being treated as neuter.

Verbs

The vast majority of verbs in the poem are in augmented past forms, and there is but one example of a preterite form in 14d *boī*. The same applies to the glosses.

The only notably conservative verb form in the poem is the 3 sg. reduplicated perfect of *gonaid* 'pierces, wounds' in 2c *·gegai*n, but the use of a

reduplicated form for this verb rather than the *s*-preterite in Middle Irish is not unparalleled: e.g. *gegnatar* (*MD* i, 50).

Turning to innovative features, compound verbs had declined in use by the time this poem was composed (see Breatnach 1994: 282–3). Examples of simple verbs derived from compound verbs are found in 13d *ēistig*h (*éistid* < OIr *in·túaisi*) and 16c *innisid* (< OIr *ind·fét*). Further examples can be found in the glosses: 4gl. *nīro·aiccillsit* (*aicillid* < OIr *ad·gládathar*); 7gl. *ro·*ch*uimrig* (*cuimrigid* < OIr *con·rig*); 9gl. *dīaro·éirig* (*éirgid* < OIr *at·reig*).

There are also developments to be noted in the endings of verbs. 2c and 10b *·fetabair* shows a Middle Irish 2 pl. past ending (Breatnach 1994: 305). 4c *co·failet* shows OIr *·fil* now using personal endings instead of an infixed pronoun or accusative noun to express its subject (Breatnach 1994: 323). In 8b *ro·*sār*aig*us*tar* shows the Middle Irish tendency for the 3 sg. deponent *s*-preterite ending to spread to non-deponent verbs (Breatnach 1994: 300).[22] The gloss to the same stanza has *ro·*sár*uig*h, the same verb without the deponent ending and *gur*us*·toirrci*us*t*ar, another example of the spread of deponent endings.

Infixed and Interrogative Pronouns

There is only one infixed pronoun in the poem, as the majority of objects are nominal. The 3 pl. class A infixed pronoun in 10d *dos·fucc* is in a relative position after *cid*, where we would not expect a class A pronoun in Old Irish. As such, this is a sign of the simplification of the infixed pronoun system which occurs in Middle Irish; 3 pl. class B and C infixed pronouns are less common than the class A *-s-* in Middle Irish, which is also found in a relative position in this period (Breatnach 1994: 267).

There are three infixed pronouns in the glosses: 1 *r*us*·m*ar*b* (3 sg. feminine class A), 8 *gur*us*·toirrci*us*t*ar (3 sg. feminine class A) and 10 *dot·roa* (2 sg. class A). 1 *r*us*·m*ar*b* is like 10d *dos·fucc* above; one would not expect a third person class A infixed pronoun in a relative clause like this in Old Irish (Breatnach 1994: 265–6).

In 4a *cūi*ch and 7a *cōi*ch, the meaning of this pronoun has extended from 'whose' to 'who are' (Breatnach 1994: 278). The former example also shows a later form of the pronoun with *-ú-* instead of *-ó-*.

Conclusion

Infixed pronouns are still being used as objects and are not entirely proleptic or fossilised yet, but there is some decline in the system as we find a third person class A pronoun being used in a relative position. There are no independent object pronouns, but most objects in the poem are nominal. There have been significant developments in simplifying the verbal system, and the perfect has prevailed over the preterite as the narrative tense. The verbs rule out a very

[22]While this verb *sáraigid*, 'violates', was originally deponent, as early as *Wb.* it is attested with active endings: *Wb.* 1d4 *rósárichset* (*Thes* i, 502), *Wb.* 3c24 *rosariged* (*Thes* i, 513). The example in *DxlC* is more likely to reflect the Middle Irish spread of deponent forms than retention of the earlier inflection.

early Middle Irish date, and the presence of infixed pronouns suggests it is not a very late Middle Irish poem, and so, on linguistic grounds, there is no reason to argue with its attribution to the eleventh-century poet Eochaid úa Céirín. It is, at least, unlikely to have been written much earlier than his time. Unfortunately, a comparative study of the language of the poems attributed to this poet was outside the scope of this article, but is a desideratum and would aid in both judging the date of this particular poem and the validity of the attribution.

Editorial policy

Modern conventions of capitalisation, punctuation, and word-separation are followed. Prosthetic *f-* is retained, even where it appears to not be original on the basis of alliteration. Glides are not added where they are absent from words written in full, but they have been included in cases where a suspended syllable is rhyming and the partner of the rhyme is spelled with a glide, e.g. 2a/b *ęch* : *airl-* has been expanded as *each* : *airleach*. Macrons mark a long vowel where it is not marked in E, and the placement of length-marks has been normalised. Suspension strokes and roman numerals are expanded and underlined. When an abbreviated syllable ends in an unstressed vowel, I use *-a* following a neutral consonant and *-e* following a palatal one. abbreviations are expanded in italics. The Latin abbreviation *q;* / *que* appears in 7d and 10d and is expanded as *-che*. Ligatures are silently separated and *e*-caudata is silently spelled out as *ea*. Marks of lenition are generally indicated by an italic *h*, though I retain *puncta* above nasalising *n* and in the instance in 1c where it appears to be marking the nasalisation of an *f-*. Any emendations to the text not included here are discussed in the footnotes or notes to the text. Readings aided by MS T are noted in the footnotes.

EDITION

Dúa*n* in chethrachat c*est* i*n* sō do·rigne Eochaid *ūa* Cérí*n*.

1. Ap*r*aid, a éolc*h*u Elga,
a s*h*lúaig Fōtla fīrergna,
in·ḟetab*air*, t*híar nō* t*air*,
ainm mná Féni*us*[a] Fárrsaid?

   Bélait ingen Laiti*n*, māthair Niúil meic Féni*us*a. Gāe g*r*éine[23] r*us*·m*ar*b.

2. Cīa fer ro·marb Í*ar* na n-eac*h*?
Cīa h*air*m*m* dia·frīt*h*[24] a airleach?
In bās ro·fuc, cī*ar*·gegai*n*,
int ēoluc*h co n*-ilbērlaib.

   Féini*us* fēin ro·m*ar*b Ī*ar* [macc] Néma do leccai*n* chámaill īar ndula[25] do Īar co Bélait ⁊ m*ar*b Bēlait do g*r*ád. Ro·adnoc*h*t hi C*ar*nn Bēlaite.

TRANSLATION

This is the poem of forty questions that Eochaid úa Céirín composed.

1. Speak, O sages of Elg,
O host of truly famous Fótla,
do you know, in the east or west,
the name of Fénius Farsaid's wife?

   Bélait daughter of Laiten, mother of Nél son of Fénius. [It was] a ray of sunlight that killed her.

2. Which man killed Íar of the horses?
Where was his slaughter carried out?
The death he got, though he wounded,
the scholar with many languages.

   Fénius himself killed Íar [son of] Néma with the jawbone of a camel after Íar's affair with Bélait[26] and Bélait died for love. She was buried in Carn Bélaite.

[23] E: g^{e}éine, with a superfluous *-e-*.

[24] This part in E is badly stained, and the reading *dia* has been aided by that of T, which has *diar*. There is no space for there to be an *-r* in E, but *-ia* is faintly legible.

[25] The reading *īar n-* is from T.

[26] For this translation cf. *eDIL* s.v. *1 dul* II (c).

3. Cīa haiged[27] rucc Féini*us* féin,
i foc*us* i n-eterc*h*éin?
C'āitt ro·adn*acht* in s*h*uí s*h*ea*n*,
Īar macc Nému na n-ainteam?

.i. m*ar*b Fēinius dano īar cóic lāib do dig*h* dermuit coro·adn*acht* hi tuaisciurt Maigi Senair, .i. i nEipithēna ciuitate ro·adnoc*h*t Íar oc*us* nīr·lēc Féinius a ad*h*nocul féin ⁊ Īar marōe*n* i n-ōe*n*cath*air*.

4. Is cūic*h* in t*r*īar tairptec*h* tean*n*,
ro·buī d'éisi na díleann
co·failet, a beinn i mbeinn,
as cach dít*r*ib i nĒrinn.

.i. t*r*ī brāit*r*i do Chessair tāncat*ar* Ērinn āenadaig rīa ndílin*n* ⁊ nīro·aiccillsit itir Cess*air*. Lúam ⁊ Med*ar* ⁊ Meal[28] a n-anmonn, i ndelbuib éon ro·bāt*ar* ⁊ i mBeinn Bairche ro·bātar.

3. What violent death did Fénius himself get,
near or far?
Where was the old sage buried,
Íar son of Néma of the heroes?

i.e. Fénius died after five days from a drink of oblivion and he was buried in the north of the Plain of Shinar, i.e. in the city of Eipithéna Íar was buried and Fénius did not allow his own grave and Íar's [to be] together in one city.

4. And who are the violent, strong trio,
who lived after the Flood
and they are, from peak to peak,
above every wilderness in Ireland.

i.e. three brothers of Cessair came to Ireland one night before the Flood and they did not speak to Cessair at all. Lúam and Medar and Meal [were] their names. They were in the form of birds and they were on Benn Boirche.

[27]Read *aided*.
[28]With an *e*-caudata, possibly *Mael*.

5. Cid thuc P*ar*tholōn ō t*h*ír?
   Cid *ar*a·nderna mórgním?
   Cīa līn ro·buī, a glinn i nglinn?
   Cid *ar*ro·dīth a nÉrinn?

   *Con*id *air*e at·berar Parrtolōn mac Sera f*r*iss .i. mac fingalach, cera .i. fi*n*gal .i. Parrtolōn ro·marb a athair ⁊ a māthair ac ī*ar*air rīg*h*e dia brā*th*air co·tānicc co Ērinn *ar* tech*e*d a f*h*ing*h*aile *con*id ī*ar*um luid tai*m*lé*ch*ta ina fi*n*gail .i. noí míli do ēc f*r*i oínshechtmai*n* díb.

6. Cía rí ro·buí f*or* Temraig,
   dī*ar*·f*h*ear sne*cht*a airdergnaid?
   I*n* ran*n* ro·buī ar Temraig dē,
   ba h*ar*gat fíal find*r*uine.

   .i. hi sechtmad blīadna[29] flatha Éna Airct*h*ig ro·fer f*r*oss *air*get hi Temruig ⁊ fross fína fo Ērinn uile.

5. What brought Partholón from his land?
   For what did he do a great deed?
   What number was there, from valley to valley?
   For what did he perish in Ireland?

   So it is therefore that he is called Partholón son of Sera, i.e. a kinslaying son, *cera*, i.e., 'kinslaying', i.e. Partholón killed his father and his mother seeking kingship for his brother and he came to Ireland fleeing from his kinslaying and afterwards a plague came because of [*lit.* in] his kinslaying, i.e. nine thousand of them died in one week.

6. Which king ruled over Tara,
   when a highly famous snow fell?
   The part of it that fell [lit. 'was'] over Tara,
   it was decorous silver of *findruine*.[30]

   In the seventh year of the rule of Énna Airgdech a shower of silver poured in Tara and a shower of wine throughout all of Ireland.

[29] Or *blīadain*, which is how Thurneysen expands this (1921: 131); on the endingless dative singular see *GOI* §294 and Breatnach (1994: 247).

[30] *findruine* is left untranslated because of the lack of consensus on its meaning. For discussions of its meaning see *eDIL* s.v. *findruine*, Hull (1962–4), Scott (1981a), Scott (1981b) and Whitfield (2010).

7. Cōic*h* in maccóe*m* co mét ṅglon*n*,
rán*i*c Ea*m*uin ci*n* imroll?
Ro·*mar*b deich cēt, mon*ar* ṅglē,
dia muinnt*ir*[31] i n-óenaid*che*.

.i. Āeng*us* dano mac in Dágda, is é ránicc Emuin *ar* brēithir *Con*cobair dīa·n-eipert for·ossna Cú C*h*ulainn cac*h* ōe*n*. ⁊ ro·m*ar*b Ōe*ng*us deich cét isi*n* C*r*āebrūaid ⁊ ro·c*h*uimrig *Coin* Culainn ⁊ do·fuc *Con*all ⁊ Celtc*air* ⁊ *Con*chobar hi súan.

8. Cīa dalta dia daltaib t*hair*
ro·s*ār*aig*us*tar Etai*n*?
⁊ ab*air* rim*m* co glicc,
cade ainm athur Seinbicc?

.i. Abcán *ūa* hEb*r*icc in fili, is ē ro·s*á*ruig*h* Etan ingea*n* Día*n*céc*h*t *ar* brú Bóinne gur*us*·toirrci*ust*a*r*, co·tor*acht* Ōeng*us* ī*ar* sain g*ur*ro·m*ar*b Abcān. *Con*id ī*ar*um ruc Etan Senbec ⁊ Ōeng*us* ro·n-alt Senbec ī*ar* sin.

7. Who is the lad with many feats,
who came to Emain without a mistake?
He killed ten hundred, a famous deed,
of its household in one night.

i.e. Óengus son of the Dagda, it is he who came to Emain because of Conchobar's statement, when he said Cú Chulainn illuminates(?) everyone. And Óengus killed ten hundred in the Cráebrúad and he bound Cú Chulainn and he put Conall and Celtchar and Conchobar to sleep.

8. Which of his fosterlings in the east
violated Etan?
And tell me cleverly,
what is the name of Senbecc's father?

'i.e. Abcán grandson of Ebrecc the poet, it is he who violated Etan daughter of Dían Cécht on the bank of the Boyne so that he impregnated her and Óengus arrived after that and he killed Abcán. And afterwards Etan bore Senbecc and [it was] Óengus who reared Senbecc after that.'

[31]The *t* has the curved hook which represents *-ur*. This MS also uses it to stand for any vowel + *r*; cf. 8gl. *gur*us·*toirrci*us*t*ar; fol. 37ra14 *ráit*er; fol. 52rb1 *bat*ar; fol. 55rb24 *do·rancat*ar.

9. Anmonn na t*rí* son ndoilbt*h*e
nā fácbaid co anf*oir*bt*h*i!
Cid fo·dera, su*n*d co sē,
soillse 'sin crunn is brēnc*h*e?[32]

.i. gō dano ⁊ anfīr ⁊ ainfiss a n-anmonn na so*n* ndoilbthe. .i. dīaro·éirig Crīst asa adnocul, is ann ro·c*h*étsalt*air* f*or* c*r*ann c*rí*n, ut *est* tene s*h*innuig.

10. Cīa do·rigne gart *ar* t*ús*?
In·fetabair a imt*hús*?
Searb ⁊ milis 'mollē,
cid dos·fucc i nd-óenoid*che*?

.i. Seth mac Ádai*m* do·rat fleid dia brāt*r*ib hi Slēib Tabōir ⁊ tuc crod da cach brāthair díb co·f*ār*caibsit benn*acht*ai*n* oca. .i. Mīchēl at·bert fri Ádam: 'benn*acht* lat na tort*h*i *ar* dot·roa Demon aslaig*h* iterum dot mal*air*t i*m*no toirt*h*i'. Cach nī *no*·bennac*h* Ádam, is milis. Cach ní t*ár*all De*m*on, is s*er*b.

9. Do not leave incomplete
the names of the three feigned sounds!
What causes, here and hitherto,
light on the tree that is withered?

i.e. falsehood and untruth and ignorance [are] the names of the feigned sounds. i.e. when Christ rose from his grave, it is then that he first tread on a withered tree, so that is foxfire.

10. Who performed hospitality first?
Do you know its history?
Bitter and sweet together,
what brought them in one night?

i.e. Seth son of Adam gave a feast to his brothers on Mount Tabor and he gave cattle/goods[33] to each brother so that they left a blessing with him. i.e. Michael said to Adam: 'bless the fruits for the Devil of temptation will come to you again to injure you along with the fruits.' Everything that Adam has blessed, it is sweet. Everything that the Devil has touched, it is bitter.

[32]This line is erroneously written *sin crunn soillse is brenc*he in the MS, with transposition marks indicating the correct word order.

[33]Without context, it is unclear which sense of *crod* is intended.

11. Cīa do rīg*r*aidib Fer mBolc
ro·gab Ērinn, cīarb anord?
I *m*Maig*h* T*ur*ed, t*r*ūag*h* in dāil,
tuc cat*h* do Túait*h* Dé dámaig*h*.

.i. T*r*īath mac Amuir in rí déidenoc*h* do Feruib Bolg, in nómad rí díb, oc*us* is hē tuc cath Maig*h*e T*ur*ead do Thúat*h*aib Dē Danonn.

12. Cadead anmunn na sé[34] mba*n*
⁊ anmunn a n-athar
tucsat leo meic Míled múaid
ō T*h*úait*h* Dé Danann d*rech*rúaid?

.i. Līan ⁊ Liphi ⁊ Lemai*n* t*r*ī hingena Midir. Aillenn ⁊ Cuillea*n* oc*us* C*air*ci trí ingena Goibnenn.

13. *Ocus*[35] anmunn na fear t*r*ā
c*us*a·ndeac*h*at*ar* na mnā.
A áes dāna na ṅdúan ndil,
ēistig*h* úan oc*us* apraid*h*.

.i. Līan co Cúailngne, Aīfi[36] co Fúat, Lemai*n* co Murthe*m*ni, Aillenn co Lugaid*h*, Cuillenn co Surg*h*e, C*airch*e ra Sob*a*irche.

11. Which of the kings of the Fir Bolg
ruled Ireland, though it was improper?
In Mag Tuired, wretched the meeting,
he waged battle on the Túatha Dé of many companies.
i.e. Tríath son of Amur [was] the final king of the Fir Bolg, their ninth king, and it is he who waged the battle of Mag Tuired on the Túatha Dé Danann.

12. What are the names of the six women
and the names of their fathers
that the sons of noble Míl took with them
from the red-faced Túatha Dé Danann?
i.e. Lían and Life and Lemain, three daughters of Midir. Ailenn and Cuilenn and Cairche, three daughters of Goibniu.

13. And the names of the men then,
to whom the women went.
O artisans of the precious poems,
listen [to it] from us and speak.
i.e. Lían to Cúailnge, Aífe/Life to Fúat, Lemain to Muirthemne, Aillenn to Lugaid, Cuilenn to Suirge, Cairche to Sobairche.

[34]This is written as the roman numeral *ui*, with a baseline dot on either side. There is an unusually large space between the *-i* and the second dot, and some slight scuffing in the space, which indicates that the scribe originally wrote *uii*, and then erased the second *-i* to fix his mistake.

[35]*Ocus* is written as a ligatured *et*. This must have been seen as an abbreviation by the scribe, since the disyllabic *ocus* is required by the metre. The same sign for *ocus* begins 15a.

[36]Here the manuscript has a *spiritus asper* on the *-f-*, which is most likely a copying error.

14. Cīa rí dīb, déig*h*enac*h* dían,
ro·gab f*or* gasraid Gáilía*n*?
ɼ ap*r*aid rim*m* ce*n* ail,
cīa ainm boī forsin rí*g*h-sain?

.i. t*r*ī rī déc dīb ō T*h*ūat*h*aib Dé Danan*n* for Ērinn co·tāncatar meic Mīled[37] .i. Gōla ō·sluinnter Slīab nGōla hi Cí*ar*aig*h*e, is ē ba rī dēigenach díb.

15. *Ocus* ainm mná Ébir *air*d;
nī·f*h*etat*ar* na dóerb*air*d,
ainm a māthar ce[n] mafath,
oc*us* ainm a degathar.

.i. Adair dano ingen in Dagda mōir, is ī ro·faei la hĒber. .i. in Mórríga[n] dano ai*n*m a *m*māthar Ad*air*i mná Ébir.

16. Caide a ndīl, ō si*n* allē,
Tūait*h*e Dē na t*r*om*m*daī*n*e?
Innisid, ab*us* is t*air*,
caide a n-ord oc*us* ap*r*aid*h*.

Ap*r*aid, a ēolchu...

14. Which king of theirs, final [and] swift,
reigned over the Gáiléoin warriors?
And tell me without reproach,
what was the name of that king?

i.e. thirteen kings of the Túatha Dé Danann ruled over Ireland until the sons of Míl came, i.e. Góla after whom Slíab nGóla in Cíarraige is named, it is he who was their final king.

15. And the name of noble Éber's wife,
the lower bards do not know [it],
the name of her mother without a doubt,
and the name of her noble father.

i.e. Adair daughter of the great Dagda, it is she who slept with Éber, i.e. the Mórrígan was the name of the mother of Adair, wife of Éber.

16. What is their fate, from then until now,
of the Túatha Dé of the numerous people?
Recount, here and yonder,
what is their order and speak!

Speak, O sages...

[37] *meic Mīled* is written above *co·tāncatar*.

Notes

1c. *in·ḟetab*air: (T: *inḟetab*air, G: *infetab*air) E and T have a *punctum* above the *f*-, apparently marking nasalisation following the interrogative.

2c. *In bās ro·fuc*: Thurneysen (1921: 131) replaces *in* with *ni* and translates the couplet 'nicht traf ihn der Tod, obschon er ihn verwundet (erschlagen) hatte, den Kundigen mit den vielen Sprachen (ibid., 133). He also offers the alternative translation 'obschon der Kundige ihn verwundet hatte' (ibid., 133 n. 2). I have to agree with Thurneysen that the stanza is unclear. I interpret *in* as being the article. It may be asking the audience to describe Íar's death, as not every question in this poem has an interrogative (cf. stanzas 13 and 15).

2c. *cīar·gegain*: this appears to be the conjunction *cía* 'although' with a suffixed *ro*- particle and loss of the *-o*, as is frequently found with *día* and *ní* (Breatnach 1994: 279–80).

3c. *in suí sean*: in the manuscript we have marks of lenition on the initials of both *suí* and *sean*. This lenition is explained by *suí* being treated as feminine, a phenomenon found in Early Modern Irish texts or manuscripts which has been discussed by Bergin (1932: 140). The fact a feminine noun is referring to a man does not cause a problem in this case and it is well-attested, e.g.: *ba sai ḟìlidechta he,* about Dallán Forgaill in the Leabhar Breac (RIA MS 23 P 16 (1230): p. 238c53), *soí shenchusa Erenn*, in an annal entry about the death of Flann Mainistrech (Hennessy 1871: 52). The article not appearing as the feminine *int* is problematic, as one would expect the scribe to alter this also. However, the lenition could have been added as an afterthought, while the article was copied faithfully.

3d. *na n-ainteam*: in his edition, Thurneysen ruled out the possibility of the *n*- being nasalisation, '*nainteam* (wegen der Alliteration nicht *n-ainteam*) verstehe ich nicht' (Thurneysen 1921: 133 n. 4), but there are other quatrains in this poem where the final line does not have alliteration (see stanzas 4, 5, 7 and 9). The second syllable has an *e*-caudata, which could result in a reading *-taem*, but this does not rhyme. There is a word *aintem* (*eDIL* s.v. *aintem*), that is found rhyming with genitive singular *Taillte*an in the poem beginning *Éistid cáin cluinebair* in *Lebor na Cert*: *Ó theclait Éireannaig* / *co forum n-anteam,* / *forad ríg Airgialla* / *for deis ríg Tailltean*, 'When the men of Ireland assemble to the brilliant gathering, the seat of the king of Airgialla is at the right hand of the king of Tailtiu' (Dillon 1962: 76–7). This rhyme would indicate the sound at the end of *aintem* is lenited and would rhyme perfectly with *sean*. Dillon (1962: 77 n. 4) derives it from the negative prefix *an*- and the adjective *te(i)m* 'dark'.

The meaning of *antem* has not been established with certainty. In the glossary of his edition of *Aislinge meic Con Glinne*, Meyer (1892: 158) analysed it as *an-timm* 'not feeble', though with some uncertainty, and translated it as 'mighty' (ibid., 82). In his notes to the *dindṡenchas* of Naas, Gwynn references Meyer's interpretation of the word, and expands the meaning to 'a man of

valour' (*MD* iii, 485), translating it as 'hero': *óenach Talten, talci gleós,* / *la cach n-antem beós din bés*, 'the assembly of Taltiu with mighty preparations, / held by every hero moreover according to custom' (ibid., 50–1). It may be rhyming with *Talten* here. Finally, it appears in the poem *Temair Breg, baile na fían*, where it again rhymes with *Taillten* in the preceding line and is translated as 'chiefs(?)': *éirg i férmaig Taillten tall* / *ar bélaib aintem nĒrenn*, 'haste thee to Tailte's grassy plain, yonder in presence of Erin's chiefs(?)' (Joynt 1908–10: 106–7).

Meyer's derivation from *timm* is problematic, as with the unlenited /*m*/ in that word, *antem* would not perfectly rhyme with the /*n*/ found in *Tailten* and *sean*. There is also the issue that we consistently find a neutral final consonant in *antem*, but one would expect an *i*-stem inflection if it derives from *timm*. Dillon's explanation should give us the necessary consonant, but *te(i)m* itself is a rare word. It is essentially limited to glossaries (*eDIL* s.v. *teim*) and derivatives such as *teime* and *teimel* 'darkness', *teimen* 'dark' etc. (*LEIA* s.v. *tem*). It could have been derived from such formations by the glossators. The quality of the final consonant could also be an issue, though Matasović (2009: 378) derives the word from a Proto-Celtic root **temo-*.

5gl. *cera*: the connection being made here is to *κήρ*, Greek for 'death' or 'doom' (Beekes 2010: 688–9). This was first suggested by Thurneysen (1936: 378) and the perceived Greek origin of the word is confirmed by the text about Partholón in TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337) and TCD MS H. 4. 22 (1363), which has been discussed above. This term may also explain the entry *ceara .i. crú no fuil*, '*ceara* .i.e. gore or blood' in O'Clery's glossary (Miller 1879–80: 382; *eDIL* s.v. ? 2 *cera*). The initial *c-* in *DxlC* indicates that the Irish scholars were reading the (apparently) Greek word with a medieval Latin soft *c-*, which would make it sound identical to *Sera*.

6gl. *f*ross airget: *airget* is an unusual genitive singular, but it is not without parallel: *clodib órduirn go féthaidib airget*, 'a gold-hilted sword with inlayings of silver' (Gray 1982: 26–7) in a manuscript roughly contemporary to E (BL Harley MS 5280, fol. 63v9). Another example is found in fourteenth-century legal section of TCD MS H 2. 15a (1316) in *Bretha im fhuillema gell*: *la aithgin arget mbruithe*, 'with compensation of the silver in bullion' (*AL* v, 396–7; *CIH* 468.24; TCD MS H 2. 15a (1316), p. 31b12–13).

7a. *co mét ṅglonn*: the nasalisation on *ṅglon*n cannot easily be explained as being caused by *mét*, which should be dative after the preposition *co n-* 'with'. This could be an instance of syncretism of the accusative and dative cases following prepositions (Breatnach 1994: 240), similar to 5c *i nglinn*, which shows a dative form in place of an accusative. It may also have been influenced by nasalisation in chevilles, such as 7c *mon*ar *ṅglē*.

7gl. *dīa·n-eipert*: the manuscripts have what looks like a 3 pl. present indicative or subjunctive of *as·beir*, E/T: *dianeipret*, G: *dianeipreat*. However, it makes more sense if we have a preterite here and *dīa* meaning 'when' rather than 'if'. As such, it makes sense to follow Thurneysen (1921: 131) in changing the

verb to *-eipert*, assuming there was a copying error or a mistake in expanding a suspension stroke or abbreviation.

7gl. *for·ossna Cú* Ch*ulainn cac*h *ōe*n: the verb *for·osna* means 'lights up, illuminates, brings to light, lights, kindles' (*eDIL* s.v. *for-osna*), but it is unclear what it means here. A figurative interpretation of the verb gives us the translation 'Cú Chulainn illuminates/enlightens everyone'. This does not seem particularly fitting for his character, but we do not have the full context. However, as *cac*h *ōe*n is the direct object, we would prefer to have accusative nasalisation on *ōe*n. It could be something like 'Cú Chulainn reveals everyone' but this is also unclear in meaning. If a word was dropped from the sentence, 'Cú Chulainn reveals X in everyone' would make sense, and if the missing word meant 'weakness' or something along those lines, it would make sense why this would spur Óengus to attack the Cráebrúad. We find phrases similar to this with *gó* 'falsehood' in the legal text *Recholl Breth*[38] and the Heptads: *it e secht mbeocaíndle and so forosnad gae cach rig*, 'these are the seven candles which expose the falsehood of every king' (*AL* iv, 52.9–10; *CIH* 219.19); *atait secht fiadnaise forosnat gae cach re*, 'there are seven evidences which expose the falseness of every battle' (*AL* v, 310.1; *CIH* 52.17). There is also the option that the verb means 'outshines', which seems plausible as a figurative use of *for·osna*. It would make sense if the statement 'Cú Chulainn outshines everyone' spurred Óengus to attack, but there is no other attestation of this meaning.

8gl. *Etan ingea*n *Díancéch*t: the forms *Etan* and *ingea*n here show the Middle Irish development wherein *ā*-stem nouns occasionally adopt an accusative singular form with a neutral final consonant instead of the older form with a palatal final consonant (Breatnach 1994: 243). We would expect a genitive singular *Déin* instead of *Día*n but the lack of apparent inflection here could be due to the writer treating the name as a compound, and so this has been reflected in the edition.

8gl. *ro·n-alt*: the nasalisation in this relative clause would be ungrammatical in the Old Irish period, as a leniting relative clause would be required with a subject antecedent. However, as noted by Ó hUiginn (1986: 74), ahistorical uses of the nasalising relative clause can be found in Middle Irish sources. An alternative explanation is that this nasalisation is from a proleptic 3 sg. masculine class A infixed pronoun. If so, it would be a further example of the decline of infixed pronouns as in 1gl. and 10d there are other third-person infixed pronouns being used in relative clauses.

9gl. *son ndoilbthe*: Thurneysen (1921: 132) treats these words as a compound in his edition. He says in the introduction to the text that the glosses were probably not written by the author of the poem because *son ndoilbthe* in the stanza was misunderstood as a compound word in the gloss (Thurneysen 1921: 130). There is no grammatical reason to read this phrase as a compound word,

[38] *AL* treats this tract as part of *Din Techtugud*, but the heading *Recholl Breth* is found as a marginal note (Breatnach 2005: 293). It is part of *Senchas Már*.

and it seems his interpretation may stem from E having little word spacing here. There is some space between *so*n and *ndoilbthe*, however, and it looks as though the scribe was struggling for space in the line by the end of the gloss. As such, I treat the phrase as two separate words.

9gl. *is ann ro·chétsalt*air *f*or *crann crín*: this passage has been interpreted in at least three different ways. In Thurneysen's (1921: 132) edition, he expands *is̄* as *is ed* with a footnote suggesting it could be read as *is ann*. His translation reads 'da sang er den Psaltar über einen morschen Stamm' (Thurneysen 1921: 135), reading *ro·chét* as the perfect passive sg. of *canaid*, with an active sense and *saltair* as the noun meaning '(the) Psalter.' An alternative translation comes from the notes to Angus McLeod's *Sar Orain: Three Gaelic Poems* where he provides the following translation by W. J. Watson: 'this is what was sung: "Tread on a withered branch" ' (MacLeod 1933: 70), where *is̄* is understood to be *is ed* rather than *is ann*, *ro·chét* is the perfect passive of *canaid*, and *saltair* is an imperative form of the verb *saltraid* 'treads'. The final possibility, and the one chosen for this edition, is that *chét* is the ordinal number meaning 'first' prefixed to a 3 sg. augmented preterite form of *saltraid*.[39] While parallels to this scene in other texts would aid in interpreting this gloss, unfortunately none has come to light yet.

10gl. *ben*nacht *lat na toirthi*: this is an example of an imperative verb with a prepositional pronoun repeating the subject, like the Modern Irish construction *Abair leat* etc., examples of which can be found in *eDIL* (*eDIL* s.v. *la* VI (d)). The verb in use is *bennachtaid* 'blesses', an uncommon variant of *bennachaid* (used later in the gloss in *no·benna*ch) which most likely derives from the noun *bennacht*, 'a blessing'.

10gl. *no·bennac*h: there is a confusion of the *no-* and *ro-* particles here.

10gl. *im no*: I take this as the preposition *imm* (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *imm, imb*) with a plural article. For another example of *imm* + article in *-o* see *Saltair na Rann* l. 4304: *imnolecdai taiblide* (Stokes 1883: 63; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 502, fol. 30ra7), 'around the stone tablets'. The article in *-o* is unusual, but occasionally found with other prepositions, such as with *co* in the Rennes *dindṡenchas* of Mag nÁi: *is é* con*ataigh cosno moighidib sin coro slectadis magh leis*, ' 'tis he that asked those slaves to clear that plain along with him' (Stokes 1894: 469).

11b. *ro·gab Ērinn*: I follow Thurneysen (1921: 135) in translating this as 'ruled Ireland', though literally it means 'took Ireland'. It could be shorthand for either *gaibid for* 'rules (over)' (*eDIL* s.v. *gaibid* V (e) 6) or *gaibid ríge* 'takes the kingship' (*eDIL* s.v. *gaibid* I (a)). I do not follow Thurneysen in treating the stanza as one sentence as it seems unnecessary and cumbersome in translation. I take this stanza as having the same structure as stanzas 6 and 7, which have a question in the first couplet and information about the answer in the second.

[39] I am grateful to Prof. David Stifter for suggesting this interpretation.

12b. *a n-athar*: as the Old Irish genitive plural *aithre* does not rhyme with *mban*, this is expanded as the Middle Irish form *athar* (Breatnach 1994: 250–1).

13d. *ēistig*h *úan*: the only other example that I have found of *éistid* and *ó* in a construction like this in the active voice is from the early seventeenth-century poem *Mór idir na haimsearaibh* (Williams 1979: 48–57) which, in stanza 33, has *éist uaim scéala an phótaire*, 'hear from me the stories of the drunkard'. There is also one example from an Early Modern Irish text quoted in *eDIL* which involves a passive form of *éistid*: *labra uaidhe ní héistior* (O'Grady 1926: 466) 'an utterance from her is not heard' (my translation). In both of these examples, the patient of the hearing/listening is clear: *scéala* in the first example and *labra* in the second. In addition, the prepositional pronouns based on *ó* clearly express the source of these patients, that is, the person who is telling the stories in the first case and (not) making the utterance in the second. The command *éistig*h *úan* does not have an overt object; rather, the *áes dána* is being exhorted to listen to the pronouncements of the poem in general.

Despite the lack of parallels, a possible explanation for this is that *úan* is replacing a form of *fri*, which would be the usual preposition found expressing the object of *in·túaisi*. This raises the question why the poet did not use a form of *fri*. It is possible that he chose *ó* for the sake of alliteration; a form of *fri* would reduce the alliteration in the line. That said, not every stanza of this poem has alliteration in the final line. *Úan* also rhymes with *dúan* in the line above. However, there is very little internal rhyme elsewhere, so this was seemingly not a major concern of the poet.

The interpretation chosen for the translation is that what is being listened *to* is not expressed, but implied; the audience is being asked to listen to the poem or the question. With that, *úan* is expressing the source of what they are hearing. This interpretation is more in line with the role of *ó* in a construction with *éistid* from the few and late examples presented here, but cannot comfortably account for the lack of an object that would normally be introduced by *fri* or a direct accusative object.

14b. *Gáilía*n: despite the usual spelling of this word having short vowels, both in manuscripts and *eDIL* (*eDIL* s.v. *Gailioin*), both syllables were long in the Middle Irish period, which can be confirmed by rhyme. This was discussed by Pokorny (1925) and O'Rahilly (1946: 22 n. 3, p. 459), who both offer rhyming examples. To these examples I can add the rhyme with *dían* here and the following from *MD* and *LGÉ*: *Gaileoin* : *lán-réir* : *dírím* : *gád-méin* (*úaithne*) (*MD* ii, 46); *gíall* : *Galían* (*MD* ii, 66); *cían* : *Galían* (*MD* iii, 162); *scíam* : *Galían* (*MD* iii, 164); *ríam* : *Galían* (*LGÉ* v, 430).

15b. *nī·ḟetat*ar: the lenition on *·ḟetat*ar resembles the effect of a neuter infixed pronoun referring back to *ainm*. It is more likely that *ní* itself is causing the lenition, and no pronoun was intended here, especially considering that that particular Middle Irish development is found as early as *Saltair na Rann* (Breatnach 1994: 278–9).

15c. *ce[n] mafath*: (E/G: *cema⌊fath*, T: *cena fath*) I have made a significant emendation to the text of E here, the addition of an *-n* to the *ce* of the manuscript. In the *dindṡenchas* of Tulach Eogain, there is a couplet with the rhyming pair *mafad* : *ríg-thatham*, where Gwynn translates *cen mafad* as 'without question'. It happens that the line in this *dindṡenchas* poem is nearly identical to 15c of *DxlC*: *ainm a muimme cen mafad* / *Rechet, ruc in ríg-thatham*, 'his nurse's name, without question, was Rechet, who slept among kings' (*MD* iv, 286–7). There is no discussion of the term in the notes to the poem, but from the index it is apparent that Gwynn was linking this word to *matha*, which is a very rare word, three of the four examples in *eDIL* being from glossaries (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *matha*). In these glossary examples, it is glossed with *cuntabart*, 'doubt', and there are three spellings: *matha*, *mathadh* and *mathfadh*. The exact form that Gwynn has in the *dindṡenchas* poem is under a different *eDIL* entry, where it erroneously has a long vowel and no translation or discussion (*eDIL* s.v. *máfad*?). The fourth example in *eDIL*, from *Timna Cathaír Móir*, was amended to *maithe* 'goodness' by Dillon (1962: 150) and may be excluded from consideration.

The word *mafad* has advantages in that it rhymes perfectly with *degathar* and provides the line with alliteration, but its disadvantage lies in its obscurity. Attempts at finding an etymology for it have thus far been unsuccessful. This edition follows Gwynn in his interpretation discussed above, as it makes sense in the context. Both metrical examples of *mafad* are found in chevilles, preceded by *cen*, and this context could indicate that Gwynn's interpretation of the term was on the right track. It is very common to find phrases in chevilles in Middle Irish poetry which begin with the preposition *cen* and assert the truthfulness of what is being said in the stanza.[40] It is possible that *cen mafad* was a set phrase in the inventory of some Middle Irish poets, perhaps fossilising a word that otherwise did not survive. Further, O'Davoren's glossary headword *mathadh* includes the citation *cen matha[d] f*or *marb*u *marus .i. cin* con*ntab*air*t*, 'without *mathad* he remained (leg. *marais*) on the dead', i.e. without doubt' (Stokes 1904: 415), while O'Cleary's glossary also gives *gan mathfadh .i. gan chonntabhairt* 'without doubt' (Miller 1881–3: 22) as an example of the word's use. If we are to follow Gwynn in linking *mafad* to these glossary entries, they further support the idea that *cen mafad* was a set poetic phrase.

16a. *a ndīl*: *díl* has a number of possible meanings here. Besides meaning 'fate', it is also a legal term referring to the 'act of discharging' and outside of legal sources it can mean 'recompense, reparation', 'satisfaction, act of satisfying' or 'complement, guarantee, what is fitting', to quickly summarise its long *DIL*

[40]To give just a few examples, *cen imroll* 'without mistake' is found in *DxlC* stanza 7 and we find further examples under *eDIL* s.v. *imroll* from *Saltair na Rann*, *Félire Óengusso*, and *Suidiugud Tellaig Temra. Cen gói* (*nglé*) 'without a (clear) lie' is found in texts such as *Saltair na Rann*, ll. 283, 7043, 7395 (Stokes 1883: 5, 103, 108) and a number of *dindṡenchas* poems including *Sinann I* (*MD* iii, 288), *Benn Étair II* (*MD* iii, 116) and *Ráth Crúachan* (*MD* iii, 352). The noun *acht* is almost exclusively found in the cheville phrase *cen acht*, which is 'usually translated "without doubt" ' (*eDIL* s.v. 4 *acht*).

entry (*eDIL* s.v. *díl*). The interpretation 'fate' fits best in this context, especially as it is followed by the phrase *ō s[h]in allē* 'from then until now'.

Abbreviations

DxlC *Dúan in chethrachat cest*
LGÉ i–v *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, vols 1–5 (Macalister 1932–42)

Manuscripts
E British Library, Egerton MS 1782
G National Library of Ireland, MS G 130
T Trinity College Dublin, MS H 5. 12 (1384)

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CYFOESI MYRDDIN A GWENDDYDD EI CHWAER AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN WELSH LITERARY HISTORY

Abstract

This article arises from the author's work on the AHRC-funded Myrddin poetry project. It presents a detailed account of the context and connections of a long prophetic dialogue poem in Middle Welsh, spoken in the voices of Myrddin and his sister Gwenddydd. The substantial manuscript tradition is surveyed, partly to explain the editorial decisions underlying the new edition of the poem hosted on the Myrddin project website (https://myrddin.cymru/). Detailed discussion of the date of composition concludes that the whole poem was probably composed in the early thirteenth century. Aspects of the metre and ornament are investigated, and an attempt is made to show how the poem creatively drew on pre-existing Welsh literature. Lastly, the reception of the poem is traced as far as the eighteenth century.

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Introduction[1]

Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer is a poem that sits on several frontiers of medieval Welsh literature. It is a substantial item of so-called *Hengerdd*, running to 428 lines. It is among the best attested Welsh poems in extant medieval manuscripts, being preserved in five separate manuscripts up to *c.* 1450. Yet until recently it has not been subject to a critical edition, and published discussions of the contents have remained superficial. Two of the oldest copies (Peniarth 3 and the Red Book of Hergest) were printed individually in the earlier part of the twentieth century, and these have formed the basis for scholarly discussion hitherto.[2] A translation of the poem, based on the Red Book but taking account of Peniarth 3, was published by John Bollard in 1990, and in the same year Manon Bonner Jenkins submitted her Cambridge PhD thesis on Welsh prophetic poetry, which included an edition and translation, with notes, of the Red Book version, with select references to several other manuscripts.[3] But the lack of sustained engagement with the text and its manuscripts has left major questions unanswered. Despite the ongoing controversies over the dating of the earliest Welsh poetry, *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* has featured little in discussion.[4] Its relationships with the other Myrddin poems, and indeed with medieval Welsh poetry more widely, have remained unexplored.

Perhaps most striking of all, the poem's remarkable contents have not yet obtained the recognition that they assuredly deserve. The first part of the poem, up to line 129, has received a certain amount of comment, because it provides a rare early perspective on dynastic history in early medieval Wales;[5] but this section is only a little more than a quarter of a long, coherent and intricately fashioned poem in which dynastic commentary is only one of many strands of interest. It is not the purpose of the present article to dwell on aspects of content or literary interpretation, but it is essential at the outset to set out the scope of the poem's contents, if only to challenge the idea that it can be shrugged off as 'lengthy and rather tedious'.[6]

[1]This work was supported by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council [grant number AH/W000717/1]. I would like to thank Dr David Callander and Dr Dylan Foster Evans for commenting on an earlier draft of this article. I am also grateful to Professor Ann Parry Owen and Dr Jenny Day for many stimulating conversations on this topic.

[2]J. Gwenogvryn Evans, *The Poetry in the Red Book of Hergest* (Llanbedrog, 1911), 1–4 (cols 577–83); Ifor Williams, 'Y Cyfoesi a'r Afallennau yn Peniarth 3', *BBCS* 2 (1928), 112–29, at 114–21.

[3]John K. Bollard, 'Myrddin in early Welsh tradition', in Peter Goodrich (ed.), *The Romance of Merlin* (New York and London, 1990), 13–54, at 30–46; Manon Bonner Jenkins, 'Aspects of the Welsh prophetic verse tradition in the Middle Ages: incorporating textual studies of poetry from 'Llyfr Coch Hergest' (Oxford, Jesus College, MS cxi) and 'Y Cwta Cyfarwydd' (Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 50)', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1990, 33–90.

[4]For recent commentary on this debate, see Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Undated medieval Welsh texts and the literary critic', in Helen Fulton and Georgia Henley (eds), *Imagination and Innovation in Medieval Celtic Literatures* (Cardiff, 2025), 3–17.

[5]For example, in T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons 350–1064* (Oxford, 2013), 337–9.

[6]Nerys Ann Jones, 'Hengerdd in the age of the Poets of the Princes', in Alex Woolf (ed.), *Beyond the Gododdin: Dark Age Scotland in Medieval Wales* (St Andrews, 2010), 41–80, at 46. Jones

The poem is a dialogue between Myrddin and his sister Gwenddydd, in which they converse in alternating englynion. For the bulk of the poem, Gwenddydd's role is to urge and cajole her seemingly reluctant brother to reveal the future of the Welsh, and indeed the world, *kan gɔ́dost y ystyr* ('since you know its story/meaning', l. 155). Gwenddydd's questions combine pity for her brother's parlous present state (*Kyfliɔ́ dy benn ac aryen gaeaf;* / *gɔ́ares Duɔ́ dy anghen* 'Your head is the same colour as winter's frost; / may God relieve your need', ll. 38–9) with warm reminders of his former glories as a warrior (*Kyuarchaf y'm clotleɔ́ llallaɔ́c,* / *anɔ́ynaɔ́c yn lluyd* 'I ask my illustrious companion, / eminent in a host', ll. 26–7). Myrddin is evidently leading the life of a wild man following the death of his lord Gwenddolau in the battle of Arfderydd: *O leas Gɔ́endoleu ygɔ́aetfreu Arderyd,* / *handɔ́yf oeithin* ('Because of Gwenddolau's death in the bloodshed of Arfderydd, / I am tormented', ll. 29–30). He proceeds to reveal the future leaders of the Welsh, beginning with three northerners and then continuing through successive kings of Gwynedd. The pattern is clear and formulaic until the reign of Hywel Dda (d. 950; ll. 127–9), but the chronological progression nonetheless continues afterwards in a more cryptic fashion up to the early thirteenth century (ll. 199–201). From this point, successive sovereigns are more obscure, probably fictional, though in some cases they clearly allude to Angevin rulers like King John (*keneu Henri, ryuyget!* 'the whelp of Henry, let him behave arrogantly!', l. 219). Matters become more tumultuous as conflict between Wales and England is foregrounded, and the legendary prophetic deliverers Owain (l. 249) and Beli Hir (l. 274) make appearances. The ultimate redeemer Cadwaladr arrives as the salvation of Gwynedd and the Welsh (l. 291), but this is not an end in itself; it is merely a sign of the coming end of times, and Cadwaladr himself is shamefully killed (*As gɔ́an gɔ́aeɔ́ euyd o ergrywyd llog* / *a llaɔ́ gynt diwedyd.* / *Dybyd Gymry gɔ́arth o'r dyd* 'A bronze spear from the planks of a ship will pierce him / by means of the hand of an unbaptized people. / Shame will come to Wales because of the day', ll. 316–18).

Cadwaladr is succeeded by Cyndaf, a bringer of the chaos that precedes the Final Judgement:

> [Myrddin:]
> Llaɔ́ ar gled, arall ar groes,
> gogelet baɔ́p y einyoes!
> Gan Gyndaf kymot nyt oes.
>
> [Gwenddydd:]
> Neut a ganaɔ́t [i] uidyssyaɔ́t a chiwtaɔ́t plant Adaf
> a henynt o'e gnaɔ́t:
> a dioes gɔ́aret hyt Uraɔ́t?

also suggests that the poem foretells 'the eventual supremacy of the Welsh under Cadwaladr', which is not quite correct; see below.

‘[Myrddin:]
A hand on a sword, another on a cross,
let everyone defend their lives!
There is no reconciliation with Cyndaf.

[Gwenddydd:]
It is what he will sing to the world and the nation of Adam’s children
who descend from his flesh:
will they have salvation up to Judgement Day?’ (ll. 334–9)

Myrddin explains to a disbelieving Gwenddydd that this will truly be the end of the world. This sets up the most important crux in the poem’s emotional journey: we learn that Myrddin is prophesying to Gwenddydd from his deathbed, and so, for Gwenddydd, Myrddin’s prophecy of the end of time is understood in terms of the end of Myrddin’s life, sparking an outpouring of grief for him:

[Myrddin:]
Gɔ́endyd wenn, benn mynogi,
as dywedaf yn difri
na byd pennaeth byth wedi.

[Gwenddydd:]
Och, annɔ́yl, o’r oer esgar,
gɔ́edy dy uot yn trydar
gan unben deɔ́r diarchar,
dy olo di dan dayar.

‘[Myrddin:]
Fair Gwenddydd, summit of dignity,
I say it seriously
that there will be no sovereign ever after.

[Gwenddydd:]
Alas, dear, from the cold separation,
that after you were in battle
alongside a brave, unconquerable chief,
you should be buried under earth.’ (ll. 376–82)

Gwenddydd’s distress grows as she and her brother lament the passing of their family members, who are named in turn. The earlier dynamic between the siblings is reversed; it is now Myrddin who is calm and accepting of what fate should bring, and Gwenddydd who requires consolation:

[Myrddin:]
Gɔ́endyd, na vyd anhylar,
neur roet y llwyth y’r dayar,
diofryt o baɔ́b a gar.

[Gwenddydd:]
Y'm byw ny'th diofredaf,
a hyt Vraȯt y'th goffaaf.
Dy fossaȯt trallaȯt tromaf.

[Myrddin:]
Escut gorwyd, rȯyd gȯynt,
amlwm ar du afyrdȯl hynt.
Yd af yn ol a ethynt.

'[Myrddin:]
Gwenddydd, be not bitter,
the family has been given to the earth,
everyone letting go of what they love.

[Gwenddydd:]
In my life I will not let go of you,
and until Judgement Day I will remember you.
Your wounding is the heaviest tribulation.

[Myrddin:]
Swift is a steed, free is the wind,
it is very bare beside a joyless path.
I will go in the tracks of those who have gone.' (ll. 408–16)

Each sibling commends the other to God, and the poem ends with a simple, sorrowful Amen.

This extraordinary poem is finally available to be read and studied thanks to the efforts of the AHRC-funded Myrddin poetry project, led by Dr David Callander and Dr Dylan Foster Evans in Cardiff University together with colleagues at the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies and Swansea University.[7] As part of the project, I have produced the first critical edition of *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*, taking account of the full manuscript tradition. This is now freely available, in both Welsh and English, on the project's website.[8] The purpose of the present article is to draw together some threads of interest that arose during the editorial process, pertaining particularly to the dating of the poem and its relationship with medieval Welsh literature more broadly. Further consideration of points of detail that are discussed here will be found in the notes to the edition. This article addresses five main areas of interest: 1. the manuscript tradition; 2. the date of composition; 3. metre and ornament; 4. intertextuality; and 5. reception. It is hoped that by addressing these matters from first principles in reference

[7] See https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FW000717%2F1 (accessed 3 September 2025).

[8] All references to the early poems in Myrddin's voice are to the new online editions at https://myrddin.cymru (accessed 3 September 2025), as follows: *Yr Afallennau* (poem 3), ed. Ben Guy; *Yr Oianau* (poem 4), ed. Llewelyn Hopwood; *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* (poem 5), ed. Ben Guy; *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin* (poem 6), ed. Ben Guy; *Peirian Faban* (poem 7), ed. Llewelyn Hopwood.

to a substantial item of *Hengerdd*, this study can offer a methodology for approaching other poems in the *Hengerdd* corpus.

All quotations and translations of the poem are taken from the new edition, with reference to the line numbers of that edition. Due to the relatively stable nature of the poem's textual tradition, and the large number of manuscripts in which it is preserved, it was felt appropriate to take a traditional stemmatic approach to editing the poem: the copy in the Red Book of Hergest was used as a base-text, since it is a full and relatively good copy, but it was emended with reference to the rest of the manuscript tradition with the aim of reconstructing the archetype of the tradition, and, where possible, the original text. Nevertheless, full reference is made in the edition to the textual variation in the tradition, and it is discussed below where appropriate.[9]

1. The manuscript tradition

Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer is preserved in a large number of medieval and early modern manuscripts. In what follows, I highlight the salient features of the primary witnesses to the text: that is, those witnesses that were significant for the editorial process. There is then a summary of the textual tradition that discusses some of the key pieces of evidence for the important nodes of the stemma. Finally, there is a brief consideration of the textual relationships between the derivative witnesses. Unless otherwise stated, all manuscripts are now housed in the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth.

1.1. Primary witnesses

Peniarth 3, part ii, pp. 17–20 (*s.* xiii/xiv): A single quire of twelve leaves with texts of *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*, *Yr Afallennau* and *Yr Oianau* alongside various other texts.[10] Owing to the loss of leaves at the beginning, the text of the *Cyfoesi* begins part-way through line 154, but continues thereafter to the end. The leaves at the beginning of the manuscript had been lost by the time that texts from this manuscript were copied by Thomas Wiliems into Peniarth 94 in the 1590s; his copy of the *Cyfoesi* is on pages 29–38 of that manuscript.

Peniarth 20, pp. 302–4 (*s.* xiv^{med}): Although the main parts of this well-known manuscript were written around 1330 in the Cistercian abbey of Valle Crucis, the text of the *Cyfoesi* was written in a formerly blank space, sandwiched between *Brut y Tywysogyon* and the bardic grammar, by several hands using Anglicana script around the middle of the fourteenth century.[11] Despite the plurality of hands, the textual evidence strongly suggests that they were copying a single exemplar. The latter part of the text is partially illegible due to rubbing, and the poem ends prematurely on page 304 with line 287. In

[9] In what follows, I refer to the poem simply as the '*Cyfoesi*'; for the meaning of the title, see below, p. 242.

[10] Daniel Huws, *A Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes*, 3 vols (Aberystwyth, 2022), i, 334.

[11] Huws, *Repertory*, i, 342–3.

the bottom margin of the following page (305) is further text that is almost impossible to read, but the few words that can just about be discerned (*merddin … br[.]nhinoedd*) suggest that this was a colophon to the text rather than a continuation of it. The final section of the poem that is extant in the manuscript, on page 304, contains several verses that were additions to the original poem, most of which are unique to this manuscript: where other copies of the poem usually have two englynion (ll. 258–63), Peniarth 20 has nine, only one of which mirrors the two in the other copies (ll. 261–3).[12] Two of these additional englynion are found in three other partial witnesses to the poem, which will be discussed briefly below.[13] One of these latter two englynion, found in Peniarth 20 and the partial witnesses, might refer to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd:

> Taleithiawc vrenin a daw
> a'y voned o Aberffraw,
> a vyd dwy vylyned devnaw.
>
> 'A crowned king will come
> whose lineage is from Aberffraw,
> who will remain for two years eighteen [times].'

Llygad Gŵr addresses Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in similar terms, and if *devnaw* has been interpreted correctly as 'eighteen times', the resulting thirty-six years would match Llywelyn's reign from when he first took power in 1246 to his death in 1282.[14]

Oxford, Jesus College, 111 [the 'Red Book of Hergest'], fols 141r–142v, cols 577–83 (1382 × *c.* 1405): One of the most famous medieval Welsh manuscripts, and certainly the most compendious.[15] The text of the *Cyfoesi* occurs alongside that of *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin*, both copied by Hywel Fychan in his section of the manuscript.[16] The manuscript contains a full text of the *Cyfoesi*, and it is certainly the best-known copy owing to its publication in diplomatic transcription by Gwenogvryn Evans in 1911.[17]

Peniarth 50 ['Y Cwtta Cyfarwydd'], fols 25v–29v [pp. 44–52] (*c.* 1445): A manuscript written in Glamorgan, apparently by a scribe called Dafydd.[18] It is an important miscellany comprised mainly of prophetic texts, many of which were edited in Manon Jenkins's PhD thesis.[19] The *Cyfoesi* occurs in a section that contains the majority of the early Myrddin poems. The text breaks off prematurely at the end of folio 29v with line 384.

[12]These nine englynion have been edited in the online edition as 'poem 5.II'.

[13]Namely, in the independent witnesses to X^9: NLW 5276D, fol. 407r; Peniarth 254, part iii, p. 50; NLW 3041B, p. 111.

[14]For the relevant poem by Llygad Gŵr, see *CBT* VII, poem 24, esp. l. 107; cf. ll. 111, 115 and 120.

[15]Huws, *Repertory*, i, 741–2.

[16]Daniel Huws, 'Llyfr Coch Hergest', in Iestyn Daniel et al. (eds), *Cyfoeth y Testun: Ysgrifau ar Lenyddiaeth Gymraeg yr Oesoedd Canol* (Cardiff, 2003), 1–30, at 5.

[17]See above, note 2.

[18]Huws, *Repertory*, i, 358–9.

[19]Jenkins, 'Aspects of the Welsh prophetic verse tradition', 225–512.

Peniarth 26, pp. 47–56 (*c.* 1456): Almost all of this manuscript was written by a single scribe, probably in north-east Wales.[20] The text of the *Cyfoesi* is found alongside the other early Myrddin poems *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin* and *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin*. This is a complete and important copy of the text. Its text has, in places, been lightly revised to a somewhat greater degree than is usual in the textual tradition. The text contains two series of unique additional verses, which are discussed below.[21] The text has a busy appearance because it was collated with another copy of the poem by a seventeenth-century hand, probably that of Robert Vaughan. The collations were taken from a lost witness that I call X^6, which was a close relative of an exemplar used by John Davies of Mallwyd, as described below.

Peniarth 94, pp. 126–7 (Thomas Wiliems, 1590s): A large compilation of prophecies, including a copy of Peniarth 3's text of the *Cyfoesi*, as noted above.[22] However, later in the manuscript, there is another, partial copy of the poem introduced by the statement *llyma byncieu o gyfoissi Merdhin wyllt a Gwenðyð yn y diwedh* ('here are passages from the *Cyfoesi* of Myrddin Wyllt and Gwenddydd at the end'). What follows is an independent copy of lines 340–410, after which Thomas Wiliems writes *val or blaen* ('as before'). It seems that he deliberately extracted these lines from the end of the poem, as found in another exemplar, because they contrasted with the lines that he had already copied from Peniarth 3.

NLW 3041B [Mostyn 133], pp. 230–42 (John Jones of Gellilyfdy, 1607–23): A collection of prophecies by the prolific scribe John Jones of Gellilyfdy.[23] The manuscript was written in two stints, the first in 1607 (pp. 1–229) and the second in 1623 (pp. 230–640). The manuscript contains no fewer than three copies of the *Cyfoesi*: one on pp. 109–11, which is an independent copy of lines 202–51 deriving from X^9, with some additional material related to Peniarth 20;[24] a second on pp. 230–42, which is an independent copy of lines 261–428 and is the only copy of the three that is useful for reconstructing the archetype (this is generally the copy meant when 'NLW 3041B' is mentioned below); and a third on pp. 419–54, which is a conflation of the texts in the Red Book and Peniarth 50. This latter copy in NLW 3041B ends with a colophon by John Jones, which reads as follows (I have supplied modern punctuation):

> Ac fal hynn y terfyna kyfoessi Merḍin a Gwenḍyḍ yr 16 dyḍ o fis Mai, oed Krist 1623, yr hụn a ysgrifennais if aḷan o lyfr o laụ newyḍ o'r eiḍo Mr Lewis uụçod, yr hụn a ysgrifenessid alan o hen dext, ond nid ydoeḍ yr ysgrifennyḍ yn dyaḷ y text nac yn medru ei darḷain o'r aços yr ysgrifennoḍ ef yn ffals lawer iaụn o eiriau, a mi a geryḍais

[20] Huws, *Repertory*, i, 345–6.

[21] See below, pp. 208–9. These two sequences have been edited in the online edition as 'poem 5.III' and 'poem 5.IV'.

[22] Huws, *Repertory*, i, 375.

[23] Huws, *Repertory*, i, 189–90.

[24] See above, note 13.

> lawer onaḍunt ac a edewais le i ḍodi ṛai eraiḷ i meụn ar a edowsid aḷan pan gaffer meụn ḷyfrau eraiḷ, ac a ysgrifennais eraiḷ o'r geiriau mal y kefais hụynt.
>
> 'And like this finishes the *Cyfoesi* of Myrddin and Gwenddydd, on the 16th day of May, AD 1623, which I wrote out of a book in a recent hand belonging to Mr Lewis above, which had been written out of an old text, but the scribe did not understand the text nor was able to read it because he wrote very many of the words erroneously, and I corrected many of them and left space to put in some others which had been left out whenever they might be found in other books, and I wrote other words as I found them.'

It is not clear, however, that John Jones himself was responsible for the conflation of the Red Book and Peniarth 50 in this text. The conflation is such that blocks of lines have been taken from the two sources in turn: lines 1–80 from the Red Book, lines 81–101 from Peniarth 50, and line 102 onwards from the Red Book, with occasional readings from Peniarth 50. This does not seem to correspond to the process that John Jones describes above, involving correcting some words and leaving space for others; that activity is visible too in the copy, but not necessarily resulting from Red Book readings being corrected by Peniarth 50 readings.[25] The original conflation, then, may already have taken place in John Jones's source: the book belonging to Mr Lewis (i.e. John Lewis of Llynwene, *c.* 1540–1615/16). At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Peniarth 50 seems to have belonged to Siôn Dafydd Rhys, a known friend and associate of John Lewis; by contrast, John Jones did not see Peniarth 50 until 1640.[26]

NLW 4973B ['*Liber B*'], fols 114r–122r (John Davies of Mallwyd, *c.* 1620–34): John Davies of Mallwyd's famous compilation of early poetry.[27] The manuscript contains two full copies of the *Cyfoesi*. The second of these, on fols 201r–206v, is a copy of the version in Peniarth 118, pp. 33–9 (Siôn Dafydd Rhys, *c.* 1580–1610), itself taken directly from the Red Book of Hergest. In his copy of Peniarth 118, John Davies corrected a few obvious errors himself and later corrected others through direct comparison with the Red Book. He also lightly annotated the text with variants drawn mainly from his other copy of the poem (or perhaps its exemplar). By contrast, this first copy, on fols 114r–122r, is independent of any other extant manuscript. At the

[25] For example, in line 11, Jones inserts the word *gadauel*, the equivalent of which in Peniarth 50 is the corrupt form *indawel*; and in line 18, he inserts the word *trewy*, which does not correspond to the readings of either the Red Book or Peniarth 50.

[26] Cf. Huws, *Repertory*, i, 359; ii, 91; Francis G. Payne, 'John Lewis, Llynwene, historian and antiquary', *The Radnorshire Society Transactions* 30 (1960), 4–16, at 7 and 15. Siôn Dafydd Rhys once referred to John Lewis as 'most expert in law and most loveable man', ibid., 15.

[27] Huws, *Repertory*, i, 208–9. Note that, in an earlier discussion of the manuscript, Huws incorrectly claimed that the copy of the *Cyfoesi* on fols 114r–122r was part of the material deriving from the Red Book: Daniel Huws, 'John Davies and his manuscripts', in Ceri Davies (ed.), *Dr John Davies of Mallwyd: Welsh Renaissance Scholar* (Cardiff, 2004), 88–120, at 107, seemingly followed by Nerys Ann Jones and Morfydd E. Owen, 'John Davies and the Poets of the Princes: *Cognoscere, Intellegere, Scire*', ibid., 171–207, at 177. This error was corrected in Huws's *Repertory*.

end of this copy is a note in Robert Vaughan's hand purporting to reveal its origin (I have supplied modern punctuation):

> D[afyd]d Jones viccar Llanvair Dyffryn Clwyd allan o hen lyfr dihenydd o barsmant a scrifennase hyn a[nn]o 1588, ac o'i lyfr ef y cafwyd hyn, hyd yr wyf yn tybiaw, pan oedd Iarll Derbi yn Flanndrys yn parlio am heddwch rhwng y frenhines Elisbeth a Philip brenin Spaen.
>
> 'Dafydd Jones, vicar of Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, had copied this out of an ancient parchment book in the year 1588, and this was taken from his book, as I suppose, when the Earl of Derby was in Flanders negotiating for peace between Queen Elizabeth and Philip king of Spain.'

Although the wording is not entirely clear, this is a description of John Davies's exemplar (the book of Dafydd Jones, written in 1588), as well as his exemplar's exemplar (the ancient parchment book). The confusion stems from the second part of the passage, beginning *hyd yr wyf yn tybiaw*, since this refers to an event that happened in 1588, when Dafydd Jones was writing, rather than something that happened when John Davies took the text from Dafydd Jones's book, as would be a more natural reading. Presumably Robert Vaughan was familiar with Dafydd Jones's book, and indeed the latter should arguably be identified with the lost witness X^6, upon which Robert Vaughan himself drew when he was annotating Peniarth 26 (discussed below). If so, the 'ancient parchment book' may be the lost X^5, a sister copy of Peniarth 26 and the exemplar of John Jones's copy in NLW 3041B, pp. 230–42.

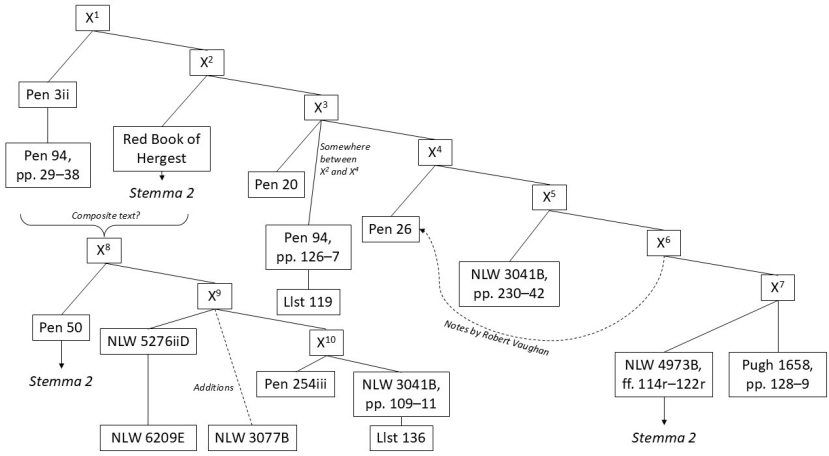
Thomas Pugh, *Brittish and Out-landish Prophesies: Most of Above a 1000 Years Antiquity, the Rest Very Antient* (London, 1658), pp. 128–9: This book of prophesies, published by Thomas Pugh in 1658, contains the first printed text of a portion of the *Cyfoesi*, and it is followed by an English translation. Although Pugh did not always understand the line divisions correctly, he preserved a complete text for lines 349–428. The text is very closely related to John Davies's text in NLW 4973B, fols 114r–122r, even in details of spelling, suggesting that Pugh's text may have been copied from a draft of the text in John Davies's own hand.

1.2. Relationships between the primary witnesses

The primary witnesses are related in the way that is shown in Figure 1. In this section, I summarise the key textual evidence for the postulated lost copies, X^1 to X^{10}, where X^1 is the archetype of the surviving written tradition.

X^1: It would appear that all surviving copies of *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* derive from a single written tradition, as can be shown by certain textual corruptions that they all share. Line 284 provides a good example. At the end of the preceding stanza, Myrddin declares *gó́yn eu byt Gymry; gó́ae Wydel!* ('blessed are the Welsh; woe to an Irishman!', l. 281). Not unreasonably, Gwenddydd enquires further about this *gwae* to be suffered by an Irishman.

Figure 1: Relationships between the primary witnesses to the *Cyfoesi*



This is her next question, as found in all the primary witnesses that are available at this point (l. 284):

Peniarth 3:	*pa daw y waed i wydel*
Red Book:	*pa y wae y wydyl*
Peniarth 50:	*pa da6 y waeth y 6yddel*
Peniarth 26:	*pan daw gway hwnnw y wyddel*
NLW 3041B:	*pan ddaw y wadd y wyddel*
NLW 4973B:	*pan daw i waet i wyddel*

In four of these six versions, one can see that a dental or alveolar consonant of some kind has intruded between *wae* and the preposition *i* or *y*. The two exceptions are the Red Book and Peniarth 26, where no corresponding consonant is present. At first sight, one might suppose that the fourth word should be *waed* 'blood', yet the previous englyn (and the earlier line 275, with a parallel structure) shows that *wae* is correct. The best explanation for the extraneous consonant is that the preposition following *wae* was originally spelled *di* or *dy*, showing the original dental fricative initial of that preposition; another example of this form of the preposition is found elsewhere in the poem, as discussed below. One could suppose that the archetype X¹ spelled the preposition in this way, and that the initial *d-* was subsequently confused with the final *-d* of *waed* by multiple later copyists; but a simpler, and therefore more likely, supposition would be that X¹ already contained the textual error whereby *wae di* had become *waed i*. This was noticed and corrected during the transmission of the versions preserved in the Red Book and Peniarth 26, but left to stand in various ways elsewhere.

X²: This is arguably the most important node in the stemma, since it suggests that the Red Book of Hergest belongs to the same branch of the tradition as

most other witnesses, whereas Peniarth 3, the earliest extant witness, belongs to an independent branch. Thus, any agreement between Peniarth 3 and the remainder of the tradition, against the Red Book, should reveal the reading of X^1. The best evidence for X^2 is found in line 179. Throughout the poem, variants suggesting that certain witnesses should be grouped with other witnesses abound, but they provide little useable evidence for textual relationships unless it can be shown which of the variants are shared innovations or errors, thus revealing the textual relationships. Line 179 is useful in this regard because it is a variation of a line found in *Canu Heledd*; as discussed below, the *Cyfoesi* contains many allusions to, or paraphrases of, earlier poems, and so this line may be a deliberate paraphrase of *Canu Heledd* itself.[28] Here is the line in *Canu Heledd*, as found in a stanza concerning Caranfael:[29]

> *gnawt man ar gran kyniuiat* 'frequent on the cheek of a warrior is a scar'

Here is line 179 of the *Cyfoesi*, as found in the primary witnesses that are available at this point:

Peniarth 3:	*gwnawt man ar gran kyngrein*
Peniarth 20:	*gnawt ef yman arañ kynrain*
Red Book:	*gónawt ef gan argan kyngrein*
Peniarth 50:	*gnaót mann a grann kygrein*
Peniarth 26:	*gwnawdd ef mañ ar grañ kyngrein*
NLW 4973B:	*gnawd ef mann ar grañ cyngrain*

In *Canu Heledd*, the first word of the line is *gnawd* 'usual, customary', a typical first word for gnomic nominal sentences in the early englynion.[30] In the *Cyfoesi*, however, there is ample evidence to suggest that the line originally began with the verbal form *gwnawd*, a third-person singular present/future form of *gwneuthur*, as is shown in Peniarth 3, the Red Book and Peniarth 26 (albeit that the latter has a corrupt spelling in *-dd*). This line appears as a kind of sangiad in the middle of the sentence formed by lines 178 and 180. Exactly the same structure is used in Myrddin's previous englyn, lines 171–3, and there the second line begins with another verb in *-awd*, *kynghoraót*.

It was presumably the verbal form *gwnawd*, rather than the adjective *gnawd*, that prompted the insertion of the optional affixed pronoun *ef* to show the verb's subject more clearly. The affixed pronoun was evidently not scanned for metrical purposes: Peniarth 3, which has *gwnawt* but no *ef*, has a seven-syllable line, whereas the Red Book, which has *gónawt ef*, has an eight-syllable line.[31] This is an Englyn Milwr, of which there are fifty-four examples in the *Cyfoesi*; of those fifty-four, as the edited version of the text

[28] Note too the collocation of *man* and *gran* in the Red Book version of the *Gereint* poem (*EWSP* 458, line 11c), though that line lacks the accompanying *gnawt*/*gwnawt*.

[29] *EWSP* 442 and 492, line 93c.

[30] Most obviously, compare the poem *Gnawt gwynt*: Nicholas Jacobs (ed.), *Early Welsh Gnomic and Nature Poetry* (London, 2012), 11–12 (poem IV).

[31] For the scanning of affixed pronouns, see further section 3.1. below.

stands, there are fifty-one that have a second line of seven syllables, and only three that have a second line of eight syllables. It might be noted too that there is not a single example of an Englyn Milwr in the *Cyfoesi* with a second line of six syllables, which is what Peniarth 50 has, with *gna6t* and no *ef*. We can suppose, therefore, that, the development was as follows. Upon adopting the line, either from *Canu Heledd* or perhaps a common source, the poet of the *Cyfoesi* adapted it by altering *gnawd* to *gwnawd*, and at the same time the final word *cynifiad* has altered to the synonymous plural form *cyngrain* (for the rhyme). This produced the seven-syllable line seen in Peniarth 3. Judging by the witnesses, the resulting line, with its initial verb, may have seemed ambiguous, because the subject pronoun *ef* was later added after it, making the line appear even more distant from its source. It is significant that this pronoun is found in both Peniarth 20 and NLW 4973B, which have *gnawt*/*gnawd* rather than *gwnawt*; as the pronoun must originally have been prompted by the verb, in those two copies the verb *gwnawt* must have been altered back to the more common *gnawt*. The Red Book, therefore, shares the innovation *ef* with the other witnesses, as against Peniarth 3, where *ef* is absent; the innovation provides evidence for X^2, where it must have occurred. The only outlier in this account is Peniarth 50, which has *gna6t* and, more importantly (given how easily *gwnawt* apparently reverted to *gnawt*), does not have *ef*. As discussed below, there is good reason to suppose that Peniarth 50's text of the *Cyfoesi* is composite, albeit that it drew on exemplars of high value.

X^3: There is ample evidence for X^3, which shows that Peniarth 20 derives from the same common exemplar as Peniarth 26, NLW 3041B, NLW 4973B and Pugh's 1658 copy. For example, here are lines 157–61 of the edited text, a metrically irregular stanza that appears to be an Englyn Gwastad appended with an additional ten-syllable line:

> Disgoganaf Seruen Wynn,
> kennat g6astat ysg6ydwyn,
> gle6 gadarn garchar gychwyn.
> Treigla6t bro brada6c unbyn.
> Ef grynna6t h6nt racda6 hyt ym Prydyn.
>
> 'I prophesy Serwen Wyn,
> a steadfast, white-shielded messenger,
> a bold, strong prison-breaker.
> He will overthrow the land of treacherous chieftains.
> He will thrust yonder before him as far as Northern Britain.'

There are two points in this stanza where the Red Book agrees with Peniarth 3 against Peniarth 20, Peniarth 26 and NLW 4973B. In the second line, Peniarth 3 and the Red Book (along with Peniarth 50) have *kennat* 'messenger' while Peniarth 20, Peniarth 26 and NLW 4973B have spellings of *keimiad* 'champion'. Similarly, in the final line, Peniarth 3 and the Red Book (again with Peniarth 50) have the word *h6nt*, whereas that is omitted in Peniarth 20, Peniarth 26 and NLW 4973B. Since, as we have seen, the Red Book shares the common exemplar X^2 with the latter three witnesses, the agreement of the Red Book

with Peniarth 3 on these points must reveal the reading of the archetype X^1, whereas the variants in Peniarth 20, Peniarth 26 and NLW 4973B must have arisen in their common exemplar X^3.

At this point, we also need to consider Peniarth 94, whose independent copy of the poem preserves only lines 340–410. The textual evidence suggests that Peniarth 94's exemplar shared some, but not all, of the innovations of X^4. For instance, this is line 383 across the extant witnesses:

Peniarth 3:	*Gwasgarawt awel awyr*
Red Book:	*Góasgaraót awel awyr*
Peniarth 50:	*Gwas[.]arraóc awel awyr*
Peniarth 26:	*Gwasgarawd awel amwyr*
Peniarth 94:	*Gwasgrawd awel am wir*
NLW 3041B:	*Gwasgarawc awel amwyr*
NLW 4973B:	*Gwasgarawc awel am wyr*
Pugh 1685:	*Gwasgarawg awel Amwyr*

Peniarth 3 and the Red Book (again along with Peniarth 50) share the reading *awyr* for the final word, producing the sensical line 'A breeze will scatter the air'; by contrast, an intrusive *-m-* appears in Peniarth 94 and the other witnesses. On the other hand, a few lines later, Peniarth 94 preserves line 400 intact along with Peniarth 3 and the Red Book, unlike Peniarth 26, NLW 3041B, NLW 4973B and Pugh 1658, which omit the line, showing that Peniarth 94 cannot derive from X^4. Peniarth 94's line of transmission thus branched off the stemma somewhere between X^2 and X^4. However, since the text in Peniarth 94 does not overlap with the text in Peniarth 20, it is impossible to know the relationship between Peniarth 94 and X^3.

X^4: The omission of line 400 has already been mentioned as clear evidence for a shared innovation in Peniarth 26, NLW 3041B, NLW 4973B and Pugh 1658. Otherwise, the most obvious textual feature of these witnesses is that Peniarth 26 and NLW 4973B, which otherwise preserve complete texts of the poem, both omit lines 217–60, which are present in Peniarth 3, the Red Book, Peniarth 20 and Peniarth 50. Furthermore, and no doubt relatedly, the extant text in NLW 3041B begins with line 261, precisely after the omission that is apparent in the other two witnesses. Perhaps a leaf of X^4 became lost or damaged, leading at least one early copyist to decide that the poems either side of the resulting gap were different poems.

X^5, X^6, X^7: There is plentiful textual variation to demonstrate the relationships between these lost exemplars and their descendants. X^5 is defined as the common exemplar of NLW 3041B, NLW 4973B and Pugh 1658, while X^7 is defined as the common exemplar of NLW 4973B and Pugh 1658. Between those was X^6, the source for Robert Vaughan's collations in Peniarth 26. Since the readings of X^6 are revealed only when Robert Vaughan noticed a difference between X^6 and Peniarth 26, and annotated the latter accordingly, absence of evidence for X^6 cannot be taken as evidence of absence. But enough remains

to suggest that the source of Vaughan's collations shared some, but not all, innovations with X^7. All these relationships are nicely illustrated by the englyn formed by lines 358–60. This is the edited text:

> Na rann periglawr na cherdaȯr ny byd
> nac adreidyaȯ yr allaȯr
> yny dygȯydho nef ar laȯr.
>
> 'There will be neither a priest's portion nor a poet
> nor any visiting the altar
> until heaven should fall to the earth.'

This is the Red Book text, but a similar text is found in Peniarth 3, Peniarth 50 and Peniarth 94, with minor variations and corruptions (especially at the end of the third line; compare the Red Book's *ar laȯr* with *ar y llawr* Peniarth 3; *y'r llaȯr* Peniarth 50; *lawr* Peniarth 94). What follows are the texts of all the witnesses to X^4 for these lines, with Robert Vaughan's collations in Peniarth 26 shown in superscript within curly brackets (and the words to which the collations pertain underlined, as in the manuscript):

Peniarth 26:	Na rrañ piglawr na cherddawr ni bydd nac athryhaw{achitwedyd} allawr{n} hyd peñ ddigwyddo nef hyt y llaw{hyt y llawr}
NLW 3041B:	Na ran periglawr na cherddawr ni bydd anchadwedydd allawr yn i ddigwyddwch i lawr
NLW 4973B:	Na cann periglawr na cherddawr ni bydd, na chidwedydd allan dwy ddigwydd vch y llawr
Pugh 1658:	Na Ran na Periglawr, na cherddawr ni bit, nag achitwedid allan eny digwyd vch yr llawr

This stanza preserves evidence for X^5, X^6 and X^7. At the beginning of the second line, Peniarth 26 reads *nac athryhaw*, which is recognisably *nac adreidyaȯ* ('nac athreiddio'), whereas the other three witnesses share a similar corruption, which arose in X^5. Robert Vaughan glossed Peniarth 26 with a form of the corruption closer to the forms found in NLW 4973B and Pugh 1658, which must have arisen in X^6. Similarly, *allawr* must have become *allan* in X^6, as found in NLW 4973B, Pugh 1658 and Vaughan's gloss in Peniarth 26, which changes *allawr* to *allan*. In the final line, Peniarth 26 has *ddigwyddo*, agreeing with the archetypal reading, but this must have become *ddigwyddwch* in X^5. In X^7, and thus in NLW 4973B and Pugh 1658, the *-wch* of this new verbal form was reinterpreted as the preposition *vch*, but this appears not to have been the case in X^6, since Vaughan's gloss on Peniarth 26 reads *hyt y llawr*, mirroring the use of *hyt* in Peniarth 26 (and perhaps therefore also X^4).

We might lastly notice that the transmission of this branch of the stemma, extending from X^3 to X^7, appears to have taken place in north-east Wales. This is apparent already in the fourteenth century in Peniarth 20, written in Valle Crucis abbey, whose text derives from X^3. In addition, Peniarth 26, deriving from X^4, was written in the north-east, perhaps in the vicinity of Oswestry, and indeed contains at least one text (*Proffwydoliaeth Myrddin*) deriving from a Valle Crucis manuscript.[32] A descendant of X^5 was copied by John Jones of Gellilyfdy, in Flintshire, while X^6 has been tentatively identified with the lost copy of Dafydd Jones, vicar of Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, just south of Rhuthun.

X^8, X^9, X^{10}: As mentioned above, it appears that Peniarth 50's text was produced by conflation; in particular, conflation between two good quality texts that were akin, respectively, to Peniarth 3 and the Red Book. Peniarth 50's text rarely strays far from the mainstream text, but when it does, it appears to share innovations with other witnesses in an inconsistent pattern. For instance, here are lines 352–4 of the edited text:

> Pan dyuo dylat (dylyet uchaf!)
> o uor hyt weryt,
> diwed, riein, orffen byt.
>
> 'When the flood comes (the highest debt!)
> from the sea over the land,
> the end, maiden, the conclusion of the world.'

With the exception that is noticed momentarily, this is the text in the Red Book, in agreement with Peniarth 3. It forms an ordinary Englyn Penfyr with lines of 9, 6 and 7 syllables. The second and third lines carry an end-rhyme in *-yd*, which also forms a proest rhyme in *-(i)ed* with the *gwant* in the first line (*dylyet*); this itself forms a line-internal proest with *-ad* in the *rhagwant* at the end of the first half of the first line. This tight metrical scheme is nonsensically disrupted in both the Red Book and Peniarth 50, which share the addition of another instance of the word *dylat* at the end of the second line. Presumably this error was prompted by the appearance of the same word in the first line, and, at first sight, it might lead us to suppose that the Red Book and Peniarth 50 share a common exemplar. Yet, only a few lines later, Peniarth 50 shares a significant omission with Peniarth 3, suggesting instead that *those* two copies share a common exemplar. In the edited text, line 361 reads *Llallaóc, kan am hatebyd* ('Companion, since you answer me'); this line varies little across the witnesses, and is paralleled closely by line 373, *Llallaóc, kan am diderbyd* ('Companion, since it will befall me'). We can thus be confident that Peniarth 3 and Peniarth 50 err when they both omit *am*, the syllabic form of the infixed pronoun, in line 361. Peniarth 50 thus appears to share separate errors with both Peniarth 3 and the Red Book. The likeliest explanation for this pattern is that the text in Peniarth 50 was produced by the conflation of two other witnesses, one of which shared innovations with Peniarth 3 and the other with the Red Book.

[32] Huws, *Repertory*, i, 345.

However, Peniarth 50 was not itself the locus of this conflation. Peniarth 50 contains a clean-looking text, unlike, for instance, Peniarth 26, where Robert Vaughan's collations would amount to an act of conflation if a clean copy of Peniarth 26 had been produced which silently incorporated those annotations. Furthermore, Peniarth 50 shares innovations with a group of partial witnesses that preserve only lines 202–51, providing evidence for a common exemplar X^8, which may itself have been the locus of the conflation. These partial witnesses themselves share a common exemplar X^9; these are the independent witnesses to X^9:

- NLW 5276D, vol. ii, fols 406v–407r (Elis Gruffydd, *c.* 1550): An extract embedded in Elis Gruffydd's chronicle of world history, along with extracts from *Yr Oianau* and *Yr Afallennau*.
- Peniarth 254, part iii, p. 50 (John Jones of Gellilyfdy, *c.* 1600–20): Another copy by John Jones. The text here begins only at line 221. This and the following witness share a common exemplar, X^{10}.
- NLW 3041B [Mostyn 133], pp. 109–11 (John Jones of Gellilyfdy, 1607–23): The first copy of the *Cyfoesi* in the manuscript of John Jones that is discussed above.
- NLW 3077B, p. 325 (*c.* 1642–4): This has a corrupt and fragmentary text similar to the Red Book for lines 208–57, but it has been expanded with readings from X^9.

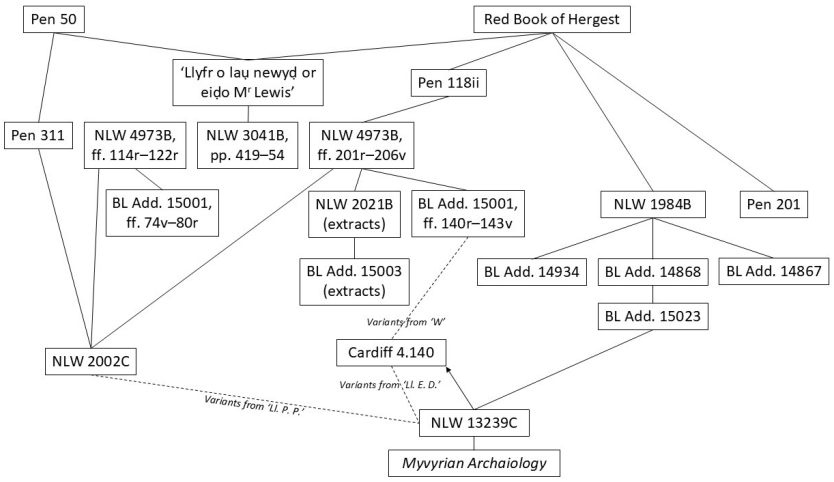
The witnesses to X^9 share all manner of corruptions; for example, they all omit line 226. Unexpectedly, they also preserve two of the additional englynion found in Peniarth 20, as discussed above. Other variants show that X^9 shared a common exemplar with Peniarth 50: for example, both Peniarth 50 and the witnesses to X^9 insert the word *gywydd* into line 240, which is absent from the other witnesses.

1.3. Derivative witnesses

In addition to those witnesses discussed above, there are numerous derivative witnesses that are related in the manner shown in Figure 2. Although these copies are interesting in their own right, they are not useful for reconstructing the archetype. They all descend from only three extant manuscripts: the Red Book, Peniarth 50, and John Davies's *Liber B* (NLW 4973B), which includes two copies of the poem, one of which itself derives ultimately from the Red Book. The most striking feature of Figure 2 is what it reveals about the role played by Evan Evans (*alias* Ieuan Brydydd Hir, 1731–88) in the transmission of the poem in the eighteenth century, leading eventually to the formation of the *Myvyrian Archaiology*'s text.[33] Evan Evans was responsible for the only extant eighteenth-century copy of the poem made directly from the Red Book (NLW 1984B, fols 35r–46r, written in 1757); the main text of the *Myvyrian Archaiology* descends from this copy via various intermediary copies. The

[33]Owen Jones, Edward Williams and William Owen [Pughe], *The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales, Collected out of Ancient Manuscripts*, 1st ed., 3 vols (London, 1801–7), i, 138–49; 2nd ed., 1 vol. (Denbigh, 1870), 108–15.

Figure 2: Relationships between the derivative witnesses to the *Cyfoesi*



Myvyrian Archaiology also notes variants from two other main sources. One, called 'Ll. P. P.' (for 'Llyfr Paul Panton'), was another manuscript of Evan Evans (NLW 2002C, pp. 1–24, written *c.* 1775); the text and variant readings in this manuscript were taken from the two copies in John Davies's *Liber B* (NLW 4973B) and from Peniarth 311 (John Jones of Gellilyfdy's copy of Peniarth 50), though there is no consistency as to which of the three exemplars was used as NLW 2002C's base text and which were used for its variants. The other source for variants in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, called 'Ll. E. D.' (for 'Llyfr Edward Davies'), was Cardiff, Central Library, 4.140, pp. 287–99, written in 1792 by Edward 'Celtic' Davies (1756–1831); the base text of this copy was, like the *Myvyrian Archaiology*'s own copy of the poem, William Owen Pughe's manuscript NLW 13239C (1784), but Edward Davies had annotated his copy with readings from a source that he called 'W', and it is these variant readings that were quoted in the *Myvyrian Archaiology*. Evidently 'W' was the copy of the poem in London, BL, Add. 15001, fols 140r–143v (John Walters with two amanuenses, *c.* 1770), which had been copied from John Davies of Mallwyd's copy of the Red Book text in *Liber B*.

2. Date of composition

There is much evidence for the poem's date, which can be divided broadly into linguistic evidence and content evidence. Gratifyingly, these two strands of evidence provide independent confirmation of a date in the early thirteenth century for the poem.

2.1. Linguistic evidence

This section presents the first thoroughgoing attempt to date *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* by linguistic evidence. In 1940, Kenneth Jackson briefly

set out linguistic evidence that he thought showed that the poem could be dated later than the ninth century and earlier than the early twelfth century, but this evidence cannot now be interpreted in the way that Jackson intended.[34] It is fair to say that, when Jackson was writing, it was possible only to gain an impressionistic idea of the significance of individual linguistic features; more reliable benchmarks for the linguistic dating of poetry in this period have been established much more recently, particularly in the work of Simon Rodway and Patrick Sims-Williams. Otherwise, comments on the poem's possible date have previously been made only in relation to the poem's contents, which I address separately.

Four aspects of the linguistic evidence are considered below. Firstly, dateable linguistic changes of various kinds are used to suggest *termini ante quem* and *post quem* for the poem. Secondly, certain orthographical features of the early copies of the poem are highlighted where they can indicate the nature of the orthography used during the early transmission of the poem. Thirdly, the poem's rare vocabulary is listed alongside references to other texts in which the relevant words occur. Lastly, attention is drawn to linguistic features that can help us date some early stages in the poem's transmission.

2.2. Linguistic evidence: termini ante quem

Turning first to the *termini ante quem*, there is much evidence that the poem's verbal morphology predates the second half of the thirteenth century. Simon Rodway has discussed changes in verbal morphology during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries on the basis of the period's dateable court poetry as well as the prose manuscripts of the second half of the thirteenth century.[35] The *Cyfoesi* displays a range of features which, in Rodway's analysis, had fallen out of use by the second half of the thirteenth century.[36] These are as follows:

- The final dental fricative -/ð/ in the second-person singular present indicative ending *-ydd*. In the *Cyfoesi*, cf. ll. 9 *hepcoryd*, 361 *hatebyd*, 363 *dywedyd*, 365 *kyuerchyd*. One can also restore final -/ð/ in two second-person singular endings on the basis of rhyme: ll. 36 *synnyy[d]*, 176 *darogeny[d]*.
- The impersonal present indicative ending *-awr*. In the *Cyfoesi*, cf. ll. 51 *alwaór*, 72 *glywawr*, 74 *hetmyccaór*, 115 *odrycaór*, 116 *pryderaór*, 122 *etmyckaór*, 195 *etmykaór*, 306 *glywaór*, 333 *trefnaór*, 356 *drefnaór*.
- Third-person singular present s-subjunctive forms. In the *Cyfoesi*, cf. line 39: *góares Duó dy anghen* ('may God relieve your need').[37]

[34]Kenneth H. Jackson, 'The motive of the threefold death in the story of Suibhne Geilt', in John Ryan (ed.), *Féil-Sgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill* (Dublin, 1940), 536–550, at 544–5, n. 30.

[35]Simon Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature: Evidence from the Verbal System* (Aberystwyth, 2013).

[36]See his summary ibid., 166.

[37]The same subjunctive form *gwares* is found in a poem attributed to Llywelyn Fardd II: *CBT* VI, poem 10.76.

Rodway has also shown that, between the first and second halves of the thirteenth century, *-w(y)s* was overtaken by *-awdd* as the most common third-singular preterite ending.[38] In the *Cyfoesi* there is only one relevant preterite verb, in line 215, and this has *-ws*: *a lews llyuyr Cado* ('who has read the book of Cato').

Another feature of verbal morphology that might potentially suggest an earlier *terminus ante quem* is the third-person singular present indicative ending *-yn(t)*. In the *Cyfoesi*, there are two such verbs ending in *-yn(t)*: *dywedynt* in l. 153 and *torrynt* in l. 312. Rodway identified only two possible instances of present-tense *-yn(t)* in the court poetry: namely, in twelfth-century poems by Gwalchmai and Cynddelw, though the latter example in particular is open to doubt.[39] This inclined him to posit that present-tense *-yn(t)* disappeared before the thirteenth century, and that even in the twelfth century *-an(t)* had already been generalised at the expense of *-yn(t)*. However, I have recently conducted a survey of this verbal ending across medieval Welsh poetry, with special attention to prophetic poetry, and identified at least two examples that can be dated to the first half of the thirteenth century.[40] These occur in a verse of the Peniarth 3 version of the *Oianau* concerning events of 1211/12.[41] On balance, therefore, one can say that the two present-tense verbs in *-yn(t)* in the *Cyfoesi* show only that the poem predates the second half of the thirteenth century.

The same dating is supported by the distribution of third-person singular present indicative absolute and conjunct forms in clause-initial position. Simon Rodway has shown that, in court poetry of the twelfth and first half of the thirteenth centuries, simple verbs in third-person singular present indicative forms in clause-initial position take absolute forms in over 80% of instances.[42] His tokens for the second half of the thirteenth century are low and thus inconclusive, but fourteenth-century poetry shows that there must have been a steep decline in the use of absolute forms even in formal praise poetry after *c.* 1250.[43] In the *Cyfoesi*, all third-person present indicative simple verbs in clause-initial position take absolute forms (11 or 12 instances).[44] By contrast, the only third-person singular present indicative verbs in clause-initial position with conjunct forms are compound verbs (5 instances).[45] Again, therefore, this feature is consistent with a date before the second half of the thirteenth century.

[38] Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 157–63.

[39] Ibid., 57–8.

[40] Ben Guy, 'The distribution of 3. pl. pres. ind. *–(h)yn(t)* and the dating of Welsh prophetic poetry', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 25 (2024), 47–80.

[41] See Williams, 'Y Cyfoesi a'r Afallennau', 126, ll. 165–6. The two verbs, in rhyming position, are *geissyn* and *gwelyn*. For the dating of the events, see *LlDC* xxix–xxx.

[42] Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 111.

[43] Ibid., 107–8.

[44] Namely, *bróydraód* l. 48, *góledychaód* l. 90, *treiglaód* l. 160, *kynghoraód* l. 172, *gónawt* l. 179, *troyt* ll. 247 and 256, *biaód* ll. 263 and 299, *elit* ll. 273 and 279. For the possible twelfth example, *grynnaód* (l. 161), see Simon Rodway, 'The syntax of absolute verbal forms in early Welsh poetry: a survey', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 22 (2021), 33–103, at 75–6.

[45] Namely, *dyderbi* l. 54, *disgogan* l. 191, *dyui* l. 194, *dybyd* l. 318, *diderbyd* l. 372.

Three syntactical features of the *Cyfoesi* might potentially be thought to suggest an earlier *terminus ante quem*, though it is difficult to be certain about their evidential value in the absence of comprehensive diachronic studies of these features. The first is the presence in the text of sentence structures lacking preverbal particles with the constructions subject + verb, object + verb, and adverb + verb. Formally, the structures subject + verb and object + verb are based on *nominativus pendens* constructions, but they were often used in early poetry for variation.[46] These are the relevant examples in the *Cyfoesi*:

Subject + verb:

- l. 54: *a oganaf dyderbi* ('what I prophesy, it will come to pass').
- l. 116: *armes Brydein pryderaór* ('the prophecy of Britain will be feared').
- l. 185: *armes Prydein pryderer* ('the prophecy of Britain will be feared').
- l. 324: *kadeu góeitheu gwledychant* ('battles, toils: they will reign').

Object + verb:

- l. 329: *oes tragoes disgoganaf* ('a time-beyond-time I prophesy').

Adverbial phrase + verb:

- l. 48: *yg kynnor bydin bróydraót* ('in the vanguard of the army he will do battle').

Simon Evans listed examples of constructions like these in his study of the language of twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poetry, among which examples are only three of subject + verb, all of which can be dated to the twelfth century.[47] These are *Dewi differwys y eglwysseu* in *Canu i Ddewi* by Gwynfardd Brycheiniog, which has been dated to *c.* 1175/6 (*CBT* II, poem 26.254);[48] *agheu dydau urth gluydet* in the anonymous religious poem *Moli Duw yn Nechrau a Diwedd*, dated by Marged Haycock to the twelfth century for unspecified reasons (*CC* poem 18.31, with the date at p. 157); and *Duw digawn* in *Arwyddion cyn Dydd Brawd*, perhaps by Llywelyn Fardd I in the twelfth century (*CBT* II, poem 5.17). Evans also listed an example from the latter poem of the construction object + verb: *gwyrtheu goleu gwelhattor* (*CBT* II, poem 5.3). However, the examples given by Evans are intended to be impressionistic, not comprehensive, and it would be unsafe to conclude that Gwynfardd Brycheiniog's generation was the last to use constructions like these in poetry. But in the absence of a

[46] Graham R. Isaac, *The Verb in the Book of Aneirin: Studies in Syntax, Morphology and Etymology* (Tübingen, 1996), 62–4; David W. E. Willis, *Syntactic Change in Welsh: A Study of the Loss of Verb-Second* (Oxford, 1998), 97–101. For examples from the early englynion, see *EWSP* 375–6 and 381.

[47] D. Simon Evans, 'Iaith y Llys a Beirdd y Tywysogion', in Morfydd E. Owen and Brynley F. Roberts (eds), *Beirdd a Thywysogion: Barddoniaeth Llys yng Nghymru, Iwerddon a'r Alban, Cyflwynedig i R. Geraint Gruffydd* (Cardiff and Aberystwyth, 1996), 60–74, at 62. A similar list of examples is given in *GMW* 181.

[48] Also reedited and translated into English by Ann Parry Owen at https://saints.wales/theedition/ (accessed 3 September 2025).

fuller study, we might take it as doubtful that they continued in use for long into the thirteenth century.

The second potentially relevant syntactical feature is the use of a clause-initial preverbal particle *a* to support infixed pronouns. These are the examples in the *Cyfoesi*, divided between those where the pronoun denotes the direct object or the indirect object.[49]

Preverbal particle *a* + direct object:

- l. 51: *a'th alwaór aborthón* ('you are called a leader').
- l. 316: *As góan góaeó euyd o ergrywyd llog* ('A bronze spear from the planks of a ship will pierce him').
- l. 364: *As dywedaf y Wendyd* ('I tell it to Gwenddydd').
- l. 377: *as dywedaf yn difri* ('I say it seriously').
- l. 402: *A'th orchymynnaf ditheu* ('I commend you too').

Preverbal particle *a* + indirect object:

- l. 65: *A'm górthgyuarch 'ym brytuan* ('Ask me again my intent').
- l. 84: *A'm górthgyuarch yn glaear* ('Ask me again gently').
- l. 87: *A'th gyfuarchaf yn glaear* ('I ask you gently').
- l. 107: *a'm dyweit y chwaryan* ('tell me calmly').
- l. 149: *a'm dywet y chweryan* ('tell me calmly').
- l. 422: *A'm kymuno Duó ehun* ('May God himself administer communion to me').

Simon Evans described this as a feature of 'early poetry', but Marged Haycock has emphasised that it is also common in twelfth-century court poetry, especially in the work of Cynddelw.[50] However, many examples are listed in *G* s.v. *a*² (1) and *GPC Online* s.v. *a*² (2003), and, while it is clear that the frequency of the construction declines after Cynddelw and Prydydd y Moch, examples can be found in the work of the following later poets:[51]

- Elidyr Sais, fl. *c.* 1195–1246 (*CBT* I, poems 15.20 and 21.41).
- Dafydd Benfras, fl. *c.* 1195–1257/8 (*CBT* VI, poem 28.9).

[49] Note that the dative function of infixed pronouns is found at least as late as the fourteenth century: cf. *GMW* 57; some examples from the court poetry are listed in Evans, 'Iaith y Llys', 68–9.

[50] *GMW* 55 and 172; *LPBT* 197 and 353. T. J. Morgan similarly notes that this use of the particle *a* occurs 'yn y cyfnodau cynnar' ('in the early periods'): *Y Treigladau a'u Cystrawen* (Cardiff, 1952), 151–2. For the particle, see too Stefan Schumacher, 'An edition and analysis of Book of Aneirin B.39 (including preliminary chapters on the grammar and poetics of early Welsh poetry', *ZCP* 64 (2017), 299–420, at 329–31).

[51] Of the later examples listed by *G* and *GPC Online*, there are grounds for disagreeing with the following, which are not listed above: *GGrG* poems 3.40 and 6.85–6; Ann Parry Owen, *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd*, iii, *Canu Amrywiol* (Aberystwyth, 2007), poem 1.12, with note on pp. 120–1; Huw Meirion Edwards, *Gwaith Madog Dwygraig* (Aberystwyth, 2006), poem 1.77.

- 'Meilyr ap Gwalchmai', fl. thirteenth century (*CBT* I, poems 30.1 and 33.45, 94, 96, 98).[52]
- Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch, fl. *c.* 1277–82 (*CBT* VII, poem 39.30).
- Madog ap Gwallter, fl. *c.* 1300 (*CBT* VII, poem 33.73, 78).
- Iorwerth ab y Cyriog, fl. *c.* 1325–75 (*GGrG* poem 3.41, 42, 43, 44).
- An anonymous Red Book poem dated to the early fourteenth century.[53]

Thus, despite the greater frequency of this construction up to the early thirteenth century, it does not appear to be useful as evidence for narrowing down the date of the *Cyfoesi* within the pre-1250 period.

The third potentially relevant syntactical feature is the use of infixed pronouns with dative meaning alongside the verb 'to be' to denote possession.[54] There are two examples in the *Cyfoesi*:

- l. 10: *pa ri a'n bi ni gantha6?* ('which king will we have (according to him)?').
- l. 167: *Nac eruyn hed6ch; ny'th vi!* ('Do not seek peace: you will not have it!').

As discussed further below, the second example is part of two lines that are largely shared with the Taliesin poem *Prif Gyuarch Geluyd*. Simon Evans commented that this construction 'disappeared rather early' (*GMW* 57), and elsewhere he listed some examples of it from court poetry and early religious poetry, including three lines by Gwalchmai ap Meilyr and one by the anonymous thirteenth-century poet known as 'Meilyr ap Gwalchmai'.[55] Again, these examples are only impressionistic. While a comprehensive diachronic study is required in order to understand the full significance of this construction for dating, it is possible to search for specific instances in the court poetry electronically to gain a more accurate impression of its diachronic distribution.[56] Below, I have listed all the examples that I could find in twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poetry of infixed pronouns + third-person singular forms of the verb 'to be' to denote possession:

Present-tense *oes*:

- First-person singular *'m*: *CBT* I, poems 3.170 (Meilyr Brydydd) and 7.25 (Gwalchmai); *CBT* II, poem 4.43 (Llywelyn Fardd I).
- Third-person singular *-s*: *CBT* I, poem 14.93 (Gwalchmai); *CBT* VII, poem 24.36 (Llygad Gŵr).

[52]Nerys Ann Jones has shown that the attribution of *CBT* I, poems 30–3 to a poet called 'Meilyr ap Gwalchmai' derives solely from a copying mistake by John Davies of Mallwyd, and must be dismissed: 'Meilyr ap Gwalchmai – rhithfardd!', *Dwned* 9 (2003), 23–36. She argues instead that the four poems were composed by the same unknown poet, probably in the thirteenth century. Below, attributions to 'Meilyr ap Gwalchmai' are written in single quotation marks, and would be best read as 'anonymous poet of the thirteenth century'.

[53]Huw Meirion Edwards (ed.), *Gwaith Prydydd Breuan, Rhys ap Dafydd ab Einion, Hywel Ystorm, a Cherddi Dychan Dienw o Lyfr Coch Hergest* (Aberystwyth, 2000), poem 10.5.

[54]*GMW* 57.

[55]Evans, 'Iaith y Llys', 69; the lines are *CBT* I, poems 7.23, 11.29, 14.93 and 33.48.

[56]My thanks to Ann Parry Owen for supplying an electronic copy of the corpus.

Habitual present/future-tense *bydd*:

- First-person singular *'m*: *CBT* I, poem 7.32 (Gwalchmai); *CBT* II, poem 7.17 (Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd); *CBT* VI, poem 27.79 (Dafydd Benfras); *CBT* VII, poem 30.23 and 30.38 (Iorwerth Fychan).
- First-person plural *'n*: *CBT* I, poem 16.23 (Elidyr Sais); *CBT* IV, poem 5.79 (Cynddelw).

Imperfect-tense *oedd*:

- First-person singular *'m*: *CBT* I poems 7.25 (Gwalchmai), 14.27 (Gwalchmai).

Preterite-tense *bu:*

- First-person singular *'m*: *CBT* I, poem 21.31 (Elidyr Sais); *CBT* II, poems 6.31 (Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd) and 31.39 (Gruffudd ap Gwrgenau); *CBT* III, poem 21.7 and 21.41 (Cynddelw); *CBT* IV, poem 4.177 (Cynddelw); *CBT* V, poem 22.1, 22.3 and 22.5 (Prydydd y Moch); *CBT* VII, poem 52.13 (Bleddyn Fardd).
- Note also *Mi a'th fum borthwr* ('I was your supporter') in *CBT* VI, poem 12.13 (Phylip Brydydd).

Present-tense subjunctive *bo*/*bwy*:

- First-person singular *'m*: *CBT* I, poems 11.29 (Gwalchmai), 12.29 (Gwalchmai), 14.86 (Gwalchmai), 27.101 (Einion ap Gwalchmai), 30.1 and 30.42 ('Meilyr ap Gwalchmai'); *CBT* IV, poems 4.177, 9.9 and 17.128 (Cynddelw); *CBT* V, poem 2.69 (Prydydd y Moch); *CBT* VII, poem 39.30 (Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch).
- Second-person singular *'th*: *CBT* I, poems 17.30 (Elidyr Sais) and 33.48 ('Meilyr ap Gwlachmai'); *CBT* IV, poem 6.299 (Cynddelw); *CBT* V, poem 2.70 (Prydydd y Moch); *CBT* VII, poem 1.12 (Y Prydydd Bychan).

These examples make it clear that the construction continued to be used by poets well into the thirteenth century, including poets who lived later in the century like Y Prydydd Bychan (fl. *c.* 1222–68), Llygad Gŵr (fl. *c.* 1230–92/3), Bleddyn Fardd (fl. *c.* 1258–84), Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch (fl. 1277–83) and Iorwerth Fychan (fl. *c.* 1300). We may note in particular the examples of *bydd* with the first-person plural infixed pronoun in poems by Elidyr Sais (fl. *c.* 1195–1246) and Cynddelw (fl. *c.* 1155–*c.* 1195), since they mirror most closely the construction in line 10 of the *Cyfoesi*. It appears, therefore, that this construction does not allow us to push back the *terminus ante quem* for the *Cyfoesi* any further than has already been established.

The final linguistic feature that might provide a *terminus ante quem* is the form of the preposition *di*/*dy*. The common preposition *i* ('to'), MW *y*, derives from the lenited form of OW *di* < Celtic **dō*. The form *di*, which might indicate /dɨ/ or lenited /ðɨ/, is ubiquitous in Old Welsh, whereas the initial

dental fricative /ð/- of the lenited form had been lost by the time of the earliest Welsh prose manuscripts in the middle of the thirteenth century, giving MW *y* (or *i*). In the Book of Llandaf, completed around 1132, *di* or *dy* remains the dominant form, though instances of *i* or *y* appear sporadically.[57] The main period of transition, when the initial /ð/- ceased to be regularly written, appears to have been the century *c.* 1150–*c.* 1250.

Above, I set out the textual evidence for why we should think that the preposition *di* or *dy* originally appeared in line 284 of the *Cyfoesi*. There is also a variant in Peniarth 20 that suggests that line 247 also originally spelled the same preposition with initial *d-*. These are the readings of the four primary witnesses that preserve versions of line 247 ('the wind will turn within a house'):

Peniarth 3:	*troit y gwynt o vewn y ty*
Red Book:	*troyt y gó́ynt o vyó́n ty*
Peniarth 20:	*troit y gwynt o vewn dy dy*
Peniarth 50:	*troit y gwynt o veó́n y ty*

Either Peniarth 20's reading *dy dy* resulted from reinterpreting the end of the line to mean 'your house', or, more probably, Peniarth 20 uniquely preserves the original spelling of the preposition *dy* 'to', which has been updated to *y* in Peniarth 3 and Peniarth 50 and omitted altogether in the Red Book.

Interpreting the significance of these two apparent instances of *di* or *dy* for 'to' in the *Cyfoesi* depends on the distribution of the form elsewhere in medieval Welsh literature. In prose, there is one example in the White Book version of *Culhwch ac Olwen*, and another, more strikingly, in the Llanstephan 1 version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, which was probably translated in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.[58] It is relatively common in undated *Hengerdd*, unsurprisingly given that much of this corpus is likely to date from the twelfth century or earlier.[59] Usefully, there are also examples in two poems that can be dated a little more closely. One is *Marwnad Cedifor ap Genillyn* by Llywelyn Fardd I, as it survives in the Hendregadredd manuscript; the poem probably belongs to the second half of the twelfth century.[60] The other is *Gwasgargerdd*

[57] Ben Guy, 'The development of Old Welsh boundary clauses', in Rebecca Thomas, Sadie Jarrett and Katherine K. Olson (eds), *Memory and Nation: Writing the History of Wales* (Cardiff, 2025), 118–46, at 130.

[58] Rachel Bromwich and D. Simon Evans (eds), *Culhwch ac Olwen*, 2nd ed. (Cardiff, 1997), 1, l. 12; Brynley F. Roberts, *Brut y Brenhinedd: Llanstephan MS. 1 Version* (Dublin, 1984), 16, l. 503, with note at 44. For the early stages of the translation of *Brut y Brenhinedd*, compare Patrick Sims-Williams, *Rhai Addasiadau Cymraeg Canol o Sieffre o Fynwy* (Aberystwyth, 2011), 6–9; Ben Guy, 'Constantine, Helena, Maximus: on the appropriation of Roman history in medieval Wales, *c.* 800–1250', *Journal of Medieval History* 44 (2018), 381–405, at 400–1.

[59] These are all the examples known to me: *LlDC* poems 8.13 (= *CC* poem 16.13) and 10.6 (= *CC* poem 2.6); *PT* poems I.25 and (?)IV.23; *LPBT* poems 1.86, 3.14, 5.107, 5.124, 8.37 and 24.34; *CC* poems 11.5, 11.38 (and cf. ll. 3, 16, 28 and 33 in the same poem) and 20.154; and possibly *CA* l. 830. I have checked all the examples listed in *G* s.v. *dy*[3] and *GPC Online* s.v. *di*[1], *dy*[2], *ddi, ddy*[1] (1960) against the opinions of the poems' most recent editors and omitted possible examples where other interpretations now seem more likely.

[60] *CBT* II, poem 4.45.

Fyrddin, in line 91 as it survives in the White and Red Books, and line 123 as it survives in Peniarth 26 and Peniarth 50. This poem has been dated to the second half of the twelfth century, probably between 1164 and 1191.

In sum, there are no certain surviving instances of *di* or *dy* for 'to' that can be confidently dated later than the second half of the twelfth century. To some extent, this conclusion must be treated with caution, since it is clear that many instances of the same preposition in poems composed in the twelfth century and earlier must have been changed to *y* or *i* in the extant Welsh manuscripts of the thirteenth century or later. It is thus possible that the form with initial /ð/- was still being used by poets in the early thirteenth century, despite its absence in extant manuscripts. Nevertheless, this feature implies that the composition and, just as significantly, the recording of the *Cyfoesi* should not be placed too long after 1200.

2.3. Linguistic evidence: termini post quem

Evidence providing *termini post quem* for the dating of the poem is slimmer, but still significant. Among verbal forms, it is notable that *-(h)o* is the default third-person singular present subjunctive ending in the poem, as seen in *achatuo* (ll. 103 and 146), *disgynno* (ll. 291 and 298), *dyuo* (l. 352), *dygóydho* (l. 360), *draetho* (l. 388) and *kymuno* (l. 422). Simon Rodway has shown that, in court poetry, *-(h)wy* was gradually superseded by the monophthongised *-(h)o* between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with poets of the first half of the thirteenth century being the first to use *-(h)o* more often than *-(h)wy*, so far as the extant texts show.[61] Unfortunately, however, none of these verbs in the *Cyfoesi* is in rhyming position, and it is possible that any or all of them could have been changed from *-(h)wy* to *-(h)o* in transmission. The value of this evidence is thus somewhat ambiguous.

Perhaps a more important aspect of the verbal system is that there are no indications that etymologically compound verbs were being analysed as compound. Firstly, the poem lacks any instances of infixed pronouns inserted after the first preverb of compound verbs.[62] The list above that shows instances of the clause-initial preverbal particle *a* supporting infixed pronouns contains many cases where pronouns could have been infixed to preverbs but were not (e.g. *As dywedaf* in lines 364 and 377).[63] It appears that the practice of infixing pronouns after the first preverb of compound verbs ceased in poetry after the beginning of the thirteenth century.[64] Secondly, there are several instances of absolute verbal endings used with compound verbs, which was historically incorrect (e.g. *Dygóydit* l. 73, *Dyrchauaót* l. 145, *Góasgaraót* ll. 300 and 383).[65]

[61] Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 81–3; Simon Rodway, 'Two developments in medieval literary Welsh and their implications for dating texts', in Paul Russell (ed.), *Yr Hen Iaith: Studies in Early Welsh* (Aberystwyth, 2003), 67–74, at 71–4.

[62] Contrast *di-s-gweyt* in *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin* (l. 2), which has been dated to the second half of the twelfth century.

[63] See above, p. 195.

[64] Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 111.

[65] For etymologies, see Stefan Schumacher, *Die keltischen Primärverben: Ein vergleichendes, etymologisches und morphologisches Lexikon* (Innsbruck, 2004), 319 (*dyrchafael*), 405 (*dygwydd*)

The practice of attaching absolute endings to etymologically compound verbs is already attested in Welsh in the twelfth century and possibly even the late eleventh, so it may not have arisen straightforwardly from a reanalysis of them as single semantic units.[66] Still, this feature may still provide a rough *terminus post quem* of approximately the eleventh century. As indicated above, all absolute forms in the poem are in clause-initial position or otherwise obey the expected syntactical rules, with the possible exception of *Neut a ganaȯt* in line 337; however, there are other examples of absolute forms in relative position in both the *Hengerdd* and in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century court poetry, including following the relative particle *a*.[67]

Rhyme provides the other major source for *termini post quem*. In one striking verse (ll. 252–4), the end-rhyme reveals that final -/v/ was not being pronounced:

> Myrdin dec, daȯnglot bennaf,
> kanys y'th eir y credaf,
> Owein, pa hyt y para?
>
> 'Fair Myrddin, talent-famed chief,
> since it is in your word that I believe,
> Owain, how long will he remain?'

In this verse, the superlative ending *-af* and the first-person singular present indicative ending *-af* are rhymed with a third-person singular present indicative verbal form ending with the denominative suffix *-(h)a*. In terms of the phonetics, this is not especially informative, since bilabial fricatives were being lost in word-final position already by the ninth century.[68] However, there is little evidence that it was acceptable for poets to rhyme words formerly ending in a fricative with words that had never ended with a fricative prior to the fourteenth century.[69] In earlier court poetry, there is only one example from the second half of the thirteenth century.[70] There are, however, some significant examples from the *Hengerdd*. In *Dadl y Corff a'r Enaid* in the Black Book of Carmarthen, *go<r>uchaf* rhymes with *da*, and *tagde* ('tangdde(f)') rhymes with *arvere* ('arwyre').[71] Marged Haycock has suggested that this poem was composed in the twelfth or early thirteenth century.[72] Similarly,

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and 577 (*gwasgaru*).

[66] Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 94–5, 110–11 and 113; Stefan Dedio, 'Absolute and conjunct forms in early Middle Welsh gnomic poetry', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 16 (2015), 61–80, at 74; for the possible late-eleventh-century example from the St Padarn englyn, see Rodway, 'Syntax of absolute verbal forms', 42.

[67] Rodway, 'Syntax of absolute verbal forms', 91–4, and cf. 75; idem, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 109.

[68] *LHEB* 417–18.

[69] Cf. John Morris-Jones, *A Welsh Grammar: Historical and Comparative* (Oxford, 1913), 180.

[70] *CBT* VII, poem 32.64; cf. the appendix to poem 40, l. 95.

[71] *LlDC* poem 5.105–6 and 130–1 (= *CC* poem 21.105–6 and 130–1); cf. Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Dating the poems of Aneirin and Taliesin', *ZCP* 63 (2016), 163–234, at 199–200. For the emendation to *go<r>uchaf*, see *CC* 228.

[72] *CC* 210.

an undated poem called *Deuddeg Mab Israel* in the Book of Taliesin rhymes *Adaf* ('Adda(f)') with *Eua* ('Efa').[73] This may suggest that, even though it was unacceptable to rhyme *-a(f)* with *-a* in the formal and public court poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a more flexible approach may have been taken with less formal varieties of poetry.

Another aspect of rhyme provides evidence that is more decisive. There are three verses in the *Cyfoesi* where the end rhyme is carried by conjugated prepositions in their third-person singular masculine forms:

> Kanys Ryderch bieu ffaɔ
> a Chymry oll y danaɔ,
> neu gɔedy gweitheu, kɔ daɔ?
>
> 'Since it is Rhydderch who will possess fame
> and all the Welsh under him,
> after battles, where will he come to?' (ll. 14–16)
>
> Llet ynuyt urenhin a daɔ
> a gɔyr Lloegyr yn y dɔyllaɔ;
> ny byd gɔlatlɔyd y danaɔ.
>
> 'A half-mad king will come
> and the men of England will deceive him;
> there will not be prosperity for the country under him.' (ll. 231–3)
>
> Pan uo Owein ym Manaɔ
> a chat ym Prydyn geirllaɔ,
> biaɔt gɔr ef a gɔyr idaɔ.
>
> 'When Owain is in Man
> and there is a battle in Northern Britain nearby,
> there will be a man who will have men.' (ll. 261–3)

These examples are significant because the third-person singular masculine ending of conjugated prepositions was previously -/auð/. This ending began in OW *hanaud* ('from him'; cf. OIr *úad*, MCo ***anoth****o*, MBr ***anez****af(f)*, all 'from him'), from where it spread to other prepositions.[74] The only extant example of a conjugated preposition with -/auð/ in a poem in rhyming position may be found in *Mawl Cuhelyn Fardd*, from the first third of the twelfth century (as preserved in the Black Book of Carmarthen), which rhymes *itaut* ('iddawdd')

[73] *CC* poem 8.5–6.

[74] Peter Schrijver, *Studies in the History of Celtic Pronouns and Particles* (Maynooth, 1997), 35–6; idem, 'Old British', in Elmar Ternes (ed.), *Brythonic Celtic – Britannisches Keltisch: From Medieval British to Modern Breton* (Bremen, 2011), 1–84, at 51–2; Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh conjugated prepositions: chronology, register and dialect', *Transactions of the Philological Society* 111 (2013), 1–50, at 6–7. OW *hanaud* is attested in the Old Welsh computus fragment from the first half of the tenth century: Alexander Falileyev, *Etymological Glossary of Old Welsh* (Tübingen, 2000), 81. The only other attested form for a third-person singular masculine conjugated preposition in Old Welsh is *racdam* 'before him' in the Juvencus glosses, which is cognate with MBr *raczaff* and has the same ending as OBr *dada em* (with the affixed pronoun, i.e. 'ef'): Schrijver, 'Old British', 51.

with *naut* ('nawdd').[75] Thereafter, the court poets only rhymed third-person singular masculine conjugated prepositions in *-aw* with other words ending in *-aw*.[76] This strongly suggests that the final fricative -/ð/ had been lost by the middle of the twelfth century, even in the minds of poets who were typically conservative with language.

In theory, a conjugated preposition in -/auð/ might have formed a generic rhyme with a word that ended with the same diphthong but a different fricative consonant.[77] In the third stanza quoted above, this would never have been true, because the name *Manaw* never ended in a fricative consonant.[78] In the first and second stanzas (the second of which, we should recall, probably alludes to King John), this would have been true only up to *c.* 800. In the first stanza, the conjugated preposition *danaó* rhymes with *ffaó* < Lat. *fāma*, which would have ended with -/μ/ in Old Welsh until the latter was lost in monosyllables with /au/ by *c.* 800;[79] and the verb *daó*, which would have ended with -/ɣ/ in Old Welsh until the latter was lost after back vowels in final syllables, also before the ninth century.[80] In the second stanza, *danaó* rhymes again with the verb *daó*, and also with the verbal noun *dóyllaó*, the suffix of which probably derives from Brittonic **-ā-mā-* and would thus have ended with -/au̯μ/ before the final fricative was lost early in the Old Welsh period.[81] Therefore, these stanzas could only have carried full generic rhyme prior to the ninth century, but no other evidence indicates a date for this poem anywhere near as early as that. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that there are no other instances of fricatives of differing qualities forming an acceptable end-rhyme in the *Cyfoesi*; rather, as in other englyn poems, the fricative /ð/ could form a generic rhyme with the liquids /r/ and /l/, like in ll. 373–5 (*diderbyd* : *urodyr* : *uyd*), as explored below.[82] Much the simpler solution is to date these stanzas to the period when the final -/ð/ had been lost from third-person singular masculine conjugated prepositions and it had become acceptable for poets to rhyme such prepositions with other words in *-aw*; on the available evidence, this would indicate a date after *c.* 1150. In light of this discussion, it would be worth revisiting the significance of rhymes involving third-person singular masculine conjugated prepositions in other anonymous englyn poems, such as *draw* : *amdanaw* in the 'Aelwyd Rheged' section of *Canu Urien*; *ognaw* : *arllaw* : *ohonaw* in the 'Caranfael' section of *Canu Heledd*; *glaw* : *danaw* : *gwynaw* in the 'Beddau Maes Maoddyn' section of *Canu Heledd*; and *dywedaw* : *kyuodaw* :

[75] *LlDC* poem 3.34 = CBT I poem 2.36.

[76] Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh conjugated prepositions', 7.

[77] Cf. Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh conjugated prepositions', 7; idem, 'Dating the poems', 204–8.

[78] George Broderick, *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, vii, *Douglas and Appendices* (Tübingen, 2005), 337–8, with earlier references.

[79] *LHEB* 416–17 and 697.

[80] *LHEB* 458 and 697; Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain: Phonology and Chronology, c. 400–1200* (Oxford, 2003), 287. For *daw* < **dɔɣ* < British **do-aget*, see *LHEB* 443.

[81] *LHEB* 417–18; Stefan Schumacher, *The Historical Morphology of the Welsh Verbal Noun* (Maynooth, 2000), 133–5.

[82] Cf. *EWSP* 334.

ymdanaw at the beginning of *Kyntaw Geir*.[83]

To summarise thus far: taking the *termini ante quem* and the *termini post quem* together, the linguistic evidence is gratifyingly consistent in placing the poem approximately in the period 1150–1250. Within that period, the two probable examples of *di* for the preposition meaning 'to' would tend to push the date back, whereas the exclusive use of the third-person singular present subjunctive ending *-(h)o*, rather than *-(h)wy*, alongside the absence of infixed pronouns following the first preverb of compound verbs, would tend to push the date forwards. This evidence can now be compared with two other forms of evidence: orthography and rare vocabulary.

2.4. Orthography

In the context of dating the composition of the poem, a full orthographic analysis of the *Cyfoesi* is not particularly helpful. For the most part, the various copies of the poem reflect the orthographical conventions of the periods in which those copies were written. Moreover, even traces of earlier orthographic systems, preserved from earlier stages in the textual tradition, reveal more about the early written copies of the poem than about the original composition of the poem. Nevertheless, these traces of earlier orthographic conventions are still a helpful confirmation of the conclusions suggested by the linguistic analysis above.

Throughout the early witnesses to the poem, one finds orthographical relics of the thirteenth century: unsurprisingly, given that the earliest copy of the poem is Peniarth 3, part ii, dated *s.* xiii/xiv (which is, of course, a palaeographical date meaning *c.* 1275 × *c.* 1325). Perhaps the most noticeable of these traces is the occasional use of <w> for /v/, a spelling that is best known as a feature of the Black Book of Carmarthen, but which is also found in several other thirteenth-century manuscripts.[84] Here is a selection of such spellings from the various primary witnesses:

Peniarth 3:	l. 274 *gorwynt* ('gorfynt', also in the Red Book).
Red Book:	l. 19 *gǒynwyd* ('gwynfyd'); ll. 169, 175, 182 etc. *annwynnaǒc* ('anfynog'); l. 317 *diwedyd* ('difedydd').
Peniarth 50:	l. 11 *indawel* (a corrupt form of the name 'Cadafel').
Peniarth 26:	l. 66 *ǒyghywyddeǒ* ('fy nghyfeddau'); l. 88 *ath gywyddeǒ* ('a'th gyfeddau').
NLW 4973B:	ll. 53, 96, 99 etc. *owri* ('(g)ofri').

More significant in the present context are the traces of what might be considered 'Old Welsh' spellings. For example, in line 390, witnesses to X[4]

[83] *EWSP* 428 (*Canu Urien* stanza 59), 442–3 (*Canu Heledd* stanzas 96 and 103) and 452 (*Kyntaw Geir* stanza 1).

[84] Paul Russell, 'Scribal (in)consistency in thirteenth-century South Wales: the orthography of the Black Book of Carmarthen', *SC* 43 (2009), 135–74, at 151–7; idem, '*Rowynniauc*, *Rhufoniog*: the orthography and phonology of /μ/ in early Welsh', in Russell, *Yr Hen Iaith*, 25–47, at 29–32.

seem to preserve an instance of Old Welsh <gu> for /w/. This is the line as it is preserved in the primary witnesses that do not derive from X^4:

Peniarth 3:	a thraethuot llyfreu awen hep arswyt
Red Book:	a thauot llyfreu awen heb arsϭyt
Peniarth 94:	a thrafod llyvrau heb arswyd

And here is the same line in witnesses to X^4:

Peniarth 26:	a thraϭod llyϭreϭ a gwenn heb arswyd
NLW 3041B:	a tharvod llyfrav a gwen heb arswyd
NLW 4973B:	a thrafod llyfrau a gwen heb arswyd
Pugh 1658:	a thrafod(?) llyfrev a gwen heb ar swyd

It seems likely that X^4 inadvertently preserved <gu> for /w/ in an Old Welsh spelling of 'awen' like *aguen* in the *Historia Brittonum*, the scribe having assumed that it stood for the two words *a gwen(n)*.[85] Another example can be found in line 82, where the available witnesses spell the word 'anwarth' as *angwarth* (Peniarth 50, Peniarth 26, NLW 4973B), or in one instance as the more corrupt *aniwarth* (Peniarth 20). However, the value of these orthographical relics for dating the poem is slight. It seems probable that <gu> continued to be used for /w/ in some contexts into the early thirteenth century, since examples of it can be seen in mid-thirteenth-century manuscripts: in the vernacular portions of the law manuscript known as 'Latin C', and in the work of hands A, C, D and E in the Black Book of Chirk (which have been interpreted as deriving from that manuscript's exemplar).[86]

More indicative, perhaps, are the examples suggesting that the Old Welsh spelling <b> for /β/ was found in the archetype. Here are the spellings of 'gwynfyd' (l. 19), 'dyfynnyn' (l. 91, possibly a corruption of *dyfyndyn* 'summoned person'), 'chwyfleian' (l. 191) and 'ar debed' (l. 308) in the primary witnesses:

- l. 19 gwynfyd: *gϭynwyd* (Red Book); *gwybyd* (Peniarth 20); *gwynuyt* (Peniarth 50); *gwynϭyd* (Peniarth 26); *gwyn maydd* (NLW 4973B).
- l. 91 dyfynnyn: *dyuynnyn* (Red Book); *dybynnyn* (Peniarth 20); *dyn ynin* (Peniarth 50); *dyfynyn* (Peniarth 26); *diuynyn* (NLW 4973B).
- l. 191 chwyfleian: *chwibleian* (Peniarth 3); *chwipleian* (Red Book); *chwyblian* (Peniarth 20); *chwibleian* (Peniarth 50); *chwibleian* (Peniarth 26); *chwibleian* (NLW 4973B).
- l. 308 ar debed: *arteuet* (Peniarth 3); *ardeued* (Red Book); *ar deued* (Peniarth 50); *ar dybed* (Peniarth 26); *ar dybedd* (NLW 3041B); *ar dybed* (NLW 4973B).

[85] For OW *aguen*, see Edmond Faral, *La légende arthurienne: études et documents*, 3 vols (Paris, 1929), iii, 42 (§62).

[86] Paul Russell, *Welsh Law in Medieval Anglesey: British Library Harleian MS 1796 (Latin C)* (Cambridge, 2011), xxvii; idem, 'Scribal (in)competence in thirteenth-century North Wales: the orthography of the Black Book of Chirk (Peniarth MS 29)', *NLW Journal* 29 (1995–6), 129–76, at 141.

The fourth example is perhaps the simplest. In Peniarth 3, the Red Book and Peniarth 50, copyists have assumed that the phrase *ar debed*, found occasionally in early poetry but not later, contained <b> for /β/, and changed it to <u> accordingly, losing the sense.[87] This implies that the copyists were used to seeing instances of <b> for /β/ in the poem. As with the example of *aguen* discussed above, it is the witnesses to X^4 that have preserved this aspect of the original spelling of *debed*, with <b> for /b/. By contrast, in the first two examples (*gwynfyd* and *dyfynnyn*), only Peniarth 20 appears to preserve spellings with <b> for /β/. In both cases, it is possible that the *-b-* actually resulted from a miscopying of an in-curling <v> (like *6*); but alternatively, in the case of *gwybyd*, a spelling with <b> for /β/ might have been preserved because the loss of the *-n-* in the word led to it being unrecognisable to the scribe. In the case of *dybynnyn*, the spellings acquire additional interest because the first part of this word is almost certainly *dyfyn* from the verb *dyfynnu*, which is a compound form of *mynnu*. In Old Welsh, the fricative would therefore have been spelled with <m>, not <b>; a spelling with <b> would be possible only when /μ/ had lost its nasal quality and fallen together with /β/, as it had done by the twelfth century.[88] Intriguingly, the same can be seen in the unusual word 'chwyfleian'. This word is restricted to early Myrddin poetry (*Yr Afallennau*, *Yr Oianau* and the *Cyfoesi*), and has been interpreted convincingly by Jarman as *chwŷf* ('motion, movement') + *llai* ('grey') + *-an*, thus 'grey wanderer'.[89] In the Black Book of Carmarthen, it is spelled *hwimleian* or *huimleian*, with the etymologically correct *-m-*, but in other manuscripts of all three poems it is spelled *chwibleian*, as in most primary witnesses to the *Cyfoesi*.[90] Here is another spelling with <b> for etymological /β/ < /μ/. Contrary to the usual assumptions about the dating implications of 'Old Welsh' spellings, these spellings are most likely to date to the period in the twelfth or early thirteenth centuries when /μ/ had lost its nasality but the graphemes <u>, <v> and <f> (as well as <w>) had yet to be adopted universally for spelling /β/, as had happened by the mid-thirteenth century.

2.5. Rare vocabulary

Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer is full of words that are found otherwise only in a small number of early poetic texts. The patterns of correspondence between the *Cyfoesi* and other poems regarding the use of these words could suggest the milieu in which the poem was composed. Below is a list of some of the rarest words in the poem, alongside references to the other poems in which those words occur (for present purposes, I have generally not included *hapax legomena*, since they do not help to contextualise the poem).

[87] For discussion of the word *tebed* and the phrase *ar debed*, see *CA* 304.

[88] See Russell, '*Rowynniauc*, *Rhufoniog*'; Ben Guy, 'Misunderstanding Old Welsh orthography and Insular script in the Jesus College 20 genealogies', *Celtica* 33 (2021), 59–96, at 77–80.

[89] A. O. H. Jarman, 'Hwimleian, Chwibleian', *BBCS* 16 (1955), 71–6.

[90] The Red Book's *chwipleian* is a hypercorrection by a scribe who thought that the *-b-* in his exemplar's *chwibleian* meant /b/.

In the interest of clarity, I have spelled the headwords at the beginning of each bullet point using modern Welsh spelling, showing the radical consonants.

- l. 21 *broglyd*: *CBT* III, poem 3.183 (Cynddelw).
- l. 26 etc. *clotlau*: *Peirian Faban*, l. 52 and *LPBT* poem 8.7.
- l. 30: *goeithin*: *CA* l. 993 (and possibly l. 309) and the prophecy associated with Meugan.[91]
- ll. 41 and 395 *diguedd*: *Oianau*, l. 135;[92] *CBT* I, poem 23.5 (Elidyr Sais); *CBT* VI, poem 36.1 (anonymous, dated tentatively to the thirteenth century).
- l. 51 *aborthun*: *CBT* IV, poem 12.18 (Cynddelw; see below).
- l. 66 *eban*: *LPBT* poem 5.221 and *CBT* IV, poem 16.26 and 209 (Cynddelw; see below).
- l. 81 *anhrwyadl*: Dafydd Ddu o Hiraddug.[93]
- l. 105 *celedigan*: *hapax legomenon*, but cf. *celedig* in *CA* l. 1363 (*Gwarchan Kynfelyn*) and *CBT* III, poem 5.111 (Cynddelw).
- l. 133 *bargodiain*: cf. *PBT* poem 4.11 (*Dygogan Awen*; see below).
- l. 139 *breuer*: *PT* poem VII.24; *CBT* IV, poem 4.278 (Cynddelw); *EWSP* 449 (*Claf Abercuawg* l. 10c); and possibly *CA* l. 474.
- l. 151 *dramyr*: *CBT* I, poem 14.83 (Gwalchmai).
- l. 152 *dierchyr* (plural of *diarchar*): *CBT* II, poem 14.83, emended from *dieithyr* (*Hirlas Owain*, perhaps by Cynddelw).
- l. 172 *diffred*: *PT* poem I.1 (see below); *CC* poem 3.12; *CA* l. 1082; and *EWSP* 417 (*Canu Llywarch Hen*, l. 9b).
- l. 191 *chwyfleian*: *Afallennau*, ll. 25 and 140; *Oianau*, ll. 26 and 33.
- l. 235 *lluyddfawr*: *CBT* III, poem 6.3 (Cynddelw); and a handful of examples from the late fifteenth century onwards (cf. *GPC Online* s.v. *lluyddfawr* (1987)).
- l. 245 *gort(h)rech*: in its adjectival sense, only *CBT* V, poem 22.17 (Prydydd y Moch) before the seventeenth century (cf. *GPC Online* s.v. *gorthrech, gortrech* (1972)).
- ll. 263 and 299 *biawd*: *Oianau*, Peniarth 3 version, l. 170.[94]
- l. 310 *rhyddyrch*: *CA* l. 530; *CBT* V, poem 20.29 (Prydydd y Moch); and *Afallennau*, l. 113.
- l. 348 *arylwch* < *arwylo*: *PT* poem VII.37.
- l. 352 *dylad*: *CBT* II, poem 1.99 (Llywelyn Fardd I); *CBT* VI, poem 18.120 (Einion ap Gwgon); the Peniarth 17 proverbs, number 159.[95]
- l. 408 *anhylar*: *GGMD* I poems 3.30 and 5.131; and *GIG* poem 9.39.
- l. 427 *gwesgrydd*: *LPBT* poem 4.186 and *CBT* VII, poem 30.48 (Iorwerth Fychan).

[91]Marged Haycock, 'A prophetic poem attributed to Meugan', *CMCS* 81 (2021), 1–41, at 15, l. 40.

[92]Note, however, that the recent editor of the *Oianau*, Llewelyn Hopwood, takes the Black Book's form *diguet* as 'diwedd'.

[93]R. Geraint Gruffydd and Rhiannon Ifans (eds), *Gwaith Einion Offeiriad a Dafydd Ddu o Hiraddug* (Aberystwyth, 1997), poem 2.1.

[94]Williams, 'Y Cyfoesi a'r Afallennau', 126.

[95]Henry Lewis, 'Diarhebion ym Mheniarth 17', *BBCS* 4 (1927), 1–17, at 5.

Taking this list at face-value, these are the poets or corpora of poetry with which the *Cyfoesi* shares more than one rare word, in descending order of frequency (I have included corresponding instances that are classed above as only 'possible').

- Book of Taliesin: 8 (= 3 in *PT* + 3 in *LPBT* + 1 in *PBT* + 1 in *CC*).
- Cynddelw: 7.
- Early Myrddin poems: 6.
- *Canu Aneirin*: 5.
- *EWSP*: 2.
- Prydydd y Moch: 2.

It should be stressed that these are very rough and ready figures that cannot bear much interpretative weight: these corpora differ significantly in size, and to some extent the figures reflect the ongoing recycling of poetic words and phrases by successive poets. Nevertheless, they are broadly indicative of the connections between the *Cyfoesi* and other poems, as explored further in the section below on intertextuality. The higher number of rare words that are also found in the work of Cynddelw (fl. *c.* 1155–*c.* 1195) is striking, as is the correspondence with the other early Myrddin poems, and especially *Yr Afallennau* and *Yr Oianau*; it should be remembered that these latter two poems contain specific allusions to political events in the second half of the twelfth century and, in the latter case, the early thirteenth century.[96] These connections support the linguistic evidence that places the *Cyfoesi* in the period 1150 × 1250.

2.6. Dating the poem's transmission

Before turning to the poem's content, it is useful to draw attention to certain linguistic features that might help us understand the early stages of the poem's transmission. There are two strands of evidence that might, at first, appear to point in contradictory directions.

It was noted above that the poem contains several instances of the second-person singular present indicative ending *-yd*, which had lost its final fricative, even in poetry, by the second half of the thirteenth century. There are four examples where the ending has been preserved intact, and two where it can be safely restored thanks to the rhyme. In one of these latter two cases, in line 176, it appears that the *-yd* ending (rhyming with *lluyd* and *vyd*) had been misunderstood as *-y* plus the affixed pronoun *di* in the archetype, X^1. These are the readings of the primary witnesses:

Peniarth 3:	*darogeny di*
Red Book:	*darogeny di*
Peniarth 20:	*darogennyd*
Peniarth 50:	*ddarogeny di*

[96] *LlDC* xxviii–xxxiii.

Peniarth 26:	*ddarogeni* [..]
NLW 4973B:	*ddarogeni*

Presumably, the reading was restored in Peniarth 20 to follow the rhyme. But the original misunderstanding might suggest that the archetype was written in the second half of the thirteenth century, after the original final -/ð/ had been lost and was no longer readily understood.

The other instance of the second-person singular present indicative ending *-yd* that can be restored by rhyme occurs in line 36, where it rhymes with the *gair cyrch*, *Arderyd*, at the end of the preceding line. Here is line 36 in the extant primary witnesses:

Red Book:	*asynnyy paham ym keu*
Peniarth 20:	*yssyd ym*[.] *pan ym ken*
Peniarth 50:	*a synny paham ym keu*
Peniarth 26:	*yssit ymy pan ym ken*
NLW 4973B:	*y sydd i'm pan i'm cen*

The original line is preserved in the Red Book and Peniarth 50, even though the ending has been updated to *-y* in those cases. But in the other three witnesses, which all descend from X³, the line has been reworked in a way that maintains the rhyme in -/ð/ but removes the second-person singular verb. Again, there is a suspicion that the scribe of X³ was not familiar with the verbal ending *-yd*. This can be placed alongside the evidence of line 122, which in the original text contained the present impersonal verb *etmyckaór*; in X³, this latter form was changed to *etmyckawd* (as witnessed by Peniarth 20 and NLW 4973B). The use of the third-person singular preterite ending *-awd*, which is not found in the original text, again suggests that X³ was most probably written no earlier than the second half of the thirteenth century.

However, these factors contrast with the evidence of Peniarth 26. Despite the clear textual evidence that Peniarth 26 descends from X⁴, Peniarth 26 contains linguistically early features that are not otherwise apparent in other descendants of X⁴. In line 87, which is *A'th gyfuarchaf yn glaear* ('I ask you gently') in the edited text, following all the other witnesses, a new verb is introduced in the Peniarth 26 version with the second-person singular present indicative ending *-yd*: *O'm kyóerchyd yn glayar* ('If you ask me gently'). Furthermore, Peniarth 26 contains two additional series of stanzas within its text of the *Cyfoesi* that display linguistic features that are unlikely to post-date the early thirteenth century.[97] The first series is comprised of two stanzas that follow the second englyn of the main text. These stanzas include two verbs that contain infixed object pronouns after their first preverbs: *Gor-ith-gyfarchaf*[98] ('I ask you') and *Dy-m-goeó* ('it has befallen me'), the latter being a unique form of the rare verb *dygofod*, which otherwise only occurs in the Books of Aneirin

[97] These are respectively poem 5.III and poem 5.IV of the online edition of the Myrddin poetry.
[98] MS *Gor ith gyffaichaf*

and Taliesin.[99] As mentioned above, the practice of inserting infixed pronouns after the first preverb of compound verbs continued in court poetry only until the beginning of the thirteenth century.[100] In the second series of additional stanzas in Peniarth 26, between lines 170 and 171 of the main text, one finds the third-person plural conjugated preposition *chandó*, with the ending *-u* that fell out of regular use after the first half of the thirteenth century, though it is found sporadically thereafter, especially in the South, for the remainder of the Middle Ages.[101]

How can this evidence be reconciled with the indications that X^1 and X^3 probably post-dated the first half of the thirteenth century? There seem to be at least two possible explanations. The text of the poem preserved in Peniarth 26 could also have drawn on a separate, early version of the poem that does not otherwise survive. Alternatively, during the transmission of the text between X^4 and Peniarth 26, the text was reworked by a linguistically conservative poet, in contrast with X^1 and X^3, which were copied by scribes who were less linguistically conservative. The latter scenario may be supported by the fact that the main text in Peniarth 26 has been reworked creatively to a greater extent than any other copy of the poem. If so, this may possibly suggest that all the early stages of transmission between X^1 and this precursor to Peniarth 26, including X^2, X^3 and X^4, took place no later than the first half of the thirteenth century; our understanding of linguistic change in that period relies heavily on the evidence of court poetry, and it would not be surprising if the average scribes of this time were less linguistically conservative than contemporary poets, and thus more liable to make the kinds of changes seen in X^1 and X^3, as discussed above.

2.7. Content evidence

Lastly, we turn to the evidence that the content can provide for the dating of the poem. It is the content that has given the chief impetus for past commentators to suggest that the poem was originally composed in the tenth century. This is because, between lines 41 and 129, the poem follows a fairly formulaic structure in which the kings of Gwynedd between Maelgwn Gwynedd and Hywel Dda are prophesied in turn. There is a long scholarly tradition, dating back to Robert Vaughan in the seventeenth century, of interpreting this to mean that the poem was originally composed in Hywel Dda's reign.[102] The

[99] *G* s.v. *dyouot* (2); *GPC Online* s.v. *dyofyddaf** (1964). I take it that *-e6* is a third-person singular perfect ending, as in *goreu*, a variant form of *goryw* < *gorfod* (*GMW* 146–7).

[100] Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*, 111.

[101] Sims-Williams, 'Variation in Middle Welsh conjugated prepositions', 15–20.

[102] Robert Vaughan, *British Chronology*, printed in the *Cambrian Register* 2 (1796), 515–33 at 524–5 (I owe this reference to Scott Lloyd, who is preparing a new edition of Vaughan's *British Chronology*); Edward Lhuyd, *Archaeologia Britannica* (Oxford, 1707), 258; William F. Skene, *The Four Ancient Books of Wales, Containing the Cymric Poems Attributed to the Bards of the Sixth Century*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1868), i, 239; H. Munro Chadwick and Nora K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1932–40), i, 463; Margaret Enid Griffiths, *Early Vaticination in Welsh with English Parallels* (Cardiff, 1937), 98; D. Simon Evans, *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* (Cardiff, 1977), cxliv; *EWSP* 292; Nikolai Tolstoy, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Merlin legend', *Arthurian Literature* 25 (2008), 1–42, at 20–5; Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 337–9.

key plank of the argument is that the stanzas following that about Hywel Dda prophesy figures who are described cryptically and appear obscure, such as might have been invented by a poet working in Hywel Dda's reign. It is undeniable that the style of the poem changes after line 129, which may explain why the Red Book begins the stanza about Hywel with a two-line rubricated initial on a new line; but, on the other hand, it is arguably incorrect to assume that the consecutive historical sequence is broken at this point. In what follows, I suggest that the sequence continues with little interruption from Hywel Dda to the early thirteenth century. The discussion is summarised in Table 1 at the end of this section.

Firstly, between lines 178 and 201, a little later in the poem, we appear to be on firm ground again, as the poem prophesies the rulers of Gwynedd between Gruffudd ap Cynan (r. 1099–1137) and Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (r. *c.* 1200–40). These are the stanzas in question:

[Myrddin:]
Gruffud y en6, gredua6l mirein,
(g6nawt man ar gran kyngrein)
a wledych ar dir Prydein.

[Gwenddydd:]
Kyuarchaf y'm clotleu llalla6c,
anwynnawc yg kadeu,
neu g6edy Gruffud, pieu?

[Myrddin:]
Dywedwyf nyt odrycker,
armes Prydein pryderer.
Gwedy Gruffud, G6yn Gwarther.

[Gwenddydd:]
Kyuarchaf y'm clotleu llalla6c,
ann6ynna6c yn ryuel,
p6y wledych wedy G6ynn G6arther?

[Myrddin:]
Wi a Wendyd wenn, ma6r a dias!
Disgogan chwibleian chwedleu atkas:
gwehelieith a uyd ar deyrnas
ny borthant wled na iawn adas,
dyui deu vroder, deu Idas am dir,
etmyka6r o'e g6ir hir alanas.

[Gwenddydd:]
Kyuarchaf y'm clotleu llalla6c,
annwynna6c yg kadeu,
p6y wledych wedy 6ynteu?

[Myrddin:]
Disgoganaf nat gỏas beid,
brenhin llew llaỏ diwreid,
gyluin geuel, gauel bleid!

And in translation:

'[Myrddin:]
Gruffudd his name, mighty and splendid,
(he will make a mark on the cheeks of princes)
who will reign in the land of Britain.

[Gwenddydd:]
I ask my illustrious companion,
eminent in battles,
after Gruffudd, who will possess it?

[Myrddin:]
I will say that there will be no delay,
the prophecy of Britain will be feared.
After Gruffudd, Gwyn Gwarther.

[Gwenddydd:]
I ask my illustrious companion,
eminent in war,
who will reign after Gwyn Gwarther?

[Myrddin:]
O fair Gwenddydd, of great tumult!
A grey wanderer prophesies hateful tidings:
princes will be over the kingdom
who will support neither a feast nor proper justice,
two brothers will come, two Judases desiring land,
a long blood-feud will be honoured because of their claim.

[Gwenddydd:]
I ask my illustrious companion,
eminent in battles,
who will reign after them?

[Myrddin:]
I prophesy that he is not a servant of boars,
but a lion king with an uprooting hand,
a pincer-like beak, the grasp of a wolf!'

The sequence is clear. Following Gruffudd, who is named transparently, is Gwyn Gwarther. This is the name of a traditional hero who is mentioned several times by Cynddelw and, later, Gruffudd ap Maredudd, but in his *Marwnad Owain Gwynedd*, Cynddelw uses the name figuratively for Owain Gwynedd (d. 1170); this is probably the meaning in the *Cyfoesi* too.[103] After Gwyn

[103] *CBT* IV, poem 4.287; the other references are *CBT* III, poem 26.39, *CBT* IV, poem 8.35 and *GGMD* I, poem 3.134.

Gwarther / Owain Gwynedd are two brothers who are also *deu Idas am dir* ('two Judases desiring land'). This is surely a reference to Dafydd ab Owain Gwynedd (d. 1203) and his brother Rhodri (d. 1195), who killed their brother Hywel, Owain Gwynedd's chief heir, in the battle of Pentraeth in 1170, and then shared Gwynedd between the two of them. Then, lastly, is the *brenhin llew* ('lion king'), a common poetic moniker for Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (d. 1240).[104]

After the stanza on Llywelyn ab Iorwerth there is one further possible item in the chronological sequence before the poem turns to non-specific prophetic commonplaces, speckled with allusions to the Angevin kings. After the *brenhin llew* comes the mysterious *mackóy deu hanner*, 'youth of two halves'. This prophetic cipher is seemingly borrowed from the Irish *mac dá leithi*, a cipher that stands for Domnall ua Néill (d. 980) in the Irish prophetic poem *Baile in Scáil* (§56), which is thought to have been redacted in the first half of the eleventh century.[105] But as a moniker for Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's successor, one inevitably wonders whether it refers to Dafydd ap Llywelyn, who might be described as 'two-halved' by virtue of having a Welsh father and an English mother (Joan daughter of King John). It appears that Dafydd was born after Easter 1212, or possibly 1213.[106] If the identification is accepted, this verse contains the latest historical reference in the poem, dateable no earlier than 1212.[107]

What, then, of the intermediate lines between Hywel Dda and Gruffudd ap Cynan? If they are comprised only of deliberately cryptic prophetic commonplaces that have no bearing upon real history, one might suppose that a prophecy composed during Hywel Dda's reign has simply been interpolated with a sequence relating to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. And yet, that is not entirely what one finds. There are six reigns that are prophesied between Hywel Dda and Gruffudd ap Cynan, and one of the rulers is specifically named: *Kynan y Kón* (l. 147). The same name is found in the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies, composed in Gwynedd between 1216 and *c.* 1223, in a section describing the descendants of Rhodri Mawr.[108] There we are told the following: *Meibion Ieuaf: Meig a Howel a Ieuaf tad Kynan y kwn* ('The sons of Ieuaf: Maig and Hywel and Ieuaf father of Cynan y Cŵn').[109] This statement sets out the sons of Ieuaf ab Idwal Foel (d. 988), including Maig, who was killed in 986,

[104]This is recognised in John Bollard, 'Myrddin in early Welsh tradition', 31; idem, '*Gwyn eu Byd*: some comments on the Myrddin poetry', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 10 (1990), 69–87, at 80.

[105]Kevin Murray (ed.), *Baile in Scáil: The Phantom's Frenzy*, ITS 58 (London, 2004), 47, 65 and 120; cf. Chadwick and Chadwick, *Growth of Literature*, i, 463.

[106]David Stephenson and Craig Owen Jones, 'The date and context of the birth of Dafydd II ap Llywelyn', *Journal of the Flintshire Historical Society* 39 (2012), 21–32.

[107]The phrase *mackóy deu hanner* is also found in later prophetic poetry, where it is used in reference to the prophetic deliverer Owain: Jenkins, 'Aspects of the Welsh prophetic verse tradition', 254–5 (Peniarth 50, poem 16c) and 261 (Peniarth 50, poem 17b); Griffiths, *Early Welsh Vaticination*, 147–8 a 168; Aled Llion Jones, *Darogan: Prophecy, Lament and Absent Heroes in Medieval Welsh Literature* (Cardiff, 2013), 133–7.

[108]For the date, see Ben Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy: An Introduction and Textual Study* (Woodbridge, 2020), 211–16.

[109]Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 370 (§28.1.2).

and Hywel ab Ieuaf, who ruled Gwynedd between 979 and 985. However, it is likely that the text has confused the parentage of Cynan y Cŵn. The only Cynan known in the next generation in the annals is the son of Hywel ab Ieuaf (rather than his brother Ieuaf ab Ieuaf), who seized Gwynedd in *c.* 1000 and ruled it until *c.* 1003.[110] It is very likely that Cynan ap Hywel can be identified with Cynan y Cŵn, and this would make sense of the reference to him in the *Cyfoesi*, within a list of kings who ruled Gwynedd. The *Cyfoesi* introduces Cynan by saying *Dyrchauaót unic o gud* ('There will arise a peerless one from hiding'), perhaps a reference to the fact that, between his father's death in 985 and his accession in *c.* 1000, Gwynedd was ruled by the southerner Maredudd ab Owain. We might presume that Cynan lived in exile during this time.

Between Hywel Dda (d. 950) and Cynan y Cŵn (r. *c.* 1000–3), the *Cyfoesi* mentions two periods: first is *Oys bargodyein* ('the age of the borderers', l. 133), and the second is *Blóydyn a hanner y ureuer vrehyryeit* ('A year and a half for lowing noblemen', l. 139). The latter is obscure, but could possibly refer to the short period between the death of Maredudd ab Owain in 998/9 and the accession of Hywel around 1000, when we do not otherwise know who was ruling Gwynedd.[111] This leaves a period of almost half a century that is described simply as *Oys bargodyein*. As the chronicles attest, the single most notable feature of this period of Gwynedd's history, particularly from the 960s to 980s, is the constant attacks that were made on Gwynedd by viking groups operating in the Irish Sea.[112] During the 970s and 980s, these attacks were primarily the work of the Islesmen of the Hebrides: the *ynyswyr*, as they are termed in *Brut y Tywysogyon* in reference to a later event in 1091.[113] Can we equate the Islesmen with the *bargodyein*? Three factors suggest that we should.

Firstly, apart from the reference in *Brut y Tywysogyon*, the only other medieval reference to the word *ynyswyr* itself is found in the poem *Saint a Merthyron Cred* in the Book of Taliesin, in a stanza concerning the *Nifer seint a deily goror* ('The host of saints who defend the border').[114] This stanza finishes with a line that evokes *ynys gwyr terwyn mor* ('the *ynyswyr* of the *terwyn* sea').[115] It is possible that *terwyn mor* here is simply a noun phrase meaning 'raging sea', but it has also been suggested that *terwyn* is a proper noun referring either to the Mediterranean Sea or, possibly, the Irish Sea, owing to the lack of a definite article preceding the phrase *mor terwyn* in

[110] These are the conventional dates, though the chronology of the chronicles is uncertain in these years; Cynan may actually have ruled from 1001 to 1005. Cf. Henry Gough-Cooper, 'Meet the ancestors? Evidence for antecedent texts in the late thirteenth-century Welsh Latin chronicles', in Ben Guy et al. (eds), *The Chronicles of Medieval Wales and the March: New Contexts, Studies, and Texts* (Turnhout, 2020), 107–37, at 133–5.

[111] For the date of Maredudd ab Owain's death, see Gough-Cooper, 'Meet the ancestors?', 135 and n. 83.

[112] For general accounts, see Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 539–52; Clare Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ívarr to A.D. 1014*, corr. ed. (Edinburgh, 2008), 217–28.

[113] *BT (Pen. 20)* 24.

[114] *CC* poem 24.61.

[115] *CC* poem 24.67.

Culhwch ac Olwen.[116] Either way, the stanza supports the currency of the idea that *ynyswyr* could be associated with borders.

Secondly, the stanza of the *Cyfoesi* in which the *bargodyein* are named strongly suggests that they were associated with paganism. Here is the edited text of the stanza (ll. 133–5):

> Oys bargodyein ny bi ssóys,
> ny byd nes y baradóys,
> nyt góaeth urd odynn noc urd eglóys.
>
> 'In the age of the borderers there will be no sense,
> it will not be nearer to paradise,
> the dignity of *odynn* will be no worse than the dignity of a church.'

Even if we ignore the intriguing word *odynn* momentarily, it is clear that the *bargodyein* were causing trouble for Christian society: paradise is receding, and the *urd* ('dignity', or perhaps 'ecclesiastical orders') of a church is compared negatively with the *urd* of *odynn*. This scenario would certainly fit with the identification of the *bargodyein* as viking groups from the Hebrides, who are usually called *gentiles* or *cenhedloedd* in Welsh chronicles. Numerous major Welsh ecclesiastical sites were attacked during this period: Caergybi in 961, Tywyn in 963, Penmon in 971, Clynnog Fawr in 978 (admittedly by Hywel ab Ieuaf and the English rather than vikings), St Davids in 982, and, most dramatically, Llanbadarn Fawr, St Davids, Llanilltud Fawr, Llancarfan and Llandudoch in 988.[117] What, then, is the meaning of *odynn*, whose *urd*, to the poet's disgust, will be no worse than that of a church? The noun *odyn* 'kiln' might be possible, if we understand that churches would be no better than kilns because they were being burnt down, though this does not explain the double *-nn*. The verb *godynnaf* ('to remove, diminish') is attested once in a poem by Prydydd y Moch (*CBT* V, poem 17.42), and we could perhaps understand *odynn* as an adjective meaning 'diminished', thus 'diminished dignity will be no worse than the dignity of a church'. But the parallel with *urd eglóys* suggests that *odynn* would be best interpreted as a noun. In the context of attacks against Christian society in the second half of the tenth century by vikings, the obvious solution would be to interpret *odynn* as the name of the Norse god Óðinn, the father god of the Norse pagan pantheon. It is difficult to verify this suggestion, since, to my knowledge, there is only one other instance of this Norse name extant in medieval Welsh, in a poem by Tudur Aled (fl. 1490–d. 1525 × 1527).[118] But it makes excellent sense in the

[116] *CC* 263; Patrick Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* (Oxford, 2011), 163–4.

[117] The attack on Llandudoch in 988 is the subject of the last part of *Gwasgargerdd Fyrddin*. On this, as well as more on what follows here, see Ben Guy, 'Poetry and taxes: Welsh responses to viking attacks in the late tenth century', in Clare Downham et al. (eds), *Viking Connections: Proceedings of the Nineteenth Viking Congress* (Liverpool, 2026), 14–25.

[118] Spelled *Odin*: Gruffudd Antur, '"Rhyw farwol law": ailddarganfod llawysgrifau Tudur Aled', *Dwned* 27 (2021), 71–82, at 73; cf. T. Gwynn Jones (ed.), *Gwaith Tudur Aled*, 2 vols (Cardiff, 1926), i,

context: in the upside-down world of the 'age of the borderers', Óðinn and the pagan Norse gods will be treated no worse than a church.

The third factor that suggests that we should identify the *bargodyein* with the Islesmen is the relationship between this section of the *Cyfoesi* and another prophetic poem, *Dygogan Awen* (*PBT* poem 4). Although the word *bargod* was a common noun meaning either 'eaves, roof' or 'edge, border', there are only two attestations of plural forms of the noun with the meaning 'borderers': *bargodyein* in the *Cyfoesi*, and *vargotyon* in *Dygogan Awen* (l. 11). Like the *Cyfoesi*, *Dygogan Awen* prophesies a series of epochs that will bring either disaster or joy to the Welsh. At the beginning of the poem, the historical sequence seems to begin with the coming of the *bargotyon* following *diwed plo, coll Iago o tir Prydyn* ('the final ?fateful blow, the loss of Iago from the land of Prydyn ['northern Britain'?]').[119] Although it would be possible to identify this Iago with various rulers of the same name, such as the Iago ap Beli who died in *c.* 615, the obvious Iago in a tenth-century context is Iago ab Ieuaf, who ruled Gwynedd from the death of Hywel Dda in 950 until he was captured by vikings, very probably Islesmen from the Hebrides, in 979. Iago, like other late tenth-century rulers, is omitted by the *Cyfoesi*, but that is as much as might be expected given that his father Idwal Foel is also omitted, even though he ruled Gwynedd between 916 and 942, *prior* to Hywel Dda. Later in *Dygogan Awen*, also like the *Cyfoesi*, the *bargotyon* are followed by a *Gwr o Gud* ('Man from Hiding', l. 24). Although this phrase became a commonplace in later prophetic poetry, the correspondence with the *Cyfoesi* may suggest that the *Gwr o Gud* in this case should be understood, again, as Cynan y Cŵn. If so, this leaves the following lines in *Dygogan Awen* between the *bargotyon* and the *Gwr o Gud*, describing someone identified only by the moniker *Llyminawc* ('leaping one') (ll. 14–23, with Haycock's translation):

> Rydybyd Llyminawc
> a uyd gwr chwannawc
> y werescyn Mon,
> a rewinyaw Gwyned
> o'e heithaf o'e pherued,
> o'e dechreu o'e diwed,
> a chymryt y gwystlon.
> Ystic y wyneb
> nyt estwg y neb –
> na Chymry na Saesson.
> Dydaw Gwr o Gud …

poem LXX.50; (I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for bringing this example to my attention). In this context, 'Odin' should be distinguished from the related English name 'Woden', who is called *Wden* in one fifteenth-century Welsh genealogical text, drawing on English genealogical sources that ultimately derive from Anglo-Saxon genealogies: Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 396 (§G12.1); cf. 231.

[119] *PBT* poem 4.7, with Marged Haycock's translation. I have added the commas and the suggestion that *Prydyn* (originally 'Pictland') might be interpreted generally as 'northern Britain' here.

> ‘There shall come a leaping one
> who shall be a man keen
> to conquer Anglesey,
> and to bring ruin to Gwynedd
> from its outermost edge to its centre,
> from its beginning to its end,
> and to seize its hostages.
> One of steadfast honour
> who bows to no-one –
> neither (to) the Cymry or the Saxons.
> There shall come a Man from Hiding …’

Considering the period between the capture of Iago (979) and the reign of Cynan y Cŵn (*c.* 1000–3), it is difficult not to see a relationship between the description of the *Llyminawc* in these lines and the activity of Guðrøðr Haraldsson, ruler of the Isles and repeated harasser of Gwynedd, in 987, as reported in the B-text of *Annales Cambriae*:[120]

> An[n]us Gothrit filius Haraldi cum nigris gentilibus uastauit Mon, captis duobus milibus hominum. Reliquias vero Mareduc secum asportauit ad Keredigean et ad Demeciam.
>
> ‘In this year Guðrøðr Haraldsson ravaged Anglesey with the Black Gentiles, capturing two thousand men. But Maredudd carried the relics with him to Ceredigion and Dyfed.’

With the poem in mind, Guðrøðr Haraldsson was certainly someone who conquered Anglesey, brought ruin to Gwynedd, seized its hostages, and bowed neither to the Welsh nor the Saxons. Ifor Williams wished to see the *Llyminawc* of this poem as Gruffudd ap Cynan, just because a verse quoted in *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* seeks to identify Gruffudd with a *Llyminauc* in a different prophecy, attributed to Myrddin; but, in the context of *Dygogan Awen*, Guðrøðr Haraldsson is a much more credible candidate.[121]

Following Cynan y Cŵn, the *unic o gud* of the *Cyfoesi* and putatively the *Gwr o Gud* of *Dygogan Awen*, the two poems lack specific points of contact but both arguably refer to rulers of the first half of the eleventh century.[122] *Dygogan Awen* finishes with three lines explaining that, after the *Gwr o Gud*, another will come to bring *llawenyd y Vrython* (‘joy to the Britons’, l. 29). Haycock commented that this ‘may be coded discourse for a Llywelyn (?ab

[120]Text from Henry W. Gough-Cooper (ed.), *Annales Cambriae: B and C in Parallel, from AD 954 to AD 1189* (Welsh Chronicles Research Group, 2017), pp. 2–3 (annal b1009), available at http://croniclau.bangor.ac.uk/parallel-editions.php.en (accessed 3 September 2025). I have added modern punctuation and capitalization as well as the translation. Note that the versions of *Brut y Tywysogyon* preserve a similar record, but they imply that their exemplar read *reliquos* ‘the rest, the remainder’ rather than *reliquias* ‘relics’: *BT (Pen. 20 trans.)* 145–6, n. 10.1–2. It seems more likely to me that *reliquias* was the original reading, but the reverse would be entirely possible.

[121]*AP* xl–xlv; cf. *PBT* 84.

[122]Though note that the two poems use the words *pellennic* (*Cyfoesi*, l. 151) and *pellenawc* (*PBT* poem 4.28) in lines that follow their respective men from hiding, as noticed by Haycock (*PBT* 96).

Iorwerth)', whose name was often collocated with *llawenydd*.[123] Strikingly, after Cynan y Cŵn, the next known king of Gwynedd was indeed a Llywelyn: namely Llywelyn ap Seisyll (d. 1023), who appears in the chronicles for the first time when he kills Aeddan ap Blegywryd, a lord from Anglesey, in *c.* 1017.[124] If Llywelyn ap Seisyll is the subject of the allusion in the final line of *Dygogan Awen*, as the chronological thrust of the rest of the poem suggests, there must be a strong possibility that the poem was composed during his reign, around 1020. By contrast, the *Cyfoesi* does not appear to contain any allusion to Llywelyn ap Seisyll, but it may well refer to his more illustrious son, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn (king of Gwynedd 1039–1064). Two Myrddin stanzas after Cynan y Cŵn (r. *c.* 1000–3), and two Myrddin stanzas before Gruffudd ap Cynan (r. 1099–1137), the *Cyfoesi* prophesies a certain 'Serwen Wyn' (ll. 157–61):

> Disgoganaf Seruen Wynn,
> kennat gɔastat ysgɔydwyn,
> gleɔ gadarn garchar gychwyn.
> Treiglaɔt bro bradaɔc unbyn.
> Ef grynnaɔt hɔnt racdaɔ hyt ym Prydyn.
>
> 'I prophesy Serwen Wyn,
> a steadfast, white-shielded messenger,
> a bold, strong prison-breaker.
> He will overthrow the land of treacherous chieftains.
> He will thrust yonder before him as far as Northern Britain.'

These lines can be linked directly to Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's career. Line 159 calls Serwen Wyn *garchar gychwyn* ('a prison-breaker'), and in 1042 Gruffudd was taken captive by the men of Dublin.[125] More significantly, Gruffudd repeatedly suffered 'treachery', as the chronicles call it, from South Wales, including one incident in 1047 when *y llas ynghylch seith vgeinwyr o deulu Gruffuδ vab Llywelyn drwy dwyll gwyrda Ystrad Tywi. Ac i δial y rei hynny y diffeithyawδ Gruffuδ vrenhin δyued ac Ystrad Tywi* ('about seven score men of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's war-band were slain through the treachery of the leading men of Ystrad Tywi. And to avenge those men, king Gruffudd ravaged Dyfed and Ystrad Tywi').[126] Quite possibly, Deheubarth is the *bro bradaɔc unbyn* of line 160, and it was Gruffudd ap Llywelyn who overthrew it. But even if Serwen Wyn can be identified with Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, the meaning of the cipher 'Serwen Wyn' remains obscure.

This leaves just two of the *Cyfoesi*'s prophesies unexplained between Hywel Dda and Gruffudd ap Cynan. Firstly, between Cynan y Cŵn (d. 1003) and

[123] *PBT* 85.

[124] Cf. Ben Guy, 'The changing approaches of English kings to Wales in the tenth and eleventh centuries', *Offa's Dyke Journal* 4, Special Issue: *Borders in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. Ben Guy, Howard Williams and Liam Delaney (2022), 86–106, at 94.

[125] Gough-Cooper, *Annales Cambriae*, 6 (annals b1063 and c364); *BT (Pen. 20 trans.)* 13 (s.a. 1040, *recte* 1042).

[126] *BT (Pen. 20)* 18; *BT (Pen. 20 trans.)* 14 (s.a. 1045, *recte* 1047); cf. Gough-Cooper, *Annales Cambriae*, 6 (annals b1068 and c369).

Serwen Wyn (?Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, r. 1039–64), we are told that men from overseas will declare a nobleman a king (ll. 151–3). This could be interpreted in various ways, but one possibility is that this is a reference to Rhydderch ab Iestyn, a nobleman from Gwent who became king of Deheubarth and seemingly Gwynedd too between 1023 and 1033, following Llywelyn ap Seisyll.[127] I have argued elsewhere that Rhydderch was helped into power by Cnut, king of England, while Colmán Etchingham has argued that Óláfr Sigtryggsson of Dublin held overlordship over Gwynedd during the latter part of this period, from 1028 to 1034.[128] Perhaps Cnut and/or Óláfr Sigtryggsson should be equated with the men from overseas and Rhydderch ab Iestyn is the *vrenhin o vrehyr*.[129] Secondly, between Serwen Wyn and Gruffudd ap Cynan, the *Cyfoesi* prophesies the coming of *Deu ysgóydwyn Veli* ('Two white-shielded men called Beli', l. 165) who will create chaos. This pair of characters seems comparatively unlikely to be based on genuine rulers; they are probably intended to emphasise the extent of the disorder that preceded the coming of Gruffudd ap Cynan.[130]

The various suggestions of the discussion above are summarised in Table 1. There are two main conclusions to take away from this. The first is that, contrary to what has sometimes been thought, the *Cyfoesi* arguably offers a chronologically continuous set of prophecies beginning in the sixth century and ending in the early thirteenth. It is true that the allusions become more cryptic after Hywel Dda, but the historical sequence remains tolerably clear up to Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (or perhaps Dafydd ap Llywelyn). After this point, the historical progression is broken, though it is possible to identify several allusions to the Angevin kings, and especially Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's adversary King John.[131] The evidence of the content therefore agrees closely with that of the language: linguistic dating places the poem in the period 1150–1250, while the content suggests a date in the early thirteenth century. The second conclusion is that the *Cyfoesi* and *Dygogan Awen* appear to describe events of the second half of the tenth century and first half of the eleventh in strikingly similar terms. *Dygogan Awen* probably reflects the kind of poetic source that the poet of the *Cyfoesi* drew on for this time period, perhaps accounting for the difference in tone after Hywel Dda. As discussed below,

[127] Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*, 557–8. For Rhydderch as king of Gwynedd, see Gough-Cooper, *Annales Cambriae*, 5 (annal c356); J. Gwenogvryn Evans, with John Rhys, *The Text of the Book of Llan Dâv: Reproduced from the Gwysaney Manuscript* (Oxford, 1893), 253.

[128] Guy, 'Changing approaches', 96–100; Colmán Etchingham, 'North Wales, Ireland and the Isles: the Insular viking zone', *Peritia* 15 (2001), 145–87, at 157–62.

[129] Another possibility would be to identify the *vrenhin o vrehyr* as Aeddan ap Blegywryd, a nobleman seemingly of non-royal extraction, who had control of Anglesey in *c.* 1017 (see above, p. 217). However, this would leave the 'men from overseas' unexplained.

[130] One speculation would be to identify them with the brothers Bleddyn and Rhiwallon, who were chosen by Edward the Confessor to succeed Gruffudd ap Llywelyn in 1064 (Guy, 'Changing approaches', 91–4); but it is difficult to find supporting evidence for this.

[131] For example, l. 219 *keneu Henri, ryuyget!* ('the whelp of Henry, let him behave arrogantly!); l. 227 *brenhin na vrenhin* ('A king who is not a king'); ll. 231–2 *Llet ynuyt urenhin a daó / a góyr Lloegyr yn y dóyllaó* ('A half-mad king will come / and the men of England will deceive him'); for discussion, see *LlDC* xxxviii–xxxix.

the poet was highly knowledgeable about literature and traditions relating to different time periods.

Table 1: Historical references in the Cyfoesi and Dygogan Awen, 950–1240

Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd	***Dygogan Awen***	**Historical references**
l. 129 *Howel*		Hywel Dda, d. 950
	l. 7 *coll Iago o tir Prydyn*	Iago ap Idwal Foel, r. 950–79
l. 133 *bargodyein*	l. 11 *gwlat wehyn vargotyon*	Viking attacks on Gwynedd, 960s–80s
	ll. 14–23: *Llyminawc … y werescyn Mon a rewinyaw Gwyned … a chymryt y gwystlon … nyt estwg y neb — na Chymry na Saesson.*	Guðrøðr Haraldsson, 987
l. 139 *Blóydyn a hanner y ueruer vrehyryeit*		998/9–*c.* 1000?
ll. 145–7 *unic o gud … Kynan y Kón*	l. 24 *Gwr o Gud*	Cynan y Cŵn, r. *c.* 1000–3
	l. 29 *llewenyd y Vrython*	Llywelyn ap Seisyll, r. *c.* 1017–23
ll. 151–3 *Góyr pellennic o dramyr … Dywedynt vrenhin o vrehyr*		(?) Rhydderch ab Iestyn, r. 1023–33
l. 157 *Seruen Wynn*		Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, r. 1039–64
l. 165 *Deu ysgóydwyn Veli*		
l. 178 *Gruffud*		Gruffudd ap Cynan, r. 1099–1137
l. 186 *Góyn Gwarther*		Owain Gwynedd, r. 1137–70
l. 194 *deu vroder, deu Idas am dir*		Dafydd ab Owain Gwynedd (r. 1170–*c.* 1194, d. 1203) and Rhodri ab Owain Gwynedd (r. 1170–1195)
l. 200 *brenhin llew*		Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, r. *c.* 1200–40
l. 207 *mackóy deu hanner*		(?) Dafydd ap Llywelyn, b. 1212/13

3. Metre and ornament

The poem's date should be borne in mind when assessing its metre. The metrical analysis offered below is based on the critical edition of the poem rather than upon any individual manuscript witness. This inevitably affects analysis of the metre, since the metre was one of the factors that was considered when choosing between variants, or when emending the text. The critical edition is therefore likely to be somewhat more metrically regular than any individual witness, but hopefully this better represents the original composition. However, as the notes to the edition make clear, the text has not generally been emended *solely* for the purpose of achieving metrical regularity; instead, it was used as one among several tools for interpreting the extensive textual tradition. Moreover, when considering the poem's metre, there was no assumption that the poem should conform to the prescriptive accounts of metre in the bardic grammars of the fourteenth century and later. As far as possible, the poem's metre was judged on its own terms.

3.1. Syllabic structure

The metre of *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* conforms broadly with our expectations of the metre of englyn poems in the *Hengerdd* corpus.[132] It is formed predominantly from a mixture of Englynion Penfyr and Englynion Milwr. Out of a total of 138 stanzas, there are 72 Englynion Penfyr, 54 Englynion Milwr and 12 others, including 1 probable Englyn Byr Crwca, 6 Englynion Gwastad and 5 irregular stanzas that will be discussed below.

Before discussing the syllabic structure in detail, it is worth highlighting certain aspects of the syllable counting process that has been followed here. All syllables that are present in the edited text, as it stands, have been counted, so as not to prejudice the exercise with assumptions based on other poems, genres, or periods. This includes some syllables that we might normally assume to have been elided. For example, the edited text follows the manuscript tradition wherever the manuscripts agree about keeping the definite article separate even from a preceding word that ends in a vowel, as seen in the following five cases:

- l. 176: *póy yr unic arwynnaól a darogenyd ynaeth?*
- l. 207: *ef yó y mackóy deu hanner*
- l. 290: *pa daó yny y deu ouunet?*
- l. 308: *Póy y góyn ar debed?*
- l. 359: *nac adreidyaó yr allaór*

The first of these lines (l. 176) appears in a stanza that is already metrically irregular in other respects, as discussed below. Line 207 forms an eight-syllable final line of an Englyn Milwr, which, as discussed below, is entirely acceptable, though the seven-syllable line produced by eliding the article would make the stanza more metrically regular. Similarly, line 290 is the final line of an Englyn

[132] As surveyed thoroughly in *EWSP* 305–67.

Penfyr, and as it stands it contains nine syllables, like the final lines of only two other Englynion Penfyr in the poem; but if the article were elided, it would have eight syllables, like the final lines of nineteen other Englynion Penfyr. Again, line 359 is the second line of an Englyn Penfyr, and as it stands contains seven syllables, like the second lines of only four other Englynion Penfyr in the poem; but if the article were elided, it would have six syllables, like the second lines of no less than fifty-six other Englynion Penfyr. By contrast, line 308 is the second line of an Englyn Penfyr, and it is more regular as it stands with six syllables than with the five syllables that would be produced by eliding the article. On the whole, therefore, although these articles have been left to stand in the figures quoted below, metrical regularity would generally (though not always) be increased by eliding them.

A similar situation arises for affixed pronouns. In some cases, metrical regularity could be increased by omitting these pronouns (cf. ll. 61, 67, 370). For example, line 61 (*wedy Beli, y uab ef Iago*) is nine syllables with the affixed pronoun *ef*, forming one of only three third lines among the poem's Englynion Penfyr with nine syllables (another being line 290, with its unelided article).[133] It would be much more regular as an eight-syllable line. Such examples suggest that affixed pronouns were not counted for metrical purposes by the poet, confirming our expectations from the broader medieval tradition.

In a small number of cases, there is uncertainty about how many syllables the poet would have counted. For example, *brenin* was formerly trisyllabic *breën(h)in*, and in line 200 (*brenhin llew llaó diwreid*), the second line of an Englyn Milwr, we can be fairly certain that it was counted as three; otherwise, this line would have only six syllables, uniquely in the poem among the second lines of Englynion Milwr. In other cases, however, the poem becomes less metrically regular if *brenin* is counted as three syllables (e.g. line 231 in an Englyn Milwr: *Llet ynuyt urenhin a daó*). In the statistics given below, only the instance of the word in line 200 is counted as trisyllabic, though there is one other case in which it might arguably be counted as such.[134] A similar case is *rhên* from *rhëen*, which appears in line 418 and has been counted as disyllabic.

An important remaining ambiguity is the place-name *Lloegyr*, which occurs five times in the poem (ll. 225, 232, 237, 245, 307). We might expect that this would be counted as a monosyllable. However, in three of these cases (ll. 225, 237 and 245), it would clearly improve the metrical regularity of the stanza if it were counted as disyllabic. In the other cases, it would make little difference. Nonetheless, since none of these lines is entirely irregular with *Lloegyr* counted as a monosyllable, it is reckoned as such in the statistics below.

The metre shows syllabic flexibility, but only within certain limits. Among Englynion Penfyr, the modal syllabic line structure is 8, 6, 7, with twenty-two examples. The next four most common structures are 9, 6, 8 (eight examples), 11, 6, 7 (six examples), 8, 6, 8 and 10, 6, 7 (five examples each). These figures

[133]The third nine-syllable example is line 394, which seems sound.

[134]Line 153, the third line in an Englyn Milwr: *Dywedynt vrenhin o vrehyr*. The length of the line would be less regular if *vrenhin* were trisyllabic, but it would improve the alliteration with *vrehyr*.

neatly reveal the expected syllabic limits for lines in an Englyn Penfyr. The first line was the most flexible, but was in general expected to be longer than seven syllables: the bulk of examples have between eight and thirteen syllables in the first line, while only three out the seventy-two have fewer: ll. 136–8 with seven, ll. 389–91 with six (an unusual stanza that seems to mix the syllabic structure of an Englyn Byr Crwca (6, 10, 7) with the rhyming pattern of an Englyn Penfyr), and ll. 267–9 with five (possibly missing one or more words). By contrast, the second line was generally expected to be less than seven syllables: there are fifty-six Englynion Penfyr with a second line of six syllables, ten with a second line of five syllables, and five with a second line of seven syllables; otherwise the only outlier is ll. 389–91 again. Finally, the third line was almost always seven or eight syllables, with a few exceptions: there are forty-seven Englynion Penfyr with a third line of seven syllables, nineteen with a third line of eight syllables, and otherwise only three with nine syllables, two with six syllables and one with eleven.

Lines of Englynion Milwr were treated largely like the third lines of Englynion Penfyr, with seven and eight syllables per line generally preferred. The modal syllabic line structure is 7, 7, 7, with twenty-nine examples. After that is 7, 7, 8, with eight examples, and 7, 7, 9, with three examples; other structures have just one or two examples each. The other structures usually include the use of eight-syllable lines, but there are exceptions: among first lines, there is one example with ten syllables and three with six syllables, and among third lines, there is one example with ten syllables, three with nine syllables and three with six syllables. All the second lines of Englynion Milwr have either seven or eight syllables.

The only candidate for the rare Englyn Byr Crwca is lines 310–12:

> Taryf ryw**yr** a th6ryf ryd**yrch**
> a bydinoed Kadwaladyr y ar Dardennin auon;
> torrynt allwed g6**yr**.
>
> Commotion of mighty men and an excellent clamour
> and Cadwaladr's armies on the Tarddennin river;
> they will break the key of men.

The second line does not contain a rhyme and is unusually long, at fourteen syllables. Nonetheless, the stanza still possibly fits our expectations for an Englyn Byr Crwca, provided that two suppositions are accepted: firstly, that the final word in the first line has been correctly emended from the manuscripts' *ryderch* (presumably the personal name, as Peniarth 50 clarifies by adding the epithet *hael*) to the adjective *rydyrch*, which certainly makes better sense in the context; and secondly, that *rydyrch* could form a kind of generic rhyme with words in *-yr*, allowing internal rhyme in the first line with *rywyr* and an end-rhyme with *g6yr* in the third line.

There are six examples of Englynion Gwastad in the poem, making it the third most commonly used form of englyn. An Englyn Gwastad was effectively a four-line Englyn Milwr, with an end-rhyme on every line, and consequently

lines of seven or eight syllables dominate these examples: there are three with the syllabic line structure 7, 7, 7, 7, one with 8, 7, 7, 7 and one with 7, 8, 7, 7. The only exception is lines 157–61 about Serwen Wyn, quoted above, which has the appearance of an Englyn Gwastad with the line structure 7, 7, 7, 7 but with an additional fifth rhyming line of ten syllables appended to it.

Of the five metrically irregular stanzas, three bear relation to englynion while two are not englynion at all. In every case, it is likely that the metrical irregularity was intended to draw attention to the significance of the moment. Two cases are similar to the 'extended' Englyn Gwastad just mentioned, in that they are essentially Englynion Penfyr with an additional line at the beginning. Lines b, c and d of the stanza formed from ll. 291–4 (the first appearance of Cadwaladr as prophetic redeemer) form a metrically regular Englyn Penfyr with the syllabic structure 12, 6, 7, but they are preceded by an additional line of seven syllables that does not carry the end-rhyme. Very similarly, lines 7–10 (Gwenddydd's first appearance and question) can be viewed as an Englyn Penfyr with a first line that needs to be sub-divided into two lines of nine and six syllables. The third case (ll. 174–7, introducing Gruffudd ap Cynan) is even more curious, since it has the structure of the first two lines of an Englyn Penfyr repeated twice:

> Kyuarchaf y'm clotleu llall*aóc*,
> annwyn*aóc* yn llu**yd**,
> póy yr unic arwynnaól a darogen**yd** ynaeth?
> Póy y enó, pa du pan v**yd**?
>
> 'I ask my illustrious companion,
> eminent in a host,
> who is the fierce, peerless one that you prophesy after this?
> What is his name, where will he come from?'

The first two lines form a typical opening for an Englyn Penfyr in the poem, with the first line ending with a *gair cyrch* that rhymes with the first stressed word of the following line. But in this case, the third line is again a long line more typical of the first line of an Englyn Penfyr, and the end-rhyme is carried on the *gwant*.

Lastly, there are two stanzas that cannot be analysed as englynion: ll. 190–5 (on Dafydd and Rhodri, sons of Owain Gwynedd) and 224–7 (on the *brenhin na vrenhin*). These stanzas make use of awdl metres: they are, respectively, six and four lines long with line lengths ranging between eight and eleven syllables.[135] Lines 190–5 are formed from one couplet of Cyhydedd Naw Ban, one couplet that mixes Cyhydedd Fer and Cyhydedd Naw Ban, and one couplet of Toddaid:

[135]For another englyn poem that includes a section in awdl metres, see *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser*: *LlDC* poem 8; *CC* poem 16; *EWSP* 203–4. Compare too the late-thirteenth-century addition to *Englynion y Beddau* in the Black Book of Carmarthen that uses awdl-gywydd metre: *LlDC* poem 18.213–18, with note on p. 103; Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Medieval Welsh Englynion y Beddau* (Cambridge, 2023), 114 and 260–3.

Wi a Wéndyd wénn,/ máɔr a dí**as**!
Disgógan chwibléian/ chwédleu átk**as**:
gwehélieith/ a úyd/ ar déyrn**as**
ny bórthant wléd/ na íawn ád**as**,
dýui deu vróder,/ deu Íd**as** am d*ír*,
etmýkaɔr o'e gɔ́*ír*/ h*ír* alán**as**.

'O fair Gwenddydd, of great tumult!
A grey wanderer prophesies hateful tidings:
princes will be over the kingdom
who will support neither a feast nor proper justice,
two brothers will come, two Judases desiring land,
a long blood-feud will be honoured because of their claim.'

The opening couplet of Cyhydedd Naw Ban has 5/4 syllables in the first line and 6/4 in the second line. Deviations like the latter from the standard nine-syllable line are not unknown even in the relatively strict work of the twelfth and thirteenth-century court poets.[136] The second couplet seems to be a single line of Cyhydedd Fer followed by a single line of Cyhydedd Naw Ban, as revealed particularly by the third line having only three stresses.[137] The final couplet is a regular Toddaid formed from four parts of 5/5/5/4 syllables. An end-rhyme in *-as* runs throughout, and we might also note that each couplet is bound together by proest on the *rhagwant*: *-enn* : *-an*; *-yð* : *-eð*; *-er* : *-ir*.

More straightforwardly, lines 224–7 are made up of two couplets of Cyhydedd Naw Ban with four stresses per line, varying between eight and eleven syllables per line:

Pan uo pónt ar Dáf/ ac árall ar Dýw**i**,
y dáɔ ar Lóegyr/ lɔ́ýr dyuýsg**i**,
a mí disgogánaf,/ wédy mab Hénr**i**,
brénhin na vrénhin;/ bríthuyt a u**í**.

When there is a bridge on the Taf and another on the Tywi,
there will come upon England complete disorder,
and it is I who prophesy, after Henry's son,
a king who is not a king; there will be confusion.

The most striking thing about the two stanzas that use awdl metres is that they both bear a clear relationship with *Yr Afallennau* and *Yr Oianau*. In the first stanza, line 191 closely parallels several lines in both of the other poems,[138] while lines 194–5 are very close indeed to two consecutive lines of *Yr Oianau*.[139] In the second stanza, the four lines are almost identical to the last four lines of *Yr Oianau* as they stand in the Black Book, albeit that

[136] Peredur Lynch, 'Yr awdl a'i mesurau', in Owen and Roberts, *Beirdd a Thywysogion*, 258–87, at 262.

[137] Cf. Lynch, 'Yr awdl a'i mesurau', 261 for combinations of this type.

[138] *Afallennau*, ll. 25 and 140; *Oianau*, ll. 26 and 33.

[139] *Oianau*, ll. 171–2.

the two couplets appear there in the reverse order.[140] One suspects that these two stanzas use awdl metres rather than englyn metres precisely because they have been borrowed from other contexts.

3.2. Ornament

Two aspects of the ornament are considered here: (1) the rhymes, and (2) the ornaments linking the first two lines of an Englyn Penfyr. In addition to full rhymes, the poem contains numerous examples of proest and generic rhyme.[141] The following types of proest are attested (unless otherwise stated, they are end-rhymes):

-ael : *-oel*	(l. 11, internal rhyme: *Kadauael* : *koel*; ll. 11–13: *koel* : *kyuarchauael* : *Hael*)
-yn : *-an*	(ll. 17–18, *gair cyrch* rhyme: *gelyn* : *gwan trywan*)
-eid : *-yd*	(ll. 20–2: *yspeit* : *broglyt* : *ryt*; ll. 106–7, *gair cyrch* rhyme: *byt* : *dyweit*)
-yð : *-eð*	(l. 41, internal rhyme: *Douyd* : *digued*)
-on : *-oen*	(ll. 44–5, *gair cyrch* rhyme (and alliteration): *vyg kalon* : *vy hoen*)
-on : *-un*	(ll. 50–2: *chanaon* : *aborthó́n* : *Run*)
-od : *-awd*	(ll. 99, 112, 130, 221, internal rhyme: *clot* : *vraó́t*)
-yr : *-awr*	(ll. 121–2, *gair cyrch* rhyme: *Merchyr* : *etmyckaó́r*)
-uð : *-yð*	(ll. 145–7: *gud* : *deurud* : *bieiuyd*)
-yd : *-ed*	(ll. 148–9, *gair cyrch* rhyme: *byt* : *dywet*; ll. 352–4: *dylyet* : *weryt* : *byt*)
-ur : *-yr*	(ll. 154–6: *echlyssur* : *ystyr* : *brehyr*)
-ar : *-or*	(l. 307, internal rhyme: *gó́ascar* : *mor*)
-awn : *an(t)*	(ll. 322–4: *teithyaó́n* : *kyflaó́n* : *gwledychant*)[142]
-ad : *-ed*	(ll. 352, 355, internal rhyme: *dylat* : *dylyet*)

It is interesting to note that proest is used in this poem only with a limited group of consonants: namely, the resonants /l r n/ as well as /d ð/. We should also note that the later prohibition against a diphthong forming a proest with a single vowel is not observed here.[143] Rather, as Jenny Rowland has discussed, what we see here, for the most part, are manifestations of an earlier rule

[140] *Oianau*, ll. 185–8.

[141] Note that /i/ and /i̯/ apparently formed a full rhyme in early englynion, especially before /r/, a nasal, or /r/ + a nasal: *EWSP* 333. Cf. the end-rhymes in ll. 113–14 (*oreudyn* : *Meruin*), ll. 228–30 (*gó́yn* : *hamouyn* : *vrenhin*), ll. 376–8 (*mynogi* : *difri* : *gwedi*, the latter ending with /i̯/) and ll. 383–5 (*awyr* : *gredir* : *dir*); and the *gair cyrch* rhymes in ll. 11–12 (*Kymry* : *bi*, plus the internal rhyme in l. 11 with *ui*) and ll. 288–9 (*oedyn* : *Myrdin*).

[142] It would be possible to emend *gwledychan(t)* to *gwledychawn(t)* to achieve full rhyme (as noticed by Jackson, 'Motive of the threefold death', 544–5 n. 30), but this has been avoided in the edited text in view of the extreme rarity of the present-tense *-(h)awnt* ending. For the six examples in early Welsh poetry, see Graham R. Isaac, 'The Old and early Middle-Welsh "future" tense: form and function of a moribund category', *JCS* 4 (2004), 153–70, at 165.

[143] Cf. John Morris-Jones, *Cerdd Dafod, sef Celfyddyd Barddoniaeth Gymraeg* (Oxford, 1925), 254–5.

whereby the most important distinction was that short syllables should proest with other short syllables, and long syllables should proest with other long syllables, regardless of whether those syllables contained a single vowel or a diphthong.[144] Even this more inclusive rule would not allow proest between the long syllable *kalon(n)* and the short syllable *hoen* (ll. 44–5), nor the short syllables *teithyaǒn* and *kyflaǒn* and the long syllable *gwledychan(t)* (ll. 322–4); if these words were to proest, they would violate the error later known as *trwm ac ysgafn*. That said, there are some clear violations of this rule among the end-rhymes elsewhere in the poem, attesting to the greater flexibility of this type of poetry (e.g. ll. 157–61 *wynn* etc. : *Prydyn* < Brit. **Pritenī*; ll. 228–30 *gǒyn(n)* : *hamouyn(n)* : *vrenhin*).[145] It is probably significant that all of these examples involve polysyllables, since, after the accent shifted back to the penult around the ninth century, unaccented final syllables with -/nn/ merged with those with -/n/, and the long vowels of final syllables ending with -/n/ were shortened.[146] It was only the weight of tradition, informed by consideration of the morphological variation of individual words (like plural forms that maintained *-nn-* under the penultimate accent), that kept the *trwm ac ysgafn* rule alive in polysyllabic words in the formal praise poetry of the twelfth century and later.

Generic rhymes are well-attested in the poem. These are rhymes where the vowels correspond exactly but the consonants vary within defined groups. The poems contain examples that illustrate three of the generically rhyming consonant groups identified by Jenny Rowland in other englyn poems:[147]

1. /l/ : /ð/ : /r/
   - ll. 78–80: *kynnadyl* : *paladyr* : *Katwaladyr*
   - ll. 81–3, 295–7, 313–15, 319–21: *antrwyadyl* : *gynnadyl* : *Katwaladyr*
   - ll. 84–6: *glaear* : *abar* : *Idwal*
   - ll. 87–9: *glaear* : *dayar* : *Idwal*
   - ll. 90–2: *Idwal* : *diarchar* : *Kadwal*
   - ll. 127–9: *amser* : *sel* : *Howel*
   - ll. 188–9: *ryuel* : *Gǒarther*
   - ll. 279–81: *aber* : *llaǒer* : *Wydel*
   - ll. 373–5: *diderbyd* : *urodyr* : *uyd*
2. /d/ : /g/
   - ll. 99–100, 130–1, 221–2, *gair cyrch* rhyme: *vraǒt* : *anvynnaǒc*
3. all nasals (and /r/ + a nasal)
   - ll. 68–70: *draethassam* : *bodrydan* : *Katuan*

[144] Jenny Rowland, 'Some aspects of *proest* in early Welsh poetry', *BBCS* 30 (1983), 234–8.

[145] Cf. A. O. H. Jarman, *Ymddiddan Myrddin a Thaliesin (o Lyfr Du Caerfyrddin)*, 2nd ed. (Cardiff, 1967), 51–2; *EWSP* 335–6; Rowland, 'Some aspects of *proest*', 234; Sims-Williams, 'Dating the poems', 212–16.

[146] For the date of the accent shift, see Peter Schrijver, 'Geminate spellings in the Old Welsh glosses to Martianus Capella', *EC* 34 (1998/2000), 147–60.

[147] *EWSP* 334.

The most elaborate patterns of ornamentation in the poem are found in the Englynion Penfyr. Lines 11–13 and 35–7 neatly illustrate most of the commonly occurring patterns:

> Yn gerth Kadau**ael**/ a u*i* k**oel** – Kymr*y*;
> y b*i* kyuarchau**ael**.
> Rɔyd yɔ arɔyd Ryderch H**ael**.
>
> 'Truly Cadafael will be an omen for the Welsh;
> there will be exaltation.
> Prosperity is a sign of Rhydderch Hael.' (ll. 11–13)
>
> O leas Gɔendol*eu*/ ygɔaetfr*eu* – Arder*yd*,
> a synny*yd* paham y'm k**en**?
> Gɔaladyr gɔaet, gɔlat y Ury**en**.
>
> 'Because of Gwenddolau's death in the bloodshed of Arfderydd,
> do you consider why I am troubled?
> Lord of blood, a country for Urien.' (ll. 35–7)

An Englyn Penfyr has a long first line that can carry the end-rhyme on a word known as the *gwant*, preceding the line's final syllable(s); this is *koel* in the first example, forming proest with the rhymes in *-ael* in lines b and c. The *gwant* can also be bound to the first part of line a by rhyme, as in both cases here: *koel* also forms proest with the *rhagwant*, *Kadauael*, which precedes the caesura in line a, while in the second example *ygɔaetfreu* does not carry the end-rhyme, but instead rhymes with *Gɔendoleu*, again the *rhagwant* before line a's caesura. Alliteration can similarly bind the *gwant* to the *rhagwant*, as with *koel* and *Kadauael*, and probably *gɔaetfreu* and *Gɔendoleu* (albeit that *gɔaetfreu* here begins with /ŋ/, the nasalised counterpart of /g/). After the *gwant* in line a comes the *cyrch*, which can be bound by rhyme and/or alliteration to line a and/or line b. In the first example, the *gair cyrch*, *Kymry*, alliterates with the *gwant*, *koel*, and the *rhagwant*, *Kadauael*, as well as *kyuarchauael* in line b, and it also rhymes with *ui* earlier in line a and *bi* in line b.[148] In the second example, the *gair cyrch*, *Arderyd*, both rhymes and alliterates with *a synnyyd* at the beginning of the second line (taking the proclitic preverbal particle *a* together with the verb).

Patterns like these are common in the poem, though there is variation as to which ornaments are present in individual stanzas. Altogether, the poem contains seventy-two Englynion Penfyr.[149] Of these, the *gwant* carries the end-rhyme in forty cases, and rhymes internally with a word earlier in line a in twenty-three cases. Meanwhile, the *cyrch* rhymes with a preceding word in line a in thirteen cases; it alliterates with a preceding word in line a in eleven cases; it rhymes with a word in line b in twenty-eight cases; and it alliterates with a word in line b in twelve cases.

[148] See above, n. 141.

[149] Not including the three irregular stanzas with Penfyr features, which are discussed above: ll. 7–10, 174–7 and 291–4.

Before leaving the poem's metre and ornament, it is worth dwelling on the implications of this analysis in relation to the poem's date of composition in the early thirteenth century. Metrically, this poem corresponds most closely to other englyn poems in the *Hengerdd* corpus, being comprised mainly of Penfyr and Milwr and characterised by a certain degree of flexibility with regard to syllable structure and ornament.[150] By contrast, the englynion that are overtly ascribed to the court poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in surviving manuscripts invariably follow four-line metres like Englyn Unodl Union and Englyn Proest, and are characterised by greater metrical regularity.[151] The difference has often been explained in terms of linear development; in other words, the 'looser' englyn of the *Hengerdd* period developed into the 'tighter' englyn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[152] There was certainly an element of change over time. The twelve Old Welsh englynion in the Cambridge Juvencus manuscript are all three-line englynion, and the term for a three-line englyn in the early fourteenth-century grammar is *ynglynn o'r hengerd* ('englyn of the old poetry').[153] John Morris-Jones showed convincingly how the four-line englyn metres developed from the three-line metres, and this process must have been underway by the late eleventh century, when the four-line Englyn Gwastad known as the St Padarn englyn was copied into the Llanbadarn Augustine manuscript.[154] But the false assumption is that the three-line metres stopped being used when the four-line metres were introduced. It is certainly notable that the court poets exclusively used the four-line metres for their purposes.[155] As Nerys Ann Jones has shown, the court poets used the englyn predominantly for singing eulogies and elegies to princes, nobles and warbands.[156] But the key difference between this body of material and the englynion of the *Hengerdd* is not one of date, since the *Hengerdd* includes many poems that have not yet been dated closely as well as at least one substantial englyn poem (the *Cyfoesi*) composed in the early thirteenth century.[157] Rather, the key differences are *genre* and subject matter, as scholars

[150]Cf. Ifor Williams (ed.), *Canu Llywarch Hen* (Cardiff, 1935), lxxxiv–lxxxviii; *EWSP* 308–55.

[151]See Nerys Ann Jones, 'Y Gogynfeirdd a'r englyn', in Owen and Roberts, *Beirdd a Thywysogion*, 288–301.

[152]For example: Morris-Jones, *Cerdd Dafod*, 315–20; *EWSP* 330–2 and 360–3; Jones, 'Y Gogynfeirdd a'r englyn'; Jacobs, *Early Welsh Gnomic and Nature Poetry*, xliii.

[153]Thus in Peniarth 20: G. J. Williams and Evan John Jones, *Gramadegau'r Penceirddiaid* (Cardiff, 1934), 46 and 49. The same grammar comments further (p. 49): *Ac ar y modeu hynny y kanei y milwyr gynt oll yn gwbyl* ('And it was in those forms [i.e. Englyn Milwr and Englyn Penfyr] that the soldiers of former times would sing everything altogether'). In the Red Book and Llanstephan 3 versions of the grammar, the three-line englyn is called *eglyn o'r hen ganyat* (pp. 6, 9, 25, 27). See Michaela Jacques, *Grammar and Poetry in Late Medieval and Early Modern Wales: The Transmission and Reception of the Welsh Bardic Grammars* (Cardiff, 2024), 73–4 and 81–2.

[154]Morris-Jones, *Cerdd Dafod*, 317–18; Paul Russell, 'The *englyn* to St Padarn revisited', *CMCS* 63 (Summer, 2012), 1–14.

[155]These are summarised in Jones, 'Y Gogynfeirdd a'r englyn', 290–1.

[156]See the figures in Jones, 'Y Gogynfeirdd a'r englyn', 296; for the nature of religious poems in englyn metre, including some by the court poets, see Barry James Lewis, '*Genre* a *Genres* ym marddoniaeth grefyddol y Cynfeirdd a'r Gogynfeirdd', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2003, 120–3.

[157]The same point, with respect to the probable dates of the *Cyfoesi* and also *Gwasgargerdd*

have increasingly begun to recognise.[158] The englynion that we ascribe to the *Hengerdd* comprise poems on a variety of themes, often focused on the emotional state of story characters, gnomic truths and natural images.[159] There is no reason to assume that poems of these types stopped being composed in the twelfth century. Indeed, recent work on the early englynion indicates that critical opinion on this matter is shifting away from that assumption, even if the implications for our understanding of metrical developments are not always highlighted.[160] The assumption that they did stop being composed is an illusion of the manuscript record: for whatever reason, it was the practice to ascribe praise poems about named patrons to known poets, whereas other types of poem tended not to be ascribed to named poets.[161] In the twelfth century, and possibly beforehand, for all we know, court poets decided to adopt the four-line englyn metres, with a greater degree of metrical rigour, for the purpose of composing praise poetry. But the three-line metres continued to be used, for a time, for their traditional purposes, as the *Cyfoesi* clearly shows. The rare vocabulary analysed above and the intertextual references discussed below emphasise the extent to which the *Cyfoesi* was firmly part of the same poetic world as the contemporary court poets.[162]

Fyrddin in relation to their metre, was made in 1900 by Joseph Loth: 'Remarques sur les vieux poèmes historiques gallois au point de vue métrique et historique', *RC* 21 (1900), 28–58, at 33–4 and 56. For other more cautious views about the dating implication of the three-line englyn metres, see *CC* xix and 117; *LPBT* 27; Jacobs, *Early Welsh Gnomic and Nature Poetry*, xliii–xlv; Barry Lewis, review of the latter in *Dwned* 18 (2012), 99–107, at 102; Jenny Rowland, *A Selection of Early Welsh Saga Poems* (London, 2014), xxix.

[158]Cf. Barry Lewis's discussion of the differing artistic status of the awdl and the englyn in reference to religious poetry: Lewis, '*Genre* a *Genres*', esp. 124; see too his comments in *Dwned* 18 (2012), 102–3, as well as David Callander, *Dissonant Neighbours: Narrative Progress in Early Welsh & English Poetry* (Cardiff, 2019), 2; Nerys Ann Jones, *Arthur in Early Welsh Poetry* (Cambridge, 2019), 3; Sims-Williams, *The Medieval Welsh Englynion y Beddau*, 27–8.

[159]For a critical review of prior attempts to identify the genre of one such poem (*Claf Abercuawg*), see Barry Lewis, '*Genre* a dieithrwch yn y Cynfeirdd: achos "Claf Abercuawg" ', *Llenyddiaeth mewn Theori* 2 (2007), 1–37; cf. idem, *Nature and Art in Early Welsh Verse*, Paul Walsh Memorial Lecture 6 (Maynooth, 2021).

[160]Recent commentators have tended to point out that some, at least, of the 'saga' and 'gnomic' englynion could have been composed in the twelfth century: e.g. Jacobs, *Early Welsh Gnomic and Nature Poetry*, xliv–xlv; Jenny Rowland, *Ailystyried y Canu Mawl Cynnar*, Darlith Goffa J. E. Caerwyn Williams a Gwen Williams 2014 (Aberystwyth, 2016), 19; David Callander, 'Trefn *Canu Llywarch Hen* yn Llyfr Coch Hergest', *Llên Cymru* 38 (2015), 1–11, at 2; Michaela Jacques, 'Llywarch Hen as poet: evidence from Harvard MS Welsh 8', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 37 (2017), 135–51, at 135–6. Simon Rodway's ongoing work on the early Welsh verbal system has been influential in this respect; see his *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature*.

[161]Jenny Rowland has rightly noted that *genre* dictated whether an early poem was ascribed to a named poet: Jenny Rowland, 'Y beirdd enwog: anhysbys a'i cant', in Daniel et al., *Cyfoeth y Testun*, 31–49, at 43; eadem, *A Selection of Early Welsh Saga Poems*, xxix.

[162]This is also the conclusion of Jenny Rowland with regard to the other englyn poems: *EWSP* 355–63; eadem, 'Genres', in Brynley F. Roberts (ed.), *Early Welsh Poetry: Studies in the Book of Aneirin* (Aberystwyth, 1988), 179–208, at 189–93; eadem, *A Selection of Early Welsh Saga Poems*, xxvii.

4. Intertextuality

Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer is awash with intertextual connections and allusions to traditional historical knowledge. This is most obviously apparent in its enumeration of the kings of Gwynedd between the sixth and ninth centuries, where the kings are associated with the same few characteristics and events that are associated with them elsewhere in Welsh vernacular literature. Thus, the poem says of Maelgwn Gwynedd's son Rhun that *yg kynnor bydin brόydraόt* ('in the vanguard of the army he will do battle', l. 48), possibly a reference to the story preserved in two thirteenth-century manuscripts of *Llyfr Iorwerth* about Rhun leading an army north and then presiding over a debate about which component of his army should have the right to *y blaen* ('the vanguard') when crossing the River Forth.[163] In the stanza about Cadwallon ap Cadfan, we hear that *Dygόydit penn Eigyl y laόr* ('The head of the English will fall down', l. 73), a probable allusion to Edwin, king of Northumbria, who was killed by Cadwallon's forces at the battle of Hatfield Chase in 633; this should be compared with one of the surviving fragments of a medieval poem about Cadwallon that Robert Vaughan called *Gofara Braint*, which says *Can dodyw pen Edwin lys Aberffraw* / *a dyfod Cymru yn un andaw* ('Since Edwin's head came to the court of Aberffraw / and Wales became a single assembly').[164] This seemingly contradicts Bede's claim that Edwin's head was brought to York and buried in the church there after the battle.[165] At line 78, Cadwaladr is a *Gόr hir*, drawing attention to the same aspect of his stature that is mentioned in a triad in order to explain why he is one of the *Tri Hualaόc Enys Prydein* ('Three Fettered Men of the Island of Britain').[166] At line 102, Cynan Dindaethwy is associated specifically with Anglesey, just as he is in the chronicles (and as his usual epithet, absent from the poem, implies).[167] Line 111 tells us that Merfyn Frych came from the land of Man, and according to the early sixteenth-century tract *Disgyniad Pendefigaeth Cymru* (on which more below), this was the subject of a lost poem ascribed to Taliesin called *Llynges*

[163]Morfydd E. Owen, 'Royal propaganda: stories from the law-texts', in T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen and Paul Russell (eds), *The Welsh King and His Court* (Cardiff, 2000), 224–54 (text and translation at 252–4).

[164]R. Geraint Gruffydd, 'Canu Cadwallon ap Cadfan', in Rachel Bromwich and R. Brinley Jones (eds), *Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd: Studies in Old Welsh Poetry, Cyflwynedig i Syr Idris Foster* (Cardiff, 1978), 25–43 (text and modern Welsh translation at 42–3); cf. Graham C. G. Thomas, 'Llinellau o gerddi i Cadwallon ap Cadfan', *BBCS* 26 (1974–6), 406–10. Compare the similar lines about playing ball with the heads of the Saxons in *Yr Afallennau*, l. 10 and *PBT* poem 6.22 (and note that Cadwallon appears in the latter at ll. 17–18).

[165]Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (eds), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), 202–5 (ii.20).

[166]Rachel Bromwich (ed.), *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Triads of the Island of Britain*, 4th ed. (Cardiff, 2014), no. 17 (WR version).

[167]For example, David N. Dumville (ed.), *Annales Cambriae, A.D. 682–954: Texts A–C in Parallel* (Cambridge, 2002), 8–11 (s.aa. 815 and 816); David N. Dumville (ed.), *Brenhinoedd y Saeson, 'The Kings of the English', A.D. 682–954: Texts P, R, S in Parallel* (Aberdeen, 2005), 16–17 (s.aa. 815 and 817).

Vorvyryn as well as a prose tale called *chwedyl Morvyn Vyrych*.[168] Lastly, line 121 draws attention to Anarawd ap Rhodri's victory over the Mercians in the Battle of the Conwy in 881, a battle which receives particular attention in two other vernacular texts from early thirteenth century Gwynedd: the chronicle *O Oes Gwrtheyrn* (written *c.* 1211/12) and the Llywelyn ab Iorwerth genealogies (written 1216 × *c.* 1223).[169]

Beyond the more general connections between the *Cyfoesi* and wider vernacular traditions about the relevant characters, there is a series of direct textual connections with other Welsh poems that are indicative of textual interface. While it is often difficult to find evidence for the direction of borrowing in individual cases, it is likely that, in the majority of instances discussed below, the *Cyfoesi* is drawing on pre-existing literature. These instances of intertextuality can be divided into three categories: (1) connections with other prophetic poems, especially those in the voice of Myrddin; (2) connections with the *Hengerdd*, especially *Canu Aneirin*, the 'historical' Taliesin poems and the legendary englynion; and (3) connections with court poetry, especially the works of Cynddelw and Prydydd y Moch. These are addressed in turn.

4.1. Connections with other prophetic poems

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, some of the most obvious textual connections are with the other Myrddin poems, and especially *Yr Afallennau* and *Yr Oianau*. Several short phrases are found in both the *Cyfoesi* and the *Afallennau*: thus, *Gruffud y enó* in the *Cyfoesi*, l. 178 and the *Afallennau*, l. 92, both clearly in relation to Gruffudd ap Cynan;[170] and *chat ym Prydyn* in the *Cyfoesi*, l. 262 and the *Afallennau*, l. 74. In the *Cyfoesi*'s stanza about the historical Cadwaladr (ll. 78–80), the name 'Cadwaladr' is rhymed with 'cynnadl' and 'paladr'; the same two words are rhymed with 'Cadwaladr' in the *Oianau*, ll. 91–2, while 'cynnadl' is rhymed with the name twice in the *Afallennau* (ll. 103 and 149) and 'paladr' is rhymed with the name in *Armes Prydein Vawr* (*AP* l. 91). But, as has already been mentioned, the most significant correspondences between the *Cyfoesi* and these two other Myrddin poems can be seen in the two stanzas in the *Cyfoesi* that use awdl metres rather than englynion (ll. 190–5 and 224–7): line 190 contains an echo of line 167 of *Yr Oianau*; line 191 mirrors various lines in the other two poems;[171] lines 194–5 are paralleled almost exactly in lines 171–2 of the *Oianau*; and lines 224–7 closely match the last four lines of the *Oianau* as that poem is preserved in the Black Book (ll. 185–8).

This last correspondence merits closer attention, since it suggests that the direction of borrowing was from the *Oianau* to the *Cyfoesi*. Here are the lines in the two poems:

[168] Peter C. Bartrum, 'Disgyniad Pendefigaeth Cymru (The Descent of the Sovereignty of Wales)', *NLW Journal* 16/3 (1970), 253–63, at 258, §§5–6.

[169] Nia Wyn Jones (published under Owain Wyn Jones), '*O Oes Gwrtheyrn*: a medieval Welsh chronicle', in Guy et al., *Chronicles of Medieval Wales and the March*, 169–229, at 191–3 and 223; Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 222.

[170] Cf. *Run y enó* in l. 47, a phrase found too in *Englynion y Beddau* (*LlDC* poem 18.186).

[171] *Afallennau*, ll. 25 and 140; *Oianau*, ll. 26 and 33.

Pan uo pont ar Daf ac arall ar Dywi,
y da6 ar Loegyr l6yr dyuysgi,
a mi disgoganaf, wedy mab Henri,
brenhin na vrenhin; brithuyt a ui.

'When there is a bridge on the Taf and another on the Tywi,
there will come upon England complete disorder,
and it is I who prophesy, after Henry's son,
a king who is not a king; there will be confusion.'
(*Cyfoesi*, ll. 224–7)

A mi dysgoganaw-e, gvydi Henri,
breenhin na breenhin, brithwyd dybi.
Ban vo pont ar Taw ac arall ar Tywi
y dav y Dyved ryvel iti.

'And it is I who prophesy, after Henry,
a king who is not a king, confusion will come.
When there is a bridge on the Taf and another on the Tywi,
there will come to Dyfed war to it.' (*Oianau*, ll. 185–8)

The key phrase here is *brenhin na vrenhin*, the figure prophesied in both extracts. This phrase bears some relationship to a Latin prophecy known either as *Prophetia Aquile* or *Prophetia Merlini Silvestris*, which circulated widely in manuscripts from the beginning of the thirteenth century onwards.[172] In the third section of the prophecy, known as *Mortuo leone* or 'The white king', which deals with the Anarchy, it is said about King Stephen that *rex est et rex non est* ('he is a king and he is not a king').[173] In the Welsh version of this prophecy, which is known as *Proffwydoliaeth yr Eryr* and first attested in the first half of the fourteenth century, this Latin phrase is translated as *brenhin na vrenhin*.[174] In the *Oianau*, the *breenhin na breenhin* comes after a certain Henry, just as Stephen succeeded Henry I; this verse may therefore refer to King Stephen and the Anarchy, just like the Latin *Prophetia Aquile*. In the *Cyfoesi*, however, the *brenhin na vrenhin* succeeds Henry's son, following the reference to a certain *keneu Henri* ('whelp of Henry', probably King John) two stanzas earlier. The *Cyfoesi* is thus a step removed from the *Oianau* and the related Latin prophecy. Overall, given the other indications of a direct relationship between the *Cyfoesi* and the *Oianau*, it makes most sense to suppose that the *Cyfoesi* borrowed the phrase from the *Oianau*.

[172]See Victoria Flood, 'Prophecy as history: a new study of the *Prophecies of Merlin Silvester*', *Neophilologus* 102 (2018), 543–59.

[173]Text in John Jay Parry (ed.), *Brut y Brenhinedd: Cotton Cleopatra Version* (Cambridge, MA, 1937), 225–6; for an English translation of the text, see Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, 'Richard III's books: VIII. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* with *The Prophecy of the Eagle* and commentary. 2. The prophecy and commentary', *The Ricardian* 8 (1989–90), 290–304 and 351–62, at 352–4.

[174]The prophecy was incorporated into the Cotton Cleopatra version of *Brut y Brenhinedd*: for the phrase, see Parry, *Brut y Brenhinedd*, 32. *Proffwydoliaeth yr Eryr* is also attested independently in the same period in Peniarth 47, part iii, in a hand of the first half of the fourteenth century: see Huws, *Repertory*, i, 356–7.

There is a handful of allusions to other prophetic poems outside the Myrddin corpus. It was Ifor Williams who suggested that lines 116 and 185 (*armes Prydein pryderer*, 'the prophecy of Britain will be feared') were intended to evoke the tenth-century *Armes Prydein Vawr*, and this may be correct.[175] Some connections with another Book of Taliesin prophecy, *Dygogan Awen*, have already been discussed. More directly, lines 166–7 of the *Cyfoesi* (*… a wnant dyuysgi. / Nac eruyn hedóch; ny'th vi!* '… who will create disorder. / Do not seek peace; you will not have it!') reproduce almost exactly lines 100–1 of *Prif Gyuarch Geluyd* (*brithuyt a byt dyuysci; nac eruyn-ti hedwch, ny'th vi!*), a poem in the voice of the legendary Taliesin with prophetic elements that is preserved in the Red Book of Hergest as well as, in part, in the Book of Taliesin.[176] Unfortunately, the date of *Prif Gyuarch Geluyd* has yet to be established, so its relationship with the *Cyfoesi* is unclear.[177]

4.2. Other connections with the Hengerdd

There are clear indications that the poet of the *Cyfoesi* knew some verses of the A-text of the *Gododdin*, and possibly *Gwarchan Cynfelyn* too. The stanzas in the *Cyfoesi* concerning Rhydderch Hael contain two possible verbal echoes of *Gwarchan Cynfelyn*. In line 17, the epithet *gymynat gelyn* ('feller of the enemy') is applied to Rhydderch Hael, and the same phrase forms a line of *Gwarchan Cynfelyn*.[178] In line 11, which introduces Rhydderch Hael, the word *gerth* is collocated with *koel*, and these words are also collocated in *Gwarchan Cynfelyn*, as well as the Black Book poem *Cyntaf gair a Ddywedaf*.[179] Perhaps *Gwarchan Cynfelyn* was in the poet's mind while the stanzas about Rhydderch were being composed.

More compelling are the allusions to the *Gododdin* in lines 392–4, in which Gwenddydd bemoans the deaths of various men with names beginning with *Mor-*, who should probably be identified as her brothers (and Myrddin's). The lines are as follows:

> Maró Morgeneu, maró kyfrennin Moryal,
> maró Moryen, mur trin.
> Trymaf hoet ym dy adoet, Vyrdin.
>
> 'Dead is Morgenau, dead is expert Morial,
> dead is Morien, wall of battle.
> Your demise, Myrddin, is the heaviest sorrow for me.'

The reference to *kyfrennin Moryal* clearly evokes the stanza in the A-text of the *Gododdin* that begins with *Kywyrein ketwyr kywrenhin* ('expert warriors arise', *CA* l. 656) and memorialises someone called *Moryal* (*CA* l. 662). Two

[175] *AP* xlvii–xlviii.

[176] *LPBT* poem 1.100–1; for the prophetic elements of the poem, see too *PBT* 8–10.

[177] Haycock mentions that this poem shows 'less certain symptoms' of a relationship with the court poet Prydydd y Moch than some other poems in the Book of Taliesin: *LPBT* 31.

[178] *CA* l. 1378.

[179] *CA* l. 1407; cf. ll. 967 and 973 in the Strathcarron awdl; *LlDC* poem 26.8 = *EWSP* 452 and 499, l. 3b.

stanzas prior to this in the A-text is the so-called 'reciter's prologue' (*CA* ll. 640–8), which contains the phrase *mur trin* (*CA* l. 647; *mvr trin* in the B-text, *CA* l. 653), the very epithet that Gwenddydd applies to Morien in the second line above. I have not discovered any other examples of the phrase *mur trin* in early Welsh poetry. Earlier in the A-text, the name Morien itself is found next to that of Myrddin, in lines 465–6: *amuc moryen* / *gwenwawt mirdyn* ('Morien defended the blessed song of Myrddin'; cf. the corresponding text in the B-text, l. 473, where Myrddin is absent and 'Morien' is apparently misspelt as *emorem*: *atguuc emorem ae guiau hem*).

These examples suggest that the poet was drawing on the A-text of the *Gododdin* when composing this stanza. Presumably Morgenau, Morial and Morien were connected to Myrddin because of the alliteration of the names, and in the cases of Morial and Morien, at least, the poet implied a further connection between these characters and warriors commemorated in the *Gododdin*.[180] In the case of Morien, the connection appears to have been made already in the A-text of the *Gododdin* itself.

In the same way that the *Cyfoesi* alludes to vernacular literature concerning the early kings of Gwynedd, the stanza that introduces Urien Rheged contains a clear reference to a line in the 'historical' Taliesin poem *Yspeil Taliessin*: compare the final line of the latter, *gwaladyr gwaed gwenwlat Vryen* (*PT* poem VIII.49) with line 37 of the *Cyfoesi*: *Góaladyr góaet, gólat y Uryen* ('Lord of blood, a country for Urien'). This is the clearest reference to the so-called 'historical' Taliesin poems in the *Cyfoesi*, though line 172, in reference to Gruffudd ap Cynan, also contains the phrase *kat diffret* ('protection in battle'), found too in the first line of *Trawsganu Kynan Garwyn* (*PT* poem I.1). This latter case, however, may have been a stock bardic phrase recycled in multiple contexts; compare, for instances, *dinas diffret* in another poem in the Book of Taliesin (*CC* poem 3.12).

There are perhaps fewer verbal connections than one might expect with the broader corpus of 'legendary' englyn poems. The only tolerably clear borrowing is line 179, which occurs in a very similar form in *Canu Heledd*, as discussed above.[181] There are also several phrases that mirror phrases found in *Claf Abercuawg*, which is perhaps to be expected considering the extent to which Myrddin's physical and emotional state in the *Cyfoesi* parallels that of the *claf* of *Claf Abercuawg*. Thus, in line 42 Myrddin complains *claf óyf o'r diwed* ('I am ill in the end'), in a manner very similar to that of various lines in *Claf Abercuawg* (l. 2c, *teryd glaf wyf hediw*; l. 13b, *ny wadaf wyf claf heno*); and in line 410 he consoles Gwenddydd about the deaths of their family members, observing *diofryt o baób a gar* ('everyone letting go of what they love'), just as *Claf Abercuawg* wistfully comments, with similar phraseology but opposite

[180]Compare a stanza in *Englynion y Beddau* concerning the graves of Gwrien, Morien and Morial, three names that all occur in the *Gododdin*: *LlDC* poem 18.4–6; cf. Peter C. Bartrum, *A Welsh Classical Dictionary: People in History and Legend up to about A.D. 1000* (Aberystwyth, 1993), 488.

[181]There is further evidence that *Canu Heledd* was known in exactly the time and place that the *Cyfoesi* was probably composed: see Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 224–5.

meaning, that *cof gan bawp a gar* (l. 9c, 'everyone remembers that which he loves').[182] Lastly, line 415 may be connected to a line in *Llym Awel*: this line is edited as *amlwm ar du afyrdól hynt* ('it is very bare beside a joyless path'), but if we read *ardu* instead of *ar du* (as may be suggested by the absence of a space in Peniarth 3), one could compare *Llym Awel*, l. 25b (*nim gunaei artu awirtul*), which has the same collocation of *arddu* and *afrddwl*.[183]

4.3. Connections with court poetry

The *Cyfoesi* contains specific, recurring connections with the work of only two court poets: Cynddelw (fl. *c.* 1155–*c.* 1195) and Prydydd y Moch (fl. *c.* 1174–1220). There is a strong chance that the author of the *Cyfoesi* was familiar with the work of these two poets. Intriguingly, the connections occur mostly in restricted clusters: those with Cynddelw's work in the stanzas concerning the early kings of Gwynedd and then again, later, Gruffudd ap Cynan and Owain Gwynedd; and those with Prydydd y Moch's work particularly in the stanzas on the *brenhin llew* (Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, patron of Prydydd y Moch) and the latter's successor, the *mackóy deu hanner* (possibly Dafydd ap Llywelyn, born *c.* 1212/13).

Knowledge of Cynddelw's work appears to be shown in lines 50–2, which ask who will succeed Rhun ap Maelgwn Gwynedd:

> Cann óyt kedymdeit a chanaon kunlleith,
> a'th alwaór aborthón.
> Kwd a Góyned góedy Run?
>
> 'Since you are a companion to whelps of slaughter,
> you are called a leader.
> Where will Gwynedd go after Rhun?'

This should be compared with an englyn ascribed to Cynddelw in *Ymryson Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr a Seisyll Bryffwrch*:[184]

> Ked bei teu, wledic, wlad Run am Maelgón,
> Maelgynig aborthun,
> Rybytei ueu uet annhun,
> Rybytón bennkert, benn-kun.
>
> 'Even if it were yours, lord, the land of Rhun ap Maelgwn,
> leader of the Maelgyning,
> the mead of sleeplessness would be mine,
> I would be *pencerdd*, the chief leader.'

Both stanzas concern Rhun ap Maelgwn; they contain the only two attestations of the word *aborthun*; and they both rhyme *Run* with *aborthun* and words

[182] *EWSP* 448–9.

[183] *EWSP* 456. I am grateful to Barry Lewis for drawing this to my attention.

[184] *CBT* IV, poem 12.17–20. It is possible that Cynddelw was not responsible for all of this poem: see *CBT* IV, 226–8.

containing the element *kun* (*benn-kun* and *kunlleith*, which is actually the *gair cyrch* in the *Cyfoesi* stanza, forming alliteration and a proesting *llusg* rhyme with the *gwant*, *chanaon*).

Similar patterns of correspondence in diction can be found elsewhere. The stanzas formed by lines 65–7 and 84–6, concerning respectively the seventh-century kings Cadfan ab Iago and Idwal ap Cadwaladr, use parallel structures with varying vocabulary. Thus, for the second lines of the two stanzas, line 66 has *'ygyuedeu neut eban* ('my friends are feeble') while line 85 has *'ygynnedueu neut abar* ('my faculties are rotten'), where *eban* and *abar* are in parallel positions.[185] As noted above, *eban* is a rare word, found otherwise only in the Book of Taliesin poem *Kat Godeu* and twice in one of Cynddelw's poems for God.[186] Its first occurrence in the latter is in the line *Hoedyl hoedrann hoen eban abar* ('a life of grief, the countenance of a feeble corpse'), where, strikingly, the words *eban* and *abar* are found directly adjacent to one another.

In other cases, the *Cyfoesi* uses the same rhymes as Cynddelw. Lines 69–70, again concerning Cadfan ab Iago, rhyme the name *Katuan* with *bodrydan*, a form of *pedrydan(t)*; similarly, in his *Arwyrain Madog ap Maredudd*, Cynddelw rhymes *Kaduan* (in reference to the same person) with *pedrydan* two lines later.[187] Again, later in the *Cyfoesi*, in the stanza where the prophetic deliverer Beli Hir is introduced, the three rhyme words are *dyffrynt*, *gorwynt* and *gynt* (ll. 273–5); these same three words carry the end-rhyme in the first four lines of Cynddelw's *Rhieingerdd Efa ferch Madog ap Maredudd*, though there *gynt* has the meaning 'formerly' rather than 'foreign people'.[188] Several stanzas beforehand in the *Cyfoesi* is another englyn with the same end-rhyme, this time carried by *letkynt*, *dyffrynt* and *kynt* (ll. 255–7); this can be compared with an englyn in Cynddelw's *Marwnad Gosgordd Owain Gwynedd* that again uses the same end-rhyme, carried in the first two lines by *letkynt* and *gynt*, and in the third line by the phrase *gόyr goruynt*, as occurs in the *Cyfoesi*'s Beli Hir stanza, l. 274.[189]

Given Cynddelw's status, at one point in his career, as court poet for Owain Gwynedd and his family, it is interesting that there are links to Cynddelw's work in the *Cyfoesi*'s stanzas about Gruffudd ap Cynan and Owain Gwynedd. In the stanza where Myrddin introduces Gruffudd ap Cynan by name, the end-rhyme is carried by the words *mirein*, *kyngrein* and *Prydein* (ll. 178–80). The same three words carry the end-rhyme across the last four lines of a *caniad* in Cynddelw's poem in praise of Owain Gwynedd's son and heir Hywel.[190] Hywel is compared with his grandfather Gruffudd ap Cynan earlier in this poem.[191] Lastly, when the *Cyfoesi* introduces Owain Gwynedd himself, it refers to him by the name of the traditional hero 'Gwyn Gwarther' (l. 186). As

[185] As is explained fully in a note to the edition, *abar* is usually a noun meaning 'corpse', and in this case its adjectival meaning is likely to be 'rotten, withered'.

[186] *LPBT* poem 5.221; *CBT* IV, poem 16.26 and 209.

[187] *CBT* III, poem 1.5 and 7.

[188] *CBT* III, poem 5.1–4.

[189] *CBT* IV, poem 5.81–4.

[190] *CBT* IV, poem 6.126–9.

[191] *CBT* IV, poem 6.18.

mentioned above, Owain Gwynedd himself is addressed by the same name in Cynddelw's *marwnad* for the prince.[192] Cumulatively, these correspondences suggest that the poet of the *Cyfoesi* was intimately familiar with Cynddelw's work and drew on it particularly in the stanzas concerning the early kings of Gwynedd as well as Gruffudd ap Cynan and Owain Gwynedd.

If Cynddelw provided inspiration for the representation of earlier kings of Gwynedd, it is intriguing that one finds apparent allusions to the work of Prydydd y Moch, court poet of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, in the stanzas about the *brenhin llew* (Llywelyn ab Iorwerth) and the *mack6y deu hanner* (possibly Dafydd ap Llywelyn). The line that introduces Llywelyn in the *Cyfoesi* is *brenhin llew lla6 diwreid* ('a lion king with an uprooting hand', l. 200). Compare this with two pairs of lines in one of Prydydd y Moch's praise poems for Llywelyn, where *lle6*, *diwreit* and *lla6* all appear:

> Llywelyn, lly6 Prydein a'e phar,
> Lle6 a gle6 a gly6 gyuarwar
> […]
> Lloegyr diwreit, llu rutuleit Rutglann,
> Llu racda6 a lla6 ar lluman (*CBT* V, poem 23.9–10 and 88–9)
>
> 'Llywelyn, Britain's leader and its spear,
> A lion and a hero and the joy of warriors
> […]
> Uprooting the men of England, Rhuddlan's host of bloody wolves,
> a host in front of him and a hand on a standard'

Similarly, the phrase *Lloegyr diwreit* occurs in an englyn poem by Prydydd y Moch for Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, in which Llywelyn is also termed *llew o Gymry* ('lion of/from Wales').[193] These are not the only poetic allusions in the *brenhin llew* stanza, however; the stanza's end-rhyme is carried by the three words *beid*, *diwreid* and *bleid*, and the same three words (the latter in the compound *aervleid*) carry the end-rhyme in an englyn in Llywelyn Fardd I's *Marwnad Cedifor ap Genillyn*.[194]

Following the *brenhin llew*, Myrddin prophesies the *mack6y deu hanner* (ll. 205–7), who, as suggested above, might be identified with a young Dafydd ap Llywelyn. In this stanza, *mack6y deu hanner* is rhymed with *rif ser* and *niuer*. The same end-rhyme is continued in the following stanza, where *mack6y deu hanner* is rhymed with *diuuner* and *ner*. Three of the same rhyme words are found in an englyn by Prydydd y Moch in another poem in praise of Llywelyn (in **bold**):[195]

[192] *CBT* IV, poem 4.287.
[193] *CBT* V, poem 20.2 and 41.
[194] *CBT* II, poem 4.22–4.
[195] *CBT* V, poem 17.21–4.

Mabddysg yw i'm llyw llu **rif ser** i'w gylch
O'e galchdoed **nifer**,
Tarf cynnygn, can yd weler,
Torri heb noddi neb **ner**.

'An early education for my lord is having a host as numerous as
the stars around him,
A retinue as his protective covering,
A scatterer of enemies, since he is seen,
a lord shattering without saving anyone.'

Lastly, we can note several relevant connections involving line 171, where the *Cyfoesi* first alludes to Gruffudd ap Cynan before naming him explicitly. The line is *Vnic ar6yna6l, arwyneb keda6l* ('One peerless, fierce, a bountiful defence'). It is probably intended to evoke Meilyr Brydydd's *Marwnad Gruffudd ap Cynan*, where Gruffudd is similarly called *unyc* and the rare word *arwyneb* is also found.[196] Apart from Meilyr Brydydd, the only other court poet to use the word *arwyneb* is Prydydd y Moch, who uses it in a series of lines, composed over a long period, that correspond closely to the line in the *Cyfoesi*:

Keda6l, arwyna6l arwyneb Prydein
(*Marwnad Hywel ap Gruffudd ap Cynan*, 1216)[197]

Keda6l, arwyna6l eryr
(*Marwnad Gruffudd ap Cynan o Wynedd*, 1200)[198]

Arwynya6l prydua6r, arwyneb Prydein
(*Mawl Dafydd ab Owain o Wynedd*, *c.* 1174–5)[199]

It is notable that the first two of these lines were composed for Gruffudd ap Cynan's later namesake and the latter's son Hywel, and that the poem to Hywel was composed in 1216. The date of that poem may, therefore, have a bearing on the date of the *Cyfoesi*.

For each stage in its long prophecy, the *Cyfoesi* clearly drew on existing vernacular literature, and especially poetry, to supports its references to traditional history and to situate the poem in an intertextual nexus that would have been familiar to audience members. No doubt the poem drew on material that is now lost to us, explaining references to otherwise unknown individuals and events like the apparent eighth-century king Hywel ap Cadwal. This has created a temptation for modern commentators to see the *Cyfoesi* itself as an outgrowth of an earlier, tenth-century poem on the same theme, but this is an unnecessary assumption that ignores the wider pattern of the whole poem. True, the *Cyfoesi* draws on the *Hengerdd* when commenting on the likes of

[196] *CBT* I, poem 3.50 and 69. The parallel use of the word *unig* to refer to Gruffudd ap Cynan in these two poems is noted in Evans, *Historia Gruffud*, cxliii, n. 139.
[197] *CBT* V, poem 13.9.
[198] *CBT* V, poem 11.28.
[199] *CBT* V, poem 3.10.

Urien Rheged and Cadwallon; but equally, it draws on court poetry of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries when addressing Gruffudd ap Cynan, Owain Gwynedd and Llywelyn ab Iorwerth. It bears repeating that the *Cyfoesi* itself does not belong to the pre-Norman period, and that there is no evidence that it developed from such a poem; but its author certainly knew plenty of poetry pertaining to that period.

5. Reception

In this final section, I trace the reception of the poem between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries, drawing attention to noteworthy references to it or interpretations of it. *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* was a popular poem that was much-copied, and its unusually ambitious content called for comment. For these reasons, it is possible to identify the various poets, scribes and scholars who knew the poem during this period.

Intriguingly, the earliest probable reference to the *Cyfoesi* itself occurs in one of Prydydd y Moch's later poems in praise of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, which celebrates Llywelyn's victories in 1217. It is worth examining the relevant lines at length:

> Darogan Mertin dyuod breyenhin
> O Gymry werin o gamhóri;
> Dywaód derwyton dadeni haelon
> O hil eryron o Eryri.
> O wyron Ywein, arwyneb Prydein,
> Un urtyein Lundein o lan deithi,
> Yn lew Loegyr gymyn, yn Ioruerth y hyn,
> Yn lary Lywelyn o lin Rodri.
> Nys kelaf, honnaf, hónn yó Beli Hir (*CBT* V, poem 25.41–9)
>
> 'Myrddin prophesies the coming of a king
> of heroism from the people of Wales;
> prophets spoke of the rebirth of generous ones
> of the line of the eagles from Eryri.
> Among the grandsons of Owain, Britain's defence,
> there is one worthy of dignified London, of pure qualities,
> a lion, England-hewing, whose forefather is Iorwerth,
> a generous Llywelyn from Rhodri's line.
> I do not hide it, I assert it, *he* is Beli Hir'

Here Llywelyn is a *breyenhin* and a *lew*, and although these words are commonly applied to Llywelyn in praise poetry, the only early prophetic poem in which Myrddin prophesies in such terms, to my knowledge, is the *Cyfoesi*.[200]

[200] Llywelyn is mentioned twice by name in the *Oianau* (ll. 36 and 218), but there are no lion metaphors there. He can also be identified with the *pendeuic eryri* mentioned in two lines that were added to the Black Book version of the *Afallennau*: see the textual note to line 71 of the online edition.

Moreover, the *Cyfoesi*, unlike other early Myrddin poems, later prophesies the coming of the prophetic deliverer Beli Hir, whom Prydydd y Moch here equates directly with Llywelyn.[201] In fact, this is the *only* reference to Beli Hir as a prophetic deliverer in the court poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The only other reference to Beli Hir in this corpus is in a later poem by Llygad Gŵr for Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, in which it is claimed that Llywelyn descends from *hil Beli Hir*, seemingly conflating the prophetic character Beli Hir with the ancestral figure Beli Mawr.[202] It is very striking that this extended allusion to the *Cyfoesi*, which was presumably intended to be recognisable to at least some audience members, was composed probably in 1217, only a year later than the latest poem that can be identified as a possible source for the poem: namely, Prydydd y Moch's *Marwnad Hywel ap Gruffudd ap Cynan*. Does this mean that the *Cyfoesi* was composed in 1216/17? Such a date would fit with all other available evidence, linguistic and historical. But unfortunately, this would not be a safe conclusion, because it is impossible to discern the precise nature of the apparent textual link between line 171 of the *Cyfoesi* and the line in *Marwnad Hywel ap Gruffudd ap Cynan*, if there indeed is one; it is conceivable that Prydydd y Moch was echoing the *Cyfoesi*, rather than vice versa. That said, the lines listed above suggest that Prydydd y Moch was already collocating the relevant words in poems composed earlier, in 1200 and *c.* 1174–5, probably before the *Cyfoesi* was composed. The possibility must stand that the *Cyfoesi* was composed about 1216/17, conceivably by Prydydd y Moch himself or by someone well-known to him.[203]

The clearest evidence for knowledge of the poem in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries comes from a poem by Gruffudd Llwyd (fl. *s.* xiv^{ex}–*s.* xv^{in}). In his *Marwnad Gruffudd* (late fourteenth century), Gruffudd refers specifically to the *Cyfoesi* and paraphrases line 410 (*diofryt o baób a gar*, 'everyone letting go of what they love'):[204]

> Merddin wawd mawrddawn ei wedd
> A ddywawd yn ei ddiwedd,
> Gair drud i mewn gwir a drig,
> Wrth Wenddydd araith wanddig:
> 'Rhaid i bawb, er hyd y bo,
> Gwir ddiofrydu a garo'
>
> 'Myrddin spoke a verse of highly talented form
> at his end,

[201] For some later references to a prophetic deliverer called Beli, see Griffiths, *Early Welsh Vaticination*, 166–7; Jenkins, 'Aspects of the Welsh prophetic verse tradition', 277–8 (Peniarth 50, poem 23a, l. 22) and (with Beli Hir specifically) 477–8 and 484 (Peniarth 50, poem 327, ll. 67–8).

[202] *CBT* VII, poem 24.39. Note that, in the genealogies, the ancestral figure is always Beli Mawr, never Beli Hir.

[203] This possibility should be considered in the light of Marged Haycock's case for many of the poems in the Book of Taliesin being the work of Prydydd y Moch: *LPBT* 25–36; *PBT* 16–18.

[204] Rhiannon Ifans (ed.), *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd a'r Llygliwiaid Eraill* (Aberystwyth, 2000), poem 13.41–6.

a precious word remains within truth,
a sad and sorrowful address to Gwenddydd:
"However long it may be, everyone must
truly let go of what they love" '

In view of Gruffudd Llwyd's direct knowledge of the *Cyfoesi*, it is striking that another reference to Myrddin and Gwenddydd in this period, along with a probable allusion to the *Cyfoesi*, can be seen in a poem by Gruffudd Llwyd's alleged bardic pupil, Rhys Goch Eryri (*c.* 1365–*c.* 1440):[205]

Merddin, bu dewin bob dydd,
A fu'n cadw o fewn coedydd
Rhawd o westfiledd yn rhydd,
Frodiau gwynddull, frawd Gwenddydd,
Fardd, a wnaf ar gerdd dafawd,
Fab Morfryn Frych, wych ei wawd.

'Myrddin (he was a prophet every day)
was keeping, within woodlands,
a large number of wild beasts free,
bright judgements (Gwenddydd's brother,
a poet) which I make in song,
the son of Morfryn Frych, his verse is excellent.'

The phrase *Frodiau gwynddull* ('bright judgements') may refer to the *Cyfoesi*'s prophecies of kings and their fates, bearing in mind that, in the first stanza of the *Cyfoesi*, Myrddin's prophecy is described as an *yngnadedd* (a variant of *yngnadaeth*, 'judgement'). The references to woodlands and wild beasts seem at least to suggest knowledge of the story about Myrddin's life in the wilderness that underlies the *Cyfoesi*. In this respect, the extract can be compared with a poem by Y Nant (fl. *c.* 1460s–70s), which offers an extraordinary summary of Myrddin's story, including, enigmatically, that *aeth â'i chwaer fain* / *I hengaer Brydain* ('he went with his slender sister / to the old fortress of Britain'), alluding to Gwenddydd's role.[206]

The only other specific allusion to the *Cyfoesi* in this period appears in one of the prophetic poems of Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn (*c.* 1400–*c.* 1490). In the first few lines of a *cywydd brud*, Dafydd Llwyd mentions various figures of the past associated with prophetic ability: Dewi, Alan Fardd (i.e. Alan de Lille, author of a substantial commentary on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophetiae Merlini*), Gwido Hen (the subject of a tale about his spirit returning from the

[205] Dylan Foster Evans (ed.), *Gwaith Rhys Goch Eryri* (Aberystwyth, 2007), poem 11.13–18; cf. p. 30.

[206] Huw Meirion Edwards (ed.), *Gwaith y Nant* (Aberystwyth, 2013), poem 7.57–8. For other instances of explicit knowledge of Myrddin's story, see Dafydd Johnston (ed.), *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi* (Cardiff, 1995), poem 90.17–20; E. Bachellery, *L'œuvre poétique de Gutun Owain: barde gallois de la deuxième moitié du quinzième siècle*, 2 vols (Paris, 1950–1), i, poem XXVI.55–60; www.gutorglyn.net poem 24.63–6, ed. Barry J. Lewis (accessed 4 September 2025).

dead to warn of Purgatory)[207] and St Jerome (to whom the fifteen signs before Judgement Day were commonly ascribed in the Middle Ages). Then comes a rare instance of the word *cyfoesi* outside colophons to *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*:[208]

> Os gwir y cyfoesi gynt,
> Addaw adwyth a ddwedynt,
> Y mae ar draws y môr draw
> Rhyfeddod rhwyf fo iddaw.
>
> 'If the *cyfoesi* of former times is true,
> the promise of misfortune that they uttered,
> there is across the sea yonder
> a prodigy; he will have arrogance.'

It was probably the context of the word *cyfoesi* in these lines that led to the idea, found in Richards's edition, that *cyfoesi* could mean 'darogan, proffwydoliaeth' ('prediction, prophecy'), a suggestion that was also adopted by *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*.[209] However, it makes better sense to interpret the word *cyfoesi* in this poem not as a common noun meaning 'prophecy' in general, for which there is no etymological justification, but instead as the title of a specific prophecy: *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*. Dafydd Llwyd reveals knowledge of the story of Myrddin and Gwenddydd in another of his poems.[210] One could then understand Myrddin and Gwenddydd as the subjects of the plural verb *ddwedynt* in the second line quoted above. With regard to the actual meaning of the poem's title, it is safest to interpret *cyfoesi* etymologically as 'coexistence, cohabitation', or, following Lloyd-Jones, 'companionship' ('cymdeithas, cyweithas'), referring to the relationship between Myrddin and Gwenddydd.[211] Similar meanings would suit the other two attestations of this word too.[212]

Other references in the poetry of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries suggest a general familiarity with the themes of the *Cyfoesi*, but not necessarily with the poem itself. Gwenddydd was sometimes associated with wisdom and prophecy: Sefnyn (fl. *s.* xiv²) praises his subject Angharad by saying that she

[207]Dafydd Johnston, *Llên yr Uchelwyr: Hanes Beirniadol Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg 1300–1525*, 2nd ed. (Cardiff, 204), 443; T. Gwynn Jones, 'Ysbryd Gwido a'r Prior', *BBCS* 5 (1929–31), 100–12.

[208]W. Leslie Richards (ed.), *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn* (Cardiff, 1964), poem 4.9–12.

[209]Richards, *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd*, 216; *GPC*[1] s.v. *cyfoesi*[2] (1957, probably drawing on Richards's original MA thesis of 1947).

[210]Richards, *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd*, poem 12.39–44.

[211]*G* s.v. *kyuoessi*.

[212]The meaning 'coexistence' would probably fit the context of the word in a poem by Trahaearn Brydydd Mawr, rather than the suggested meaning 'disaster' (which follows another suggestion in *GPC*[1] s.v. *cyfoesi*[2] (1957)): N. G. Costigan (Bosco), R. Iestyn Daniel and Dafydd Johnston (eds), *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Dafydd ap Tudur, Gwilym Ddu o Arfon, Trahaearn Brydydd Mawr ac Iorwerth Beli* (Aberystwyth, 1995), poem 10.53–4. Similarly, the latest editor of Ieuan ap Rhydderch's poem on the life of Dewi comments that *cyfoesi* 'seems to be a compound of *oesi* "live, ensure", and may well have the same meaning as the simplex here': Barry J. Lewis (ed.), *Medieval Welsh Poems to Saints and Shrines* (Dublin, 2015), 286, n. to poem 18.89.

has *Wenddydd wybodau* ('Gwenddydd's knowledge/understanding'), while Dafydd Epynt (fl. *c.* 1456–*c.* 1515), commenting on the deceased Morgan ap Syr Dafydd Gam's understanding of prophecy, bemoans that no-one of his like will follow him, *Neu Gynddelw na Gwenddydd* ('neither a Cynddelw nor a Gwenddydd').[213] Others, including Iorwerth Fychan (fl. *c.* 1300), Mab Clochyddyn (fl. *s.* xiv[1]) and Ieuan ap Llywelyn Fychan (fl. *s.* xv/xvi), convey a different interpretation of Gwenddydd's role, implying that Myrddin sang a love poem to her.[214] It is not clear whether this idea was an independent tradition in which Gwenddydd was Myrddin's lover rather than his sister, perhaps influenced by the story of Merlin and Viviane/Niviane/Nimue in the French Merlin romances, or whether this way of thinking arose from a misunderstanding of *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*.[215] If the latter, the misunderstanding may have been prompted by the idea that Myrddin was responsible for other poems directed to women, as found already in a poem by Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd (d. 1170) in the twelfth century.[216] But it is clear that other accounts of Myrddin and Gwenddydd were circulating aside from *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*, such as the account of the 'five dreams of Gwenddydd' that surfaces in Elis Gruffydd's work in the sixteenth century.[217]

From the beginning of the sixteenth century, there emerges a tradition of using the *Cyfoesi* as a historical source for the early Middle Ages. This is first found in the vernacular historical tract *Disgyniad Pendefigaeth Cymru*, preserved in Peniarth 181, which was written by Ieuan ap Madog ap Rhys between 1509 and 1536.[218] Much of this manuscript contains genealogical material that was copied directly from Peniarth 129 and derives ultimately from Gutun Owain's work, but this tract was not copied from that source, and could conceivably be the work of Ieuan ap Madog ap Rhys himself.[219] The text explicitly acknowledges its debt to the *Cyfoesi*: when listing the three northern kings who preceded Maelgwn Gwynedd, it says *velly y dyvawt 'Kyvessi Verddin wyllt'* ('thus said the *Cyfoesi* of Myrddin Wyllt').[220] The influence of the *Cyfoesi* can be seen elsewhere in the tract, such as in its claim that Cynan y Cŵn (correctly identified, though made son, rather than grandson, of Ieuaf ab

[213] Nerys Ann Jones and Erwain Haf Rheinallt (eds), *Gwaith Sefnyn, Rhisierdyn, Gruffudd Fychan ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed a Llywarch Bentwrch* (Aberystwyth, 1995), poem 1.27; Owen Thomas (ed.), *Gwaith Dafydd Epynt* (Aberystwyth, 2002), poem 5.72.

[214] *CBT* VII, poem 30.59–61; *GGrG* poem 6.62, with the note on p. 105; and most overtly, M. Paul Bryant-Quinn (ed.), *Gwaith Ieuan ap Llywelyn Fychan, Ieuan Llwyd Brydydd a Lewys Aled* (Aberystwyth, 2003), poem 4; cf. poem 2.13.

[215] The French story of Merlin and his lover certainly became known to Welsh poets, as Rhys Goch Eryri attests: see Foster Evans, *Gwaith Rhys Goch Eryri*, poem 13.15–20.

[216] *CBT* II, poem 6.46–7.

[217] Thomas Jones, 'The story of Myrddin and the five dreams of Gwenddydd in the chronicle of Elis Gruffudd', *EC* 8 (1959), 315–45.

[218] For the text, see Bartrum, 'Disgyniad Pendefigaeth Cymru'; for the manuscript and its scribe, see Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 169; Gruffudd Antur, 'Ieuan ap Madog ap Rhys', *Dwned* 22 (2016), 83–8.

[219] Cf. Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 175.

[220] Bartrum, 'Disgyniad Pendefigaeth Cymru', 257 (§1).

Idwal Foel) held the sovereignty of all Wales, and that Gruffudd ap Cynan, rather than his son Owain Gwynedd, *vv gwyn gwyarchev* [*recte gwarther*]*, ac y dyvot Merddin amdano* ('was Gwyn Gwarther, and Myrddin spoke about him').[221] There are also misunderstandings of the *Cyfoesi*, as when *keledigan* (from l. 105) and *dyuynnyn* (from line 91, *recte dyuyndyn*?) are interpreted as personal names and assigned backstories: the former becomes *Galydigan, kynvtai Rodri* ('Calydigan, Rhodri's firewood steward'), alleged father of Cynan Dindaethwy, and the latter becomes *Dyvyn diarchar*, a king in his own right who reigns between Cynan Dindaethwy and Merfyn Frych.[222]

A century later, another writer of Welsh history perceived the *Cyfoesi* as a source of historical value. John Lewis of Llynwene (*c.* 1540–1615/16), a recusant lawyer and antiquary from Llanfihangel Nant Melan in Radnorshire, composed a *History of Great-Britain* that probably reached its final form in the first decade of the seventeenth century, though it remained unpublished until 1729.[223] In an introductory chapter, entitled 'Of the Prophecies of the *Britains*', Lewis mounts a defence of the use of prophecy as a historical source, claiming that 'I dare not say there is no Truth in those Prophecies, being the Gift of God, and not the Inspiration of any *Puthon* or Devil'.[224] Of particular interest to him are 'Taliessin and the two *Merlins*, viz. *Merlin Calydonius* or *Sylvester*, called also *Merlin Wyllt*, and *Ambrosius Merlin*'.[225] References to the first of those Merlins at several points in the *History* suggest that the *Cyfoesi* was the key text that he attributed to him. He names the five kings who preceded Maelgwn Gwynedd, according to *Merlin Calidon*, as *Rytherch Hael*, *Morgan Mwynfawr* and *Vryen*, the same three kings who precede Maelgwn in the *Cyfoesi*.[226] More strikingly, he later quotes verses from the *Cyfoesi* as evidence for Rhun ap Maelgwn, Cadwallon and Cadwaladr.[227] The quotations show that John Lewis was using the same full copy of the poem that John Jones of Gellilyfdy later drew on in NLW 3041B, pp. 419–54, which he attributed to a manuscript belonging to John Lewis, as noted above.[228] Lewis was evidently aware of elements of the early Welsh story of Myrddin, as can be discerned in poems like the *Afallennau*; for instance, he mentions that 'Some say, that, in the Batel of *Camlan* he, fighting on King *Arthur*'s Syde, at unawares slew his Nephew, his Syster *Gwendythe*'s Son, which was the Caus that he fel distracted.'[229]

Nonetheless, even in the seventeenth century, it is clear that some readers continued to pore over the text of the *Cyfoesi* in order to identify prophetic allusions to their own time. In John Jones's composite copy of the *Cyfoesi*

[221]Ibid., 259 (§§8–9).
[222]Ibid., 258 (§§3–4).
[223]Payne, 'John Lewis', 13.
[224]John Lewis, *The History of Great-Britain, From the First Inhabitants Thereof, 'till the Death of Cadwalader, Last King of the Britains; and of the Kings of Scotland to Eugenev* (London, 1729), 34–7, quotation from 35.
[225]Ibid., 34.
[226]Ibid., 205.
[227]Ibid., 207, 216 and 220
[228]See above, p. 182.
[229]Lewis, *History of Great-Britain*, 206.

in NLW 3041B, pp. 419–54, he added the following comment between the verses about the *deu Idas am dir* (probably Dafydd and Rhodri sons of Owain Gwynedd) and the *brenhin llew* (Llywelyn ab Iorwerth):

> Ụrṭ gyfflybiaeṭ mae peṭ yn eissiau yma, ac naiḷ ai ef a goḷwyd ai ef a adawyd aḷan o amser Edward y kyntaf hyd Risiart y trydyḍ
>
> 'By comparison there is something missing here, and from the time of Edward I up to Richard III either it was lost or it was left out.'

Clearly, John Jones was interpreting the poem in terms of English regnal history in the later Middle Ages; perhaps he understood the *brenhin llew* as Henry VII, successor of Richard III, conforming with the contemporary idea that Henry Tudor was the *mab darogan*.[230] Very similarly, Thomas Pugh, in his introduction to the extract of the poem that he printed in his 1658 book, explains why he decided to print only the final part of the poem (from l. 349): 'in respect of the tediousness of it, I began at Queen Elisabeth'.[231] This was because Pugh understood line 354 as a reference to Elizabeth I: in the edited text, this is *diwed, riein, orffen byt* ('the end, maiden, the conclusion of the world'), where *riein* is a vocative noun addressing Gwenddydd, but in Pugh's text *Rhiain* is capitalised, and he translates the stanza as 'When the wages of the dull people comes to be paid, which will come to passe after the reign of a Virgin, then an end is at hand'.[232] Again, in David Parry's transcript of John Jones's lost copy of Elis Gruffydd's chronicle, which Parry made for Edward Lhuyd around 1698–9, prophecies from the *Cyfoesi* are identified with kings and periods in the seventeenth century between the reigns of Charles I and William III.[233] It is clear that prophetic poems like the *Cyfoesi* continued to appeal because they were capable of being reinterpreted in reference to later times.

Scholarly treatment of the *Cyfoesi* began with Robert Vaughan in the seventeenth century. Robert Vaughan's involvement with the poem's manuscript transmission has been noted above: he collated Peniarth 26 with the lost copy X^6, and he annotated the two copies of John Davies in *Liber B*. Following the approach of *Disgyniad Pendefigaeth Cymru* a century earlier, he used the poem as a historical source in his *British Chronology*, in which he attempted to reconcile Geoffrey of Monmouth's date for the battle of Camlan with other sources.[234] Vaughan's analysis of the text is remarkable for its time, and can

[230] Jones, *Darogan*, 3–4.

[231] Pugh, *Brittish and Out-landish Prophesies*, 128.

[232] Ibid., 130.

[233] NLW 6209E, pp. 145–6; cf. Huws, *Repertory*, i, 222. The identifications may have been made originally by John Griffith of Caecyriog, who had annotated David Parry's exemplar.

[234] Robert Vaughan's *British Chronology* is printed in *Cambrian Register* 2 (1796), 515–33. For the true origin of Geoffrey of Monmouth's date for the battle of Camlan, see Ben Guy, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth's Welsh sources', in Georgia Henley and Joshua Byron Smith (eds), *A Companion to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (Leiden, 2020), 31–66, at 51–3.

be counted as the first scholarly treatment of it. He describes the *Cyfoesi* as follows:[235]

> there is an old historical tract, written dialogue wise, in the British tongue, entitled Cyfoessi Merddin a Gwenddydd, that is, the joint lives or living together of Merlin and Gwenddydd, being brother and sister, wherein the sister demandeth of her brother Merlin, under what kings her nation, the Northern Britons, should be governed; and, thereupon, he taking occasion to answer her question, prophetically reckoneth the kings of Cambria, from king Arthur's time, or shortly after, successively by their names, (although some of the first kings, as it seemeth, were dead, before the prophecy was written) until Howell Dda, king of the Britons; but from him forward to the end, he seldom nameth them by their own proper names as before, but denoteth them by some peculiar property, or quality, eminent in them, whereby the residue is not so intelligible and plain as the beginning, which gives occasion to some to think that it was not the work of Merlin, but of another bard, who living in the time of Howell Dda, gave it the title aforesaid; but whosoever was the author of it, certainly it was very ancient, as by the dialect, and several ancient copies thereof, fairly written on parchment many hundred years since, it is very apparent.

Since the seventeenth century, many others have shared this view of the poem, though perhaps few have expressed the view so elegantly.[236] Vaughan's thinking may be reflected in the summary of the poem offered in Edward Lhuyd's *Archaeologia Britannica*, published in 1707:[237]

> Kyvoese Myrdhyn a Gụendhydh i χụaer. *Merlini & Gwendidiæ sororis ejus, Synchronismus: sive Dialogus de futuris principibus Cumbriæ; ignoto authore quem circa annum* 948 *non reverâ de futuris, sed præteritis (cùm eos nominatim designet) scripsisse constat.* L. K. H. [Llyfr Coch Hergest] 577. *Init.* Deithym i attat, i adrodh. *Fin.* Gogeled Duụ o ụendhydh. *Const. pag.* 4.
>
> ʿCyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer. *The Synchronism of Merlin and Gwendidia his sister: or a Dialogue concerning the future*

[235] *Cambrian Register* 2 (1796), 524–5.

[236] See above, n. 102. Note, however, the perceptive note by Robert Saunderson in his 1834 edition of Robert Vaughan's *British Antiquities Revived*, glossing Vaughan's reference to the *Cyfoesi*: 'The prophecies attributed to Merddin Sylvester alluded to in this argument, as foretelling the accession of Anarawd, are evidently the production of some person in the reign of Henry II. The succession of the Princes of North Wales are detailed by name, in the form of a dialogue, in the precise manner in which they reigned down to Owen Gwynedd; from which time the narrative is too mysterious to admit of an explanation, for the plain reason that the compiler's powers of penetrating futurity were no more acute than those of other people. His testimony however to the fact of Anarawd being the heir of Rodri is important': Robert Saunderson in Robert Vaughan, *British Antiquities Revived* (Bala, 1834), 79.

[237] Lhuyd, *Archaeologia Britannica*, 258.

> *princes of Cumbria; by an unknown author who wrote, it is certain, around the year* 948 *not really concerning future princes, but past princes (since he refers to them by name).* Red Book of Hergest 577. *Begins* Deithym i attat, i adrodh. *Ends* Gogeled Duụ o ụendhydh. *It consists of* 4 *pages*.'

This is a view that one finds repeated in the nineteenth, twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and there the matter has largely rested prior to the Myrddin project.

Conclusion

Drawing on the editorial work that has taken place as part of the Cardiff Myrddin project, this discussion has sought to establish the basic parameters for understanding *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer*. The primary manuscript witnesses have been described, and the key pieces of evidence for their interrelationships have been set out. A large amount of information relating to the poem's date has been analysed. The linguistic evidence consistently points towards a date of composition within the time bracket 1150 × 1250, though further work would need to be done on the individual dating criteria in order to narrow down this dating window on linguistic evidence alone. Happily, this agrees with the poem's content, since the latest historical individuals mentioned in the poem are Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (r. 1200–40) and perhaps his son Dafydd (born 1212/13), as well as, most probably, King John (r. 1199–1216). The disjuncture that has previously been perceived within the poem after the reign of Hywel Dda, leading to the supposition that the extant poem is a twelfth- or thirteenth-century elaboration of a tenth-century poem, has proven illusory, since the historical sequence arguably proceeds unbroken from Hywel Dda to the twelfth- and thirteenth-century kings of Gwynedd. An early thirteenth-century context for the poem is significant for the history of the englyn metres. The poem is comprised mainly of Penfyr and Milwr in a style similar to that of other englyn poems in the *Hengerdd* corpus, yet the date of the *Cyfoesi* shows that these three-line englyn metres continued to be used for anonymous poems on certain themes into the thirteenth century. This should prompt us to reassess the dating and context of other anonymous englyn poems.

Like other early Welsh poems, the *Cyfoesi* exists within a network of intertextuality, thanks in part to the poets' habit of drawing on a common stock of bardic words and phrases. Nonetheless, specific allusions to other poems can be discerned in the *Cyfoesi*, including allusions to *Yr Afallennau* and *Yr Oianau*, to the A-text of the *Gododdin*, and to court poems by Cynddelw and Prydydd y Moch. The latest potential allusion is to a line in a poem by Prydydd y Moch composed in 1216, even though Prydydd y Moch himself appears to allude to the *Cyfoesi* in a poem of 1217 in praise of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth. Judging by the evidence of the language and content, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's Gwynedd, around 1216/17, is exactly the time and context in which

we would expect the poem to have been composed. It remained well-known thereafter across many centuries, initially to poets and then increasingly to the scholar-scribes who came to dominate cultural activity in the seventeenth century.

In a sense, all of these observations are preliminary to the literary interpretation of the poem. A huge amount could be said about this poem that has never been said before. Yes, it is a prophecy, but it is also a dialogue poem between a worried sister and a brother on his deathbed who sees before him the full passage of time, and the inevitability of disaster and Judgement. Hopefully this article can stimulate others to read the poem for what it is. Long, certainly, but by no means tedious.

Abbreviations

AP	Ifor Williams (ed.), *Armes Prydein: The Prophecy of Britain, from the Book of Taliesin*, trans. Rachel Bromwich (Dublin, 1972).
BT (Pen. 20)	Thomas Jones (ed.), *Brut y Tywysogyon: Peniarth MS. 20* (Cardiff, 1941).
BT (Pen. 20 trans.)	Thomas Jones (trans.), *Brut y Tywysogyon or The Chronicle of the Princes: Peniarth MS. 20 Version* (Cardiff, 1952).
CA	Ifor Williams (ed.), *Canu Aneirin* (Cardiff, 1938).
CBT I	J. E. Caerwyn Williams et al. (eds), *Gwaith Meilyr Brydydd e'i Ddisgynyddion* (Cardiff, 1994).
CBT II	Kathleen Anne Bramley et al. (eds), *Gwaith Llywelyn Fardd I ac Eraill o Feirdd y Ddeuddegfed Ganrif* (Cardiff, 1994).
CBT III	Nerys Ann Jones and Ann Parry Owen (eds), *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr*, i (Cardiff, 1991).
CBT IV	Nerys Ann Jones and Ann Parry Owen (eds), *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr*, ii (Cardiff, 1995).
CBT V	Elin M. Jones and Nerys Ann Jones (eds), *Gwaith Llywarch ap Llywelyn, 'Prydydd y Moch'* (Cardiff, 1991).
CBT VI	N. G. Costigan (Bosco) et al. (eds), *Gwaith Dafydd Benfras ac Eraill o Feirdd Hanner Cyntaf y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg* (Cardiff, 1995).
CBT VII	Rhian M. Andrews et al. (eds), *Gwaith Bleddyn Fardd a Beirdd Eraill Ail Hanner y Drydedd Ganrif ar Ddeg* (Cardiff, 1996).
CC	Marged Haycock (ed.), *Blodeugerdd Barddas o Ganu Crefyddol Cynnar* (Llandybïe, 1994).
EWSP	Jenny Rowland (ed.), *Early Welsh Saga Poetry* (Cambridge, 1990).
G	John Lloyd-Jones, *Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg* (Cardiff, 1931–63).
GGMD I	Barry J. Lewis (ed.), *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd*, i, *Canu i Deulu Penmynydd* (Aberystwyth, 2003).

GGrG	Rhiannon Ifans et al. (eds), *Gwaith Gronw Gyriog, Iorwerth ab y Cyriog, Mab Clochyddyn, Gruffudd ap Tudur Goch ac Ithel Ddu* (Aberystwyth, 1997).
GIG	Dafydd R. Johnston (ed.), *Gwaith Iolo Goch* (Cardiff, 1988).
LHEB	Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain: A Chronological Survey of the Brittonic Languages, First to Twelfth Century A.D.* (Edinburgh, 1953).
LPBT	Marged Haycock (ed.), *Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin*, 2nd ed. (Aberystwyth, 2015).
LlDC	A. O. H. Jarman (ed.), *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin* (Cardiff, 1982).
PBT	Marged Haycock (ed.), *Prophecies from the Book of Taliesin* (Aberystwyth, 2013).
PT	Ifor Williams (ed.), *The Poems of Taliesin*, trans. J. E. Caerwyn Williams (Dublin, 1968).

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A POETIC CONSPIRACY: THE RHYMING PATTERN OF THE FIRST PERSON PLURAL PREPOSITIONAL FORM *-MP-NY* IN MIDDLE BRETON

Abstract

Based on its rhyming pattern, the 1pl. prepositional ending with an enclitic pronoun is argued to have been /-Vni/ in the language of *Le Grand Mystère de Jésus* (and probably of *Buhez sante Barba*), not the expected /-Vmpni/. The form in /-Vni/ is explained as having arisen through analogy within the paradigm of inflected prepositions with an enclitic pronoun. The form is not directly attested in writing in Middle Breton, but occurs in Early Modern Breton and in the modern Cornouaillais dialect.

1. Middle Breton versification as a tool

Middle Breton poetic texts generally follow a strict system of syllable counting combined with final and internal rhyme.[1] This formal structure offers a valuable point of departure for linguistic analysis, providing information about the phonology of the language which is not always revealed by the spelling conventions. This includes hiatus, sonorant length and, to an extent, proclisis.

These rules may allow us to identify words or passages that have undergone textual corruption during transmission. When a given word, phrase or construction *repeatedly* and *consistently* rhymes in a way that runs counter to the way it is spelled, we may assume that something other than what is written was intended phonemically. Such a mismatch between spelling and rhyme could be due to changes made to the text(s) after composition. However, it does not always have to be the result of textual corruption. A clear case of systematic and intended mismatch is seen in the representation of the consonant mutations in word initial position and in transparent compounds. Here the consonant mutations are generally not written, but they are taken into account for the purpose of rhyme and thus are clearly there in a phonemic sense. An example of this is provided by the following line from *Le Mirouer de la mort* (M):[2]

M 2415. *Ha tan grizias hastiff, ouz ho lesquiff dimat*
'and scorching fire swiftly burning them cruelly'

[1]For detailed descriptions see Ernault (1900; 1912), Loth (1900; 1902: 177–203), Kervella (1965), Jones (1977), Pennaod (1979: 165–76), Le Menn (1999), Le Berre (2011: 613–26; 2012: 81–109).

[2]Ed. Ernault (1914) and Le Berre (2023).

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The obligatory internal rhyme is expected to be between the penultimate syllable (the "in-rhyme") and a preceding final syllable immediately before a caesura. The caesura after *hastiff* is fixed, ensuring that the rhyme must be in /iv/, /if/, /iμ/ or /iu̯/ in this line. We may therefore safely read[3] the line as

M 2415. *Ha tan grizias hastiff, ouz ho lesquiff di[ff]at*

with a main rhyme between *hastiff* 'swiftly', *lesquiff* 'burning' and *di[ff]at* 'cruelly, badly', the internal rhyme revealing the lenition after the privative prefix *di-* in *dimat*, yielding /diμad/.[4]

Systematic mismatches between spelling and versification are not restricted to productive mutations, however. A different type of systematic mismatch will be investigated in this paper.

2. The first person plural prepositions with an enclitic pronoun

The specific issue investigated in this paper relates to the rhyming pattern of the 1pl. ending *-Vmp*[5] of inflected (or 'conjugated') prepositions with an additional enclitic pronoun *-ny*, *-ni* /-ni/ 'us',[6] forms like *deompny* 'to us' (from *da* 'to'), *entrompny* 'among us' (from *entre* 'among, between').

In the following, I will examine all attestations of such forms in obligatory rhyming position known to me from the major works of Classical Middle Breton poetry.[7] The majority of attestations, seven in total, are found in *Le Grand Mystère de Jésus*[8] (Jpass. and Jres.).[9] Of the seven attestations in J, the following five appear to be defective with respect to the rhyme:

da 'to, for'
Jpass. 90/1855. *Eguyt se ez compse ef* ***deompny***[10]

[3]This is not to suggest that the texts should be emended in this way, only that the spelling does not always reflect the phonemic level.

[4]Compare Nl. 419 *Da monet d-e ty, peur difat*, where the lenition is spelled out.

[5]The Middle and Modern Breton prepositional ending *-Vmp* replaces the Proto-Brittonic ending **-Vnn*, which is still preserved in Middle Welsh and Middle Cornish. Middle Breton *-mp* was imported from the verbal system and ultimately reflects the 1pl. present ending **-mos(i)*, with the unlenited **-mm-* taken from the verb 'to be', where **es-m-* yielded **emm-*. The origin of the final *-p* in Breton *-Vmp* is unclear.

[6]Of the type described by Hemon (1975: 76).

[7]This comprises *Le Grand Mystère de Jésus* (J), *Le Mystère de Sainte Barbe/Buhez sante Barba* (B), *Le Mirouer de la Mort* (M), *La Vie de Sainte Nonne/Buez santes Nonn* (N), *L'ancien Mystère de Saint Gwénolé/An Buhez Sant Gwenôlé* (G), *An Nouelou ancien ha devot* (Nl.), *Trois Poèmes en Moyen-Breton* (Pm.), *La Destruction de Jérusalem* (Jer.) and *An Dialog etre Arzur Roe d'an Bretounet ha Guynglaff* (Dag.).

[8]Ed. Hersart de la Villemarqué (1895) and Le Berre (2011).

[9]Abbreviated here as Jpass. = the Passion and Jres. = the Resurrection in order to distinguish between the two parts of J.

[10]Ideally, *ef* would be part of the main internal rhyme, rather than *compse*, due to the fact that we expect the caesura to come after *ef*. However, the internal rhyme is clearly in /e/, as shown by *Eguyt se* earlier in the line. Moreover, the line is hypermetric, possibly indicating that *ef* should be deleted. Le Berre (2011: 210) instead suggests that *Eguyt se ez* should be contracted to *Eguyt se*

'However, he said to us'

Jres. 219/4467–9. *Na leueret quet en fet se*
Rac mar publiet drouc graet ve
Ha preiudicc cref ve ***deompny***[11]
'Do not talk about that matter,
For if you divulge it, damage would be done
And grave harm would be for us'

Jres. 220/4478. *Breman plen a certen* ***deompny***
'Right now certainly for us'

gant 'with, by'
Jpass. 162/3315–7. *Dan lech ha don ty ancien*
Donn em confort en vn ordren
Monet breman plen ***gueneomp ny***
'To the place and to our old house
To console each other,
Going right now with us'

entre 'among, between'
Jpass. 70/1140–1. *Maestr special doe ro saluo*
Ha roz enoro ***entrompny***
'Dearest master, may God keep you safe
And may he honour you among us'

In these examples we see that what is written <eomp> in *deompny* 'to us, for us' and *gueneomp ny* 'with us' and <omp> in *entrompny* 'among us', the sequence expected to carry the in-rhyme,[12] does not take part in the rhyme as we would expect. In other words, five of the seven instances of this grammatical category in J appear to be defective with respect to the rhyme. This is clearly noteworthy and calls for an explanation. We may note that in all four cases of <eomp> (*deompny*, *gueneomp ny*), the surrounding text either requires (as indicated by the end-rhyme of the preceding line(s)) or suggests an in-rhyme in /e$(C)V/[13] or /en(C)V/.[14] The single instance of <omp> *(entrompny)* requires

'z. This would also produce the correct syllable count.

[11] One might interpret this as a rhyme between *cref* /eμ/ and *deompny* /eo/ (if such a rhyme is considered acceptable). However, this cannot be the case, since the preceding lines require the internal rhyme to be of the open-syllable type in /e/.

[12] The in-rhyme is the obligatory 'pivot' rhyme, usually falling on the penultimate syllable of the line. It determines the main internal rhyme of the line. In some verse structures, the in-rhyme is itself determined by the end-rhyme of the preceding line (as in Jres. 219/4467–9, Jpass. 162/3315–7 and Jpass. 70/1140–1 in the examples discussed here).

[13] $ marks a syllable boundary. The notation /e$(C)V/ does not necessarily imply the presence of zero or one consonant after the rhyming vowel, but simply indicates an open syllable that would be able to provide a rhyme with word-final /-e/. Crucially, /emp$nV/ does not provide a suitable rhyme.

[14] But this does *not* include a rhyme /ennV/.

an in-rhyme in /o$(C)V/. This means that we expect the penultimate syllable of the lines to contain /e$(C)V/, /en(C)V/ and /o$(C)V/.

In some of the examples above, it might appear that the penultimate syllable is skipped and that the in-rhyme is irregularly placed on the antepenultimate syllable. However, as argued in §3 below, this interpretation is unlikely to be correct.

2.1 Ambiguous lines

The two remaining instances of 1pl. inflected prepositions with an enclitic pronoun in J are ambiguous with respect to the rhyme pattern:

da 'to, for'
Jres. 209/4263. *En hent plen gueneomp ha* ***deompni***
'On the road with us, and to us'

gant 'with, by'
Jpass. 155/3187. *Guell eu deomp ren plen* ***guen eomp[ny]***[15]
'It is better for us to take with us'

These two lines could be understood as having a completely regular main internal rhyme *gueneomp* = *deompni* and *deomp* = *gueneompny* respectively. However, the presence of words providing a rhyme in /en/ in both lines – *plen* and *ren*, *plen*, respectively – is noteworthy. In light of the fact that the four defective instances of *-eompny* in rhyming position discussed above in §2 all indicate a rhyme in /e$(C)V/ or /en(C)V/, it would be more parsimonious to assume that these two ambiguous lines present the same rhyming pattern, with a main internal rhyme in /en/ correctly placed on the penultimate syllable (for reasons that will become clear later).

2.2 A rhyming conspiracy

As shown above, five out of the seven attestations of the 1pl. preposition with an enclitic 1pl. pronoun fail to display the expected in-rhyme. This is, in itself, cause for suspicion. When we add the fact that the in-rhyme predicted by the context in *all* cases seems to be /en/ or /e/ (for *deompny* and *gueneomp ny*) and /o/ (for *entrompny*) and the pattern becomes even more striking – a proper rhyming conspiracy.

3. Antepenultimate in-rhyme?

It might be argued that some of the instances of 1pl. prepositions with enclitic *-ny* given in §2 should be interpreted as showing antepenultimate in-rhyme (in-rhyme falling on the third-to-last syllable) rather than the usual penultimate in-rhyme (in-rhyme falling on the second-to-last syllable). Under this assumption,

[15]Line-final *-ny* is missing from the text, but its presence is indicated by both the end-rhyme and the syllable count. It may therefore be taken as a fairly secure emendation (as also proposed by Hersart de la Villemarqué and Le Berre).

the line Jres. 220a/4478 *Breman plen a certen deompny* discussed above would be formally correct: it has the required number of syllables and the required internal rhymes. The only irregularity would be the placement of the in-rhyme on the antepenultimate syllable, *certen*. However, as argued in Jørgensen (2007: 59–94), the placement of the in-rhyme on the antepenultimate instead of the penultimate syllable is not a random event. There is a specific limitation to when this kind of in-rhyme may happen: antepenultimate in-rhyme is almost exclusively allowed if the penultimate syllable is taken up by a proclitic word, such as the definite article (*an*), a preposition (*en, da, oar, ouz*), a verbal particle (*a, ez*), a possessive pronoun (*da, hon*), conjunctions (*ha, na*), etc. This may be exemplified by stanza 224 from noel 17 of *An Nouelou ancien ha deuot* (Nl.):[16]

Nl. 224. *Pemp mil blizien ancquen* ***à voe***
Oz gortos Doue enou[e]et,
Be[t] ma-z maruent, ez eant ***da-n tan***
Buhan gant Sathan poaniet,
Iesu so deuet, lamet ***hon crim***
Ma-z omp a-n lim redimet

'After five thousand years of anguish
Waiting for God, troubled
Until they died, they went to the fire
Swiftly tormented by Satan,
Jesus has come, taken away our crime,
So that we are redeemed from limbo'

Here we see how the proclitic syllables in the syntagms *à voe* 'was' (verbal particle *à* + stressed 3sg. preterite verb *voe*), *da-n tan* 'to the fire' (preposition *da* 'to' + definite article *an* + stressed noun *tan* 'fire') and *hon crim* 'our crime' (1pl. possessive pronoun *hon* + stressed noun *crim* 'crime') are skipped. In each case the in-rhyme instead falls on the preceding, antepenultimate syllable, *ancquen*, *eant* and *lamet*, respectively.

Counterexamples in which the in-rhyme skips a *non-proclitic* penultimate syllable are sufficiently rare that we may generally assume they are either the result of textual corruption during transmission, a rare slip on the part of the poet,[17] or a misunderstanding of the rhyme pattern on our part.

The option of using antepenultimate in-rhyme by skipping a proclitic word in the penultimate position is not exploited equally across the different texts. It occurs very frequently in *An Nouelou ancien ha deuot,* somewhat less often in *An Buhez Sant Gwenôlé*,[18] and only rarely in *Le Mirouer de la mort* (the texts examined in Jørgensen 2007). Irrespective of the frequency, the general restriction of antepenultimate in-rhyme to lines with a proclitic word in the penultimate position seems to apply to all the Classical Middle Breton poetic

[16]Ed. Hersart de la Villemarqué (1889, 1890, 1891, 1892) and Pennaod (1984).
[17]In which case it should not be systematic.
[18]Ed. Ernault ([1935]) and Widmer and Jørgensen (2011).

works, with the exception of *Buez santes Nonn*, which does not appear to use the option at all, and possibly *Tremenuan an Ytron guerches Maria, Pemzec leuenez Maria* and *An Dialog etre Arzur Roe d'an Bretounet ha Guynglaff*, which are either unusually corrupt or follow a less strict system of versification.

J does not differ substantially from the main Middle Breton poetic corpus in this respect. This has consequences for the evaluation of the rhyming pattern of *deompny*, *gueneompny* and *entrompny* in J: since /(e)omp/ must have been stressed and not proclitic,[19] it is highly unlikely that the irregularity in rhyme can be explained by invoking antepenultimate in-rhyme.

4. The rhyming pattern of inflected prepositions with enclitic pronouns

Given that five out of a total of seven attestations in J behave in an irregular way, one may wonder whether this reflects a general problem with inflected prepositions with enclitic pronouns. However, inflected prepositions, when occurring with enclitic pronouns in other persons (1sg. *-Vffme*, 2sg. *-Vde*, 2pl. *-V(ch)huy*), show very few cases of irregular or absent in-rhyme. And when there are irregularities, they do not point to any specific underlying rhyme pattern. This is exemplified by attestations of *da, gant* and *digant* from J (there are no examples of inflected *entre* with suffixed pronouns in obligatory rhyming position):

da 'to, for'	
Jpass. 45/923.	*En reprim da credif* ***difme***[20]
Jpass. 59/1194.	*Disclaeryet autrou prim* ***difme***[21]
Jpass. 21/382.	*A ve hardiz da comps* ***dihuy***[22]
Jpass. 49/987.	*An Maestr a diquemenn* ***dihuy***[23]
Jpass. 73/1487.	*Mardeu me eu a fell* ***dihuy***[24]
Jpass. 118/2442.	*Aet gueneoch me en re* ***dihuy***[25]

[19] As it is in Modern LTK Breton (see, e.g., *ALBB* maps 109, 212 and 504).

[20] /dime/ rhyming with *reprim* (or, less likely, /diɰme/ rhyming with *credif*).

[21] /dime/ rhyming with *prim*.

[22] /dixu̯i/ provides a weak rhyme with *hardiz* /hardiθ/. This is understandable, given the rarity of words ending in /-ix/ (apart from *dich* itself).

[23] The verb *diquemenn* 'to summon' (ModBr *degemenn*) fits the context well and is probably intended, in spite of the later variants *An maestr à dy quemenn dy huy* (1609 edition) and *An maestr á dy á queme'n dy huy* (1622 edition). However, this intrepretation means that there is no syllable ending in /-i(x)/ before a caesura to provide a rhyme with *dihuy*. Therefore, this line is apparently missing an internal rhyme. I am grateful to Hervé Le Bihan for his help with this passage.

[24] /deoxu̯i/ rhyming with *eu*.

[25] /deoxu̯i/ rhyming with *gueneoch* or /dexu̯i/ rhyming with *guene[]ch*. Formally, an open syllable rhyme between /dexu̯i/ and *re* is also possible, though less likely.

Jpass. 154/3181.	*Bennos Doe a pedaf* ***dihuy***[26]
gant 'with, by'	
Jpass. 54/1095.	*Dre ouz eux guelet lem* ***guenefme***[27]
Jres. 190/3869–3871.	*Na pe tu ezoude cuzet* *Da hem discuez pan ouf queuzet* *Dif vn pret mar plig* ***guenede***[28]
Jres. 216/4405–7.	*A te gra goap ac achapet* *Eu ef lauar yach na nach quet* *Perac nac eu ef deuet* ***guen ede***[29]
Jpass. 104/2169.	*Maza ma sae me* ***guynihuy****?*[30]
Jpass. 155/3195.	*Meyel oar en lech* ***gueneoch huy***[31]
digant 'from'	
Jres. 221/4505.	*Dioar an lech* ***diguenech huy***[32]

As can be seen, there are no indications that first and second person forms of inflected prepositions with enclitic pronouns behave substantially differently from other stressed words. And when there are irregularities, they appear unsystematic and do not point in any specific direction. We may therefore conclude that, for whatever reason, the systematic irregularity in the rhyme pattern is specifically restricted to the 1pl. of prepositions with an enclitic pronoun.

5. Reinterpreting the rhyme pattern

There is one way to accept the rhyme pattern of the 1pl. prepositional forms without altering the meaning of the text. Given that in four cases of *deompny* and *gueneomp ny* the expected in-rhyme is /en(C)V/ or /e$(C)V/ (§2), and that the remaining two attestations are fully compatible with such a rhyme pattern (§3), I will suggest that *all* instances of *deompny* and *gueneomp ny* in J should be read accordingly – as /deni/ and /geneni/, respectively. This produces a completely regular in-rhyme placed on the penultimate syllable:

[26] /dexu̯i/ rhyming with *Doe*? Or – highly speculative, but providing a much better rhyme – /deoxu̯i/ rhyming with *Doe[u]*, a form possibly preserved in HVann. *duéù* < PBrit **duru̯*. On the Vannetais form, see Ernault ([1905]: 58).

[27] /geneme/ rhyming with *lem*.

[28] /genede/ rhyming with *cuzet*, *queuzet* and *pret*.

[29] /genede/ rhyming with *achapet*, *quet* and *deuet*.

[30] /genexu̯i/ rhyming with *me*?

[31] /genexu̯i/ rhyming with *lech*.

[32] /digenexu̯i/ rhyming with *lech*.

da 'to, for'
Jpass. 90/1855. *Eguyt se ez compse ef* ***de[]ny***

Jres. 209/4263. *En hent plen gueneomp ha* ***de[]ni***

Jres. 219/4467–9. *Na leueret quet en fet se*
Rac mar publiet drouc graet ve
Ha preiudicc cref ve ***de[]ny***

Jres. 220/4478. *Breman plen a certen* ***de[]ny***

gant 'with, by'
Jpass. 155/3187. *Guell eu deomp ren plen* ***guen e[][ny]***

Jpass. 162/3315–7. *Dan lech ha don ty ancien*
Donn em confort en vn ordren
Monet breman plen ***guene[]ny***

The assumption that /-Vmpni/ could be reduced to /-Vni/ in the 1pl. of inflected prepositions – for reasons that will become clear in §9 – is supported by the final example of a 1pl. preposition with enclitic pronoun in obligatory rhyming position, *entrompny*. Based on the preceding line ending in *saluo*, we know that the in-rhyme should be in /o$(C)V/. On the surface, however, *entrompny* cannot participate in this, because the syllable in /omp$n/ is closed and therefore requires a rhyme in /om/ or /omp/. If we read /-oni/ instead of /-ompni/, this line becomes completely regular:

entre 'between, among'
Jpass. 70a/1140–1. *Maestr special doe ro saluo*
Ha roz enoro ***entro[]ny***

We may conclude that in J the rhyming pattern of *all* instances of 1pl. prepositions with an enclitic pronoun either requires or is compatible with forms ending in /-Vni/, rather than the /-Vmpni/ suggested by the spelling.[33]

6. Evidence from other texts

This particular rhyming pattern of the 1pl. prepositions is not unique to J. Unfortunately, examples of 1pl. prepositions with an enclitic pronoun in obligatory rhyming position are much rarer in other texts. The sole attestation from *Buhez sante Barba* (B)[34] appears in a line that, at first glance, seems

[33]If one assumes that the medial /p/ was lost in the heavy cluster /mpn/, it might just be possible to argue for a syllabic division /V$mnV/. This would allow some of the problematic instances to be read with a regular rhyme – for example, Jres. 219/4469 may be read as *Ha preiudicc cref ve de[]m[]ny*, with /kre/ and /ve/ rhyming with /de$mni/. However, there is no evidence that such a syllabic division is valid, and /mn/ is not a permissible initial cluster in Middle Breton. In fact, the one parallel word in the language with <Vm(p)n>, *dam(p)n-* 'to damn' from OFr. *dampner*, consistently rhymes as /am/ (or as /aɰ(n)/, indicating that the variant *daffn-* from Lat. *damnāre* is intended). Moreover, this explanation would not account for those cases which require a rhyme in /en/.

[34]Ed. Ernault (1888) and Le Berre (2018).

defective, lacking any internal rhyme:

B 371/2271. *Tau, Riualen, pe laz* ***dimp ny***
'Be quiet, Riualen, what does it matter to us?'

There are only two possible internal rhymes earlier in the line: *Riualen* /-en/ and *laz* /-að/. Remarkably, the line becomes completely regular if the 1pl. preposition *dimp ny* 'to us' is read as /deni/, just as in J, yielding a perfect rhyme between *Riualen* and *d[e]ny*:

B 371/2271. *Tau, Riualen, pe laz* ***d[e]ny***

A single line from the *Tremenuan an Ytron guerches Maria* (Pm. (Trem.))[35] has *guenempny* in an obligatory rhyming position but appears to lack the expected internal rhyme:

Pm. (Trem.) 119/5314. *Ne vyoude quet* ***guenempny***
'You were not with us'

We expect the internal rhymes earlier in the line to be performed by *quet* /-ed/, the syllable before the only caesura in the line. However, this clearly does not lead to an acceptable rhyme. The line might become acceptable if *guenempny* is read as /geneni/, producing an open-syllable rhyme with *vyoude*:

Pm. (Trem.) 119/5314. *Ne vyoude quet* ***guene[ ]ny***

However, we do not expect a caesura after *vyoude*, so the line can probably not be considered completely regular. Moreover, the *Tremenuan an Ytron guerches Maria* is highly irregular in its versification. Therefore, a single possible instance of rhyme in /-eni/ for written *-emp-ny* cannot necessarily be trusted, especially as it involves a simple vowel rhyme, which is more likely to be accidental.

There are lines in other texts that may be improved by assuming a 1pl. form /-Vni/. The first hemistichs of M 1499 *Pez á taluoe dymp ny, hon bout glorifius?* and M 2519 *Pez á taluoe dimp ny, bezaf glorifius* may be understood as *Pez á taluoe* ***d[e]ny***. However, in both cases the lines are not defective in their original form, and the proposed rhyme involving /deni/ could just as well be accidental (there are similar situations in M 119 and B 546/3359).

Remarkably, rhymes indicating /-Vni/ in the 1pl. inflected prepositions with an enclitic pronoun appear to be far more common in Middle Breton than rhymes indicating /-Vm(p)ni/, despite the fact that only the latter is reflected in the spelling. The only instances of obligatory rhyme in /-Vm(p)ni/ known to me occur in Nl.:

[35] Ed. Hemon (1962) and Le Berre (2011).

Nl. 111. *Scriffet prym eo* ***deonny***[36]

Nl. 418. *Da digacc lem eo deuet* ***deompny***

Admittedly, one could also interpret these lines as containing a rhyme *eo* = *deompny*.[37] If this was preferred, there would be no rhyming evidence from Classical Middle Breton in favour of an ending /-Vmpni/. However, the presence of the semantically vague but phonemically distinctive words *prym* and *lem* earlier in the lines strongly suggests that these instances should be interpreted as reflecting /-Vmpni/:

Nl. 111. *Scriffet prym eo* ***d[imp]ny***[38]

Nl. 418. *Da digacc lem eo deuet* ***d[em]pny***

7. Summary of the Classical Middle Breton evidence

The evidence for 1pl. prepositional forms with an enclitic pronoun in obligatory rhyming position may be summarized as follows:

/Vm(C)i/:	2× (Nl. 111, 418)
/Vm(C)i/ or /Vn(C)i/:	2× (Jpass. 155/3187, Jres. 209/4263)
/V$(C)i/:	4× (Jpass. 70/1140–1, Jpass. 90/1855, Jres. 219/4467–9, Pm. 119/5314)
/Vn(C)i/:	3× (Jpass. 162/3315–7, Jres. 220/4478, B 371/2271)

Given that these attestations are expected to contain the enclitic pronoun /-ni/, the material may be interpreted more narrowly as follows: we find two instances of the 1pl. preposition with suffixed pronoun rhyming as /Vm(p)ni/, two instances that may either rhyme as /Vmpni/ or as /Vni/, four instances of open-syllable rhyme /V$(C)i/ – most likely to be read as /Vni/ and certainly incompatible with /Vmpni/ – and three instances of rhyme as /Vni/ (two in J and one in B). It is probably significant that the variation seems to be distributed according to the text, with evidence for the 1pl. /-Vni/ appearing in J, B and possibly Trem., and evidence for /-Vm(p)ni/ being restricted to Nl. Whether this is due to a dialectal, stylistic or chronological difference remains to be determined.

8. Understanding the spelling

How can we reconcile the rhyming evidence for /Vn/ with the consistent spelling <mpn> or <mp n>? One possibility is that <mpn>, <mp n> was

[36] Fleuriot (1964a: 263) and Hemon (1975: 89–90) interpret *deonny* 'to us' (Nl. 111) as an instance of reduction of the 1pl. prep. with an enclitic pronoun. However, it is far more likely that this should be treated as a simple printer's error – of which there are many in the Nl. – for intended *deom(p)ny*.

[37] Assuming this type of rhyme is permissible, for the sake of the argument.

[38] This reading is also suggested by Pennaod (1984: 129).

introduced by later copyists, and that the texts in their original form had <n>. The discrepancy could then reflect dialectal differences between the language of composition and that of later scribes or printers. Alternatively, the variation might reflect stylistic differences, assuming that 1pl. /-Vni/ and /-Vmpni/ were distributed according to register. Finally, the difference could be chronological, if we assume that forms in simple /n/ were original and that /mp/ was reintroduced from the inflected prepositions without an enclitic pronoun.

The complete lack of written evidence for reduced forms in /Vn/ is nevertheless a potential cause for concern. Ideally, we would want to accept the spelling as reflecting the original intention, while still allowing the forms to rhyme regularly. In light of this, it is possible that the uniform spelling <mpn> or <mp n> reflects the partially morphophonemic writing system in this particular case – just as it does in several others. The underlying, morphophonemic //-Vmp+ni// may have been chosen as the written form, even if this was phonemically realized and rhymed as /-Vni/ in the language of the writer(s). Put differently, the writer(s) correctly inferred that the 1pl. prep. /-Vni/ consisted underlyingly of the morphemes of the 1pl. prep. ending //-Vmp// and the enclitic pronoun //-ni//. Accordingly, Middle Breton //entromp+ni// – realized phonemically as /entroni/ and rhyming as such – was still spelled <entrompny>. There is nothing particularly remarkable about this in a Middle Breton context. The same principle applies to the general lack of representation of the initial mutations. Even more to the point, the 1sg. inflected prepositions with an enclitic pronoun appear to show the same behaviour. Here we find the underlying 1sg. prepositional ending //-Vμ// + enclitic pronoun //me// represented in writing in J:

> Jpass. 54/1095. *Dre ouz eux guelet lem* ***guenef me***
>
> Jpass. 59/1194. *Disclaeryet, Autrou, prim* ***difme***

However, the rhyme indicates that the 1sg. prepositional ending and the enclitic personal pronoun had been assimilated to phonemic /-Vme/ in the language of the poet,[39] a fact not reflected in the spelling in J.[40]

9. The origin of the first person plural in /-Vni/

Having argued for the existence of /-Vni/ in 1pl. inflected prepositions with an enclitic pronoun, we may now turn to the origin of the form. How can we account for the apparent absence of the 1pl. prepositional ending *-mp* before the enclitic 1pl. pronoun *-ny*? We would expect /-Vmpni/, which is also the form consistently reflected in Middle Breton spelling. At first glance, it may

[39] Other texts provide direct spelling evidence for the assimilation: *dime* (B 768/4721, M 670) and *dyme* (M 694).

[40] J 45/923 *en reprim da credif difme* is formally ambiguous, but it is most parsimonious to assume that it behaves like the unambiguous cases, with the rhyme being between *reprim* and *di[]me*.

appear as if there was a phonemic reduction of *-m(p)n-* to *-n-*. Such a reduction would find a parallel in MBr *ganiuedenn* (Ca. 90), Early ModBr *caneueden*, *queneuen* (SCger. 8)[41] and ModBr *kanevedenn* 'rainbow', corresponding to OCo *camniuet*. This is often interpreted as consisting of **kam* 'crooked' followed by a derivative of **neμ* 'heaven' (Ernault 1888: 294; Henry 1900: 52; Deshayes 2003: 535).[42] If this etymology is accepted, it would show a reduction of **mn* to **n* in Proto- or Common Breton (see *NALBB* map 145 'rainbow', which shows no trace of /m/). This would imply that the 1pl. prepositions in /-Vni/ represent the regular outcome of **-Vm-ni*, and that forms in /-Vmpni/ (as seen in the Nl. and in Modern LTV Breton) arose through influence from the simple 1pl. form /-Vmp/, without an enclitic pronoun.

However, the etymology of *kanevedenn* is less secure than often assumed. While it might contain PBrit **kam* 'crooked', it is equally possible that Cornish *camniuet* was remodelled to contain *cam-* under the influence of this adjective. The second part,[43] which is most straightforwardly reconstructed as **-nɪβed* or **-nɪu̯ed*, is usually seen as a derivative of **neμ* 'heaven', but this interpretation poses significant phonological challenges.

That there was no general reduction of **mn* to **n* seems particularly likely given the clear evidence for the preservation of PBrit **mn* in MBr *amneseuc* (Cb., Cc.), *amnesec* (Cms., Ca.), only later reduced to *amesec* (Cb. fol. 21a/s.v. *cõtigu*, M 1003), ModBr *amezeg* 'neighbor', ultimately from PBrit **amnesɔg*.[44] As this example shows, PBrit **mn* was retained in the earliest attested Classical Middle Breton but was later reduced to *m*. In light of this, a regular reduction of *m(p)n* to *n* in Classical Middle Breton would be difficult to justify.[45]

9.1 An analogical explanation

There may be a way to explain the 'endingless' 1pl. forms in /-Vni/ that does not involve any actual sound change and thus does not conflict with the development of **amnesɔg* > MBr *amnese(u)c* > ModBr *amezeg*. Once we consider the system of inflected prepositions with an enclitic pronoun outside the 1pl., it becomes easy to see how forms in /-Vni/ could have arisen analogically. This will be illustrated by a selection of forms of *da* 'to' and *gant* 'with, by':

da 'to, for'	
1sg. /dime/	*difme* (Jpass. 59/1194, rhyme with *prim*), *dime* (B 768/4721, M 670), *dyme* (M 694)

[41]The dictionary sections of Maunoir's *Le sacré college de Iesvs*, ed. Le Menn (1996).

[42]Deshayes (ibid.) even opts for a Modern Breton spelling *kanneñvedenn*, despite the lack of evidence for nasalization of the second vowel. This is presumably due to the assumption that the word contains a derivative of *(n)eñv* 'heaven'.

[43]If that is how the word is to be segmented.

[44]Consisting of PBrit **am-* 'about, around', **nes* 'closer' and the suffix **-ɔg*.

[45]French loanwords with *m(p)n* contribute little to the question. While the cluster is preserved in, e.g., MBr *dampnaff* 'to damn' ← OFr. *dam(p)ner* < Lat. *damnāre*, such loanwords may have entered the language later than a reduction of **mn*, or may have been protected from sound change due to continued French influence.

2sg. /dide/	*dide* (B 380/2327, rhyme with *dellit*, B 30/178, 228/1382, etc.)
2pl. /dixu̯i/	*dihuy* (Jpass. 21/382, rhyme with *hardiz*), *dyhuy* (G 495, 969), *dichuy* (B 53/319, 85/513, etc.)
gant 'with, by'	
1sg. /geneme/	*guenef me* (Jpass. 54/1095, rhyme with *lem*), *guenеme* (Pm. (Trem.) 20/4915, rhyme with *lem*), *gueneme* (G 100, 101)
2sg. /genede/	*guenede* (Jres. 190/3871, B 312/1905), *gue[n]ede* (Nl. 118), *guen ede* (Jres. 216/4407)
2pl. /genexu̯i/	*gueneoch huy* (J 155/3195, rhyme with *lech*), *guynihuy* (Jpass. 104/2169, rhyme with *me*(?)), *guene[ch] huy* (B 511/3148, rhyme with *lech*), *guenechuy* (B 541/3325, rhyme with *lech*, G 57, rhyme with *lech*), *diguenech huy* (Jres. 221/4505, rhyme with *lech*)

These forms lend themselves to an analysis as combinations of an invariable stem (/di-/ or /gene-/) and the enclitic personal pronouns 1sg. /me/, 2sg. /de/, 2pl. /xu̯i/. In light of this, it is easy to see how new 1pl. forms /dini/ and /geneni/ may have been created by adding the 1pl. pronoun /ni/ to the perceived inflectional stem of the preposition.[46] This applies equally to the stem class in *-o-*, explaining the existence of the 1pl. /entroni/ 'among us', indicated by rhyme in Jpass. 70/1441.[47]

10. The Modern Breton distribution of the first person plural prepositions in /-Vni/

In Modern Breton, 1pl. prepositions in /-Vni/ are found only in Cornouaille,[48] according to the *ALBB* (maps 109,[49] 212[50] and 504[51]). However, this only shows the minimal extent of the distribution. It is generally difficult to use the *ALBB* to rule out the presence of a given form or feature at any particular location. This is especially true here, since prepositional forms with enclitic pronouns typically occur side by side with prepositional forms without enclitic pronouns.

[46] The analysis of these forms as consisting of a bare prepositional stem + independent pronoun has also led to the reverse analogy, whereby a suffixed form like ModBr *genemni* was reinterpreted as *gene-mni*, leading to the creation of a new independent 1pl. pronoun *mni* (as in Berrien, Ploneis 1983: 83). Naturally, some 1pl. verbal forms with a suffixed pronoun may also have played a part in this reanalysis.

[47] Although inflected forms of this particular preposition are restricted to the plural for semantic reasons.

[48] And conversely, forms in [-m(p)ni] are rare in Cornouaille, but usual in the other dialects.

[49] *da*: pt. 36 [ˈdõni], 44 [ˈdini], 49 [ˈdõni], 55 [ˈdini], 56 [ˈdɛni].

[50] *gant*: pt. 44 [gʲeˈneni], 56 [geˈnõnɪ].

[51] *(di)ouzh*: pt. 49 [duɥiˈtõ ni].

In principle, any *ALBB* point that records only 1pl. forms without an enclitic pronoun could also have forms in /-Vni/, which simply happen not to have been documented by Le Roux. Nevertheless, it is probably safe to conclude that 1pl. forms in /-Vni/ are concentrated in Cornouaille[52] and are very rare outside that region.[53]

We should also keep in mind the possibility that forms in /-Vni/ may have been more widespread earlier. Forms in /-Vm(p)ni/ could easily have been restored on the basis of the prepositions without an enclitic, which will always have been /-Vm(p)/ in Middle and Modern Breton.[54] Nevertheless, if the modern distribution of forms in /-Vni/ is projected back onto the Classical Middle Breton period, it would suggest an interesting conclusion: that J presents an *innovation* – the creation of a 1pl. preposition in /-Vni/ – closely associated with Cornouaillais Breton. The same appears to hold for B, although this rests on a single rhyming attestation.

If we understand the rhyming evidence for a 1pl. in /-Vni/ as reflecting a dialectal feature, this would point toward a Cornouaillais origin of the texts using this form. However, this is not the only possible conclusion. Even if /-Vni/ is accepted as a dialectal form, its presence does not necessarily mean that the texts in which it appears consistently represent that dialect. It is conceivable that poets had access to multiple dialectal forms. If so, it would be easy to understand why /-Vni/ might have been preferred over /-Vm(p)ni/ in poetry: rhymes with /-Vni/ are far easier to construct, making it the more attractive option – other things being equal. To argue convincingly for a Cornouaillais origin of any given text, we would need to identify additional features pointing in that direction, and confirm that there is little or no evidence contradicting the hypothesis. That work remains to be done.[55]

[52]This picture is supported by the appearance of reduced forms in dialect descriptions from Cornouaille (sometimes alongside unreduced forms), e.g.:

Berrien: ['dɛni] *deomp-ni*, [gəˈnɛni] *ganeomp-ni* (Ploneis 1983: 155–6).

Plozévet: /doˈhuːniŋ/ *(di)ouzhomp-ni*, /niˈmjuniŋ/ *nemedomp-ni*, /ˈvjuːniŋ/ *evidomp-ni* (Goyat 2012: 256–64).

Saint-Yvi: /döɥiˈtônék/ *(di)ouzhimp-ni* (Gary German *apud* Heusaff 1996: 82).

Scrignac: [gəˈnɛˑni] *ganeomp-ni*, [dœˈhwɛˑni], [dœˈwɛːni] *(di)ouzhimp-ni*, [(e)vɛlˈdɛˑni] *evel-domp-ni* (Lozac'h [2024]: 104, 240, 605).

[53]There is also limited evidence for a reduced form in the dialect of the western Léonais island of Ouessant; see Loth (1895: 202, fn. 1) and, more recently, Madeg (2023: 157), who gives [gãˌnœˌni] alongside [gãnõmˌni], [ˌganeˌõmni] *ganeomp-ni*.

[54]Goyat (2012: 256–64) records a peculiar distribution in Plozévet (south-west Cornouaille) between reduced and non-reduced 1pl. suffixed forms. Unreduced forms appear in /ˈdõmniŋ/ (*deomp-ni*) 'to us' and /gaˈnõmˌniŋ/ (*ganeomp-ni*) 'with us', while reduced forms are found in /doˈhuːniŋ/ (*(di)ouzhomp-ni*), /niˈmjuniŋ/ (*nemedomp-ni*) and /ˈvjuːniŋ/ (*evidomp-ni*). The distribution may relate to the corresponding 1sg. forms. The suffixed 1sg. /ˈdime/ (*din-me*) and /gaˈniˌme/ (*ganin-me*) differ in the thematic vowel and thus offer little paradigmatic support for a reduced 1pl., making it likely that the 1pl. forms were remodelled after the forms without enclitics, /dõm/ (*deomp*) and /gaˈnõm/ (*ganeomp*). By contrast, the other prepositions show a 1sg. in /-ume/ (/doˈhume/, /niˈmjume/, /ˈvjume/), analysable as /u/ + /me/, which provides paradigmatic support for a corresponding 1pl. plural in /u/ + /niŋ/. These reduced 1pl. forms were therefore retained rather than being remodelled on the 1pl. forms without enclitics, /doˈhuõm/ (*(di)ouzhomp*), /niˈmitõm/ (*nemedomp*) and /ˈvitõm/ (*evidomp*).

[55]As argued in Widmer and Jørgensen (2011: 7–30), there is a case for viewing *An Buhez*

11. Spelling evidence for a first person plural in /-Vni/

It could be argued that the connection between a possible Middle Breton 1pl. ending in /-Vni/, indicated only through rhyme and never in spelling, and modern dialectal forms found at five points in the *ALBB* is tenuous at best. However, we do have direct and relatively early textual evidence for the reduced variant /-Vni/. In the *Cantic spirituel en enor d'an Autrou St. Julian* (CJul.; see Giraudon 2007), a canticle from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century with a pronounced eastern Cornouaillais flavour, we find a 1pl. *dini* 'to us', corresponding to Middle Breton *dimpny*:

CJul. 3.25–6. *Itron mar gousoc'huimedi,*
En han Doué leret dini

'Lady, if you know where he is,
In God's name, tell us'

It is likely that further instances of 1pl. <Vni> can be found in Modern Breton texts with significant Cornouaillais influence. The single attestation in CJul. confirms that the reduced form goes back at least to the Early Modern Breton period, making it entirely plausible that the feature was already present in Classical Middle Breton. The absence of any indication of a 1pl. ending /-Vni/ in Late Middle Breton may be attributed to the emerging northern dialectal bias in that period and/or the morphophonemic nature of the spelling system.

11.1 Old Breton first person plural prepositions in <Vnni>

A few Old Breton 1pl. prepositional forms with enclitic pronouns may be relevant to the discussion. We find OBr *contenni*[56] and *centenni*[57] 'with us', corresponding to MBr *guene(o)mpny* (*gant* 'with'), and *cemintronni* 'between us', corresponding to MBr *entrompny* (*entre* 'between').[58] The consistent spelling with <Vnni>, indicating a 1pl. /-Vnni/, suggests that these forms are not connected to the Middle Breton forms in /-Vni/ and their Modern Breton descendants. Rather, the Old Breton forms directly continue the inherited Proto-Brittonic 1pl. ending **-Vnn*[59] < PCelt **-V-snV-*, and are not the result of a reduction

Sant Gwenôlé (G) as representing the eastern Cornouaillais dialect of the time. This conclusion, however, rests on a broader evaluation of the linguistic features of the text, rather than on any single trait. Moreover, the language of G is probably somewhat later than that of J and B, meaning that more distinctive dialectal features had developed by the time G was composed. This makes a dialectal identification much easier.

[56]Angers, Bibl. Mun. 477, fol. 65a. See Fleuriot (1964b: 117) and Bauer (2008: 45).

[57]Angers, Bibl. Mun. 477, fol. 67a. See Fleuriot (1964b: 102) and Bauer (2008: 45).

[58]Angers, Bibl. Mun. 477, fol. 49a. This interpretation follows Lambert (1984: 188–9), who sees the form as a 1pl. /kəɥntronni/, consisting of **kəɥ-* 'with', **ɪntronn* 'between us' and **ni* 'us'.

[59]This is regularly reflected in the 1pl. prepositional ending in Early Middle Welsh *-n* and Middle Cornish *-n* (see Sims-Williams 2012: 11–14); compare the Old Irish 1pl. prepositional ending *-n(n)* (Thurneysen 1946: 272). The same ending probably survives in the Middle Breton adverb *ahanan(n)* /ahanann/, *ahanen(n)* /ahanenn/ and ModBr *ac'hann* 'from here' < OSWBrit 1pl. **ahanann* 'from us' (cf. MCo *ahanan* 'from us; from here'). The rhyming behaviour of *ahanan(n), ahanenn* and the fronting and raising of unstressed *-ann* > *-enn* clearly demonstrate that we should reconstruct /-nn/ for this morpheme for Proto-Brittonic (see Jørgensen 2024: 147).

of *-*Vmpni*. The Proto-Brittonic 1pl. *-*Vnn* was replaced before the Classical Middle Breton period by *-Vmp*, taken from the verbal system. The Middle Breton 1pl. /-Vni/ and its Modern Breton reflexes most likely derive from the usual MBr /-Vmpni/, by the analogy outlined above in §9.1.

12. The 'thematic' vowel

If we accept that the 1pl. prepositional forms of *da* and *gant* with an enclitic pronoun in J were in fact /deni/ and /geneni/, a few issues remain to be clarified. The proposed forms display a 'thematic' vowel /e/ before the zero ending and the suffixed pronoun, in contrast to the transmitted spelling of J, which consistently shows *deompny*, *gueneompny* with <eo>. However, this discrepancy is not insurmountable. Regardless of whether the development from *-Vm(p)ni* to *-Vni* occurred via sound change (§9) or analogy (§9.1), the forms /deni/ and /geneni/ posited here would likely derive from earlier forms in *-empny*, rather than the *-eompny* we find written. Such forms in *-empny* are in fact directly attested in spelling, though not in rhyme, as in *guenempny* (Jres. 228/4648, Pm. (Trem.) 119/5314). These, in turn, are built on suffixless forms in *-emp*, such as *guenemp*, which appears in a non-obligatory rhyme with *pe̲m̲dez* (G 214). In the case of *gant*, the forms in /-em(p)/ and /-em(p)ni/ are most likely older than those in /-eom(p)/ and /-eom(p)ni/. The preposition *gant* forms its own inflectional class, with a stressed vowel /e/ between the prepositional root allomorph /gen-/ (for expected /gent-/) and the personal endings. Thus, /geneni/ ← **genem(p)-ni* is entirely unremarkable, and the consistent spelling <eo> in J may simply reflect a later modernization.

The situation is more complicated in the case of /deni/, which is consistently spelled <deompny> in J. Neither **demp(ny)* – which appears to be unattested in Classical Middle Breton, at least in the poetic corpus[60] – nor *deomp(ny)* reflects the original form. The inherited 1pl. form of *da* is *dimp(ny)*, whose vocalism corresponds to OIr *dúnn* (< PCelt **dū-snV-*; see Schumacher 2012: 366, n. 9). The attested MBr *deomp(ny)* is therefore most likely analogical, based on *gueneomp(ny)*.[61] This, in turn, suggests that the form **demp(ny)* may have been created on the basis of *guenemp(ny)*.

Alternatively, it is possible that the form **demp*, with a thematic vowel /e/, derives from an earlier *deomp* (itself replacing *dimp*). A parallel may be found in the development of MBr *deomp*, the 1pl. imperative of *monet* 'to go', which is reduced to *demp* in, for example, B 42/250, 43/258, 369/2252 and 804/4944.

[60] Nl. 418 *Da digacc lem eo deuet deompny* is most likely to be read as having /dem(p)ni/, providing indirect evidence for the form. In addition, the corresponding analogical 2pl. *dech* is directly attested in J 126/2615. *Mar fell dech glan breman en bet*, though this instance is not secured by rhyme.

[61] The origin of the diphthong *-eo-* in *gueneomp* and *gueneoch* remains unclear, along with the irregular final stress in the first- and second-person forms of this preposition. It is possible that the diphthong originates in the 2pl., where both Middle Welsh and Middle Cornish show diphthongization (perhaps *-*Vu̯x* from *-*Vxu̯* < *-*V-su̯V-*?). If so, we would expect *guenemp* (and by extension **demp*) to be the older form, with *gueneomp* arising in analogy with *gueneoch*.

In Modern Breton, the 1pl. imperative form *dem(p)* is found across much of K and T (*ALBB* map 469), while *deomp* is primarly attested in L.

In Modern Breton, forms corresponding to MBr **demp(ny)* 'to us' are fairly widespread, appearing across parts of Cornouaillais, Vannetais and western Trégorrois (*ALBB* map 109). These forms may have been even more common earlier, as large parts of Cornouaillais and Vannetais have generalized the 1pl. ending *-omp* (i.e. *domp* 'to us'), following the productive *o*-thematic class. This shift to the *o*-class is likely to have been a later development and *domp* may have replaced an earlier form **demp* in many places.

There is nothing unusual about an inflected preposition having a thematic vowel that is spelled in one way but rhymes in another. Both *gant*[62] and especially *da* show considerable variation in their thematic vowels in Middle Breton, and mismatches between spelling and rhyme are frequent. For example, J uses <dihuy> for the 2pl. form of *da* with an enclitic pronoun, but this does not appear to have any close correlation with the phonology. In obligatory rhyming position, <dihuy> rhymes as /dixu̯i/ twice (Jpass. 21/382 and Jpass. 49/987), /deoxu̯i/ twice (Jpass. 73/1487 and 118/2442(?)) and /dexu̯i/ once (Jpass. 154/3181). Similarly, B consistently spells the 2pl. form of *da* with an enclitic pronoun as <dihuy>, but in obligatory rhyming position it rhymes as /deoxu̯i/ (B 201/1221 and 217/1316). In light of such variation, the interpretations proposed above – for instance, reading B 371/2271 *Tau, Riualen, pe laz* ***dimp ny*** as *Tau, Riualen, pe laz* ***d[e]ny***, with the thematic vowel /e/ – seem entirely unremarkable.

13. Conclusion

The rhyming evidence for 1pl. prepositions with an enclitic pronoun suggests that, at least in J and B, such forms should not be read as /-Vm(p)ni/, but rather as reduced forms in /-Vni/. These 1pl. forms in /-Vni/ probably arose through analogy, based on the 1sg. /-Vme/, 2sg. /-Vde/ and 2pl. /-Vxu̯i/, being reanalysed as consisting of a bare inflectional stem in /-V-/ followed by enclitic personal pronouns. Following this pattern, a new 1pl. in /-Vni/ was created.

The 1pl. form in /-Vni/ is strongly associated with modern-day Cornouaillais dialects, and its presence in J (and to a lesser extent in B) may reflect a dialectal feature. If interpreted in this way, it would point to a contrast with Nl., which shows rhyming evidence for /-Vm(p)ni/.

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[62] For a collection of the inflected forms of *gant* in Middle Breton and Vannetais, see ar Menn (2009).

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DÁNTA LE MAOL EACHLAINN NA NUIRSGÉAL Ó HUIGINN (1): *MEISDE MH'INMHE MH'FHAD Ó SHAIDHBH*[1]

Abstract

This article presents an edition of a poem composed in honour of Sadhbh, daughter of Conchobhar Ó Briain, who died in 1410. It includes a discussion of the poet, patron, subject matter, and literary aspects of the poem. Beginning *Meisde mh'inmhe mh'fhad ó Shaidhbh*, the poem represents an important example of praise of women and also addresses questions of patronage and identity.

Réamhrá

1. An file

Maol Eachlainn 'na nUirsgéal' Ó hUiginn a chum an dán atá in eagar anseo.[2] Ceann de dheich gcinn de dhánta é seo atá tagtha anuas chugainn ón bhfile céanna.[3] Is le linn na tréimhse *c.* 1399/1400–1444 a cumadh dánta leis ar féidir dáta a chur leo. De réir a thuairisce féin, is i gCo. Shligigh a oileadh é agus dealraíonn sé go raibh cónaí air i gCo. Ros Comáin. D'fheidhmigh sé mar ollamh flatha don bhrainse de Í Chonchobhair a chónaigh i gCo. Shligigh. Léiríonn an forshloinne 'na nUirsgéal' gur bhain an file cáil amach, agus go raibh scil aitheanta aige, i ndréachtadh na n-*uirsgéal* liteartha, cé nach ngabhann *uirsgéal* le gach dán leis an bhfile atá tagtha slán (an dán seo san áireamh). Ach is gnách go gcuireann sé comparáid(í) ar bun le pearsain liteartha nó stairiúla má bhíonn *uirsgéal* in easnamh.

2. Ábhar an dáin

Is in onóir don bhanphátrún Sadhbh, iníon Uí Bhriain (†1410) a cumadh an dán. Bhí Sadhbh pósta le duine de Bhúrcaigh na Mumhan, Bháitéar mac Risdeard, a raibh cónaí air i gCo. Thiobraid Árann (r. 3*b*).

Tá dhá chomhairle á meá ag Ó hUiginn sa dán tríd síos: (i) bheith in éineacht le Sadhbh i gCúige Mumhan nó (ii) fanacht ina dhúthaigh i gConnachta. Tá an dán roinnte i gcodanna a gcuirtear i láthair iontu: (i) cruachás an fhile (rr. 1–5);

[1]Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil le heagarthóirí *Celtica*, leis an té a léigh an t-alt seo faoi rún agus leis na daoine a ghlac páirt i seimineár ar an dán i Scoil an Léinn Cheiltigh, Institiúid Ard-Léinn Bhaile Átha Cliath.

[2]Féach cuntas ar an bhfile in Ó Riain (2022: 97–8).

[3]Tá dánta leis in eagar in Ó Riain (2008) (an dán seo san áireamh), *DDána* uimh. 82, 88, 96, Breatnach (1986), agus Ó Raghallaigh (1938: 45–51). Leagtar dán eile air chomh maith, ach tá amhras ann i dtaobh an té a chum. Dán dar tús *Tuar feirge foighide Dé* é sin (eag. *PB* uimh. 25) agus Ó Cuív (1994: 191–212); déantar plé ar cheist an údair in Ó Riain (2008: 8–9).

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(ii) plé ar fhanacht sa Mhumhain (rr. 6–10); (iii) comparáid le Sadhbh, iníon Chuinn Chéadchathaigh (rr. 11–12); (iv) ginealach iníon Í Bhriain (rr. 13–15); (v) an dá chomhairle agus cinneadh an fhile fanacht i gConnachta (rr. 16–18); (vi) comparáid le filí eile chun tacú lena chinneadh (rr. 19–21); (vii) adhmholadh (rr. 22–34); (viii) caidreamh an fhile le Sadhbh agus cuairt uirthi á cur ar an méar fhada (rr. 35–6); (ix) rainn iargcomhairc (rr. 37–41).

Cé go ndéanann an file cur síos ar bheith in éineacht le Sadhbh agus ar imeacht uaithi i gcuid mhór den dán, cuirtear i láthair dúinn ina thús go bhfuil an file i bhfad óna phátrún agus go bhfuil sí á ghairm go dtí an Mhumhain (rr. 1, 3). Cur síos ar thamallacha a bhí caite aige in éindí léi roimhe seo atá sa dán mar sin, mar aon le freagra ar chuireadh ón bpátrún teacht ar cuairt chuici. Is cosúil go bhfuil an file ag tabhairt le fios go mbainfidh sé Sadhbh amach tráth éigin, ach go mbeidh tamall ann sula n-éireoidh leis é sin a dhéanamh.[4]

Tá cosúlachtaí áirithe ó thaobh stíle agus ábhair de ag an dán seo le dánta eile ina meáitear comhairle faoi fhanacht ag pátrún nó imeacht uaidh (nó a mhalairt de chás).[5] Blúire eile a théann i gcosúlacht leis ná an dán dar tús *Fuaras aisgidh gan iarraidh* mar a dtugann an file le fios nach n-éireoidh leis cuairt a thabhairt ar a phátrún (tar éis dó duais a fháil uaidh gan iarraidh sa chás sin).[6]

I measc na bpríomhthéamaí is féidir a aithint sa dán, tá: (i) an saibhreas agus an grá atá ag Sadhbh don fhile (flaithiúlacht an phátrúin agus na duaiseanna atá aici don fhile; caidreamh na beirte lena chéile); (ii) 'dúthchas' agus 'andúthchas' (dúthaigh an fhile i gConnachta i gcodarsnacht le háit chónaithe an phátrúin i gCúige Mumhan; ceangal ginealais idir an bheirt agus idir an dá cheantar); (iii) comparáidí (le hiníon Chuinn Chéadchathaigh agus le filí eile) agus (iv) moladh ar thréithe na mná.[7]

De bhreis ar an leagan amach is féidir a aithint ó thaobh ábhair agus téamaí de, tá gnéithe eile ag baint le comhdhéanamh an dáin mar atá: (i) an t-athrá agus (ii) úsáid na n-uimhreacha. (i) Déantar athrá ar fhocail atá dlúthcheangailte le téamaíocht an dáin (nó luaitear focal gaolmhar), focail iad sin a bhaineann le: fad, gluaiseacht (nó gan ghluaiseacht), treo, maoin agus dúchas.[8] (ii) Luaitear

[4]Féach an aimsir fháistineach agus an modh foshuiteach i rr. 1, 6, 10. Baintear úsáid as an aimsir ghnáthchaite i r. 3 (ag tagairt do chuairteanna roimhe seo) agus as an ngnáthláithreach i rr. 8–9, 17–18 (ag tagairt don nós atá ag an bhfile cuairt a thabhairt ar an bpátrún ar bhonn rialta, is dócha).

[5]Mar shampla, na dánta dar tús: *Cionnas do fhúigfinnse Aodh* (Cú Chonnacht Ó Dálaigh), eag. Breatnach (1989); *Ionmhuin teach ré ttugus cúl, LBranach* uimh. 47; *Ní doirbh go deaghuil na ccarad* (Maol Domhnaigh Ó Muirgheasáin), eag. Ó Riain (1970); *Atá cás comhairle im cheann* (do Bhrian na Múrtha Ó Ruairc †1591), RIA 2 (23 F 16), 213; *Atám i gcás idir dhá chomhairle* (Eochaidh Ó hEódhasa), eag. Knott (1957: 72–7) agus *DDána* uimh. 70. Pléitear an dán deireanach seo agus áitítear gurbh é Giolla Brighde Ó hEódhasa a chum in *DBM* II 110–1.

[6]*AithdD.* uimh. 29; féach rr. 7, 8, 13.

[7]Féach plé cuimsitheach ar na téamaí seo in Ó Riain (2022: 100–17).

[8]Ina measc: *fad(a)*/*cian* (rr. 1, 6), *anadh* (rr. 1, 6, 10, 18, 19), *triall* (1, 19), *imtheacht* (rr. 3, 9, 19), *teacht* (3, 21), *fágbháil* (rr. 7, 18), *fasdódh* (rr. 8–9, 15), *dola* (rr. 16, 18), *sgaradh* (18, 19, 35) (cf. *rochtain* (1), *céad míle* (4), *tréagadh* (21–2), *a-dtuaidh/thuaidh* (3, 21), *theas* (27)); *inmhe* (cf. *bronnta, ór, bó, seóid* etc. i rr 2–5 agus 7–9); (*an*)*dúthchas*/*dúthaigh* (rr. 11, 15–18, 21) (cf. r. 6: *clanna Cuinn*). Féach samplaí den *bhreacadh* i rr. 2, 13, 14, 26, 31 chomh maith. Tabhair faoi deara freisin go ndéantar macalla ar chuid d'fhocail lárnacha an dáin sna rainn iargcomhairc m.sh. *meisde*/*feirrde*,

uimhreacha éagsúla i gcaitheamh an dáin (nó tá siad le tuiscint).[9] I ngeall ar an ngné lárnach a bhaineann leis na huimhreacha sa dán, is féidir a áiteamh go bhfuil imeartas focal ar bun sa dán in úsáid an fhocail *tréidhe*, focal a bhfuil dhá chiall leis, mar atá 'tréithe' agus 'trí rud/tré'.[10]

3. An bhanphátrún

Tuairiscítear ar bhás phátrún an fhile, Sadhbh, iníon Uí Bhriain, sa bhliain 1410:

Sadb ingen Conchobair h. Briain uxur [sic] *Uater a Burc mortua est.*[11]

Tagraíonn an t-údar do ghinealach Shaidhbhe i ngiota tábhachtach i lár an dáin (rr. 13-15). Tarraingíonn an file ar dhá thuiscint anseo, ceann acu a bhaineann leis an tíreolaíocht agus ceann eile a bhaineann le cúrsaí ginealais. Bhí an tuiscint ann (1) go raibh an tír roinnte ina dhá leath, Leath Chuinn agus Leath Mhogha agus (2) gur shíolraigh formhór na dteaghlach i Leath Chuinn ó Chonn Céadchathach, mar aon le roinnt bheag teaghlach i Leath Mhogha. *Clanna Cuinn* a tugadh orthu sin (r. 6*c*). Is ó iníon le Conn Céadchathach a shíolraigh cuid de mhórtheaghlaigh na Mumhan, áfach, agus bhí ceangal ginealais idir an dá leath dá réir (féach plé ar iníon Chuinn Chéadchathaigh thíos). Is ar an ngné thuaisceartach seo (*Leath Chuinn*) de chraobh choibhneasa an phátrúin a dhíríonn an file chun cóngas gaoil idir a phátrún agus é féin a chur ar bun.[12] Ar thaobh na máthar a dhírítear chuige sin. Díol suntais í an bhéim a leagann an file ar an dá leath sa dán, rud a thugann méar ar eolas dúinn faoin tábhacht a samhlaíodh leis an dá leath ó thaobh na féiniúlachta de.[13]

Is féidir ginealach na mná a chur in úil mar atá sa tábla seo thíos bunaithe ar an dán agus ar théacs ginealais ar na Brianaigh (*Blogh de sheanchus Síol mBriain*) i measc foinsí eile.[14] Tá cló trom anseo ar na daoine a bhain le Leath Chuinn (ó thaobh ceantair nó ginealais de) agus cló iodálach orthu siúd a bhain le Leath Mhogha. Tá líne fúthu siúd a bhí lonnaithe i Leath Mhogha ach a bhain leis an ngrúpa ginealais Clanna Chuinn, agus tá líne dhúbailte fúthu siúd a bhain leis an gceantar Leath Chuinn, ach gan aon cheangal ginealais a bheith ag an teaghlach le Clanna Chuinn.[15]

d(h)earg(as), *leath*, *inmhe* agus *fuarrún* (bheith idir dhá chomhairle).

[9] Mar atá: dhá chomhairle, dhá leath na tíre, agus, faoi mar a fheicfimid, beirt sheanathair agus beirt sheanmháthair, beirt bhan á gcur i gcomparáid (an bhanphátrún agus iníon Chuinn Chéadchathaigh); trí ghlúin i nginealas an phátrúin; triúr filí; tréithe an phátrúin (trí cinn mar aon leis an gceathrú tréith); dathanna an phátrúin (trí cinn mar aon leis an gceathrú dath); ceithre/cúig ghné ar fad sa mholadh Tá na huimhreacha féin le fáil i rr. 9, 13. 14, 17, 21, 32, 33, cf. r. 24.

[10] Plé in Ó Riain (2022: 117–18).

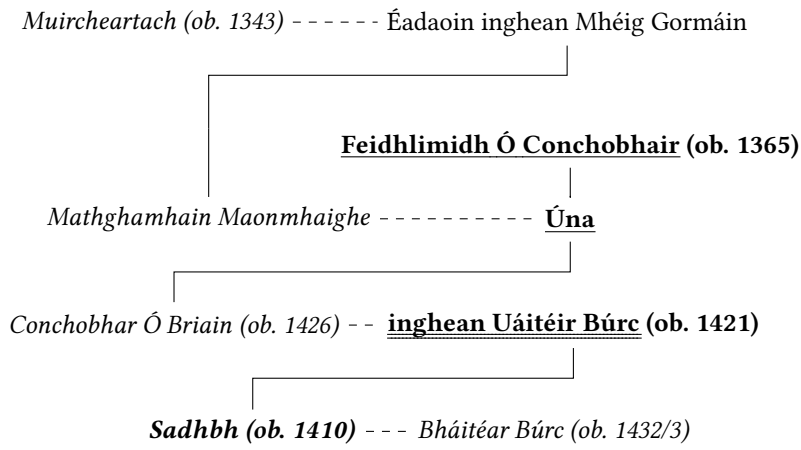
[11] *AC* (§10) s.a.; cf. *AFM* s.a. 1410: *Sadhb inghen Conchobhair Uí Briain ben Uater a Búrc do écc.*

[12] Ceanglaíonn an file an pátrún le haibhneacha i Leath Mogha (rr. 13*b*, 15*b*) i dtús an dáin, ach nuair atá dintúirí tuaisceartacha a phátrúin cinntithe ag an bhfile, ciallaíonn sé go bhféadfaidh sé í a cheangal le habhainn i dTír Eóghain (*an Mhodhairn* r. 25*d*). Maidir le hainmneacha aibhneacha á gceangal le pátrúin, féach *TD* I lvi, lix.

[13] Ó Riain (2022: 109–10).

[14] O'Grady (1929, I: 171–92). Déantar plé cuimsitheach ar an nginealas in Ó Riain (2022: 106–10).

[15] Ó Riain (2022: 107–9).



Luann an file sinsir agus grúpaí eile chomh maith le Leath Chuinn i ndeireadh an bhlúire ghinealais (14–15): Uilliam Búrc (agus na Gaill dá réir), Oirghialla (Colla) agus Laighin (sin-seanmháthair Shaidhbhe, inghean Mhéig Gormáin). Duine de shinsir Mac Gormáin é Fearghas Fortamhail, ardrí na hÉireann sa chianaimsir, atá luaite i r. 14*d*. Mar fhear a bhí i gceannas ar an dá leath den tír roimh aimsir Chuinn, bhí sé feiliúnach mar cheangal idir dhá leath na tíre.[16]

4. Dáta an dáin

Bhí athair Shaidhbhe, Conchobhar Ó Briain, ina rí ar Thuadhmhumhain ón mbliain 1399/1400 amach. Cuireadh as an ríocht é ar feadh tamaill sa tréimhse 1409-10.[17] Ní fheilfeadh an teideal *inghean airdríogh Mumhan* (r. 4*b*) ná *inghean Í Bhriain* (rr. 9*a*, 27*a*, 33*a*, 35*b*) do Shadhbh le linn an ama sin, is dócha. Bíodh is gur fhill athair Shaidhbhe ar an ríocht sa bhliain 1410 agus bhí ina rí go dtí go bhfuair sé bás ina sheanfhear sa bhliain 1426, cailleadh Sadhbh sa bhliain 1410. Dá réir sin, is féidir an dán a shuíomh sa tréimhse 1399/1400-1409.[18]

5. Caidreamh an fhile lena phátrún

Labhraíonn an file in *Meisde mh'inmhe* ar Shadhbh i dtéarmaí ar gnách iad a úsáid i dtaca leis an gcaidreamh idir an t-ollamh flatha agus a phátrún, mar atá *fearann saor* (r. 7*d*), *grádh* (r. 9*b*), *muirn* (r. 9*b*) agus *tréan* (r. 36*c*).[19] Tugann sé sin le fios go raibh dlúthchaidreamh eatarthu. Is dócha go raibh ceangal buan idir an bheirt go dtí gur cailleadh í ón uair go gcuireann rann iargcomhairc i ndán eile leis an bhfile céanna síos ar bhás Shaidhbhe.[20] I bhfianaise an dáin

[16] Ó Riain (2022: 108–9).

[17] *AC* (§2), *Annála Chluain Mhic Nóis* agus *AFM* s.a. 1399, *AU* s.a. 1400; *AFM* s.a. 1409, 1410; *AU*, *AFM* s.a. 1426.

[18] Féach freisin r. 39 n.

[19] Maidir leis na téarmaí seo, féach Breatnach (1983: 60–6, 42–5); idem (1997: 54). Féach samplaí dá n-úsáid ag tagairt do bhanphátrúin in Ó Riain (2022: 101–2 n. 15).

[20] *DDána* uimh. 82 r. 41 (tos. *Do bhriseas bhearnaidh ar Brian*).

seo againne, is cosúil gur caidreamh buan ach ócáideach a bhí ann, cineál caidrimh nach bhfuil mórán staidéir déanta air go dtí seo.[21]

6. Comparáidí

(1) *Sadhbh*
Cuireann Maol Eachlainn na nUirsgéal comparáid ar bun idir a phátrún, Sadhbh iníon Í Bhriain, agus iníon Chuinn Chéadchathaigh a raibh an t-ainm céanna uirthi (r. 11):

> Sadhbh inghean Chuinn dum chrích féin,
> fada ó andúthchas eisēin,
> mo bheith ag Saidhbh ar a sliocht
> dā reich a hainm ‘s a hoighreacht.
>
> ‘Sadhbh the daughter of Conn from my homeland, it is far from unnatural that I should be with Sadhbh through her descendant to whom (both) her name and legacy apply.’[22]

De réir na scéalaíochta, bhí Sadhbh pósta le hOilill Ólomm i gCúige Mumhan (tar éis di a bheith pósta le Maicniadh mac Luighdheach). Deirtear gur rug sí clann mhac d’Oilill, ach tagann na foinsí salach ar a chéile i dtaobh líon na clainne sin. Is gnách go luaitear seachtar mac léi agus deirtear nár mhair díobh ach triúr.[23] Áirítear gur uaithi a shíolraigh Eóghanachta, Cianachta agus Dál gCais.[24] Bhain muintir Bhriain leis an ngrúpa deireanach seo.

Áiríodh Sadhbh ar dhuine de na mná ab fhearr ar domhan.[25] Mar sin, ní beag mar chomparáid é gurb í Sadhbh, iníon Í Bhriain, an t-aon bhean amháin atá ionchomórtais léi, dar leis an bhfile (rr. 23–4):

> Ní rug acht ríoghan éigin
> do mhaicne meic Ceinnéidigh
> —gá bean díbh nach sloinnim soin?—
> oirrim ó rígh dá ríoghain.
>
> Bean éananma d’inghin Chuinn
> an ríoghan rug an urraim;
> tearc d’íbh Sadhbha acht slat Chaisil
> mac samhla na Sadhbhai-sin.

[21] Ó Riain (2022: 119).

[22] Duine de thriúr iníonacha Chuinn Chéadchathaigh í Sadhbh: *Trí hinghena Cuinn is croid / Maoin agus Sadhbh is Sáraid, / trí ríoghna Innse hEalga / millse gríobhdha gruaddearga* (IGT III 649) ‘Know that the three daughters of Conn are Maoin and Sadhbh and Sáraid, three sweet splendid ruddy-cheeked queens of Ireland [Aistriú an scríbhneora].’

[23] M. sh. O’Brien (1962: 192.147b36–9) (luaitear naonúr sna leaganacha den téacs atá in *LL* agus Leabhar Leacáin); ibid. (147b45) sa dán dar tosach *Clann Ailella Auluimb uill.*

[24] O’Daly (1975: 38 §1, 74 §1); cf. Meyer (1912b: 303.25–8). Áiríonn an Céitinneach gur óna mac Eóghan a shíolraigh Clann Charrthaigh agus Síol Shúilleabháin (*FFÉ* II 272); gur ó Chormac Cas a shíolraigh Dál gCais agus síol Aodha (.i. Clann Chon Mara agus síol Fhlannchuidhe) (ibid. 274); gur ó Chian a shíolraigh Ó Cearbhaill, Ó Meachair, Ó hEadhra, Ó Gadhra, Ó Cathasaigh agus Ó Conchobhair Ciannachta (ibid. 276).

[25] Ó Riain (2022: 110–11).

> 'Only a certain queen of the issue of Ceinnéideach's son earned the admiration of a king for his queen — which of their women do I not name? A woman of the same name as the daughter of Conn was the queen who earned this admiration; few of the descendants of Sadhbh, save the wand of Caiseal, are a counterpart of that Sadhbh.'

(2) *Filí eile*
I gcaitheamh an dáin, tagann an file ar an tuairim go mbainfidh sé a phátrún amach uair éigin ach go mbeidh air imeacht uaithi arís ar deireadh. Nuair atá a chinneadh déanta aige, luann sé beirt fhilí a tháinig roimhe is a bhí sa chás céanna leis féin chun tacú lena chinneadh. Leagann sé béim ar an drogall a bhí orthu imeacht ó na Brianaigh agus áiríonn sé é féin ina measc (rr. 19–21):

> Giolla Brighde, breitheamh sgol,
> ó chloinn Táil mar do thrialladh,
> dob é a sgaradh riú mo riocht
> dob fhiú anadh a imtheacht.
>
> Mac Liag mo leithéid oile:
> ō mhaicne Briain Bhóraimhe,
> uatha riamh ní raibhe ag dol
> nach biadh a aire ar anadh.
>
> Dūthchas thuaidh 'gan triar ollamh,
> ionann taobh dhá dtāngamar,
> ionann cridhe dháibh is damh
> fá fhine Tháil do thréagadh.
>
> 'Giolla Brighde, authority of schools, when he used to travel from the descendants of Tál, his parting with them was (as) my plight (is), to stay seemed as desirable as to go forth. Mac Liag was another like me: from the progeny of Brian Bóraimhe, from them he never went but that his mind dwelt on remaining. (We) three chief-poets have a northern birthright, the area we came from is the same, my feeling and theirs about forsaking the descendants of Tál is the same.'

Ón uair gur do shliocht Bhriain Bhóraimhe a thagraíonn Maol Eachlainn na filí seo, is dócha gur daoine iad a mhair am éigin idir an t-aonú haois déag agus ré Mhaoil Eachlainn féin.[26]

(i) *Giolla Brighde*
Ní heol dom ach beirt fhilí arbh fhéidir tagairt dóibh sa tréimhse seo a raibh Giolla Brighde mar ainm orthu, mar atá Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe agus

[26]Tugtar faoi deara, áfach, gur téarma níos scaoilte (*clann Táil*) é an téarma a úsáideann sé ag tagairt do Ghiolla Brighde agus don triúr filí le chéile (rr. 19*b*, 21*d*).

Giolla Brighde Albanach.[27] Ní móide gurb é Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe atá i gceist, áfach, ón uair nach bhfuil aon dán againn uaidh ag cur síos ar phátrúin taobh amuigh de Chúige Uladh agus Connachta.[28]

Tá dhá dhán againn ó Ghiolla Brighde Albanach a cumadh in ómós do Dhonnchadh Cairbreach Ó Briain (†1242): (i) *Aisling ad-chonnarc ó chian-aibh* ina ndeir an file gur taibhsíodh dó in aisling go bhfaca sé Donnchadh Cairbreach agus (ii) *Tabhraidh chugam cruit mo ríogh* ina moltar cláirseach a phátrúin.[29] Fuair Giolla Brighde Albanach pátrúnacht ó Chathal Croibhdhearg Ó Conchobhair (†1244) chomh maith, is cosúil.[30] Mar sin, d'fhéadfadh Maol Eachlainn na nUirsgéal a bheith ag tagairt anseo don taisteal a dhéanadh Giolla Brighde Albanach go Connachta nó go hAlbain ag fágáil Chúige Mumhan dó. Ní hamháin sin ach tá dánta againn ó Ghiolla Brighde Albanach ag cur síos air féin mar phalmaire a chuaigh ar oilithreacht, cás eile ina gcaithfeadh sé imeacht ó Chúige Mumhan b'fhéidir. Fágann na tagairtí seo go bhfuil Giolla Brighde Albanach feiliúnach le suíomh i gcomhthéacs na comparáide atá ar bun ag Maol Eachlainn na nUirsgéal.[31] Mar thacaíocht bhreise leis an áiteamh sin, is mar 'Ghiolla Brighde' (gan sloinne) a ainmnítear údar aitheanta i sraith deismireachtaí in UCD-OFM A 10 (f. 3r), faoi mar a dhéantar sa dán anseo, agus is dócha gur aon duine amháin é agus Giolla Brighde Albanach.[32]

(ii) *Mac Liag*

Is é Mac Liag an dara file atá ina ábhar comparáide ag Maol Eachlainn na

[27]Féach plé ar an mbeirt fhilí seo in Murphy (1943–4: 90–6) agus in *GBMCM* 1–2, 5; féach freisin plé ar Ghiolla Brighde Albanach in *DBM* II 327–30 agus McLeod (2004: 85–9, 176). Tá fianaise ar fhile darbh ainm Giolla Brighde Beag Mac Con Midhe freisin, ach tá sé curtha i gcás ag Brian Ó Cuív (1970: 195) gurbh ionann é siúd agus Giolla Brighde Albanach.

[28]Dealraíonn sé gur chaith Mac Con Midhe tréimhse ar deoraíocht i gConnachta, *GBMCM* 3–4; ach, gan amhras, níl aon cheangal le Clann Bhriain ar eolas againn.

[29](i) eag. McGeown agus Murphy (1953); (ii) eag. Walsh (1933: 113–15). Leagtar *Tabhraidh chugam cruit mo ríogh* ar Ghiolla Brighde Albanach i Leabhar Uí Chonchobhair Dhoinn, ach is ar Mhuireadhach Albanach atá sé leagtha in RIA 743 (A IV 3), 726. Deir an file sa dán gurb í Albain is *dúthchas* dó (Walsh 1933: 115 r. 13), rud nach dtagann le cúlra Mhuireadhaigh Albanaigh. Is ar Dhomhnall (mac Dáire) Mac Bruaideadha a leagtar an dán in MN M 107, 153, ach is cosúil gurb é is cúis leis sin ná meascán le dán dar tosach *Ceolchair sin, a chruit an ríogh* le Domhnall mac Dáire (eag. Walsh 1933: 111–13) atá breactha roimh an dán *Tabhraidh chugam* sa lámhscríbhinn chéanna.

[30]Féach n. 27 thuas.

[31]Tagraíonn Murphy (1943–4: 96 n. 1) don rann sa dán seo againne agus cuireann sé i gcás gur cur síos ar Ghiolla Brighde Albanach é agus ar a thaisteal ó Thuadhmhumhain go hAlbain; féach freisin *DBM* II 329 mar a nglactar leis gurb é Giolla Brighde Albanach atá i gceist sa rann. Ní miste a lua go bhfuil díospóireacht ar bun faoi cé acu arbh fhile Albanach nó Éireannach é Giolla Brighde Albanach, féach an plé is deireanaí ar an gceist in McLeod (2004: 85–9, 176). Deir file an dáin seo againne gur bhain *dūthchas thuaidh* le Giolla Brighde. Is cosúil gurbh fhéidir an dobhriathar suímh *thuaidh* a thagairt d'Albain mar a dhéanann Maol Domhnaigh Ó Muirgheasáin, Ó Riain (1970: 53 r. 14*c*). Tugtar faoi deara, áfach, gurb iad *soir* / *anoir* agus *thall* na dobhriathra treo agus suímh is minice a úsáidtear i gcás na hAlban, ibid. 53 r. 17, *AithdD.* uimh. 29 rr. 13*a*, 26*a*, *d*, 27*a*.

[32]Mac Con Midhe (gan ainm baiste) a thugtar ar Ghiolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe san fhoinse chéanna (f. 4v).

nUirsgéal. Deirtear go raibh Mac Liag mar ollamh ag Brian Bóroimhe.[33] Tá cur síos spéisiúil sa dán *Díleas gach éanduine a eidhreacht* ar chaidreamh ar leith a bheith ag Mac Liag le bean Bhriain Bhóroimhe.[34] Aithníodh é mar mhórfhile na Mumhan go háirithe:

> Do bhí ollamh an taoibh theas
> Mac Liag, oide na n-ēigeas,
> ina shuidhe a [g]Ceann Coradh,
> ceann uidhe na n-ollamhan.[35]
>
> 'The chief-poet of the south, Mac Liag mentor of poets, was seated in Ceann Coradh, the journey's end of poets [Aistriú an scríbhneora].'

Tá tuairiscí againn a chuireann síos ar thaisteal Mhac Liag timpeall na tíre.[36] De réir an dáin *Samhoin so, sodham go Tadg* a chuirtear i leith Mhac Liag, chaitheadh sé leathbhliain ag Brian Bóraimhe agus an leathbhliain eile i Leath Chuinn, ag Tadhg Ó Ceallaigh go háirithe.[37] Is é taisteal an fhile seo is ábhar d'*uirsgéal* sa dán *Dleaghar cunnradh do chomhall*.[38]

Tarraingíonn Maol Eachlainn na nUirsgéal ar na filí clúiteacha seo a bhí sa chás céanna leis agus samhlaíonn sé é féin leo ar bhealach éifeachtach a chuireann a chás féin i láthair.

7. An moladh

Sa chuid adhmholtach den dán (rr. 25–33), díríonn an file ar thréithe ar leith a luann sé leis an bpátrún, mar atá a huaisleacht (trí mheán a ginealais) agus a háilleacht mar aon lena cuid iompair (a tréithe agus a cuid flaithiúlachta go háirithe).

Insíonn an file dúinn gur thuill na tréithe sin Shaidhbhe meas di ó mhná na hÉireann (r. 27):

> Inghean Í Bhriain an bhairr thruim
> dá trēidhibh tugsad urraim,
> gé [a-]tá ar uirrinn don tír theas
> uirrim gach mná dhíbh dhligheas.

[33]Féach mar shampla *TD* I uimh. 14 r. 29, Meyer (1912a) 225 (r. 47) (*Samhoin so, sodham go Tadg*). Luaitear dátaí báis éagsúla le Mac Liag sna hAnnála mar atá: *Ann. Clon.* s.a. 1009, *Chron. Scot.* s.a. 1014, *AFM* s.a. 1015, *AU*, *ALC* s.a. 1016; cf. freisin Freeman (1924–7: §282) agus Best (1904: 102 §62). D'áitigh Colm Ó Lochlainn (1943: 42) nár phearsa stairiúil é Mac Liag ar chor ar bith. Féach go ndeirtear san *uirsgéal* a ghabhann leis an dán *Cionnas do roichfinn rí Oiligh* (eag. Ó Riain 2007) go raibh Mac Liag mar ollamh ag Niall Glúndubh Ó Néill († 919).

[34]RIA 1134 (23 E 29), 205.

[35]Carney (1945) uimh. 8 r. 31; cf. freisin *IF* uimh. 9 r. 21, uimh. 16 r. 97.

[36]Féach Best (1904: 94–5 §§49, 50).

[37]Meyer (1912: 222 r. 6). Is í an tréimhse ó Shamhain go Bealtaine a chaitheadh sé i Leath Chuinn a deirtear (ibid. 222 rr. 1, 8, 225 r. 47); is botún é *Bealtaine* (recte *Samoin*) in 225 r. 45*a* mar a léiríonn *samh* in r. 45*d* agus na rainn atá díreach luaite.

[38]Tá an dán tras-scríofa in Ó Macháin (1998: 36–42).

> 'They (i.e. Munsterwomen) have given homage to the daughter of Ó Briain who has luxuriant hair for her qualities; although she resides on the very tip of the southern land, she deserves each of its women's admiration.'

Ceann de na tréithe sin an phátrúin ná a cuid flaithiúlachta mar bhean de bhunadh na mBrianach (r. 22):

> Clann Táil nach tréigid filidh
> fuair uirrim gach éinchinidh;
> níor dhiall [re] féile a bhfionnbhan
> riamh acht tréidhe tighearnadh.
>
> 'The descendants of Tál, whom poets do not forsake, gained the admiration of every race; the generosity of their fair women can only be compared with kingly qualities.'

Tréith í sin a théann i gcosúlacht le tréithe na dtiarnaí nó na ríthe. Is cosúil go bhfuil Maol Eachlainn ag tagairt do na tréithe a shamhlaítear le hiompar an rí anseo, mar shampla i dtéacsanna gaoise, leithéidí *Tecosca Cormaic* agus *Senbríathra Fíthail*.[39] Téann flaithiúlacht na mban Brianach i gcosúlacht le flaithiúlacht na ríthe sin agus le tréithe eile nach iad, tréithe arb ionann iad agus na tréithe is fearr amuigh.

Tá an fhlaithiúlacht sin na mban Brianach ag Sadhbh i measc tréithe eile, mar atá *tlás, fos,* agus *féile* (r. 31):

> Tlás [is] fos agus féile,
> bheith d'fhearaibh ar éinchēile,
> tréidhe mhná glaicréidhe gaoil,
> baintréidhe a-tá gan tathaoir.
>
> 'Gentleness and steadfastness and modesty, (causing) men to remain with a single spouse, these are the traits of a smooth-handed kinswoman — female traits that are beyond reproach.'

Tréithe iad sin a shamhlaítear le mná maithe i dtéacsanna éagsula, ina measc an téacs gaoise *Senbríathra Fíthail* agus an scéal *Tochmarc Ailbi*.[40] Tá sampla eile i ndán dar tús *A fhir ná hiad dreich Temrach* i Leabhar Ua Maine:

> Tlās, fos is fēili go fīr,
> trēidi degmnā go ndegnīm
>
> 'Mildness, steadiness and hospitality, truthfully, are the characteristics of a good woman acting well'.[41]

[39] Bhí eolas ar na téacsanna seo sa tréimhse chlasaiceach mar a léiríonn tagairtí dóibh i ndán a chum Giolla na Naomh Mac Aodhagáin (†1309) dar tosach *Gabh mo chomhairle a mheic mhín*, eag. Ní Dhonnchadha (1989: 165 rr. 8, 10). Tá an tsuim chéanna in iompar an rí atá le feiceáil sna téacsanna gaoise le fáil sa séú haois déag sa dán *Mór atá ar theagasc flatha* a chum Tadhg mac Dáire, dán atá in eagar ó RIA 23 F 16 in Nic Cárthaigh (2013).

[40] Plé in Ó Riain (2022: 111–14).

[41] Breatnach (2023: 167 r. 27*ab*, 172). Féach freisin *O'Hara* uimh. 27 r. 7*a* (*ciall agus fos is féile*).

Cuireann na tréithe seo leis an bhflaithiúlacht agus le tréithe na dtiarnaí a luadh thuas, agus déanann moladh feiliúnach (i gcomhthéacs thuiscintí na haimsire) ar Shadhbh mar bhean mhór mhaith.[42]

8. An lámhscríbhinn

Is i lámhscríbhinn ón seachtú haois déag atá an dán tagtha anuas chugainn, mar atá RIA 743 (A IV 3), f. 684–8.[43] Is lámhscríbhinn í seo a bhfuil dánta le scoth na bhfilí le fáil inti, Muireadhach Albanach Ó Dálaigh, Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe agus Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh ina measc. Is cóip mhaith í den chuid is mó, ach tá truailliú dulta i gcion ar línte áirithe, mar atá rr. 3*c*, 6*c*, 18*b*, 30*c*, 31*a*, 32*c*. Tá *Meisde mh'inmhe* breactha roimh dhán eile le Maol Eachlainn na nUirsgéal dar tosach *Ní deireadh d'anbhuain Éireann* sa lámhscríbhinn.

9. Eagrán

Deibhidhe (dán díreach) meadaracht an dáin. Tá cóiriú déanta ar théacs na lámhscríbhinne ar na bealaí seo a leanas:

(i) tá macrain curtha isteach san áit nach bhfuil síneadh fada sa LS;
(ii) má tá séimhiú in easnamh sa LS, tá sé faoi chló iodálach sa chás gur séimhiú comhréire i dtús focal é (m.sh. 'mó is f*h*ada'); soláthraím os íseal é i ngach cás eile (m.sh. Mumhan (LS mum*an*), 'mh'fhad' (LS mhfad));
(iii) tá normalú déanta ar litriú na LS;[44]
(iv) tugtar léamh na LS i gcás aon athrú eile a dhéantar nó sa chás go bhfuil amhras ag baint le scaoileadh na nod;
(v) cuirtear leasuithe ar an téacs ar fáil idir lúibíní cearnógacha.[45]

[42]Plé in Ó Riain (2022: 112–14) agus idem (2025: 455).

[43]Féach cur síos ar an lámhscríbhinn ag Murphy agus Wulff (1936: 2258–64).

[44]Féach *TD* I, xciv–xcviii, agus Ó Riain (2025: 512). Maidir le: (i) litriu na réamhfhocal agus iad ceangailte leis an bhforainm sealbhach *-m*, féach *BST* 190.33–5, 213.31–3 (in éagmais aon treoir faoi fhoirmeacha de *do*, níor athraigh mé litriú na lámhscríbhinne i rr. 11*a*, 40*a*); (ii) urú neamhchlasaiceach ar lorg *nach* (bainte amach anseo), féach O'Rahilly (1932) 39–40; (iii) séimhiú a bhíonn ar thúschonsan ainm dhílis agus é sa ghinideach nuair a léirítear an t-athrú tosaigh sa LS (m.sh. re cloi*n*n chairthi*n*n i r. 18*d*); tá na hathruithe tosaigh tugtha chun rialtachta agam sna cásanna sin (m.sh. *re cloinn gCáirthinn*) cé go bhfuil fianaise ar luaineacht éigin i gcás ainmneacha dílse (Ó Riain 2017: 171); (iv) d'fhéadfaí ionannas gutaí a chur i bhfeidhm i siollaí neamhaiceanta agus síneadh meánach sna siollaí céanna, ach féach *IGT* V §140 (locht á fháil ar litriú dá leithéid i gcásanna áirithe ar a laghad; ba cheart an pointe deireanach a lua mar chuid den tráchtaireacht in Ó Riain 2025: 429); ní chuirtear a leithéid de litriú i bhfeidhm sa LS tríd síos ach an oiread; ba dheacair a áiteamh gur fianaise ar ghuta soiléir é litriú na LSS (seachas an síneadh féin sa siolla neamhaiceanta nó comhardadh súl), go háirithe agus an measc an céanna i litriú na ngutaí neamhaiceanta agus síneadh gairid ann (ní bhaineann le hábhar anseo thar a bhfuil san eagrán thíos ach -io/o/u- i rr. 8*d*, 12*d*, 17*c*, 24*b*, 25*b*, 27*b*, 33*c*, 40*b* sa LS; cf. uirre : sabhroin*n*i, bhanba : comu*r*dha i rr. 13*b*, 33*b*).

[45]Tá an dán tras-scríofa in McManus & Ó Raghallaigh (2010) uimh. 330, ach mar shampla i r. 35*b* tá 'inghion' na LS tras-scríofa mar 'righion' agus é á thuiscint mar 'ríoghan'. Féach freisin Ó Riain (2019a) 134, 139, 144 agus *passim*.

Téacs

1. Meisde mh'inmhe mh'fhad ó Shaidhbh
'na goire a-tá 'gár dtoghairm;
nī anabh gan triall dá toigh
giodh cian rabhar 'gá rochtain.

2. Mōr do bhronntaibh bheanas díom
m'fhad ó inghin an airdríogh;
lór linn agus lór damh-sa
ar mhill dā hór umam-sa.

3. Ar ceann a bó nó a brat ndonn
a-dtuaidh go Tiobraid Ārann
gémadh tráth do th[a]grainn teacht,
do ghnáth nī admhainn imtheacht.

4. Nī husa [io]ná bheith 'na mbun
ag inghin airdrīogh Mumhan
ar ceann séad an tíre theas
céad míle im cheann do chuireas.

5. Seóid do choigill fám chomhair
nī fhéad inghean Chonchobhair;
breith a harradh dāmadh áil
bheith 'na farradh ní foláir.

Aistriúchán

1. My prosperity is lessened by my distance from Sadhbh, she is summoning me to her side; I will not refrain from travelling to her house, although I may be some time in reaching it.

2. Many are the gifts that my distance from the daughter of the high-king deprives me of, all of her gold that she has lavished on me seems ample to me and is ample for me.

3. Although I resolved at times to come from the north to Tipperary for her cattle or her dark mantles, ordinarily I used not consent to leave.

4. It is as difficult as (*lit.* no easier than) being near them (i.e. riches) in the company of the daughter of the high-king of Munster (?); for the riches of the southern land, I have set my mind on [travelling] one hundred miles.

5. Conchobhar's daughter cannot store up treasures for me; if one wishes to take her wares, one must be by her side.

Malairtí

Ceannscríbhinn: máoileachloin*n* na nuirsgél; **1** *c* g*an d* gidh; **2** *b* ing*in c* ⁊; **3** *b* aduaidh] atuáith tiobr*aid c* thograin*n d* admhain*n* (= *ceartú os cionn na líne ar* <to…in>); **4** *a* mbu*n b* i*nghin* aird*r*igh muma*n d* im] u*m* chu*ri*u*s*; **5** *b* i*nghean c* harr*adh d* farr*adh*

6. Anfad feasda 'na farradh
mó is f*h*ada gur anamar;
[maith (?)] mh'āithcheódh ar chlannaibh Cuinn
dallaidh ar n-āithcheōl orainn.

7. Inghean chodhnaigh chloinne Táil
nī thiogfa fúinn a fágbhāil
ar bhuaibh laogh dá leanam dhī
is ar fhearann saor Saidhbhe.

8. Ní bhí an t-each ná an t-earradh sróill
aice acht ar fhuidheall mh'fhasdóidh
ná an cófra munba cead liom
ná an leag órtha ná an fhithcheall.

9. Inghean Í Bhriain do-bheir damh
grádh muintire is muirn dheóradh
– do-bhir gan im[dh]eacht ar mh'óidh –
ag sin dá inleacht mh'fhasdóidh.

10. Anfad agā haghaidh mhoill
– gach ubhall ar a abhaill –
fuil tréanChuinn 'na deala dhamh
le heala méarchuirr Mumhan.

6. I will stay henceforth by her side; I have delayed staying rather long; my reproach to (?) the descendants of Conn has good reason (?), it blunts my keen music.

7. I will not consider parting from the daughter of the champion of Tál's descendants, if I am to cleave to her for the sake of milch cows and their calves and land held free of exactions from Sadhbh.

8. She possesses neither steed nor silken garment, but only subject to the decision (?) that I remain, nor chest, unless I consent to it (i.e. remaining), nor gemstone nor *fidhcheall*-board.

9. The daughter of Ó Briain bestows on me (both) familial love and the affection of an outlander – she compels me to consider not leaving – those are the two devices for retaining me.

10. I will stay with her gentle countenance – every apple belongs on its tree – the blood of mighty Conn connects me with the swan of Munster of tapering fingers.

6 *b* as *c* mhaithcheódh coin*n d* dall*aidh*; **7** *a* i*nghean b* thiucfa; **8** *b* fhuighioll mhfasdóigh *c* munbá; **9** *a* i*nghean* br*í*ain *b* muin*n*tire dhéor*adh c* g*an* imte*cht* mhóigh *d* in*n*tle*cht* mhfasdóigh; **10** *a* hag*aidh c* tr*é*nchoin*n d* lé mhum*an*

11. Sadhbh inghean Chuinn dum chrích féin,
fada ó andúthchas eisēin,
mo bheith ag Saidhbh ar a sliocht
dā reich a hainm 's a hoighreacht.

12. Mná uaisle 'na héagmhais sin
do Leith C*h*uinn cóir a n-āirimh
uimpe ar-aon re hinghin [g]Cuinn,
nī gaol nach imdhigh orainn.

13. Leath Cuinn āirighim uirre
díbh máthair mhná Sabhrainne
– le sgoil dá tír do tháthaigh –
díbh soin a dhā seanmhāthair.

14. Fuil Cholla is comhfhogas dī
ó dhā sheanathair Shaidhbhe,
ó a bhfuil 'na [h]eanghlais dá fhíon,
is fuil Fhearghais an airdrīogh.

15. Fuil Uilliam Búrc an bha[i]rr thais,
ōr gh[e]in máthair mhná an Fhorghais,
agā brosdadh do bhí an fhuil
'gum fhosdadh dhí óm dhúthaigh.

11. Sadhbh the daughter of Conn from my homeland, it is far from unnatural that I should be with Sadhbh through her descendant to whom (both) her name and legacy apply.

12. Other noble women from Conn's Half (i.e. the northern half), in addition to the daughter of Conn, should also be mentioned as related to her (i.e. Sadhbh) – it is not a kinship that does not exist between us.

13. I number the mother of the lady of the Sabhrann as being from Conn's Half – she (i.e. Sadhbh) has united with a poet from her land – both her grandmothers are from there.

14. The blood of Colla is close to Sadhbh through both her grandfathers, through whom she is a mixture of two wines, as is the blood of Fearghas the high-king.

15. The blood of Uilliam Búrc of the soft hair from whom the mother of the lady of the Fergus is descended, that blood was inciting her to retain me from my homeland.

11 *a* i*nghean* choin*n* f*éin d* hoidhrio*cht*; **12** *b* l*eith* coin*n c* hing*in* choin*n d* imghidh; **13** *a* coin*n c* lé *d* seanm*athai*r; **14** *a* as *c* ffuil; **15** *a* uill*iam* bha*r*r

16. Tráth éigin d'aimhdheóin Shaidhbhe
'nar ndúthaigh dhá ndeachaim-ne,
badh cumhain é ar a fheabhas
mé i Mumhain ar mhuintearas.

17. Tugsad tiodhlaicthe Saidhbhe
mé i gcomhrag dhá chomhairle:
ciabh ghlúnchas 'gá ngabhaim port
is dúthchas chladhfhuinn Chonnacht.

18. Tig fúm gan a fágbhāil s[o]in;
tograim dol[a] go ar ndúthaigh;
beag nach anadh badh loinn linn
ag sgaradh re cloinn [g]Cāirthinn.

19. Giolla Brighde, breitheamh sgol,
ó chloinn Táil mar do thrialladh,
dob é a sgaradh riú mo riocht
dob fhiú anadh a imtheacht.

20. Mac Liag mo leithéid oile:
ō mhaicne Briain Bhóraimhe,
uatha riamh ní raibhe ag dol
nach biadh a aire ar anadh.

16. At some time, in spite of Sadhbh, if I return to my homeland, my soujorn in Munster among friends will be remembered, so wonderful was it.

17. Sadhbh's gifts have caused me to be caught in a conflict of two (opposing) counsels: the coiffured lady of elaborate pedigree with whom I reside, and (my) birthright of the ramparted land of Connacht.

18. I consider not leaving her; I resolve to go to my homeland; I would almost long to remain when parting from the descendants of Cáirtheann.

19. Giolla Brighde, authority of schools, when he used to travel from the descendants of Tál, his parting with them was (as) my plight (is), to stay seemed as desirable as to go forth.

20. Mac Liag was another like me: from the progeny of Brian Bóraimhe, from them he never went but that his mind dwelt on remaining.

16 *a* thsaidhbhe *c* ndhechaimne *d* mhuin*n*tioras; **17** *b* a gcomhrac *d* as; **18** *a* sin *b* dol gó *d* sgar*adh* chairthin*n*; **19** *b* thríall*adh* *c* dub; **20** *a* leithéid *b* bríain *d* mbíadh an*adh*

21. Dūthchas thuaidh 'gan triar ollamh,
ionann taobh dhá dtāngamar,
ionann cridhe dháibh is damh
fá fhine Tháil do thréagadh.

22. Clann Táil nach tréigid filidh
fuair uirrim gach éinchinidh;
níor dhiall [re] féile a bhfionnbhan
riamh acht tréidhe tighearnadh.

23. Ní rug acht ríoghan éigin
do mhaicne meic C[e]innéidigh
– [g]á bean díbh nach sloinnim soin? –
oirrim ó rígh dá ríoghain.

24. Bean éananma d'inghin Chuinn
an ríoghan rug an urraim;
tearc d'íbh Sadhbha acht slat Chaisil
mac samhla na Sadhbhai-sin.

25. Nī cinneadh d'inmhe orra,
ní dealbh 'na díol orrama,
do-bheir oirrim shíl Shaidhbhe
do choinnill mhín Mhodhairne.

21. (We) three chief-poets have a northern birthright, the area we came from is the same, my feeling and theirs about forsaking the descendants of Tál is the same.

22. The descendants of Tál, whom poets do not forsake, gained the admiration of every race; the generosity of their fair women can only be compared with kingly qualities.

23. Only a certain queen of the issue of Ceinnéideach's son earned the admiration of a king for his queen – which of their women do I not name?

24. A woman of the same name as the daughter of Conn was the queen who earned this admiration; few of the descendants of Sadhbh, save the wand of Caiseal, are a counterpart of that Sadhbh.

25. It is not by surpassing them in wealth or by (having) an appearance that merits admiration that the offspring of Sadhbh (i.e. the people of Munster) have cause to hold the smooth candle of the Mourne in esteem.

21 *a* thuaidh] thúaith oll*amh*; **22** *a* tt*r*eigid fil*idh* *b* éinchin*idh* *c* re] lé; **23** *b* m*e*ic cin*néid*igh *c* cá *d* ríog*ain*; **24** *a* choin*n* *d* m*a*c; **25** *c* uirrim *d* chuin*n*ill

26. Ní huaisle 'na [h]adhbhar g*h*ill
do-bhéaradh aice an uirrim,
gé fhuair-se a bruinneadh ó Bhrian
is tuilleadh uaisle ó Uilliam.

27. Inghean Í Bhriain an bhairr t*h*ruim
dá trēidhibh tugsad urraim,
gé [a-]tá ar uirrinn don tír theas
uirrim gach mná dhíbh dhligheas.

28. Dá rabh ar ríoghnaibh Banbha
luighe re [a] lucht ealadhna,
ní badh coimhmionna dhí is dáibh
ar tí a n-oirrioma d'fhaghāil.

29. Dá mbeith gach aoinbhean aca
ar seachna dhámh ndeórata,
ní léig mac deóraidh gan díol
an tslat d'fheólfhuil na n-airdrīogh.

30. Dá dtugadh mar nach tabhair
eiteach ar gach ollamhain,
a-tá a [cleith] d'airdhibh oile
'gár gcleith shaidhbhir Shadhbhai-ne.

26. Nobility is not the grounds for excellence that would win admiration for her, although she was refined by Brian and inherited further nobility from Uilliam.

27. They (i.e. Munsterwomen) have given homage to the daughter of Ó Briain who has luxuriant hair for her qualities; although she resides on the very tip of the southern land, she deserves each of its women's admiration.

28. If the queens of Banbha had to sleep with their poets, she (i.e. Sadhbh) and they (i.e. the queens) would not be equally prominent in obtaining their (i.e. the poets') esteem.

29. Even if each of those women were to shun companies of outlanders, the scion of the flesh and blood of the high-kings does not permit the son of (such) an outlander to go unrewarded.

30. Even if she refused all poets – which she does not – my prosperous mainstay, Sadhbh, has other hidden qualities (?).

26 *c* fúairsi b*r*uin*neadh* b*rí*an *d* tuill*eadh* uill*iam*; **27** *a* i*nghean* t*r*uim *b* tugs*a*t; **28** *b* luidhe ré eal*adh*na *c* coi*mh*mion*n*a dfag*ail*; **30** *a* ttug*adh* ttabhair *c* cleith] cheilt dairrdhibh

31. Tlás [is] fos agus féile,
bheith d'fhearaibh ar éinchēile,
tréidhe mhná glaicréidhe gaoil,
baintréidhe a-tá gan tathaoir.

32. Gile, diorga, agus duibhe,
trí datha ó mBriain Bhóraimhe,
fuair go gcaolach ndata ndearc
gach aondath aca i n-aoineacht.

33. Fuair inghean Í Bhriain Bhanbha
an ceathramhadh comhardha:
ríoghan osgardha Uisnigh,
rosggurma san ríoghain-sin.

34. A díthcheall dána molta
is agam badh ionganta
's a feabhas le [a] fear páirte,
bean dár bheanas bótháinte.

35. Gen go ngabhadh geis oile
inghean Í B*h*riain Bhóraimhe,
mar do sgéaradh sinn re Saidhbh
a-déaradh gan inn d'iarghairm.

31. Gentleness and steadfastness and modesty, (causing) men to remain with a single spouse, these are the traits of a smooth-handed kinswoman – female traits that are beyond reproach.

32. White, red and black are the three colours of the descendants of Brian Bóraimhe; she has received each of these colours side by side, along with an attractive eye-wattling.

33. The daughter of Ó Briain Bhóraimhe received a fourth sign: the august queen of Uisneach has blue eyes.

34. It would be surprising for me to have a fitting eulogy for the woman, so esteemed by her companion, from whom I took herds of cattle.

35. Although the daughter of Ó Briain Bhóraimhe would commit no other transgression, when I would part with Sadhbh, she would ask not to have me recalled (?).

31 *a* is] *om.* agus] ⁊ *c* glaicr*éidh*e; **32** *a* ⁊ *c* gcaolach] gcláolach; **33** *b* ce̲thram*adh*; **34** *b* as *c* sa lé; **35** *a* Gén oíle *b* bríai*n* *c* ré

36. Mo chuid do chlannaibh Sadhbha
Sadhbh inghean mheic M*h*athghamhna,
tréan 'gá súil mhongfhabhraigh mē
tnúidh ar ollamhnaibh uime. Meisde

37. Feir[r]de le fearaibh Uladh,
m[e]isde le mnáibh fionnMhumhan,
céim lé mbéara thoir ar thréan
a-moigh do-bhéara Bháitēar.

38. Iomdha i Leith C*h*uinn na gcuach ndearg
do mhainéara, a mheic Risdeard,
biaidh an leath-sa i ndeighriocht dhē
badh leat-sa eighreacht th'aicme.

39. Feir[r]de mh'inmhe mh'fhaicsin dó
Mac Domhnaill dheargas caolghó,
lámh ón meince cneadh c*h*roidhe
fear teilgthe na táthlaimhe. Meisde

40. Croch Dhé dum dhídean orra,
truagh ar n-inmhe eatarra,
ar bhfuarrūn is ar bhfearg thē
nī sealg ar nuamhūr nimhe.

36. Sadhbh the daughter of Mathghamhain's son is my share of the children of Sadhbh (i.e. most of the people of Munster); I hold sway with her thickly lashed eye, poets are envious thereby.

37. All the better for the men of Ulster, all the worse for the women of bright Munster, is a situation whereby he will gain power in the east – this will bring Bháitéar out (of Munster).

38. Numerous are your manors in Conn's Half of the red goblets, o son of Risdeard; this half will be in good stead owing to this, your race's inheritance will be yours.

39. My prosperity is improved by my being noticed by Mac Domhnaill who bloodies slender spears; the hand that most frequently deals fatal wounds, he the caster of the sling-stone.

40. May the Crucifix protect me from my ineffective resolve (?) and my fiery anger – my circumstances are pitiful (caught) between them – it is no attempt to attain the bright castle of Heaven.

36 *b* ing*ean* *c* mhongfhabhr*aigh* *d* meisde] .m*eisde.*; **37** *a* lé ul*adh* *b* misdi lé *d* a moigh bháit*ear*; **38** *b* me*i*c *d* eidhreacht; **39** *b* m*a*c *c* cn*eadh* cr*idh*i *d* teilcthi meisde] .m*eisde.*

41. Meisde a fhad go ndamhaim dhuid
mo bhreith ó phéin, a Phádraig,
nī thallan nach tiogfa rinn,
bhar bhfiorta is annamh éisdim. Meisde

41. The length I wait before allowing you to secure me from pain, o Pádraig, is all the worse as this will surely be charged against me in the next life; I rarely heed your miracles.

41 *b* breith *c* ttiocfa *d* as meisde] .m*eisde*.

Nótaí

1*b.* *'na goire a-tá 'gár dtoghairm* 'she is summoning me to her side'. Is féidir an líne seo a thuiscint ar dhá bhealach: (i) *Sadhbh* (líne *a*) a thuiscint mar ainmní an bhriathair, faoi mar atá déanta thuas; (ii) líne *a* nó *mh'fhad* a thuiscint mar ainmní an bhriathair (*a-tá*); aistr. 'My prosperity is lessened by my distance from Sadhbh, this is summoning me to her side'. Is dócha gur fearr (i) ón uair go dtugann an file le fios nach mbainfidh sé Sadhbh amach go fóill (seachas cinneadh uaidh féin dul ar cuairt chuici, mar a thabharfadh (ii) le fios). Féach freisin r. 35.

2*d.* *ar mhill dā hór umam-sa* 'all of her gold that she has lavished on me'. Glacaim le *inghean* (líne *b*) mar ainmní an bhriathair agus an file ag tabhairt le fios nach easpa flaithiúlachta a thugann air fanacht i gConnachta. D'fhéadfaí a áiteamh gurb é *m'fhad* (líne *b*) ainmní an bhriathair (*millidh*) freisin, aistr. 'all of her gold that my distance from her has spoilt for me'. De réir na tuisceana sin, bheadh an file ag tabhairt le fios gur leor na duaiseanna atá imithe amú air is gur cúis é sin le Sadhbh a bhaint amach anois.

3*cd.* *teacht* : *imtheacht* 'to come … to leave'. Teacht go Cúige Mumhan agus imeacht ó Chonnachta atá i gceist, ní foláir. Tá cosc ar *rinn* agus *airdrinn* ina mbíonn an chéad fhocal (*rinn*) mar dhara heilimint san fhocal atá mar *airdrinn* de réir IGT V §108. Luaitear eisceachtaí ar an riail áirithe sin, áfach, ina measc an péire atá i gceist anseo, féach *BST* 235.21, 17b.5–6.

4*a.* *Nī husa [io]ná bheith 'na mbun* 'It is as difficult as (*lit.* no easier than) being near them'. Tá comparáid ar bun sa líne, ach tá an chéad ábhar comparáide fágtha ar lár sa rann. Tuigtear dom go bhfuil an file ag leanacht den smaoineamh a cuireadh i láthair i rann 3 faoi bheartú ar theacht chuig Sadhbh (líne *c*) agus imeacht ó Chonnachta (líne *d*). Is éard atá i gceist ná go mbeadh sé chomh deacair céanna don fhile imeacht ó Chonnachta is a bheadh sé imeacht ó Shadhbh tar éis dó í a bhaint amach. Maidir le *ioná*, féach IGT V §12 (Ó Riain 2025: 218).

4*a.* *bheith 'na mbun* 'being near them (?)'. Tagraíonn an aidiacht shealbhach iolra don fhocal *séad* (gin. iol.) i líne *c*, is cosúil. Tuigtear dom go ngabhann brí

áite leis an leagan cainte *bheith i mbun* anseo, féach samplaí in *DIL* B 241.81–2 agus RIA 92 (24 P 4), 271 (*Fada m'fhuireach óm fhior ghráidh* r. 9): Tar fhéin chláir bilin*n*sigh breagh / na dháil dlighfin*n*si dul [sic; leg. do dhlighfinnse] / leam ar leath [sic; leg. leith] an*n*sa ón fhior / ciodh dhamhsa gan bheith na bun ('Beyond all other warriors of the plain of Breagha which abounds in trees and byres, I should go to his side; love from that man is mine in particular (so) why should I not be near him? [Aistriú an scríbhneora].'). Tacaíonn na leaganacha cainte eile a ngabhann brí áite leo sa chuid tosaigh den dán leis an tuiscint seo, féach *'na goire* (r. 1*b*), *'na farradh* (rr. 5*d*, 6*a*). Roghanna eile ab fhéidir a chur i gcás mar aistriú, b'fhéidir, ná 'to be occupied with them' nó 'to be intent on them' (cf. Ó Dónaill 1977 s.v. *bun* 13 agus r. 4*d* n.).

4*d*. *im cheann do chuireas* 'I have set my mind on'. Maidir leis an mbrí atá á baint as an leagan cainte seo, féach *DIL* C 124.73–83, *AithdD.* uimh. 1 r. 9*c* n. agus Ó Dónaill 1977 s.v. *ceann*.

5. Sa rann seo deir an file gur gá dó a bheith ar an bhfód i dteach a phátrúin más mian leis glacadh le duaiseanna uaithi ón uair go mbeidh siad á gcaitheamh go flaithiúil aici ar dhaoine eile mura mbeidh sé ann. Tá mianach an tseanfhocail ag baint leis an leathrann *cd*.

6. Is cosúil gurb é atá á rá anseo ná go bhfuil an dá chomhairle atá á meá (Sadhbh a bhaint amach agus na cúraimí atá ar an bhfile ina dhúthaigh i gConnachta) feiliúnach chun cur isteach air agus ar a ghairm (a chuid filíochta, nó a chuid ceoil mar atá ráite anseo). Féach na nótaí thíos, áfach, maidir leis na deacrachtaí a bhaineann leis an rann.

6*b*. *mó is fhada gur anamar* 'I have delayed staying for rather long (*lit.* it is rather long until I stayed)'. Gheofar samplaí eile den dul cainte *fada go* in *DBM* uimh. 17 r. 36*a* (= Breatnach 1944: 198) agus O'Sullivan (1987) uimh. 3 r. 4. Maidir le *mó is* a úsáid chun treisiú le haidiacht, féach Breatnach (1990: 6–7).

6*c*. Tá siolla in easnamh ar líne *c*. Tharlódh (i) gur fágadh focal ar lár sa líne i ngeall ar é a bheith cosúil le cuid den fhocal a lean (*haplography*). Dá réir sin, tá sé curtha i gcás agam gurbh é *maith maithcheodh* a bhí os comhair an scríobhaí agus tá an focal *maith* curtha isteach sa téacs agam dá réir; is ionann é seo is a rá go bhfuil cúis mhaith ag an bhfile ar a phátrúin i gConnachta a fhágann go bhfuil sé chomh deacair sin aige imeacht uathu (cf. r. 4); (ii) gur cheart *mo tháithcheódh* ('my reproach') a léamh in ionad *m'áithcheódh*, féach *DIL* s.v. *taithcheódh*. Tá síneadh os cionn an ghuta sa lámhscríbhinn san aon sampla amháin den fhocal atá luaite in *DIL* (ach tharlódh gur scríob os cionn an *i* ba cheart a thuiscint ('*hair stroke*')); níl fad an ghuta deimhnithe i gcomhardadh; (iii) gur cheart guta neamhaiceanta a sholáthar san fhocal 'mhaithcheódh' (i.e. mh[a] āithcheódh) ar an tuiscint gur fágadh é sin ar lár i ngeall ar an dá litir *a* (*haplography*). Sa chás sin, b'fhéidir go bhfuil *mh* litrithe in ionad *bh* agus go seasann an litriú *bha* don fhoirm *fa*, féach *SnaG* III §13.12 agus O'Grady (1929: I, 118.35) don mhalartú *ba/fa* (réamhfhocal). Níor mhór glacadh leis an bhfoirm *fa* i riocht aimsir chaite na copaile anseo, áfach; aistr. 'it was a reproach to the descendants of Conn'. Ní féidir a bheith cinnte i dtaobh na moltaí thuas.

6*c*. *Cuinn* (LS coin*n*) ‘of Conn’. Déantar *Cuinn* den ainm *Conn* sa tuiseal ginideach, féach IGT II §67. Sin í an fhoirm atá sa lámhscríbhinn in r. 38*a*, agus tá leasú déanta agam dá réir anseo agus in rr. 10*c*, 11*a*, 12*b*, *c*, 13*a*, 24*a*. Ardú neamhchlasaiceach ar an nguta i gcoibhneas le consan srónach is cúis le *oi* a theacht chun cinn anseo, féach O’Rahilly (1932: 194–5) agus r. 25*d* n. thíos.

6*c*. *āithcheódh* ‘reproach’. Tá éiginnteacht ag baint le fad an ghuta thosaigh san ainmfhocal seo agus leis an gcomhardadh (: *āithcheōl*) dá réir. Is faoin gceannfhocal *áithcheó(d)* ‘refuting’ a thugtar an focal in *DIL*, agus luaitear samplaí ansin ina bhfuil an guta tosaigh fada nó gearr. Guta fada tosaigh atá in *áithcheódh* san aon sampla amháin eile den ainmfhocal atá agam i gcomhardadh: (: *gnáithcheól*), *AithdD.* uimh. 97 r. 14*cd* (cf. *AithdD.* II 363 maidir leis an léamh seo). Is é mo thuairim gur fearr an chiall a thugann *āithcheōl* ‘sharp / keen music’ anseo (in áit *aithcheól* ‘second (?) music’) agus réitíonn fad an ghuta leis an sampla atá luaite thuas. Féach plé ar an bhfocal seo in Murphy (1953: 223) s.v. *aithcheó[dh].* (Samplaí den fhocal nach luaitear in *DIL* is ea: *Mag.* 462; *DDána* uimh. 49 r. 14*d*; Walsh (1957: 98 r. 6*b*); McKenna (1947b: 71 r. 52*d*, = *BST* 238.14, cf. ibid. 302); *DBM* uimh. 39 rr. 95*c*, 147*d*; Cameron (1894: 294 r. 17*b*); Carney (1952: 177 r. 77*d*). Féach freisin *aithcheódh* (: *ainghleódh*), Carney (1952: 179 r. 82*cd*); sa chás sin, áfach, b’fhéidir gur cheart *aithcheó* agus *ainghleó* a léamh (LS aceo; angleo).)

6*d*. *dallaidh … orainn* ‘it blunts my …’. Níl aon samplaí eile agam den bhriathar *dallaidh* is é in úsáid leis an réamhfhocal *ar* ar an gcaoi seo. Is cosúil gurb é is brí leis an nath anseo ná go bhfuil an file chomh mór sin trína chéile go bhfuil cur isteach á dhéanamh ar a cheird (*áithcheól*), é sin i ngeall ar an dá chomhairle atá á meá aige is ó tharla nach túisce a bheartaíonn sé ar fhanacht ag Sadhbh ná go gcuireann smaoineamh ar chlanna Cuinn agus ar a áit dhúchais isteach air. Féach samplaí de *dall(aidh)* ag tagairt do chur isteach ar an meabhair in McGrath (1944: 180 r. 4*ab*, cf. 179–80 rr. 1*ab*, 3, 7) agus *GBMCM* uimh. 4 r. 37*ab*; cf. freisin *O’Hara* uimh. 28 r. 12 agus n. (lch 402). Tá codarsnacht éifeachtach idir *áith-* (‘keen’) agus *dallaidh* (‘blunts, obscures’) dá réir. Mar sin féin, b’fhéidir go bhféadfaí *tallaidh* a léamh in ionad *dallaidh* agus an líne a aistriú i riocht ‘it takes my keen music from me’ (féach *DIL* s.v. 1 *do-alla*). Tá an chuma ar léamh na lámhscríbhinne go mb’fhéidir go ndearnadh *d* den litir *t* sa bhriathar, ach ní fhágann sé sin nach tuaiplis a bhí sa *t* an chéad uair. Rogha eile ná an briathar a cheangal leis an mbrí ‘plenty, lashings’, brí atá luaite leis an ainm briathartha *dalladh* sa Nua-Ghaeilge (Ó Dónaill 1977 s.v. *dalladh* 3a) agus é a aistriú mar ‘my keen music causes increase/abundance for me’. Ní luaitear an bhrí sin leis an mbriathar féin, áfach (ibid. s.v. *dall*[3]).

6*d*. *áithcheól* ‘keen music’. Don cheol atá á thagairt ag an bhfile do cheird na filíochta anseo, mar a mheasaim, féach, mar shampla, *ceól ar ceirdi-ne* ‘the music of my craft’ agus *ceóllaoidhe* ‘musical poems’ (McManus 2014: 166 r. 24*b*; *LCAB* uimh. 19 r. 21*d*). Ar ndóigh, tá cuntais againn go mbíodh ceol ag gabháil leis an bhfilíocht agus í á haithris, féach Breatnach (1981), McCaughey (1984), Gillies (2010) agus Blankenhorn (2010).

7*c.* *ar bhuaibh laogh* 'for the sake of milch cows and their calves'. Tá sé á chur i gcás anseo go bhfuil an nath *bó laogh* le tuiscint sa chiall 'bó mar aon leis na laonna'. Cuir i gcomparáid, b'fhéidir, na duaiseanna *loilgheacha gona laoghaibh* ('milch cows with their calves') a luaitear in *GBMCM* uimh. 9 r. 31*d*. Ní dhéanfadh na beithígh an bainne a thál gan na laonna a bheith in éindí leo agus ba chuid den duais ón bpátrún iad dá réir, féach Kelly (1997: 38–9) ('Early Irish sources … stress the necessity for the calf to be present at the milking.').

Rogha eile ná glacadh le *bó laogh* sa chiall atá ag *bó inlaogh* 'in-calf heifer' (féach Kelly 1997: 64, 558). Tá sampla eile den nath le fáil in *Mag.* uimh. 32 r. 22*ab*: *Ball einigh nar urmais Guaire* / *do ghabh ar bhronnadh b*hó *laogh* ('In the bestowal of cows in calf he reached a point of generosity at which Guaire never aimed'), ach b'fhéidir gur chirte 'cows with [their] calves' mar aistriú i bhfianaise an phlé thuas. Tá samplaí le fáil de nath *bó laoigh* ina n-úsáidtear an ginideach uatha den fhocal *laogh*, áfach, murab ionann agus an ghinideach iolra atá sa dán seo againne agus sa sampla in *Mag.*, agus is cosúil ar an gcéad shampla gurb ionann an bhrí agus *bó inlaogh* i ngeall ar *agh ionlaoigh* a bheith luaite sa dara líne: (i) *Ní fhuil bhoin acht 'na boin láoigh* / *ná agh acht 'na hoigh indláigh* ('There is no cow that does not bear calves, nor doe that does not bear fawns [Aistriú an scríbhneora].'); (ii) *Ar dtrághadh lachta na loilgheach* / *dá laogh ní budh lór do dhigh* / *a dtabhradh bó laoigh do leamhnocht* / *do ghaoibh cró na seanlocht sin* ('When the milk of the milch-cows had dried up, all the beestings an in-calf heifer could give to its calf was not sufficient sustenance, this was caused by the bloody spears of ancient faults [Aistriú an scríbhneora]', *PB* uimh. 10 r. 6*c*). Tharlódh go bhfuil difríocht sa bhrí mar sin ag brath ar ghinideach uatha nó ginideach iolra a bheith i gceist.

8*b.* *ar fhuidheall mh'fhasdóidh* 'subject to the decision that I remain'. Gabhann bríonna éagsúla le *fuidheall*, féach *DIL* s.v. *fuigell* agus *fuidell* (cf. freisin *TD* II 220 19 n.). Glacaim leis sa chiall 'decision' (*DIL* F 469.34) anseo.

8*c.* *munba cead liom* 'unless I consent to it'. Creidim go bhfuil an t-ainm briathartha *mh'fhasdódh* (líne *b*) le tuiscint mar chomhlánú ar an nath *munba cead liom* sa líne seo agus go bhfuil sé fágtha ar lár trí fhocalbhá.

9*b.* *grádh muintire* 'famial love'. Tá an t-aistriú bunaithe ar chomhthéacs an natha *muirn dheóradh* sa líne chéanna. Tacaíonn ginealach an phátrúin agus an cóngas gaoil a chuireann an file ar bun léi leis, mar a pléadh thuas. D'fhéadfadh imeartas focal a bheith i gceist, áfach, ar bhrí eile ab fhéidir a shamhlú le *g. m.* mar atá 'grade / position of an attendant'; cf. r. 16*d* n. maidir le himeartas focal den chineál céanna.

9*cd.* *imdheacht* : *inleacht* (LS imte*cht*; in*n*tle*cht*) 'leaving' 'devices'. Leasú déanta ar mhaithe le comhardadh slán, féach *IGT* II §24, *DIL* s.v. *int(ṡ)liucht* agus *DDána* uimh. 3 r. 17*cd* [*sic leg.*]; *IBP* uimh. 35 r. 6*cd* (inntleachta : inghealta; *leg.* inleachta).

10*b.* *gach ubhall ar a abhaill* 'every apple belongs on its tree'. Nath seanfhoclach is cosúil; cf. *Cionnus bheadh an t-ubhaillín acht mar bheadh an t-abhaillín?* (O'Rahilly 1922 §12) agus *Matha* 7: 17–18, *Lúcás* 6: 43.

11*c*. *ar a sliocht* ‘through her descendant’. Glacaim le *sliocht* sa chiall ‘descendant’; shíolraigh Í Bhriain ó Chormac Cas, mac le hiníon Chuinn Chéadchathaigh, féach *FFÉ* IV 18–22, cf. Ó Donnchadha (1940: 293). D’fhéadfaí é a aistriú i riocht ‘because of her descent’ freisin nó glacadh leis an leagan cainte *ar sliocht* sa chiall ‘in imitation of, following the example of’ chomh maith, féach *DIL* S 271.78–84.

11*d*. *ainm* ‘name’. Tharlódh an bhrí ‘fame, renown’ a bheith le tuiscint leis an ainmfhocal chomh maith, *DIL* s.v. *ainmm* (b).

12*b*. *do Leith Chuinn* ‘from Conn’s Half’. B’fhéidir an giorrú sa lámhscríbhinn a scaoileadh mar *leith* nó *leath*. Faightear foirmeacha den dá inscne atá ag an ainmfhocal *leath* i gcás an logainm seo (m.sh. *ó leath C.* : *each*, O’Dwyer (1946: 88 r. 48*cd*).

12*c*. *uimpe* ‘related to her’. Maidir le brí an réamhfhocail *um* chun gaol a chur in úil, féach *DIL* I 103.7–24.

12*d*. *ní gaol nach imdhigh orainn* ‘it is not a kinship that does not exist between us’. Is é an míniú a thugtar ar an leagan cainte *imdhigh ar* (*imm-téit for*) in *DIL* I 156.51–61 ná ‘befalls, happens’. Tá sé á aistriú ar mhúnla an bhriathair *teagmhaidh* ‘happens’, ‘happens to be (come)’, ‘is’ (*DIL* s.v. *do-cuirethar* III; Bergin (1930) 77, 23 n.). Rogha eile é a aistriú mar a bheadh brí an leagain chainte *téit ar / for* (‘is inflicted upon, comes upon’ *DIL* T 131.58–85) leis (‘that does not impose itself upon me’). Bríonna eile nach luaitear in *DIL* leis an leagan cainte *imdhigh ar* is ea: (i) ‘approaches, attacks’ (< *téit ar / for*), *AithdD.* II 305 s.v. *imthighim*; (ii) ‘is born’ ibid.; (iii) ‘treats of’ *Mag.* 1990.

13*b, d*. *díbh* ‘from there (*lit.* of them)’. Ní foláir nó tá *Leath Cuinn* (líne *a*) á úsáid anseo mar a bheadh cnuasainm ann agus *díbh* (línte *b*, *d*) ag tagairt do phobal an cheantair (cf. O’Rahilly 1946: 191).

Tá úsáid den chineál seo le feiceáil sa tagairt a dhéantar do logainm (*Cell Dá Lua*) le forainm réamhfhoclach san uimhir iolra sa dán *A fhir, ná suid ar in síd*, Ó Cuív (1987: 48 r. 39) agus n. (53 r. 39*d*): *‘Freisteólaid Conchobar cruaid, / mac Ruaidrí is rígda sluaig, / loiscfid Cill Dá Lua lennmair, / do-béra dáib do-menmain’* (‘Hardy Conchobar, son of Ruaidrí who is most royal as regards hosts, will counterattack; he will burn ale-loving Cell Dá Lua (and) he will cause them to be dispirited.’). Do shamplaí eile, féach r. 27*d*, *Créad tárraidh treise Connacht* r. 6*c* (Ó Riain 2008: 173) agus O’Grady (1929: I, 91.12).

13*b*. *máthair mhná Sabhrainne* ‘the mother of the lady of the Sabhrann’. Sadhbh atá i gceist le *bean Sabhrainne*. Abhainn i gCorcaigh í an tSabhrainn. Is gnách í a aithint mar abhainn na Laoi, ach áitíonn Ó Murchadha (1965) gurbh ionann abhainn na Sabhrainne agus an ‘Maglin-Curragheen river’ i gCorcaigh agus go ndearnadh cuid d’abhainn na Laoi di níos deireanaí. Is dócha go bhfuil Sadhbh á ceangal leis an abhainn sin toisc gur i gCúige Mumhan atá sí. Ceanglaítear an pátrún le haibhneacha eile freisin (*an Forghas*, *an Mhodhairn* rr. 15*b*, 25*d*); cf. n. 12 sa réamhrá.

14*a*. *Fuil Cholla* 'The blood of Colla'. Do chuid de na teaghlaigh a shíolraigh ó na trí Cholla, féach *TD* II 229 agus Hogan (1910: 601). Is cosúil gur le teaghlach a máthar a bhaineann an tagairt, féach Ó Riain (2022: 108 n. 37; *leg.* 'sin-seanmháthair' in ionad 'seanmháthair' sa nóta céanna).

14*c*. *ó a bhfuil 'na [h]eanghlais dá fhíon* 'through whom she is a mixture of two wines'. Glacaim le *bhfuil* mar bhriathar substainteach agus le *dhā sheanathair Shaidhbhe* i líne *b* mar réamhtheachtaí an chlásail choibhneasta réamhfhoclaigh anseo. Tuigtear dom gurb í *Sadhbh* (líne *b*; gin.) ainmní an bhriathair shubstaintigh agus tá *h*- soláthraithe ar an bfocal *eanghlais* dá réir. D'fhéadfaí glacadh le *fuil* (líne *a*) mar ainmní an bhriathair freisin, ach ba ghá *h*- a sholáthar sa chás sin chomh maith.

14*c*. *dá fhíon* 'two wines'. B'fhéidir dhá mhíniú a sholáthar air seo: (i) an uimhir *dá* agus an ginideach iolra den ainmfhocal; aistr. 'of two wines'; (ii) *dá* (< *de* + *a*) mar a mbeadh an aidiacht shealbhach fhirinscneach ag tagairt do *Cholla* (líne *a*); aistr. 'of his wine'. Don smaoineamh go bhfuil *dá fhíon*/*fhuil* i nduine óna ghinealach, féach RIA 1134 (23 E 29), 146 (*Misi <a Aimi> ar h'inc[h]aib fein* r. 14): *<I>arla h'athairsi, a ucht glan,* / *iarla athair do mhathar,* / *slicht <a> riadhla fuil ortsa* / *fuil dá iarla indottsa* ('Your father is an earl, o clear breasted one, your mother's father is an earl; you bear the mark of their regimes — the blood of two earls is inside you [Aistriú an scríbhneora].'

Úsáidtear *fíon* anseo ag tagairt d'fhuil anseo. Féach samplaí eile den mheafar seo in *AithdD.* uimh. 18 r. 36*c* agus Ó Raghallaigh (1928: 46 r. 59). Tá an úsáid seo le cur i gcomparáid leis an gcomhfhocal coitianta *fíonfhuil.* Tuairimíonn Ryan (2002: 147–8) agus (2006: 215–18) gur ón bhfilíocht chráifeach a shíolraigh úsáid an chomhfhocail seo san fhilíocht shaolta.

14*d*. *fuil Fhearghais an airdrīogh* 'the blood of Fearghas the high-king'. Tagairt d'Fhearghas Fortamhail, ardrí na hÉireann sa chianaimsir, de réir chosúlachta, féach Ó Riain (2022: 108).

15*a*. *Uilliam Búrc.* Tá ceist ann faoin duine a dtagraítear dó anseo. Is dócha gurb é Uilliam mac Aldelm (*al.* Atalm) (Uilliam Congcar) atá i gceist ón uair gur uaidh a shíolraigh na Búrcaigh, féach *LMG* §§798B.1, 798C.1, 2. Ba Bhúrcach í máthair Shaidhbhe, féach lch 272 thuas. D'fhéadfadh sé, áfach, gurb é Uilliam Átha an Chip (mac Riocaird Mhóir), sinsear na mBúrcach i gCo. Mhaigh Eo, atá i gceist anseo, cf. *LMG* §798F.6.

15*b*. *gh[e]in* (LS ghin). Ardú ar an nguta *e* in aice le consan srónach is cúis le *ghin* na lámhscríbhinne, féach plé in O'Rahilly (1932), 194–5 agus féach r. 37*b* *misdi* (cf. *mei-* i rr. 1*a*, 41*a* agus *meince* : *teilgthe* i r. 39*c*). Tá fianaise ar a leithéid sna lámhscríbhínní ón gceathrú haois déag amach (Ó Riain 2025: 62). Lochtaítear *i* in ionad *ei* i gcásanna áirithe sa teanga chlasaiceach, áfach (m.sh. *mic* in ionad *meic* in IGT II 702). Ach féach, mar shampla, go gceadaítear *teinn* agus *tinn* (ginideach an ainmfhocail *teann* in IGT II §63) agus an comhardadh *misi* : *brisi* (13ú haois), *IBP* uimh. 45 r. 14*cd*.

15*b*. *mhná an Fhorghais* ‘the lady of the Fergus’. Tagairt do Shadhbh. Tá abhainn an Fhorghais (‘the Fergus’) i ndeisceart Cho. an Chláir, dúthaigh na mBrianach; cf. r. 13*b* n.

16*d*. *ar mhuintearas* ‘among friends (*lit.* friendship)’. Glacaim le *m.* sa chiall ‘association, friendship, alliance’ anseo. D’fhéadfadh an bhrí ‘service’ (i.e. membership of a ‘muinter’) a bheith leis freisin (féach *DIL* s.v. *muinteras*) agus b’fhéidir go bhfuil imeartas focal i gceist anseo; cf. r. 9*b* n. maidir le himeartas focal den chineál céanna.

17*b*. *i gcomhrag dhá chomhairle* ‘in a conflict of two (opposing) counsels’. Tharlódh go bhfuil macalla ón líne seo sa dán *Atám i gcás eidir dhá chomhairle* le hEochaidh Ó hEódhasa (*DDána* uimh. 70).

17*c*. *’gá ngabhaim port* ‘with whom I reside’. Maidir le haistriú an bhriathair, féach *DIL* G 19.12–25. B’fhéidir go bhfuil imeartas focal ar bun anseo le brí eile a ghabhann leis an leagan cainte *port do ghabháil* mar atá: ‘sing’. Thacódh an focal *āithcheōl* i líne 6*d* leis an tuiscint sin.

18*b*. *dol[a]* ‘to go’. Tá an líne seo róghairid, agus is í an mhalairt fhoirme de *dol* na lámhscríbhinne atá curtha sa téacs chun an siolla breise a sholáthar. D’fhéadfaí *gus ar* a léamh in áit *go ar* chomh maith chun an siolla sin a chur ar fáil freisin; mar sin féin, is é *go* (nó *gó*) an ghnáthfhoirm roimh aidiacht shealbhach a thosaíonn ar ghuta (O’Rahilly (1941: xxxiv); cf. 35*a* n. thíos); níl ach an t-aon sampla amháin den fhoirm *gus* le fáil san ionad sin agus é sin i ndán *ógláchais* (McKenna 1947, uimh. 7 r. 1*d*). Féach McManus (2000: 87–8, r. 25 n.) maidir leis na foirmeacha *gus* / *go*.

18*d*. *re cloinn gCāirthinn* ‘from the descendants of Cáirtheann’. Cáirtheann Fionn mac Bloid meic Cais atá i gceist anseo. Is gnách go n-áirítear é i measc ghinealach ríthe (/ iarlaí) Thuadhmhumhan, féach *LL* VI 44671–85, Pender (1951) §1948, *LMG* §642.1, cf. Ó Donnchadha (1940: 86).

Tá an guta fada san ainm dílis cinnte in *AithdD.* uimh. 26 r. 3*cd* (: *ráidhfinn*); cf. Ó Macháin (2019: 279).

19*a*. *breitheamh sgol* ‘authority of schools’. Úsáidtear an téarma *breitheamh* ag tagairt don ghnó a dhéanadh an grád file ab airde. Dá úsáid, féach *IBP* uimh. 42 r. 7, *DDána* uimh. 73 r. 32, McKenna (1951b) 217 r. 4*a* agus féach plé ar an ngnó agus ar an téarma in McManus (2004: 113–21) agus Simms (2007: 130–1).

21*b*. *taobh dhá dtāngamar* ‘the area we came from’. Aistriú eile ab fhéidir a sholáthar é ‘the area we came to’ (an réamhfhocal *do* ‘to’ in ionad *de* ‘of, from’).

21*d*. *fhine Tháil* ‘the descendants of Tál’. Tál (*al.* mac Táil, *al.* Cas), sinsear Dál gCais, féach Pender (1951) §1948, *LMG* §§637.1, 642.1.

22*a*. *tréidhe tighearnadh* ‘kingly qualities’. Luaitear an frása seo nó leagan comhchiallach (*tréidhe*/*airdheana ríogh*/*flatha*) i dtéacsanna éagsúla, féach lch 277 thuas, *DDána* uimh. 82 r. 39; Ó Raghallaigh (2012: 897 r. 30); Watson (1937) uimh. 5 r. 7, *O’Hara* uimh. 8 r. 51, uimh. 20 rr. 9*a*, 11; *LCAB* uimh. 42

ll. 93–6; Ó Raghallaigh (1928: 289 r. 38); *TD* uimh. 20 r. 11; cf. rr. 1–10; *AithdD.* uimh. 18 r. 29; *IT* II uimh. 11 r. 11; Watson (1922: 222, r. 51) agus *DIL* s.v. *tréide*.

22*c.* *níor dhiall [re]* (LS lé) 'can only be compared to'. Soláthraím *re* anseo ón uair gurb é is gnáth a úsáid le *diall*, *deall* sna samplaí ar fad atá agam, cé is moite de dhá shampla ón seachtú haois déag ina n-úsáidtear *le* (viz. Mhág Craith (1958: 120) uimh. 7 r. 40*c* (= O'Rahilly 1927: II, 139 l. 63) agus RIA 540 (C IV 1) 180b). Luaitear sampla eile in *DIL* (s.v. *díall, dell*) ina n-úsáidtear *le* i gcóip RIA 743 (A IV 3) den dán *Uaigneach sin, a Chinn Choradh*: *síol mBriain…ag díall lé háitibh oile nár áitigh Brían Bóroimhe*; is é *re* atá ina áit sin sna cóipeanna den dán atá i Leabhar Uí Chonchobhair Dhoinn agus RIA 23 F 16, rud a thugann údarás don leasú a dhéantar anseo.

23*a.* *éigin* 'certain'. Tá an dobhriathar á úsáid anseo sa chiall 'ar leith' ('particular'). Do shamplaí eile den úsáid seo, féach Breatnach (1993: 63 r. 3*b*); *AithdD.* uimh. 31 r. 15*c*, uimh. 32 r. 6*b*, *Créad tárraidh treise Connacht* r. 26*a* (Ó Riain 2008: 176).

23*a.* *soin*. Tá mar a bheadh feidhm fhorainm phearsanta ag an bhforainm taispeántach anseo a thagraíonn siar do *bean*. Féach sampla eile den úsáid seo: *Lá a Leithbhior 'nar loiteadh sin* 'the day in Lifford where he was wounded', Knott (1960: 166 r. 24*a*) agus *Créad tárraidh treise Connacht* r. 3*c* (Ó Riain 2008: 173).

23*c.* *gá* (LS *cá*) 'which'. Tá *gá* (< *cía*) curtha síos mar fhoirm chlasaiceach in *IGT* I §16 (séú haois déag). Ainneoin gur athrú a bhaineann le ré na Meán-Ghaeilge é go nglóraítear *c-* tosaigh i bhfocail neamhaiceanta, m.sh. *co* > *go*, *can* > *gan* (féach *GOI* §178.2 agus *SnaG* III §3.23), tá cruthúnas againn i gcás an fhocail *ciodh* / *giodh* (< *cía*) (ar féidir leis a bheith aiceanta agus neamhaiceanta, *BST* 225.7–24, cf. *IGT* I §16) go raibh feidhm fós le malairtíocht idir consan tosaigh glórach agus neamhghlórach sa tréimhse seo, cf. *ná bean díom **g**iodh* (: *miodh*) *do **gh**ualainn* agus *a **ch**airte **c**iodh* (: *cion*) *nach osglann*, *AithdD.* uimh. 29 r. 16*c*. D'fhágfadh sé sin go mb'fhéidir nár cheart aon athrú a dhéanamh ar an bhfoirm *cá*.

25*d.* *choinnill* (LS cuin*n*ill) 'candle'. Ní aithnítear foirm den ainmfhocal seo le -u- sna tráchtais (IGT II §54) agus níl aon sampla ar eolas agam ina bhfuil -u- le fáil i gcomhardadh. Tá an fhoirm leasaithe agam dá réir sin agus 'oirrim' (LS uirrim) á léamh i líne *c* ar mhaithe leis an gcomhardadh. Maidir leis an malartaíoct *cu-*/*co-*, féach r. 6*c* n. thuas.

25*d.* *Mhodhairne* 'the Mourne'. Abhainn i gCo. Thír Eoghain; cf. r. 13*b* n. thuas.

26*a.* *Ní huaisle 'na [h]adhbhar ghill* 'it is not nobility as a cause for excellence'. Glacaim le *na* i riocht an réamhfhocail *i* agus na haidiachta sealbhaí ag tagairt do *uaisle* agus dá bhrí sin tá loime, atá in easnamh sa lámhscríbhinn, curtha isteach sa téacs agam. Tá an líne seo le cur i gcomparáid le *ní dealbh 'na díol orrama* (r. 25*b*) áit nárbh fhéidir *nā* a léamh ó thaobh na brí de ach an oiread. Maidir le *adhbhar gill* sa chiall 'a cause for supremacy / excellence', féach *DIL*

G 61.74 agus cf. McKenna (1940: 67–8). Tá an nath céanna *adhbhar gill* le fáil sa dán *A theachtaire théid bhu thuaidh* freisin (*LCAB* uimh. 67 ll.65–8):

> Cidh iomdha ag Aodh adhbhar gill,
> ní treisi cúis dá gcluinim
> fa bhfúair urraim Innse Fáil,
> millse a chumainn 's a chomhráidh.
>
> 'Although Aodh has many grounds for excellence, of all the reasons I have heard for him to have gained the respect of Ireland, there is none more compelling than the sweetness of his love and speech [Aistriú an scríbhneora].'

26*b*. *do-bhéaradh aice* 'which would win … for her'. Níl aon sampla eile agam den leagan cainte *do-bheir ag*, ach is cosúil go gciallaíonn sé 'thuillfeadh di'. Cf. *do-bheir* i r. 25 ach *rug* (*beiridh*) i r. 23–4.

26*c*. *bruinneadh* 'refinement'. Úsáidtear *bruinneadh* i gciall mheafarach ag tagairt do 'giniúint' agus is cosúil gurb é sin atá i gceist anseo, féach *DIL* s.v. 2 *bruinnid* agus m.sh. *AithdD.* uimh. 70 r. 16 (cf. II 252 n.):

> Ógh do bhruinneadh is do bhaisdeadh,
> bláith ro ghabhais chugat corp,
> glan rod bruinneadh i mbroinn Moire
> níor thoill bruinneadh oile ort.
>
> 'Virginal was Thy conception and Thy baptism; nobly didst Thou take a body; pure wert Thou conceived in Mary's womb; no other conception befitted Thee.'

27*c*. *uirrinn* (*ur* + *rinn*) 'the very tip'. Tuigtear dom gurb é an réimír threise atá mar chéad eilimint sa chomhfhocal seo, féach *DIL* s.v. *air-* agus IGT I §100.

28*ab*. Tá an file ag tarraingt ar mhóitíf an 'leannáin fhileadh' ar bhealach suntasach anseo; móitíf í sin ina roinneann an t-ollamh an leaba (nó an seomra leapa) lena phátrún, féach Breatnach (1983: 40ff.).

28*c*. *coimhmionna* (*comh-* + *mionna*) 'equally prominent'. Focal ar fhocal '(it would not be) equal oaths (for her and for them)'. Glacaim le *mionna* mar uimhir iolra an ainmfhocail *mionn* 'oath' anseo. Bhraith an tábhacht a bhí ag roinnt leis an mionn ar stádas an duine a thug an mionn uaidh (féach Kelly 1988: 198–9, 202). Fágann sé seo go bhfuil an file ag tabhairt le fios gur fearr an chéim atá ag baint le Sadhdbh ná le mná eile (féach r. 27). Rogha eile ná glacadh le *mionna* mar ainm teibí na haidiachta *meann* 'clear etc.' (*DIL* 1 *menn*), foirm nach bhfuil luaite in *DIL*; cf. 1 *minde* (ainm teibí) < 2 *menn* 'stammering' agus r. 32*a* n. thíos.

29*a*. *Dá mbeith* 'even if … were'. Féach *TD* I, lxxvi n. 1 maidir leis an bhfoirm *dá mbeith*.

29*d*. *d'fheólfhuil* 'of the flesh and blood'. Is comhfhocal coitianta é seo. Tá samplaí eile de le fáil in *IT* II uimh. 18 r. 6*b*, *AithdD.* uimh. 21 r. 16*c*, *DDé*

uimh. r. 2*c*, *PB* uimh. 14 r. 24*d*, Ó Háinle (2004: 114 r. 16*d*), *LCAB* uimh. 4 l. 18, Ó Muireadhaigh (1970: 218 r. 29*c*). Tá an comhfhocal seo le cur i gcomparáid le *fíonfhuil*, féach r. 14*c* n. thuas.

30*a*. *Dá dtugadh mar nach tabhair* 'Even if she (refused) … which she does not'. Is ciúta stíle é seo ina ndéantar cur i gcás (foirmle: *dá* + modh foshuiteach caite) a bhréagnú (leis an bhfoirmle *mar nach x*). Féach sampla eile den chiúta céanna in *TD* uimh. 7 r. 50:

> Dá mbeith cách fós mar nách fuil,
> i coimhmeas re cloinn nEóghain,
> do bhiadh oirrim Bhanbha Breagh
> ag coinnill Annla ar éigean.
>
> 'And further, if, as is not the case, the rest were of equal estimation with the race of *Eóghan*, the homage of the Bregian *Banbha* would of necessity be given to the hero of *Annla*.'

Do shamplaí eile, féach McKenna (1951: 354 r. 18) agus IGT III 114.

30*c*. *a [cleith]* (LS cheilt) 'hidden' (ainm briathartha *ceilidh*; féach IGT II §14, III §34). Tá foirm na lámhscríbhinne leasaithe ón uair go bhfuil carn consan (*-lt*) san fhoirm sin ag réiteach le consan aonair (*clei*)*th*, locht a dtugtar *briseadh* air, IGT V §4. Tuigtear dom gur aidiacht shealbhach bhaininsceach atá ag teastáil sa chomhthéacs (ag tagairt do *gcleith* i líne *d*) agus tá an séimhiú bainte den ainm briathartha dá réir. (Ní móide go bhféadfaí a áiteamh gur aidiacht shealbhach fhirinscneach a bhfuil feidhm neamhphearsanta léi atá i gceist le foirm na lámhscríbhinne mar ní léir céard dó a dtagródh sí sa chomhthéacs.)

31*a*. *tlás [is] fos agus féile* (LS *tlás, fos,* 7 *féile*) 'Gentleness and steadfastness and modesty'. Tá siolla in easnamh ar an líne seo. Soláthraím *is* ar an tuiscint go raibh *tlas as* ós a chomhair ag an scríobhaí agus gur fhág sé an cónasc *as* (= agus) ar lár trí dhearmad. Tá na tréithe atá luaite sa líne seo le fáil i bhfoinsí eile, féach lch 277 thuas.

31*b*. *bheith d'fhearaibh ar éinchēile* '(causing) men to remain with a single spouse'. Glacaim leis go bhfuil an líne seo ar cheann de na tréithe atá á gceangal leis an mbean sa rann seo. Don dul cainte (*bheith*) *ar chéile*, féach: *ar chéile* (: *Éire*) *riamh go raibhe* 'she has always had a spouse', (RIA 1134 (23 E 29) 123 (téacs cóirithe); tos. *Ó mhnáibh ainmnighthear Éire* r. 11*c*). Féach plé ar an tréith seo na dílseachta in Ó Riain (2022: 114).

32*a*. *diorga* 'red'. Ní luaitear an fhoirm seo den ainm teibí in *DIL* s.v. *derge*, agus tharlódh gur cheart *deirge* a léamh anseo, ach tá an malartú sa ghuta aiceanta le cur i gcomparáid leis na foirmeacha den ainm teibí *meince*, *mionca*; cf. freisin r. 28*c* n. thuas.

32*b*. *trí datha ó mBriain Bhóraimhe* 'the three colours of the descendants of Brian Bóraimhe'. Tá an dathúlacht á lua anseo i bhfoirm na ndathanna dearg, bán agus dubh, féach plé in Ó Riain (2022: 114–17).

32*c*. *go gcaolach* (LS gcláolach) *ndata ndearc* ‘with an attractive eye-wattling’. Ní heol dom go bhfuil an focal *claolach* ann. Tá foirm na lámhscríbhinne leasaithe go *caolach* agam ar an tuiscint gur bhreac an scríobhaí *l* faoi dhó trí thimpiste. Is cosúil go dtagraíonn *caolach* do na fabhraí nó na malaí anseo. Féach úsáid an fhocail *caolach* ag cur síos ar ghruaig in *DDána* uimh. 74 r. 63:

> Atá cathair chaolaigh dhuinn
> ós do ghruaidh dheirg, a Dhomhnuill,
> rosg ar dhath gloine guirme,
> a sgath Moighe Modhuirne.
>
> ‘Brown thatched hair lies above your ruddy cheek, o Domhnall, (as does) an eye the colour of blue crystal, o hero of Magh Modhairne [Aistriú an scríbhneora].’

Féach samplaí eile in *DDána* uimh. 98 r. 20, *Mag.* 930, 973 agus RIA 1134 (23 E 29), 22 (*Cia so agras cóir um Chruachain* r. 29). Úsáidtear an focal céanna in *DDána* uimh. 106 r. 33 ag tagairt do mhéara (aistr. McKenna (1927) 554):

> Sleagha reamhra Bhéinne Bhriot
> a chéile Leamhna budh lat;
> fuarais corn beannchraobhach breac
> ’mar fheac Dolbh gealchaolach glac.
>
> ‘Béinne Briot’s stout lances shall be thine, O spouse of Leamhain, thou ownest a painted cup of branching handles whereon Dolbh plied his hands’ white fingers’.

Tá sampla eile den úsáid seo in McGeown agus Murphy (1953: 81 r. 5*c*).

Maidir le hurú a bheith ar lorg ainmfhocail atá faoi réir ag *go*^{N} (‘with’) in áit an tséimhithe stairiúil, féach Bergin (1930: 90, uimh. 19, 21 n.), *Mag.* 410 (1010 n.) agus Falconer (1953: lxiii).

33*d*. *rosggurma* ‘blue eyes’. Is cosúil gurb é *rosgurma* an litriú a mholtar in IGT i gcás an chomhfhocail seo ón uair go moltar *-c* a fhágáil ar lár i gcomhfhocal ina dtagann *-sg* agus *-c* (agus *-g* dá réir) le chéile ann, féach IGT I §30 *fleasgorr* (< *fleasg* + *corr*).

34*a*. *A díthcheall dána molta* ‘a fitting eulogy for the woman (*lit.* her)’. Cuir i gcomparáid an téarma *dán*/*duan díchill* in *DDána* uimh. 38 r. 16*c* agus *DMU* uimh. 23 r. 13*c* (l. 2813 n.); cf. freisin *IGT* III 477.

34*c*. *fear páirte* ‘companion’. Is cosúil gurb é an file féin atá i gceist leis an nath seo, ach tharlódh go dtagraítear d’fhear céile an phátrúin.

Maidir leis an easpa uraithe ar lorg ainmfhocail (*fear*) sa tuiseal cuspóireach a bhfuil an fhoirm chéanna aige sa tuiseal sin agus sa tuiseal ainmneach, féach Ó Riain (2012: 58).

35. Tá brí an rainn doiléir, cf. r. 35*d* n. Tharlódh go gciallaíonn sé go dtabharfadh Sadhbh cead a chinn don fhile gan bheith in éineacht léi, ach ní féidir a bheith cinnte ina thaobh sin.

35*a*. *Gen go ngabhadh geis* 'Although … would commit no other transgression'. Léiríonn dhá shampla a thugtar in *DIL* G 57.70–2 go gciallaíonn an leagan cainte *geis do ghabháil* 'to perpetrate an injustice', mar atá (i) *DDé* uimh. 31 r. 20 (mar a bhfuil sé ar comhbhrí leis an leagan cainte *do-ní geis* (ibid. r. 21*b*) is cosúil) agus (ii) *IT* II uimh. 7 r. 9*ab*:

(i) Gach duine ghabhas geis éagcóir
dá anmain budh olc an béad
[sínfir] olc ar gheis do ghabháil
ní leis corp d'fhagháil re n-éag.

'If a man does injustice 'twill ruin his soul; but punishment for it shall be delayed (?), for it cannot get hold of his body till death.'

(ii) Géill ceathra cóigeadh re a chois
óigfhear leis nach geabhtha geis.

'The young man who should commit no crime had the hostages of four provinces with him [Aistriú an scríbhneora].'

Maidir le *gen* (LS gén) *go*, tá an fhoirm *gion go* coitianta sa tréimhse chlasaiceach, ach ar ndóigh tá an fhoirm *cen co* le fáil ó ré na Meán-Ghaeilge, féach *DIL* s.v. *cen* IV. Tagann an litriú *gen* leis an bhfoirm stairiúil sin (*pace DIL*; cf. 23*c* n. thuas); níl aon leasú déanta dá réir. Tabhair faoi deara go mbíonn síneadh fada ag an scríobhaí ar fhocail neamhaiceanta scaití (m.sh. i rr. 8*c*, 18*b*) agus féach samplaí eile de *gén go* in RIA 215 (A V 1), 78, 79 (Breatnach 1989, 36, 38 rr. 13*a*, 30*a*).

35*d*. *iarghairm* 'recall (?)'. Ní luaitear an focal seo in *DIL*. Is cosúil go bhfuil an file ag súil leis go dtiocfaidh cuireadh eile ón bpátrún agus nach mian leis a leithéid i ngeall ar na cúraimí atá air i gConnachta. Tabharfaidh sé cuairt uirthi ar a choinníollacha féin amach anseo, féach r. 1*cd* agus plé in Ó Riain (2022: 118–19). Rogha eile (nár luaigh mé san aiste úd) ná nach mbeadh Sadhbh sásta cead a chinn a thabhairt don fhile imeacht uaithi arís, ach í ag iarraidh air fanacht ina teannta; aistr. 'to be recalled [*sc.* to Connacht]'.

36*d*. *uime* 'thereby'. Tá dúnadh anseo agus i rainn 38 (*-me*), 39 (*-mhe*), 40 (*-mhe*), agus 41 (*-m*; *dúnadh* dúbailte le *Meisde* in 1*a* agus 41*a* sa chás deireanach). Tharlódh go bhfuil *dúnadh* i rainn 26 (*-m*) agus 35 (*-m*) freisin. Maidir leis an *dúnadh* i rainn iargcomhairc, féach Breatnach (1986: 52 r. 41*d* n.) agus maidir le *dúnadh* i gcorp an dáin féin, féach Ó Riain (2019b: 103–21).

37–8. Déantar moladh ar Bháitéar Búrc, fear céile an phátrúin, sna rainn iargcomhairc seo.

37*b*. *do mhainéara* 'your manors'. Maidir leis na mainéir atá luaite anseo, féach Nicholls (2003: 173), Murphy (2015) agus léarscáil 6 in Cosgrove (2008: 233).

37*c*. *céim lé mbéara thoir ar thréan* 'a situation whereby he will gain power in the east'. Déanaim amach go dtagraíonn an focal *céim* don staid atá curtha síos i líne *a* (go bhfuil Sadhbh pósta le fear de shliocht Iarla Uladh), gurb é Bháitéar atá le tuiscint mar ainmní an bhriathair *mbéara* agus gur do ríocht

na hÉireann i dTeamhair a thagraíonn *thoir* agus *tréan*; aistr. 'is a situation whereby he will gain power in the east'. Más ceart an léamh a dhéanaim ar an líne, is cosúil go dtagraítear anseo do thacaíocht a bhféadfadh Bháitéar a bheith ag súil léi ó cheantair éagsúla, muintir a mhná céile ina measc. Pléitear an ghné seo den phósadh in Simms (1975: 98–9), eadem (1978: 19–20).

37*d*. *Bháitēar* (< *Water (Gaultier), Risk (1968–71: 624 (§104)). Tá litriú an ainm seo le *Bh-* tosaigh in ionad foirme gan séimhiú le feiceáil i dtéacs P de IGT II §35. Is litriú é *Báitéar* a tháinig chun cinn níos deireanaí ar an tuiscint gur foirm shéimhithe é *Bháitéar*, féach Risk (1968–71: 655 §218).

39. Molann an file Mac Domhnaill sa rann iargcomhairc seo. Ní móide gur cheart glacadh leis seo mar shloinne, áfach. Is é is dóichí gurb é seo an teideal *Mac Domhnaill*, teideal a bhí in úsáid don té a bhí mar cheann fine ar Chlann Domhnaill Í Chonchobhair sa tréimhse 1395–1536 (Ó Riain (2022: 98 n. 3); tugadh Uí Chonchobhair Shligigh ar an teaghlach ina dhiaidh sin. Ba é Muircheartach Bacach Ó Conchobhair a tháinig i gcomharbacht ar a athair Domhnall nuair a cailleadh é sa bhliain 1395, an chéad duine a bhféadfadh an teideal sin tagairt dó. Tagairt do Mhuircheartach Bacach nó dá dhearthár Brian (rí 1403/4–1440) atá sa rann mar sin. Níl aon dánta ann ó Mhaol Eachlainn in onóir do Mhuircheartach Bacach, ach ní féidir argóint *ex silentio* a dhéanamh dá réir nach é atá i gceist. Ach más tagairt do Bhrian é, chuirfeadh sé ar ár gcumas an bhliain 1403/4 a lua mar *terminus post quem* leis an dán. Maidir leis na hairm a luaitear anseo, féach Harbison (1976: 272–3, 275–6, cf. 279) agus Boyd (2022) 66.

39*a*. *mh'fhaicsin dó* 'my being noticed by Mac Domhnaill (*lit.* him)'. Úsáidtear ainm briathartha *do-chí* agus an réamhfhocal *do* i gciall chollaí nó rómánsúil mar a léiríonn sampla in *TD* uimh. 1 r. 26*c*:

> "Do dheóin nó ar éigin agam
> biaidh tú," ar an t-óg abhradonn,
> "do-chuaidh mé óm fhéagain d'fhior,
> ní féadair é," ar an inghean.
>
> ' "By consent or force thou shalt be mine," said the brown-lashed youth. "I have forsaken the glances of man, it cannot be," returned the maiden.'

Is cosúil, mar sin, gurb é an grá a chuireann an nath in úil, féach Breatnach & Breatnach 2005, 35 r. 2*cd*, *LBranach* l. 6076, *AithdD.* uimh. 80 r. 2, Ó Cuív (1973: 100, 9–10 n.), Carney (1976: 187–8), Dooley (1985: 146 n. 7), Campbell (1989: 175–6), agus Ó Tuama (1988: 46).

Tá sampla eile ann mar ar cosúil go dtagraíonn an nath don chaidreamh idir an t-ollamh flatha agus a phátrúin, comhthéacs a bheadh feiliúnach sa dán seo againne (Leabhar Fhear Maighe 195, *Cionnas íocthar séad suirghe* r. 13*a*; téacs cóirithe):

D'éis fhaicseana Dáibhíth dún
níor fhéadas m'aigneadh d'iompúdh;
níor fhéad mé an annsa tar ais;
sé níor annsa 'na éagmhais.

'When I had noticed Dáibhíth, I could not turn my thoughts (from him); I could not turn back (the tide of) love; he would be loved as dearly from afar [Aistriú an scríbhneora].'

40, 41. Pléann an dá rann seo, atá tiomnaithe don chroch naofa agus do Phádraig faoi seach, le haiféala an fhile faoina easpa cráifeachta. Tá gaol gairid acu, dá bhrí sin, le téamaíocht dáin eile leis dar tús *Tánaig an tráth nóna* (Knott 1957: 33–6 / Ó Riain 2008: 210–57). Tá rann tiomnaithe ag an bhfile do Phádraig sa dán céanna (Ó Riain 2008: 243 r. 23; rann nach bhfuil ag Knott) agus rann eile don chroch naofa sa dán *Do bhriseas bhearnaidh ar Brian* (*DDána* uimh. 82 r. 43).

40*a.* *Croch Dhé* 'Crucifix'. Faightear an ginideach uatha de *Dia* le séimhiú agus gan séimhiú. Féach O'Rahilly (1941: 237 l. 3620 n.).

40*c.* *bhfuarrūn* 'indifferent resolve (?)'. Tuigtear dom go dtagraíonn an focal seo d'easpa cráifeachta an fhile agus d'easpa dáiríreachta a bhraitheann sé i leith na cráifeachta (féach 40, 41 n. thuas maidir leis an téama seo). Don bhrí 'indifferent' le *fuar-*, féach *DIL* U 29.81–30.11. Cuir i gcomparáid *rúinnimh* ('evil heart') agus *fuaire mo bhéas* ('colder grows my character') in *DDána* uimh. 39 rr. 6*d*, 16*c* / McKenna (1928: 437, 438), maraon leis na línte: *Eadrad, a Athair neamhdha, 's an bioth cé … tig mo rún a-nall 's a-nonn* 'my will wavers between you, O heavenly Father, and this world' (Ó Háinle 2004: 116–17 r. 28*abc*);

Tá dhá *r* ag teacht le chéile anseo, iad i ndeireadh agus i dtús an dá eilimint den chomhfhocal. Nuair atá défhoghar (nó guta fada) sa chéad eilimint de chomhfhocal den saghas seo, moltar an comhfhocal a litriú le *r* amháin (*.r. trom*) in IGT I §44, ach dhá *r* atá sa LS.

Liosta foinsí

Giorrúcháin

AC	Freeman (1944).
Ann. Clon.	Murphy (1896).
AithdD.	McKenna (1939–40).
ALC	Hennessy (1871).
BST	McKenna (1944).
Chron. Scot.	Hennessy (1866).
DBM	Mhág Craith (1967–80).
DDána	Mac Cionnaith (1938).
DDé	McKenna (1922).
FFÉ	Comyn & Dinneen (1902–14).
GBMCM	Williams (1980).
IBP	Bergin (1970).

IF	McKenna (1918).
IGT V	Ó Riain (2025).
IT	Fraser & O'Keeffe (1931).
LBranach	Mac Airt (1944).
LCAB	Ó Donnchadha (1931).
LMG	Ó Muraíle (2003–4).
Mag.	McKenna (1947).
O'Hara	McKenna (1951d).
PB	McKenna (1931).
TD	Knott (1922–26).

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AN IRISH COLLECTION OF REMEDIES FOR GYNAECOLOGICAL AND OBSTETRICAL CONDITIONS

Abstract

This contribution presents a semi-diplomatic edition and translation of a collection of remedies for gynaecological and obstetrical conditions that was written around the beginning of the sixteenth century and is now preserved in two separate Irish medical manuscripts (RIA MSS 23 N 29 [467] and 24 B 3 [445]). The collection forms part of a much larger remedy book compiled by the north Connacht physician Conla Mac an Leagha (*fl.* 1496–1509) and is noteworthy as a witness to the transmission in Ireland of material relating to the twelfth-century ensemble of Latin texts on women's medicine known as the *Trotula*. The text sheds light on the processes of vernacularisation of this material in the Insular world during the later Middle Ages and offers insight into the use of the prosimetrical and enumerative forms for medical writing in Irish. It also informs our understanding of the circulation of Irish medical remedy collections and is of considerable lexicographical significance, containing several word-forms and meanings that are not recorded in the *Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language* (*eDIL*).

Introduction

This article presents an edition and translation of a collection of remedies for gynaecological and obstetrical conditions preserved in an early sixteenth-century Irish manuscript that is now split between two distinct codices.[1] The collection forms a single chapter in a much larger remedy book containing over 920 different cures for ailments of the entire body, broadly arranged in the head-to-toe order typical of such collections throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages. The remedy book in question was written primarily by the north Connacht physician Conla Mac an Leagha (*fl.* 1496–1509), with possible assistance in one instance from his brother Máel Eachlainn, who

[1]I am especially grateful to Sharon Arbuthnot, Siobhán Barrett, David Stifter, the editors of this volume and the anonymous reviewer for offering many insights into, and important corrections on, previous drafts of this work. I also wish to thank the other attendees of the Irish Medical Texts Reading Group at Maynooth University in Autumn 2025 (Benedetta D'Antuono, Mairéad Finnegan, Chantal Kobel and Cassandra Pruetz) for their perceptive contributions to our discussion of the text. I alone am responsible for any errors or shortcomings that may remain. This work has been produced as part of the project *LEIGHEAS: Language, Education and Medical Learning in the Premodern Gaelic World*, funded by a Consolidator Laureate Award from Research Ireland (grant agreement no. IRCLA/2022/2922; https://leigheas.maynoothuniversity.ie).

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was *ollamh* in medicine to the two Mac Donnchaidh lords in Co. Sligo and is known to have been active in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.[2] The work as a whole is significant in being the only prosimetrical medical text to survive from medieval Ireland, containing over forty passages in verse, many of which are versified remedies.[3] In a previous volume of this journal, I published an edition and translation of the chapter of cures, charms and prayers for andrological ailments that immediately precedes the present text.[4] Together, these chapters constitute the portion of the treatise that might now be designated 'Conla Mac an Leagha's Remedy Book' dealing with conditions of the generative organs.

Conla Mac an Leagha is known to have been a practising physician in the service of the Mac Diarmada family in the lordship of Magh Luirg, located in what are now the baronies of Boyle and Frenchpark, Co. Roscommon. He appears to have moved around several different locations in that area while compiling his remedy collection, apparently for his own use.[5] His treatise is now preserved, however, as part of two distinct, composite manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy. The majority of the text (thirty-two vellum leaves) is found in its original location, RIA MS 24 B 3 (445), pp. 33–[90], 90a, 90b and 91–3. A further eight paper leaves, which became separated from the vellum at an unknown point in the transmission of the work, are now found in RIA MS 23 N 29 (467), fols 1–4 and 6–9. Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha has established the correct collation of these leaves as follows:

RIA MS 24 B 3 (445), pp. 33–70;
RIA MS 23 N 29 (467), fols 1–4;
RIA MS 24 B 3 (445), pp. 71–4;
RIA MS 23 N 29 (467), fols 6–9;
RIA MS 24 B 3 (445), pp. 75–93.[6]

[2]Paul Walsh, 'An Irish medical family – Mac an Leagha', in Colm Ó Lochlainn (ed.), *Irish Men of Learning: Studies by Father Paul Walsh* (Dublin, 1947), 206–18; Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha, 'An Irish medical treatise on vellum and paper from the 16th century', in Pádraig Ó Macháin (ed.), *Paper and the Paper Manuscript: A Context for the Transmission of Gaelic Literature* (Cork, 2019), 111–25, at 113.

[3]For editions of three of these remedies, as well as discussion of their wider stylistic context, see Deborah Hayden, 'Three versified medical recipes invoking Dían Cécht', in Anders Ahlqvist and Pamela O'Neill (eds), *Fír Fesso: A Festschrift for Neil McLeod* (Sydney, 2018), 107–23. Two further metrical remedies from the collection have been published in Deborah Hayden, 'A versified cure for headache and some lexicographical notes', *Keltische Forschungen* 8 (2019), 7–22, and Deborah Hayden, 'Medieval Irish medical verse in the nineteenth century: some evidence from material culture', *Irish Historical Studies* 45/168 (2021), 1–19.

[4]Deborah Hayden, 'A sixteenth-century Irish collection of remedies for ailments of the male reproductive organs', *Celtica* 33 (2021), 248–76.

[5]Nic Dhonnchadha, 'An Irish medical treatise', 113.

[6]Nic Dhonnchadha, 'An Irish medical treatise', 111. For a discussion of this manuscript in relation to other composite paper and vellum codices from late-medieval Ireland, see Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'The emergence of the Gaelic paper manuscript: a preliminary investigation', in Pádraig Ó Macháin (ed.), *Paper and the Paper Manuscript: A Context for the Transmission of Gaelic Literature* (Cork, 2019), 21–43, at 31.

This collation is of particular relevance for the present contribution, because Conla's chapter on gynaecological and obstetrical conditions spans a portion of the original manuscript that is now split across the two codices: it begins on one of the paper leaves, fol. 9v8 of RIA MS 23 N 29 (467), and then continues to pp. 75–78.26 of the vellum leaves in RIA MS 24 B 3 (445).

The chief aim of this article is to make this text available in a modern edition and translation with a view to highlighting its significance for the lexicography of the Gaelic languages and for the historical sociology of knowledge, as well as to provide a basis for future, more in-depth studies of its sources and manuscript transmission. Some preliminary remarks in this regard might, however, be made here for contextual purposes.

Medieval Irish gynaecology and obstetrics in their European context

The collection edited here comprises seventy-eight separate remedies for gynaecological and obstetrical conditions. Over one third of these are for menstrual irregularities, chiefly excessive blood flow or retention of the menses. This emphasis in content is in keeping with other European sources on women's medicine: Monica Green has noted, for example, that of some 250 medicinal substances listed in the most popular pharmaceutical authority in western Europe, the *Circa Instans*, eighty-seven – over a third – are stated to be good for menstrual disorders.[7] A similar preoccupation with regulation of the menses can be found in the 'Book on the Conditions of Women' (*Liber de sinthomatibus mulierum*), the first of three Latin texts on women's medicine that, after several stages of independent revision, were brought together by the end of the twelfth century to form the ensemble of texts now known as the *Trotula*.[8] Here again, over one-third of the work is taken up with sections on the general physiology and pathology of menstruation, menstrual retention, paucity of the menses and excess menstruation.[9]

A focus on menstruation in medieval texts on women's medicine is not surprising, since, as Green has further observed, this physiological phenomenon 'formed the bedrock of medieval concepts about how the female body functioned': it was seen as the end result of a whole bodily process of purification and a prerequisite for conception.[10] Accordingly, disruption of the menses was understood as the cause, and not merely the symptom, of a whole range of other disorders affecting the female body, and addressing such issues could in turn influence matters of an obstetrical nature.[11] For example, preparations for bringing on menstruation, or emmenagogues, 'were not necessarily seen

[7] Green, 'Flowers, poisons and men: menstruation in early medieval Europe', in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie (eds), *Menstruation: A Cultural History* (Basingstoke, 2005), 51–64, at 54.

[8] For a discussion of the evolution and contents of the *Liber de sinthomatibus mulierum*, see Monica Green (ed. and trans.), *The Trotula. A Medieval Compendium of Women's Medicine* (Philadelphia, PA, 2001), 17–37.

[9] Green, *The Trotula*, 21.

[10] Green, 'Flowers, poisons and men', 53.

[11] Green, Flowers, poisons and men', 54. The physiological rationale underlying medical approaches to menstrual irregularities is discussed in detail in Green, *The Trotula*, 19–22.

as abortifacients but may well have had a deliberately prenatal purpose', since it was understood that the womb had to be successfully cleaned out before it could provide a suitable place for implantation of the seed.[12] The physiological link between menstruation and obstetrical concerns is clearly articulated in the Irish treatise on health known as *Regimen na sláinte*, dating to the mid-fifteenth century:

> Et bīt*h* a f*h*is agad gurab c*úis* c*h*oiméda sl*áint*i don m*ac*l*ac* ⁊ don mnaī faicsin na f*ol*a m*īst*a a cāil*id*eacht ⁊ a caindiacht ⁊ a n-aims*ir* imc*h*ub*aid* do r*ēir* gnāth*uigth*e an g*ach* uile aims*ir*, ⁊ gurab c*úis* c*h*oimēda ō g*ach* uile urc*h*ōid; ⁊ do-nī sī iat geanmnaid maill*e rē* b*eac*ān āilg*is* coimriachtana. Et as ī as meadh c*h*omt*h*rom do f*h*lux na f*ol*a m*īst*a, .i. a beith ūair an g*ach* aen-mī. *Agus* nī hēigin a beith co[m]mōr *nō* coimb*eac* an g*ach* aen-mnaī […] mur claec*h*l*uigth*ear an f*huil* m*īst*a ōna suig*iugad* n*ādūrda* fēin as c*ūis* anfhainne ⁊ claec*h*l*uigth*i na f*uir*me dona mnāib sin, ⁊ as cūis tearcacht don gein*eam*ain ⁊ toirrc*his* mairb sin. Mās ead dēntur deithneas innus nach claec*h*l*uig*i an f*huil* m*īsta* ōna hord n*ādūrd*a.
>
> 'And we know that seeing the menstrual blood in proper quality and quantity and at the appropriate time according to custom in every period of time is a cause of conservation of health for the uterus and for the woman, and a cause of conservation from every harm; and it makes them chaste with little desire for coition. And the even measure for the menstrual discharge is that it should occur once in every month. And it need not be equally large or equally small in every woman […] when the menstrual blood is changed from its own natural disposition that is a cause of weakness and of change of form for women, and that is a cause of scant conception and of a dead foetus. Therefore, let care be exerted that the menstrual blood does not change from its natural order.'[13]

That Conla Mac an Leagha was not merely a scribe but also a practising physician who probably made use of the remedies in his collection is indicated by a note he wrote in RIA MS 24 B 3 (445), p. 109, where he observed that he had finished copying a lapidary after attending Cathal Bearrtha Mac Diarmada Gall, who had been dangerously wounded by an arrow.[14] His inclusion of a chapter on gynaecological and obstetrical cures in the same manuscript suggests that he was also involved in the practice of women's medicine. Such a range of clinical expertise accords with a broader trend across Europe in

[12] Green, 'Flowers, poisons and men', 53.

[13] Séamus Ó Ceithearnaigh, *Regimen na sláinte: Regimen sanitatis Magnini Mediolanensis*, 3 vols (Dublin, 1942–4), i, 99–100 (ll. 2656–81); trans. Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha, 'Irish medical writing, 1400–1600', in Angela Bourke (ed.), *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing, Vol. 4* (Cork, 2002), 341–57, at 352.

[14] Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha, 'Medical writing in Irish', *Irish Journal of Medical Science* 169/3 (2000), 217–20, at 220.

the later Middle Ages, when gynaecological care, as well as certain aspects of emergency obstetrical care, were frequently in the hands of male practitioners.[15] That this was the case in Ireland as elsewhere is indicated by a colophon written in another medical manuscript of the sixteenth century, where the Irish physician Corc Óg Ó Cadhla stated that on 22 March 1578 he was in 'Gráinseach na Manach' (apparently Graiguenamanagh, Co. Kilkenny) in the house of Brian Caomhánach, having just treated Brian's daughters for a menstrual irregularity.[16]

Other gynaecological matters and obstetrical conditions are the focus of most of the remedies in the second half of Conla Mac an Leagha's collection. Some fifteen of these address problems with conception or infertility, while four (§§58, 61, 64, 65) are concerned with inducing or facilitating a successful birth. The terse format of medical remedies, which do not always include headings explicitly stating their purpose (although this can sometimes be inferred from the text of the immediately preceding remedy in the collection) means that it is not always clear whether remedies for ensuring successful parturition were considered distinct from those more explicitly recommended for abortion (*toglúasacht*) or removal of a dead foetus from the womb (§§51–2, 57, 66, 70–1, 78–9, 80).

A glimpse into the sociohistorical context of our remedy collection is provided by the nine cures that are recommended for influencing the gender of an unborn child (§§41–3, 53, 55–6, 62–3 and 73), all but two of which (§§41 and 43) indicate a preference for male offspring. This teaching may ultimately derive from a source such as the *Natural History* of the Roman historian Pliny the Elder, who claimed that 'If the uterus of the hare is taken in food, it is believed that males are conceived; the same result is obtained by eating its testicles and rennet' (*si vulva leporum in cibis sumatur, mares concipi putant, hoc et testiculis eorum et coagulo profici*).[17] Three remedies with a similar purpose are found in the Latin *Trotula* tradition, specifically the section of the *Liber de sinthomatibus mulierum* concerned with 'impediments to conception'.[18] Monica Green has observed, however, that 'Neither here nor in the vast majority of medieval medical texts are there any explicit instructions on how to conceive females'.[19] She notes only two exceptions to this, one being a late antique or early medieval treatise known as '*De passionibus mulierum* A', which recommends that the two partners drink the dried vagina of a hare in order to conceive a girl. The other is a recipe in the fifteenth-century Middle English work '*Sekenesse of Wymmen* 2', which misinterprets instructions in §76 of the Latin *Trotula* advising the woman to drink the testicles of a hare in order to conceive a male child.[20] The remedies in §§41 and 43 of our Irish

[15] Monica Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology* (Oxford, 2008), x.

[16] RIA MS 24 P 14 (443), p. 170a36–8; noted in Nic Dhonnchadha, 'Irish medical writing', 342.

[17] W. H. S. Jones (ed. and trans.), *Pliny. Natural History, Volume VIII: Books 28–32*, Loeb Classical Library 418 (Cambridge, MA, 1963), 166–7 (XXVIII.lxxvii).

[18] Green, *The Trotula*, 94–5 (§§76–8).

[19] Green, *The Trotula*, 34.

[20] Green, *The Trotula*, 220, referring to pp. 94–5 of her edition and citing the Middle English

text can thus be added to this list of exceptions to the apparent preference for conceiving male children that is expressed in many medieval medical sources.

The mysterious and often unpredictable nature of conception and childbirth is intimated by the inclusion of two remedies that might be termed 'magical' or 'ritualistic' in nature, both of which are instructions for creating amulets to be worn on the body. As I have noted elsewhere, the remedy in §64 of our text, which is stated to be for ensuring childbirth without danger, is an Irish reflex of the popular ritual motif of the holy mothers, sometimes referred to as the '*peperit* charm', variations of which circulated widely in Europe throughout the Middle Ages. Its core formula consists of an enumeration of biblical instances of miraculous childbirth, and the version in our text is similar to that transmitted in the Anglo-Norman tradition, which expanded the roster of holy mothers to include Anna, mother of Mary, and Celina, mother of Remigius.[21] The remedy in question also includes a reference to the so-called '*Sator* square', a palindrome consisting of the five Latin words *sator*, *arepo*, *tenet*, *opera* and *rotas*. This ritual came to be closely associated with childbirth in the Middle Ages by virtue of its inclusion in the Latin *Trotula* tradition, where the reader is advised that the words may be written on cheese or butter and then consumed by the woman in order to facilitate the parturition of a dead foetus.[22] I have as yet found no parallel for the instructions in §63, which counsel a woman suffering from the 'affliction' of bearing daughters to tie a horse's tooth in a sealskin thong, take it to seven masses (?) and wear it around the neck.

A concern for postpartum conditions such as retention of the afterbirth is expressed in the remedies in §§76 and 77. There is no direct correspondence between the instructions given for this purpose in our text and similar remedies in the Latin *Trotula* tradition, apart from the recommendation in §76 to apply fumigations to the genitalia, a procedure that was also used for conditions such as menstrual retention and uterine pain.[23] For example, the use of a *stól toll* or *sella perforata* 'perforated chair' or 'stool' for this purpose, as noted in §§24 and 36 of the Irish text (for menstrual retention and conception, respectively), is attested several times in the Latin *Trotula*, as in the following advice for curing 'paucity of the menses':[24]

> Accipe zinziber, folia lauri, et sauinam, tere et simul pone in olla rudi super carbones uiuos, et super sedem perforatum sedeat

text edited by Beryl Rowland, *Medieval Woman's Guide to Health: The First English Gynaecological Handbook* (Kent, OH, 1981), 168–9.

[21] Deborah Hayden, 'Premodern Irish rituals for conception and childbirth in their Insular context', in Deborah Hayden and Sarah Baccianti (eds), *Medicine in the Medieval North Atlantic World: Vernacular Texts and Traditions* (Turnhout, 2025), 415–37, at 418–20; see also Marianne Elsakkers, ' "In pain you shall bear children" (Gen. 3:16): medieval prayers for safe delivery', in Anne-Marie Korte (ed.), *Women and Miracle Stories: A Multidisciplinary Exploration* (Leiden, 2001), 179–209.

[22] Green, *The Trotula*, 100–1.

[23] See Green, *The Trotula*, 102–3 (§§104–11).

[24] See Green, *The Trotula*, 76–9 and 116–17 (§§13, 25 and 134); suffumigation is recommended in §108 of the Latin text.

> mulier, et fumum recipiat per inferiora, et sic menstrua redibunt. Fiat ter uel quarter uel pluries. Mulier autem que huiusmodi fomenta frequentat, necesse est ut uuluam suam ungat intus frigidis unguentis ne nimis calefiat.
>
> 'Take ginger, laurel leaves, and savin. Pound them and place them together in a plain pot on live coals, and let the woman sit upon a perforated seat, and let her receive the smoke through the lower members, and thus the menses will return. Let this be done three or four times or even more often. But for the woman who frequently makes applications of this kind, it is necessary that she anoint her vagina inside with cold unguents lest she becomes excessively heated.'[25]

Conla Mac an Leagha's chapter on gynaecological and obstetrical conditions also includes a few miscellaneous remedies, such as the tetrad in §15 for easing a sharp pain (*greim*) or the cure for 'tightness' (*tendus*) in the woman at the birth of her child, possibly a reference to labour contractions. §§54 and 69 appear to be concerned with the birthing of calves and may reflect the agricultural milieu in which a rural practitioner like Conla might have been called to work on occasion. The purpose of the remedies in §§16, 17 and 32 is not clearly stated, although the first two involve the use of a clyster or enema to inject medicinal liquid into the vagina. Familiarity with the medical equipment used throughout medieval western Europe at this period is also indicated in §§29–31, 35, 42, 46 and 48, which involve the use of a pessary, or tampon-like wad of cotton or some other material into which medications could be wrapped or poured.[26]

Verse, tetrads and vernacularisation

In addition to its inclusion of numerous versified remedies, several chapters in Conla Mac an Leagha's Remedy Book begin with verse excerpts, many of which were evidently intended to summarise or introduce the ailments for which the following cures in the chapter are deemed efficacious.[27] These are typically in the common Irish metre known as *deibhidhe*, which consists of four heptasyllabic lines in which line *a* rhymes with *b* and line *c* rhymes with *d*. End-rhymes in this metre are between words of unequal syllabic length; the final of the second line of each couplet has a syllable prefixed to the syllable that forms a rhyme with the final of the first line.[28] The chapter on women's medicine edited here likewise begins with two quatrains, but

[25] Green, *The Trotula*, 78–9 (§25).

[26] See Green, *The Trotula*, 30–3, for references to such equipment in the Latin text, as well as illustrations of pessaries, fumigation pots and stools in a fifteenth-century copy of the Dutch translation of the *Trotula* (Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, MS GKS 1657, fols 29r and 32r). In our text, the creation of the pessary is only described explicitly in §31, but its use can be inferred in the other remedies noted.

[27] For other examples, see Hayden, 'A sixteenth-century Irish collection', 269–70.

[28] See Eleanor Knott, *Irish Syllabic Poetry 1200–1600*, 2nd ed. (Dublin, 2005), 18–19.

rather than presenting a list of ailments, they contain information of a more theoretical nature and appear to be a versification of teaching found in the section of the *Liber de sinthomatibus mulierum* concerned with 'excessive flux of the menses' (*De nimio fluxu menstruorum*).[29] This begins by explaining that 'Sometimes the menses abound beyond what is natural, which has happened because the veins of the womb are wide and open, or because sometimes they break open and the blood flows in great quantity' (*Habundant quandoque menstrua preter naturam, quod contigit quia uene matricis sunt ample et aperte, uel quia quandoque crepantur et fluit inde sanguis in multa quantitate*).[30] The second quatrain (§3) may be inspired by the passage immediately following this explanation in the Latin *Trotula*, which offers a humoral rationale for why menstrual flux might be yellow, red or white in colour: it is stated that a yellow excretion is caused by excess bile, white by excess phlegm and red by excess blood.[31] It is then observed that 'Illnesses of this kind emerge on account of corrupt humors within, which corruption Nature refuses to sustain' (*Huiusmodi egritudines emergunt propter humores interius corruptos, quam corruptionem natura dedignatur sustinere*). §25 of our chapter also contains a quatrain of verse, but in this case, it is a prescription for retention of the menses, albeit lacking any explicit instructions regarding the preparation or administration of the remedy, as is common in other versified cures.

Verse renditions of material belonging to the *Trotula* are attested in other geographically proximate linguistic traditions: one metrical version of the work survives in Latin from the thirteenth century and another was produced in Anglo-Norman French around the same time, both of them copied in England.[32] Tony Hunt has observed that the Anglo-Norman verse translation (preserved in Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.1.20) appears to be based on the first redaction of the *Liber de sinthomatibus mulierum*, the first of the three texts that constitute the standardised Latin ensemble.[33] This is also the portion of the work that has been argued above to be the source of the Irish quatrains in §§2 and 3 of our remedy collection, although the corresponding section in the Anglo-Norman version bears little resemblance to the Irish rendition.[34] While

[29] Green, *The Trotula*, 80–3 (§§29–44).

[30] Green, *The Trotula*, 80–1 (§29).

[31] Green, *The Trotula*, 80–1 (§30). The inclusion of the colour brown in our text (§2) appears to be an innovation on the part of the author of the verse, perhaps to complete the quatrain. For another Irish version of this section of the *Trotula* text, see Winifred Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook of gynaecology and midwifery preceded by a section on the grades and on the treatment of wounds and some good counsel to the physician himself finishing with a discussion on the treatment of scabies', in J. Fraser, P. Grosjean and J. G. O'Keefe (eds), *Irish Texts Fasciculus V* (London, 1934), 12–74, at 20. The humoral rationale underlying different colours of excretion in this context might be compared with an episode in *Acallam na Senórach*, where the protagonist Caílte is given a purgative and produces five different colours of vomit: see Ranke De Vries, 'The healing of Caílte in *Acallam na senórach*', *North American Journal of Celtic Studies* 5/1 (2021), 49–82, at 60–8.

[32] Green, 'Obstetrical and gynecological texts in Middle English', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 14 (1992), 53–88, at 64. The Anglo-Norman verse translation has been edited by Tony Hunt, *Anglo-Norman Medicine*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1994–7), ii, 68–128.

[33] Hunt, *Anglo-Norman Medicine*, ii, 72.

[34] See Hunt, *Anglo-Norman Medicine*, ii, 86.

it is tempting to suggest that the three quatrains in this chapter of Conla Mac an Leagha's Remedy Book represent traces of a full Irish verse rendition of the *Trotula* that is no longer extant, it is also possible that they are merely ornamental flourishes intended to demonstrate the stylistic versatility of the scribe. Conla Mac an Leagha was inclined to Gaelicise his medical texts in other ways, such as by attributing individual remedies to figures of Irish mythology, switching to ogham script, or including elaborate illuminated initials in a style typical of Gaelic vernacular manuscript culture at this period.[35] Demonstrating his capacity to compose verse in traditional Irish metre, however rudimentary, would fit well within this wider context.

Also noteworthy with regard to the stylistic form of the remedies in this text is the inclusion of two tetrads in §§14 and 15. Although tetrads are far less common than triads or heptads in medieval Irish literature, with numerous examples of the latter spanning subjects such as topography, literature, social structures and legal principles, cataloguing concepts or information in groups of four undoubtedly served the same aphoristic and mnemonic function as the triadic and heptadic genres.[36] To my knowledge, no Irish tetrads concerned specifically with medicine have been published before, but given the technical nature of medical learning, which would have likely involved the need to memorise lists of ingredients or nosological classifications, it is not surprising to find such formulations in this context as well.[37] I am aware of two other examples of medical tetrads: one pair is found in NLI MS G 11, p. 250b14–17, where the scribe provides contrasting lists of 'four large cold seeds' (*síla móra*) and 'four small cold seeds' (*síla beca*), presumably a reference to recipe ingredients and their properties. Another, more strikingly visual example of this mnemonic form is found in Dublin, TCD MS H 2. 13 (1315), a fifteenth-century medical manuscript written by an anonymous scribe.[38] In the lower margin and space created by tapering of the text on p. 3a of this manuscript, the scribe has recorded the three causes of sighing; the three types of dropsy and their three causes; the four causes of flux; and the four causes of constipation. He arranges each item diagrammatically and draws lines linking each rubric

[35]On mythological attributions in the text, see Deborah Hayden, 'Attribution and authority in a medieval Irish medical compendium', *Studia Hibernica* 45 (2019), 19–51. Conla switches to ogham script when copying a tract on uroscopy preserved elsewhere in RIA MS 24 B 3 (445); for discussion, see Deborah Hayden and David Stifter, 'Ogham, cryptography and healing charms in the nineteenth century: observations on "The Minchin Manuscript" ', *PRIA* 125C (2025), 345–88, at 351–2. For examples of illuminated initials in Conla's remedy book, which typically mark the beginning of individual chapters, see RIA MS 24 B 3 (445), pp. 33, 46, 48 and 54.

[36]The most recent account of triads and heptads in early Irish tradition, with comparisons to Welsh material, is Fergus Kelly, *The Triads of Ireland: An Old Irish Wisdom Text*, Early Irish Texts Series 2 (Dublin, 2025).

[37]For discussion of triads in Irish medical texts, see Deborah Hayden, 'Observations on the "doors of death" in a medieval Irish medical catechism', in Liam P. Ó Murchú (ed.), *Rosa Anglica: Reassessments*, ITS Subsidiary Series 28 (London, 2016), 26–56, at 35–8.

[38]It may be relevant, as Siobhán Barrett has pointed out to me, that this manuscript contains a close copy of a text on eye ailments written by Conla Mac an Leagha's brother, Máel Eachlainn, and preserved in Dublin, King's Inns Library MS 15.

to a sub-rubric or relevant text.[39]

Parallels in other Irish texts

Copies or variant versions of some of the remedies in our text are found in other Irish medical manuscripts of the later Middle Ages. The largest overlap (at least thirteen remedies) occurs with a collection of cures in RIA MS 23 F 19 (473), fols 88–95. This fifteenth-century codex includes an Irish treatise on gynaecology that derives in part from the Latin *Trotula* text, and which Winifred Wulff published in 1934 using variants from RIA MS 23 M 36 (472) and TCD MS E 4.1 (1436).[40] All the parallels that I have identified in our text (§§27–8, 30–2, 35–7, 40–2 and 47–8 below) correspond to remedies in a portion of Wulff's edition (§§59–61) for which she could find 'no Latin original',[41] although, as observed in the notes below, many of them are similar to remedies found in the version of the standardised *Trotula* ensemble that has since been published by Green. It is possible, therefore, that they ultimately derive from a different version of the Irish *Trotula* text from the one published by Wulff. The transmission of the Latin *Trotula* ensemble is complex, and its translation into Irish coincided with renderings in many other European vernaculars during the later Middle Ages, including Dutch, English, French, German, Hebrew and Italian.[42] Monica Green has noted, however, that the Latin texts comprising the *Trotula* ensemble, which existed in fifteen distinct versions, were particularly popular in the Insular world, with more than three dozen of the 118 extant Latin *Trotula* manuscripts having been copied in England.[43] It may be instructive in future to investigate further the relationship between the Irish transmission of this material and other Insular texts deriving from the *Trotula* tradition.[44]

[39]Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha, 'Catalogue record for Dublin, Trinity College MS 1315', available on *ISOS*: https://www.isos.dias.ie/TCD/TCD_MS_1315.html (accessed 11 February 2026).

[40]Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook'; Wulff (p. xi) incorrectly gives the shelfmark of RIA MS 23 M 36 (472) as '24 M 36'. Fol. 24 of RIA 23 F 19 (473) bears the date 1352, but as noted in Kathleen Mulchrone et al., *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, 8 vols (Dublin, 1926–70), ii, 1235, 'this must apply to the original compilation, as the ms. is of later date'.

[41]Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', xiv.

[42]On these, see especially Monica Green, 'A handlist of the Latin and vernacular manuscripts of the so-called Trotula texts, Part 2: the vernacular translations and Latin re-writings', *Scriptorium* 51 (1997), 80–104, and the appendix to Monica Green, *Women's Healthcare in the Medieval West: Texts and Contexts* (Aldershot, 2000).

[43]Green, 'Obstetrical and gynecological texts', 64. Tony Hunt, *Anglo-Norman Medicine*, ii, 70–1, similarly observes that 'It is noteworthy that approximately one third of the Latin "Trotula" MSS come from England, 36 copies being certainly insular, and a further 5 emanating either from England or N. France.'

[44]On the Irish translations of the *Trotula*, see most recently Sharon Arbuthnot, 'Women's medicine in late medieval Ireland: The *Trotula* texts', in Salvador Ryan (ed.), *Birth and the Irish: A Miscellany* (Dublin, 2021), 40–4, and also Sharon Arbuthnot, 'The Irish versions of the *Trotula* texts on women's medicine', *CMCS* 91 (Summer 2026), 1–29. The latter article came to my attention at an advanced stage in the preparation of this contribution, and I am grateful to Dr Arbuthnot for sharing it with me prior to publication. Arbuthnot presents persuasive evidence to suggest that the *Trotula* was translated into Irish more than once and argues that the Irish treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff contains material that probably derives from a version of the Latin proto-ensemble (on which see Green, *The Trotula*, 52–5), alongside two chapters and possibly

The manuscript witness with the next largest collection of parallel remedies known to me is NLS MS Adv. 72.1.3, fol. 80r–v, which includes copies of at least ten remedies also found in our text (§§9–13, 70–1, 73–4 and 77). In this source, which has been tentatively dated to the fifteenth century and was subsequently associated with the Beaton family of medical practitioners in Gaelic Scotland, the gynaecological and obstetrical cures in question are included in a more varied remedy collection described by the manuscript's cataloguer as

> Treatments, including charms, for various conditions: colic, wounds, burns, felon, insanity, loss of speech, lack of sleep, and after letting a vein; charm for safe childbirth; epilepsy, erysipelas, sterility; to ensure the birth of a male child; to abort a dead foetus; menstruation; to stem the flow of blood from a vein; charm against all evil, etc.[45]

Copies of the two instructions for making textual amulets in §§63–4 are preserved among various charms added to the margins and blank spaces of TCD MS H 3.17 (1336), a composite manuscript consisting primarily of legal texts.[46] A further four remedies (§§60, 63–4 and 72) are also found in 'a compilation of cures, charms and prayers against obstetrical and gynaecological problems' preserved in NLI MS G 11, pp. 268b1–269b32.[47] G 11 is a large and diverse medical manuscript compiled in the fifteenth century by the Ó Bolgaidhe family of medical scribes in Leinster; a colophon on p. 268a records the murder, in 1468, of Thomas, Earl of Desmond, and may have been written at the Ó Bolgaidhe home at Woodstock, west of Athy.[48]

In a recent discussion of Old English remedy collections, Conan Doyle observed that 'finding the source of every individual recipe […] is a task akin to untangling the Gordian knot', one that might ultimately have to be solved using digital methods of neural network computing.[49] A similar point might be made regarding the identification of variant versions of remedies in the large corpus of unpublished Irish medical manuscripts and the challenge of establishing their relationships. While it is beyond the scope of this contribution to do much more than 'tease at the strands of the knot',[50] it is hoped that publishing a semi-diplomatic edition of such a large collection of this material may serve as a starting point for further investigation of such texts. I have thus noted

other extracts that were based on a later development of the Latin ensemble.

[45] Ronald Black, *Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland*, available on *ISOS*: https://www.isos.dias.ie/NLS/NLS_Adv_MS_72_1_3.html (accessed 11 February 2026); see also John Bannerman, *The Beatons: A Medical Kindred in the Classical Gaelic Tradition* (Edinburgh, 1998), 38 and 49.

[46] On these, see R. I. Best, 'Some Irish charms', *Ériu* 16 (1952), 27–32 and Hayden, 'Premodern Irish rituals'.

[47] As observed by Nessa Ní Shéaghdha, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland, Fasciculus I: Mss. G1–G14* (Dublin, 1967), 77.

[48] Ní Shéaghdha, *Catalogue*, 66.

[49] Conan Doyle, *The Reception of Latin Medicine in Early Medieval England: The Evidence from Old English Texts*, Health and Healing in the Middle Ages 8 (York, 2025), 107.

[50] To adapt the turn of phrase used by Doyle, *The Reception of Latin Medicine*, 107.

relevant parallels from the above-mentioned manuscripts, where identified, in the notes to the edition but have only transcribed these other copies in cases where they clarify the readings in our text or present significant variants.

Text and translation

The edition presented here is based on what was once a single witness but is now found across two manuscripts: RIA MSS 23 N 29 (467), fol. 9v8–z and 24 B 3, pp. 75–78.26. In the presentation of the text below, expansions noted in the manuscript are indicated by italics, and length-marks, where not found in the manuscript, are marked using a macron over vowels. Missing letters are indicated (and supplied where possible) in square brackets, with the exception of lenition, which is only rarely (and inconsistently) marked by the scribe. Nasalisation is marked by the scribe in just three instances and has been reproduced as in the manuscript. Word-division and punctuation are editorial, and textual or semantic ambiguities are discussed in the notes.

A note of caution should be sounded regarding the translation of plant names in particular. As Monica Green has observed, 'The translation of pharmaceutical ingredients is the most vexing aspect of working with texts such as these, since all identifications carry a certain amount of imprecision.'[51] Names of ingredients may become deformed in transmission or may have referred to several different plants, and in some cases, species may now be extinct or their chemical properties may have changed slightly over the last several hundred years.[52] In the case of Irish plant names, dialectal differences and the limitations of our lexicographical sources, many of which do not incorporate information from medical texts, may also come into play; this is certainly the case for *eDIL*, where translations of plant names are often tentative, ambiguous or even contradictory. In translating the plant names given in this text (some seventy-seven in total), I have otherwise chiefly relied on the definitions given in a handful of late-medieval medical glossaries;[53] on the translations provided in Micheál Ó Conchubhair's edition of Tadhg Ó Cuinn's fifteenth-century *Materia medica*;[54] and on entries in modern collections of Irish plant-names, such as Hogan's *Luibhleabhrán*,[55] Uí Chonchubhair and Ó Conchúir's *Flóra Chorca Dhuibhne*,[56] and Williams's *Díolaim Luibheanna*.[57] Problematic or uncertain translations are discussed in the textual notes to the edition.

[51] Green, *The Trotula*, 62.

[52] Green, *The Trotula*, 62.

[53] Whitley Stokes, 'On the materia medica of the mediaeval Irish', *RC* 9 (1888), 224–44 and Whitley Stokes, 'Three Irish medical glossaries', *ACL* 1 (Halle, 1900), 325–47.

[54] Micheál P. S. Ó Conchubhair (ed. and trans.), *An Irish Materia Medica*, interim edition (1991), available at https://celt.ucc.ie/published/G600006/index.html (accessed 11 February 2026).

[55] Edmund Hogan, John Hogan and John C. MacErlean, *Luibhleabhrán: Irish and Scottish Gaelic Names of Herbs, Plants, Trees, etc.* (Dublin, 1900).

[56] Máirín Uí Chonchubhair and Aodán Ó Conchúir, *Flóra Chorca Dhuibhne: Aspects of the Flora of Corca Dhuibhne* (Ballyferriter, 1995).

[57] Nicholas J. A. Williams, *Díolaim Luibheanna* (Dublin, 1993).

§1 RIA MS 23 N 29 (467), fol. 9v8

Do gal*ur* na *m*ban bud*est*a.

On the sickness of women from here on.

§2 9v9–11

IMad cuislend bīs gu p*r*ap
isna lesaib ⁊ sa m*ac*l*og*:
is ūatib gala*r* na mban
re robur is re n-imad.

A venous excess that comes suddenly
in the thighs and in the womb:
it is from them that the sickness of
women [comes]
before a copious flow and an excess.

Cet*r*i data th*ec*aid dī
dat*h* bān ⁊ dat*h* buid*h*e
dat*h* d*er*g, ūa*r* is caom a bl*ad*
mar aon ⁊ d*a*t od*h*a*r*.

Four colours come from her,
the colour white and the colour yellow
the colour red, for its renown is noble,
as well as the colour brown.

§3 9v12–13

Ar gal*ur* na mban .i. cac eic*h* do
c*umus*c a*r* u*isce* ⁊ ūan lemn*achta*
ar a ūacht*ur* ⁊ a tab*air*t gan fis *dí*
⁊ a ōl gu cend *nómaid*e gach laī.

For the sickness of women, i.e.
horse-dung should be mixed with water
and froth of new milk [should be put] on
top of it, and it should be given to her
without her knowledge and it should be
drunk every day for a period of nine
days.

§4 9v14

Do toirm*us*c fola .i. būafall*án*
l*íath* do bruit a*r* fīn nō a it*h*i fūa*r*
le fī*n*.

For retention of blood, i.e. mugwort
should be boiled in wine or eaten cold
with wine.

§5 9v15

IN lus *cét*na do bruit a*r* u*isce* ⁊ a
ibi ⁊ dober in fuil.

The same plant should be boiled in water
and drunk, and it brings on the blood.

§6 9v16–18

Do toirm*us*c fola .i. grut dīgērta
do bruit*h* a*r* llemn*acht* fo t*r*ī a
tāt*h*. ⁊ brister *con*ad men ⁊ c*ur*tur
līach do mil air ⁊ im úr ⁊ cantur
umnum dicat ⁊ p*aidi*r fo t*r*ī an*n* ⁊
b*er*b*aig*tur tenga ēnāi*n* ⁊ l*us* na
sub a*r* medg, ⁊ a ōl. ⁊ a tīrib g*rég*
t*u*cud.

For retention of blood, i.e. unsoured (?)
curds should be boiled in fresh milk
three times [to make] solidified cheese.
And let it be grated until it is a fine
powder, and let a spoonful of honey and
fresh butter be put on it and let a
Hymnum dicat and a *Pater* be sung three
times over it, and let stitchwort and
strawberry be boiled in whey, and it
should be drunk. And it has been
brought from the lands of the Greeks.

§7 9v19–20

Ar rit fola .i. tenegal ⁊ mecun rata, brister a*r* u*isce* ⁊ b*er*b*aigth*ur ⁊ do*nī*ter liti dē ⁊ c*urtur* ūsca *nó* im inti ⁊ bīd aige gu mbī slán.

For a flow of blood, i.e. let houseleek and root of a fern be crushed in water and boiled and let a porridge be made of it, and let lard or butter be put into it, and let her have it until she is healthy.

§8 9v21–22

Ar rit fola: adarc gabai*r* do sg*r*is ⁊ mil do cum*u*sc uirre ⁊ a caitem ⁊ is mait*h* īcas.

For a flow of blood: the horn of a goat should be scraped and mixed with honey and eaten, and it heals well.

§9 9v23–24

Ar robur fola do mnaī īa*r* tuismed .i. rūsc na t*r*ī ndres ⁊ a*rget* lūacra do bruit tre as ⁊ liti do dēna*m* air do men cr*uithnechta* ⁊ psal*ann* urre [⁊] a caitem ⁊ īcaid.

For excessive bleeding of a woman after giving birth, i.e. the bark of the three briars and meadowsweet should be boiled with milk and a porridge should be made with [lit. on] it with wheat flour and salt [put] on it [and] it should be eaten, and it heals.

§10 9v25–6

Arin c*ét*na .i. craide mīl muige do cur tre detaig g*um*bī c*r*ūaid ⁊ a scris ⁊ aonbrochān dē ⁊ īc*aid*.

For the same, i.e. the heart of a hare should be smoked until it is hard and it should be scraped and a single pottage [made] from it, and it heals.

§11 9v27

Ar robu*r* f*ola* a*r* mbreit leni*m* .i. iba*r* tal*main* do bruit*h* a*r* u*isce* ⁊ a ō[l].

For an excessive flow of blood after the birth of a child, i.e. juniper should be boiled in water and drunk.

§12 9v27–8

A*r* i*n* c*ét*na .i. samad bō do bruit ar lemn*acht* ⁊ c*eir*īn dē a*r* com*h*ai*r* an m*a*cl*og* ⁊ bīd slān.

For the same, i.e. garden sorrel should be boiled in new milk and a poultice made from it for the womb and she will be healthy.

§13 9v29

Ar rob*ur* f*ola*, cac gabar ⁊ brēt līn nūa uime ⁊ b*er*b*aigtur* a*r* lem*nacht* ⁊ ib*edh* ⁊ nā bīd a fis aicce.

For an excessive flow of blood, i.e. [take] goat dung and [put] a new linen cloth around it and let it be boiled in new milk and let her drink [it], and let her not know about it.

§14 9v30–1

Cetri menanda coisces in rit fola .i. men ēsc ⁊ men psalann mara ⁊ mein cogna ⁊ mein ragaim.

Four powders that prevent the flow of blood, i.e. powdered fish and powdered seasalt and powdered horn and powdered horseradish.

§15 9v32

Cetri losa do cobar in grema: simsān, selgān, samad lēna, fed coille.

Four herbs for helping a sharp pain: wood sorrel, spleenwort, meadow sorrel, rue.

§16 9v31; 33–4

Sug crūaici Pádraig ⁊ slánl[us] do cur tre clistire 'na fēil gu domain le hola arnā tī in sūg gu hoband esti ⁊ a dēnam gu menic gu rob slán.

Juice of greater plantain and ribwort should be put through an enema deep in her vagina with oil so that the juice does not come quickly from it, and that should be done often until she is healthy.

§17 9v35–37; then continues in RIA MS 24 B 3 (445), p. 75.1

Tuilleadh ele: cairt ōg darac ⁊ frēma ferna ⁊ droigin ⁊ cairtaind ⁊ a[b]la do bruit ar uisce ⁊ a sītlad ⁊ a cur a soithech bēlcumang imfair[sing], ⁊ in ben do suighe ann go himlind ⁊ nī don tsūg sin do sceirdiug 'na f[éle] gu domain tre clistire ⁊ a dēnam sin gu gnāthach.

Another one: fresh oak bark and the roots of an alder and of blackthorn and of rowan and of an apple-tree should be boiled in water and strained and put in a very spacious vessel with a narrow mouth, and the woman should sit in it up to the navel, and some of that juice should be squirted deep into her vagina through an enema, and that should be done regularly.

§18 75.2–3

Sūg crūachi Pādraig do cur do mnaī 'na fēle gu domain ⁊ mar tirmaiges as meodōn coisgid in rith fola.

The juice of greater plantain should be put deep in the woman's vagina and as it dries from within it prevents the flow of blood.

§19 75.4–5

Ar galur na mban and so .i. tene talman ⁊ pīnān, berbaigtur ar lemnacht ⁊ curtur salann ⁊ im ara let ⁊ in let 'na dig; bun copóige d'iti do mnaī ⁊ aincid in rit fola.

For an ailment of women here, i.e. boil meadow saffron and gooseberry in new milk and salt and butter are put in half of it, and [have her drink] the half in one draught, [and give] the stem of dock-leaf to the woman to eat, and it takes care of the flow of blood.

§20 75.6–10

Do togairm na fola m*ísta* na*ch* ticc do mnaī i*n*[*a*] hai*mser* b*u*dēi*n* .i. gab p*ré*ma soile ō*n* maoit*he* bīs[58] a*r* srut*h* ⁊ bent*ur* ⁊ berbt*ur* a fīn *nó* a n-uis*ce* ⁊ gab barr raidde ⁊ tūair*c* t*r*īt a cēle ⁊ dēna broch*án* dīb ⁊ cait*hed*,[59] ⁊ ibed in nī a*r* a mb*r*uiter na f*r*ēma fo laige ⁊ fo ērge ⁊ dā nderntur fo t*r*ī is an*n* ticc in fuil m*ísta*.

For inducing the menses that do not come to a woman in her own time, i.e. take the roots of a willow from the moist part that overhangs a stream, and let them be cut and boiled in wine or in water, and take the top of bog-myrtle and pound it together and let a broth be made of them and let her consume [it], and let her drink the thing in which the roots are boiled when going to bed and rising, and if it is done three times, it is then that the menses come.

§21 75.11

Dēnt*ur* urb*r*uit don ca*r*[t]l*ann* fās*us* et*e*r cloc*haib* ⁊ c*urtur* fona mnāib ⁊ dobeir in fuil mīsta foc*ét*oir.

Let a decoction be made of water-mint that grows between rocks and apply it to the women and it brings on the menses at once.

§22 75.12–14

Do tab*air*t na fola m*ísta* .i. gab gāi*rleóg* ⁊ berb a n-u*isci* ⁊ in ben do cur 'na suide isin u*isci* gu nuige a himlind nō a brised ⁊ a berb*ad* tre ola ⁊ a cur fōn mnaī ⁊ dobeir in fuil m*ísta*.

To bring on the menses, i.e. take garlic and boil [it] in water and make the woman sit in the water up to her navel, or it should be crushed and boiled in oil and applied to the woman, and it brings the menses.

§23 75.15–16

Eōl*us* do togai*r*m na fola m*ísta* ⁊ a*r* galur fūail .i. l*us* na c*r*oici do b*r*uit ar medg ⁊ u*isce* coisregta do cratad ai*r* ⁊ ibed īa*rum* ⁊ īc*aid*.

A cure for bringing on the menses and for urinary disease, i.e. fennel should be boiled in whey and consecrated water should be sprinkled on it and let her drink [it] then and it heals.

§24 75.17–19

Do tab*air*t f*ola* m*ísta*: sinaip do berbad a*r* u*isce* ⁊ a cur fōn mnaī ⁊ silfid a fuil, nō a fotrug*ad* gu himlind *nó* a detath do lēgen fūit*h*i ⁊ sī a*r* stōl toll ⁊ cadōg uimpi gu mait.

To bring on the menses: mustard should be boiled in water and applied to the woman and her blood will flow, or she should be bathed up to the navel or its smoke should be released under her when she is on a perforated stool with a wrap around her well.

[58] MS bis bis.
[59] MS *caitet*heth.

§25 75.20

Eōlus ele is eōl dam trā
ben nach tic a fuil místa
ticcfuit dī gu fīr a fuil
⁊ ibed fīn gabuir.

Another cure indeed I know
[for] a woman whose menses do not come
truly her blood will come from her
if she drinks goat wine.

§26 75.21–2

Ar tobairt fuil místa .i. lus creide
do bruit ar fīn *nó* ar linn *nó* ar
medg ⁊ a ōl ⁊ dobeir in fuil místa.

To bring on the menses, i.e speedwell should be crushed in wine or beer or whey and it should be drunk and it brings on the menses.

§27 75.22–3

Flidh do thēgad ar licc tē *nó* a
n-aghain *nó* a bruit *nó* a fhāsced
⁊ a cur tē 'mon mbroind ⁊ dobeir
in fuil místa a cétōir.

Chickweed should be heated on a hot stone or in a pan, or it should be boiled or squeezed and when it is hot, it should be put around the womb and it brings on the menses at once.

§28 75.24

Būafallán do bruith ⁊ a brised ⁊ a
cur tē ar in imlind ⁊ dīcuirid in
fuil místa.

Mugwort should be boiled and pounded and put on the navel when it is hot and it brings on the menses.

§29 75.25–6

Saige d'ibe ⁊ tocuirid in fuil *nó* a
brised ⁊ a cur 'na fēle ⁊ dobeir in
fuil mīsta amach.

Sage should be drunk and it brings on the blood, or it should be pounded and put in her vagina and it brings the menses out.

§30 75.26–7

Frēma madra do bruith ⁊ a cur
'na fēle ⁊ cuiridh amach an fuil.

The roots of madder should be boiled and put in her vagina and it causes the blood to flow out.

§31 75.27–8

Men cogail do cumusc ⁊ mil ⁊
boill imfodo fo indamail
congaibe fir ⁊ a cur 'na fēle gu
domain ⁊ tocuirid in fuil.

Powder of cockle-plant and honey should be mixed and very long objects in the likeness of the male member [should be made] and put deep into her vagina and it brings on the blood.

§32 75.29–33

Calement, mint*us*, saige, būafall*án*, frēma madra, origanum, saderei, litronta, rú, isoib, musda*r*d, cu*m*i*n*, sīl losa na croic*h*i, l*us* creide, nenaid, nefpt, mercuirial: na losa sin *nó* ní dīb do bruit*h* ar li*n*d *nó* a*r* fīn *nó* a*r* braichl*es* ⁊ a ōl nō a mbruit a*r* u*isce* ⁊ fot*r*ucc*ad nó* a mbruit*h* a*r* fīn u*e*l a*r* lind u*e*l a*r* u*isce* ⁊ urbruit dīb.

Calamint, mint, sage, mugwort, madder roots, oregano, savory, dittany, bedstraw, hyssop, mustard, cumin, fennel seed, speedwell, nettles, catmint, mercury: those herbs or some of them should be boiled in beer or wine or in wort and drunk, or they should be boiled in water and a bath [be made of it], or they should be boiled in wine or in beer or in water and a decoction [should be made] from them.

§33 75.34–5

Ar teilgen fola .i. ces ferna bīs sai*r*des re grēi*n* ⁊ līat*h* an d*r*oigin do berbad ar lemn*acht* ⁊ ibed gu cend naomaide.

For releasing blood, i.e. a sprig of alder that is [growing] south-eastwards to the sun and the grey part of a blackthorn should be boiled in new milk, and let it be drunk for nine days.

§34 75.36

Leiges am*r*a do tab*air*t na fola .i. glaisīn fūalraig do bruit*h* a*r* li*n*d ⁊ a ōl fo t*r*ī ⁊ dobeir i*n* f*uil.*

A wonderful cure for bringing on the menses, i.e. spearwort from the marshy edge of a lake should be boiled in beer and drunk three times, and it brings on the blood.

§35 75.37–76.1

Do toirmescc rof*h*a*r*singe na bandoc*h*ta .i. alum*en* ⁊ arrament ⁊ fuil d*r*aige ⁊ dēna men mī*n* dīb ⁊ c*umus*c si*n* ⁊ fīnh*ég*ra trēn ⁊ cuir 'na fē*le* ⁊ bīd inte re hed fada ⁊ cuimgeōc*h*aid hī.

To prevent a too copious flow from the vagina, i.e. [take] alum and atrament and dragon's blood, and let a fine powder be made of them and mix that with strong vinegar and put [it] in the vagina, and let it be in her for a long while and it will constrict it.

§36 76.1–3

Mei*n* coc*ail* ⁊ tūis do losg*ad* ar cloi*ch* nd*er*g ⁊ a detach do lēgi*n* tre fui*n*ēl fūit*h*e ⁊ arlamaig[id] sin hī [cum] comp*er*ta.

Powder of cockle and incense should be burned on a red [hot] stone and its smoke released through a funnel underneath her and that prepares her for conception.

§37 76.3–6

Neift do berbad ar fī*n nó* a*r* u*isci* ⁊ suided a*r* stōl toll ⁊ lēig*ed* a detach fūiti, nō a losc*ad* a*r* cloi*ch* nd*ei*rg ⁊ a dē do lēigin fūiti *nó* an lus fēi*n* do c*ur* 'na fēil ⁊ tir*m*aigid sin a fēile [⁊ do]beir in comp*e*rt.

Catmint should be boiled in wine or water and let her sit on a perforated stool and let its smoke be released under her, or it should be burned on a red [hot] stone and its smoke released under her, or the herb itself should be put in her vagina and that dries her vagina and it brings on the conception.

§38 76.7

Fuil [...] [ai]psint[60] a*r*na t*ir*mug*ad* ⁊ a*r* ndenam mene dīb ⁊ a n-ōl ar fīn *nó* ar li*nn* nō a*r* bai*n*de d'ēis na fola[61] ⁊ comp*ēruid*.

[Take] blood [...] [and] absinth that have been dried and made into flour, and they should be drunk mixed with wine or beer or milk after the blood and she will conceive.

§39 76.8–9

Sūg maga*r*lāi*n* .i. sati*r*egia do comailt do co*n*gaib an fi*r* ⁊ na m*n*ā [d'éis na?][62] fola m*ísta* rē com*us*c dōib ⁊ comp*ēr*uid.

Juice of orchid, i.e. satyrion, should be rubbed on the genitals of the man and the woman [after the?] menses [and] before they have intercourse, and she will conceive.

§40 76.9–12

Bei*net* mīl ⁊ cac m[...]ic[63] fo cud*r*uma re mil ⁊ taislī*n* do dēnam dē ma*r* mēur ⁊ a c*ur* 'na fēil re t*r*ī lā ⁊ re t*r*ī haidcib d'ēis na fola ⁊ ibed i*n* ben casnaide deda a*r* fī*n* nō ar li*n*d ⁊ gēmad ai*mr*i*t* rīam comp*ēr*uid.

Equal parts of the rennet of a hare and dung [of a ?] should be mixed with an equal amount of honey and a damp linen cloth should be made in the shape of a finger, it should be put in her vagina for three days and nights after the blood, and let the woman drink the shavings of centaury in wine or beer and although she had been barren before, she will conceive.

§41 76.13–14

Fēili mīl do t*ir*mug*ad* ⁊ mi*n* do dēna*m* deí ⁊ in mi*n* sin do c*h*ait*h*em do*n* fi*r* ⁊ do*n* mnaī ⁊ comp*é*ruid i*n* ben ma*c* ⁊ ma*d* hī in ben amāi*n* caitfes co*mpēr*uid i*ngin*.

The vagina of a hare should be dried and a powder made of it and have the man and the woman eat that powder and the woman will give birth to a boy, and if the woman alone eats it she will give birth to a girl.

[60] Several letters are illegible in the MS here.
[61] The words *d'ēis na fola* have been added above the line in the MS.
[62] A few letters are illegible in the MS here.
[63] Several letters are illegible in the MS here.

§42 76.15–17

Mei*n* mag*r*all cull*aigh* d'ōl nō do caitem don mnaī p*ost* sangene*m* (u*e*l c*r*uore*m*) ⁊ an mi*n* c*ét*na do c*ur* a fēile na mnā ⁊ ti*r*m*igid* hī ⁊ dobeir arin m*a*clog in sīl ferrda do congb*áil.*

The woman should drink or eat the powder of a boar's testicle after blood (or blood) and the same powder should be put in the woman's vagina and it dries her and it causes the womb to retain the male sperm.

§43 76.18–19

Uirge fïada d'ōl a*r* fīn ⁊ in mag*r*all is mō don maga*r*lī*n* ⁊ is tende, ⁊ comp*ē*r*i*d m*a*c dā cuidige a f*er* lé ⁊ m*a*d hī an ben amāi*n* cait*h*es comp*r*id i*ngin.*

The testicles of a deer should be drunk in wine with the largest and hardest root of the orchid, and she will conceive a boy if her husband shares it with her, and if it is the woman alone who consumes [it], she conceives a girl.

§44 76.20–2

Comtrom pengi*n*de do mirr ⁊ da *fich*it grāi*n*de pibuir ⁊ comtrom t*r*ī pi*ngin*de do stafesaig*r*ia; a mi*n* sin d'ōl a*r* fīn [⁊] a fot*r*ugad p*ost* c*r*uore*m* ⁊ c*om*pēraid fo c*ét*ōir.

[Take] the equivalent of a pennyweight of myrrh and forty grains of pepper and the equivalent of three pennyweights of staveacre; its powder should be drunk in wine [and] she should be bathed after bleeding and she will conceive immediately.

§45 76.23–4

In lec*htur*i risi *n*-abur*tur* t*r*ifera magna ⁊ mandrogora do berb*ad* a*r* fīn ⁊ a ōl d'ēis na fola in lictub*áire* remrāti ⁊ dobeir sin a*r* amridib co*mper*t.

The electuary that is called *trifera magna* and mandrake should be boiled in wine and said electuary should be drunk after bleeding, and that makes those who are barren conceive.

§46 76.25

In lictub*áire* ⁊ sūg būafallá*in* l*íath* do sūat*ad* t*r*īt a cēle ⁊ tlām olla do t*um*ad in[d][64] ⁊ a c*ur* 'na fēle ⁊ c*om*p*r*id.

The electuary and juice of mugwort should be mixed together and a flock of wool dipped in it, and it should be put in her vagina and she conceives.

[64]There is a hole in the MS that obscures the final letter of this word.

§47 76.26–8

In lictub*áire* dīanad ai*n*m teoto*r*i*con* anaca*r*diu*m* .i. co*m*t*r*om ui*n*ge dē ⁊ co*m*trom 6 pi*ng*i*nd* do ta*r*taru*m* .i. desc*ad* fī*n*a a*r* c*r*ūad*h*ug*ad* a*r* f*r*aigt*h*ib na dunad; a c*um*usc sin ⁊ a cur sa f*é*l*e* ⁊ co*mp*r*i*d.

[Take] the electuary called *teodoricon anacardium*, i.e. the equivalent of an ounce of it and the equivalent of six pennyweights of tartar, i.e. the dregs of wine that have been dried on the interior walls of the casks; that should be mixed and put in the vagina and she will conceive.

§48 76.29–31

P*r*eteria teoto*r*i*con* anacai*r*di ⁊ c*u*dru*m*a dē ⁊ do scamonia, .i. co*m*t*r*om t*r*ī pi*ng*i*n*d da g*a*c ní dīb ⁊ a c*um*usc ⁊ a c*ur* 'na fēle ⁊ co*mp*r*i*d gan cu*n*dtabe*r*t dā co*m*ruige ra fer sa lō sin *nó* a*r*a bā*r*ach.

In addition, [take] an equal amount of *teotoricon anacairdi* and of scammony, i.e. the equivalent of three pennyweights of each of them, and they should be mixed and put in her vagina and she will conceive without doubt if she has sexual relations with a man on that day or the following day.

§49 76.31–2

Neipt ⁊ bei*n*id mīl do c*um*usc g*um*bid 'na pillolib. A t*r*ī nō a 4 do c*ur* 'na f*é*l*e* *dí*b a n*dí*aig fola ⁊ c*um*usced ra f*er* ⁊ co*mp*r*i*d a c*ét*óir.

Catmint and rennet of a hare should be mixed until they are in the form of pills. Three or four of them should be put in her vagina after bleeding, and let her have intercourse with a man and she will conceive at once.

§50 77.1–3

Gāirl*eóg* do [b*ri*]sed[65] ⁊ im nō blonacc do c*ur* t[rethe][66] ⁊ a c*ur* a*r* l*eic* ndeirg ⁊ i*n* ben do congb*áil* a*r* stōl 'na suide ⁊ biaid bal*ad* na gāirl*eóig*i ara h*án*ail dā roib in brei*t*h gu cōir ⁊ dobeir in fuil m*ísta.*

Garlic should be pounded and butter or grease put through it and it should be put on a red [hot] stone and the woman should be kept sitting on a stool and the smell of garlic will be on her breath if the birth is correct, and it brings on the menses.

§51 77.4–6

Eōlus do lot brei*t*h*i* mnā .i. ath*air* losa ⁊ dubsc*r*ibion*n* ⁊ fuil d*r*aig*e* ⁊ g*r*ifi*n* na cl*oiche*, b*er*b*aigt*u*r* ar u*isc*i t[rá]iges ⁊ a c*ur* ara cuidig ⁊ nī b*é*ra m*ac* nā i*ngin.*

A cure for destroying a woman's birth, i.e. bistort and black ink and dragon's blood and biting stonecrop, let them be boiled in water from an ebbing tide, and they should be put in her meal and she will bear neither a boy nor a girl.

[65]The first letter of this word is faded in the MS, but may be a 'b' with a very faint vertical tilde above it.

[66]The final letters of this word are obscured by fading in the MS.

§52 77.6–7

Bocc beg ⁊ ath*air* tal*man*, b*erbtur* do mna[í] aga caillt*er* a breit*h* ⁊ icyd.

Let a small he-goat and yarrow be boiled for a woman who is losing her birth and it heals.

§53 77.8

Eōlus do mnāib aimrid .i. ros nenta ⁊ ros ca[indinde] ⁊ r*os* c*rūach* P*ādraig* do b*r*uit ar fī*n* ⁊ a ōl ⁊ b*ēr*ui[d m]*ac*.[67]

A cure for barren women, i.e. nettle seed and onion seed and seed of great plantain should be crushed in wine and drunk and she will conceive a son.

§54 77.9

Eōl*us* do dāi*r* bō .i. sop nenta do cumelt fob [*sic*] alta.[68]

A cure for bulling of a cow, i.e. a wisp of nettle should be rubbed (under ?) of a joint.

§55 77.10

Eōlus a*r* tac*h*ur mec .i. b*úafallán* l*íath* do b*r*uit a*r* lemn*acht* nō a*r* fī*n* ⁊ a ōl.

A cure for bringing forth a son, i.e. mugwort should be boiled in new milk or in wine and drunk.

§56 77.11–12

Eōl*us* a*r* toch*ar* mec .i. c*eir*īn do būafall*án* do ceng*al* a*r* comai*r* in m*acl*a*ig* a*r* in mb*r*oi*n*d ⁊ ros cai*n*di*n*de ⁊ ros losa na c*r*oic*h*i do b*r*uit*h* ⁊ a ōl p*ost.*

A cure for bringing forth a son, i.e. a poultice of mugwort should be tied over the womb on the abdomen and onion seed and fennel seed should be boiled and drunk afterwards.

§57 77.13–14

Eōl*us* a*r* breit*h* t*h*ógl*úasacht*a g*u* cōir .i. b*úafallán* l*íath* do b*r*uit*h* a*r* u*isce* ⁊ a cur fōn mbnaī [*sic*] ⁊ bēr*aid* gu cōir.

A cure for aborting a birth properly, i.e. mugwort should be boiled in water and applied it to the woman and she will deliver properly.

§58 77.15–16

Ar tuismed do mnaī .i. loi*m* con ⁊ melle ⁊ fīn fo cud*r*uma d'ōl 'na dig ⁊ tuismēbuid fo c*ét*ōir.

For a woman in childbirth, i.e. have her drink in one draught equal parts of dog's milk and bitter vetch and wine and she will give birth immediately.

§59 77.16–17

Ar i*n* c*ét*na .i. b*enet* m*íl* m*uige* do b*r*uit ar fī*n* ⁊ a ōl re co*m*rug risin mnaī ⁊ co*mpēr*uid.

For the same, i.e. rennet of a hare should be boiled in wine and drunk before intercourse with the woman and she will conceive.

[67] These letters are illegible in the MS due to fading.

[68] The end of this line is obscured by fading in the MS, and my reading is therefore tentative.

§60 77.18–20

Ar tuismed do mnaī .i. barr briscēn do brised ⁊ a mbruith ar geir mhairt ⁊ a fasced tre brét līn ⁊ mīn cruithnechta ⁊ psalann trīt ⁊ a mbruit arīs, ⁊ ix mīrenda d'ithi dē ar cétlongad ⁊ a trī rē loighe gu cend nómaide ⁊ ind in am na cōrach donīter.

For a woman in childbirth, i.e. the top of silverweed should be pounded and boiled in ox fat and it should be strained through a linen cloth and wheat flour [put] on it and salt through it and they should be boiled again, and nine pieces of it should be eaten on an empty stomach and three before going to bed for nine days, and an end is made in the proper time.

§61 77.21–23

Do cudnud breithi .i. ces fern a ⁊ crotoll ūr droigin ⁊ berbtur ar lemnacht nō ar uisce fīrtiprat ⁊ ibed in ben ⁊ suided ria in ūair sin.

For hastening a birth, i.e. let a sprig of alder and fresh husk of a blackthorn be boiled in new milk or in fresh spring water, and let the woman drink it and let him sit with her at that time.

§62 77.24–25

Do claechlaid breithi ann so don mnaī beres ingena .i. uirge tuirc allaid do bruith ar lemnacht ⁊ a n-ithe ⁊ an lemnacht d'ōl a n-inbaid na fola.

For changing a birth here for the woman who bears daughters, i.e. testicles of a wild boar should be boiled in new milk and eaten, and the new milk should be drunk at the proper time of the blood.

§63 77.26–27

In ben beris ingena as ē so a leigheas .i. fiacal eich do cengal a n-eill do croicend rōin ⁊ a cur fo 7 n-aiffrennaib ⁊ a cur fo brāgaid.

A woman who bears girls, this is its cure, i.e. the tooth of a horse should be tied in a sealskin thong and it should be taken to seven masses (?) and put around her neck.

§64 77.28–31

Ar breith leinim do mnaī gan gūasacht na brīathra so sīs do scríbend a membrum ⁊ a cengal ina broind .i. M[a]ria peperit Christum, Anna peperit Mariam, Elizabet <⁊>[69] Iohannem, Celina Remegium + satur + arepo + tenet + opera + rotas nō ditanntri do tabairt ar dig dī ⁊ bēraid gan gūasacht.

For childbirth without danger for a woman, these words should be written on a parchment and fixed to her womb, i.e. Mary gave birth to Christ, Anna gave birth to Mary, Elizabeth [gave birth to] John, Celina [gave birth to] Remigius + sator + arepo + tenet + opera + rotas or put dittany in a drink for her and she will give birth without danger.

[69]The scribe has written the Tironian note for Irish *ocus* 'and' here, but this must be an error, as Elizabeth is the mother of John the Baptist; presumably a repetition of Latin *peperit* is to be understood.

§65 78.1

Cosc a*r* tend*us* do mnāib a*r* *m*br*eth* lenim .i. ath*air* tal*man* d'ibi a*r* dig.

A remedy for contractions in women at childbirth, i.e. yarrow should be consumed in a drink.

§66 78.1–2

Sūg in gallbil*air* d'ibi do mnaī a mbī lenam ma*r*b ⁊ b*é*ruid a c*é*t*ó*ir.

For a woman in whom a dead child remains, juice of garden cresses should be drunk and she will give birth immediately.

§67 78.3

Ar telg*ud* fo*l*a do mnāib .i. esp*ó*c b*án* do b*er*b*ad* a*r* lemn*acht* ⁊ gloriu*m* ⁊ ibed.

For shedding of blood by women, i.e. oxeye daisy should be boiled in new milk and iris (?) and let her drink [it].

§68 78.4

Do tab*air*t fo*la* m*ísta* .i. a*r*get l*úacr*a ⁊ edend talm*an* ⁊ fīnscot*h*.

To bring on the menses, i.e. meadowsweet and ground ivy and wine blossom.

§69 78.4–5

⁊ g*r*ībrācā*n* 'mu*n* doim scīt*h* bīs fo arata*r* ⁊ nī bēra*r* dōib ī*ar* tai*n*.

And a cattle prod (?) around the weary ox that is under a plough, and they will not give birth afterwards.

§70 78.6–7

In ben 'ga mbī lenum ma*r*b 'na broi*n*d, tabai*r* cac eic*h* a*r* leic deir*g*[70] ⁊ a dē fōn srōi*n* ⁊ bēr*aid* gan fuirech.

The woman who has a dead foetus in her womb, give [her] horse's dung on a red [hot] stone and [put] its smoke under her nose and she will give birth without delay.

§71 78.7–8

Ros bilair do bruit do m*n*aī a*r* medg ⁊ ibed ⁊ ber*ar* in tógl*úasacht*.

Seed of watercress should be crushed in whey for a woman and let her drink it and let the abortion be brought on.

§72 78.9–11

Tāscēla cīa don lānmui*n* is amr*it* .i. fūal cec*h*ta*r* dīb do tab*air*t a soitec*h* a*r* let*h* i *m*bīd[71] duill*eo*ga lem[aigh] muige ⁊ cidbē dīb is amr*it*, bīd feōdaig a luib arna bārach.

A prognostication for which one of a couple is barren, i.e. the urine of each of them should be put in a separate vessel in which are leaves of marsh mallow, and whichever of them is barren, their plant will be withered the next day.

[70] MS *deig* with a suspension mark over the 'i', but *deirg* is probably meant.
[71] MS i*n* bid.

§73 78.11–12

Uirge mīl muige do māollug*ad* maill*e re* balg*um* fīna do mnaī ar ndul a fola m*ísta* dī ⁊ c*om*pr*i*d mac.

Have the woman swallow whole the testicles of a hare along with a mouthful of wine after her menses go and she [will] conceive a boy.

§74 78.13

Eōl*us* d'fi*r* amr*it* .i. benit mīl muige do c*umus*c a*r* fī*n* ⁊ ibed ⁊ gei*n*fid ūad.

A cure for a barren man, i.e. the rennet of a hare should be mixed in wine and let him drink and she will conceive from him.

§75 78.14–15

Ar rit fola ban .i. lemn*acht* a*r* a mberbt*ur* ell*enn* ⁊ im*us* ⁊ arg*at* l*úachr*a d'ōl.

For a flow of women's blood, i.e. new milk in which elecampane and celery and meadowsweet are boiled should be drunk.

§76 78.15–17

Ar slānasaigid mnā .i. nem*naid* goirt nac*h* ricc u*isce* do c*ur* a n-om*ur* nda*n*gen ⁊ clo*ch*a d*er*ga i*nd* ⁊ scaīl*id* in ben a cosa ōsa c*hin*d gu tēit in tes ina broind ⁊ īc*thair*.

For the afterbirth of a woman, i.e. tormentil from a field that does not reach water should be put in a solid tub with red [hot] stones in it and the woman spreads her legs above it so that the heat goes into her womb, and she will be healed.

§77 78.18–19

Urcosc ele fai*r* .i. cet*r*i cāora i*m*be ⁊ sci*n*dīn do c*h*ac gabair a meodōn g*a*ca caīre ⁊ a māels*h*lug*ad dí*.

Another antidote for it, i.e. [take] four balls of butter and [put] a small lump of goat dung in the middle of each ball and have her swallow them whole.

§78 78.19–21

A*r* toglúa*sacht* .i. sema*r* scait*h*e fin*n*e ⁊ ec*h*sema*r* ⁊ ath*air* l*osa* ⁊ ath*air* t*alman*, b*rist*e*r* ⁊ b*er*b*aigt*u*r* a*r* lemn*acht* ⁊ eba*r* fo l*uig*i ⁊ fo ērge.

For an abortion, i.e. let clover of the white flower and red clover and bistort and yarrow be crushed and boiled in new milk and let it be drunk on going to bed and when rising.

§79 78.22–23

Do scaīl*ed* leni*m* mai*r*b bīs a ṁbroiṅd .i. loc*h*oll, sl*ánlus* m*uc*, flid, biatus a c*ur* a*r* cuir*m nó* a*r* medg ⁊ deoc*h* d'ōl dē a*r* c*étlong*ad gac*h* laī.

For releasing a dead child that remains in the womb, i.e. brooklime, swinecress, chickweed [and] beet should be put in beer or in whey and a draught of it drunk every day on an empty stomach.

§80 78.24–26

Eōl*us* do mnaī a mbī lenu*m* ma*r*b .i. loi*ṁ* con ⁊ mil ⁊ fīn ⁊ a c*ur* a n-āe*n*l*estur* .i. lān copāi*n* da g*ac* ní dīb si*n* a c*umus*c, ⁊ a n-ōl don m*n*aí ⁊ bēr*aid* lenam a c*ét*ōir.

A cure for a woman in whom a dead child remains, i.e. dog's milk and honey and wine should be put in a single vessel, i.e. a full cup of each of those should be mixed, and the woman should drink them and she will give birth to a child at once.

Textual commentary

§1: *galur.* This word is written in the manuscript as *gal–*, with a suspension stroke following the first three letters. Although one might expect a plural form here given that multiple conditions are dealt with in the chapter, I have expanded the form as the singular *galur*, partly on the basis that the expected dative plural form *galraib* would usually be abbreviated as *galr–*. It is also tempting to compare here the title '*The Sekenesse of Wymmen*' that is given for two fifteenth-century Middle English treatises on gynaecology and obstetrics.[72]

§2: *imad cuislend* […]. The concept of veins that have been widened or ruptured seems to be what is conveyed by the phrase *imad cuislend* 'a venous excess' in the first Irish quatrain in our text.[73]

§4: *būafallán líath.* *eDIL* s.v. *búathfallán* translates this term as 'ragwort' (*Senecio jacobaea*), which, however, is a highly toxic plant; the etymology and variants of the word are discussed by Williams, who suggests that it means 'cow-shriveller'.[74] The name *búafallan líath* translates Lat. *artemecia* (*Artemisia vulgaris*, or 'mugwort'), however, in a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century treatise on *materia medica* in BL MS 15403.[75] In the Latin *Trotula*, mugwort (*arthimesia*) is prescribed in remedies for 'retention of the menses' (*De retentione menstruorum*), where its medicinal value is attributed to the authority of Galen,[76] as well as in cures for 'paucity of the menses' (*De paucitate menstruorum*).[77]

§6: *dīgērta.* My translation of this term as 'unsoured' is tentative. As noted in *eDIL* s.v. *? digerta*, this word is also attested in a separate entry in Conla Mac an Leagha's Remedy Book, where *medg ndigerta* is prescribed as the liquefying

[72] Version 1 of this Middle English text has been edited by M-R Hallaert, *The 'Sekenesse of wymmen': A Middle English Treatise on Diseases in Women (Yale Medical Library, Ms. 47 fols 60r–71v)*, Scripta: Mediaeval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 8 (Brussels, 1982), while Version 2 has been edited by Rowland, *Medieval Woman's Guide to Health*.

[73] See the discussion above, p. 314.

[74] N. J. A. Williams, 'Some Irish plant names', in Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone (eds), *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney*, Maynooth Monographs 2 (Maynooth, 1989), 449–62, at 449–50; see also the remarks in Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, Early Irish Law Series 4 (Dublin, 2000), 184.

[75] Stokes, 'On the materia medica of the mediaeval Irish', 225.

[76] Green, *The Trotula*, 74–7 (§§13, 14 and 16)

[77] Green, *The Trotula*, 78–9 (§§19, 20 and 24).

agent in a cure for cough (RIA MS 24 B 3 [445], p. 61.34). It is also noted in the dictionary that the form *digér* is given as a compound of *deoch* 'drink' and *gér* 'sharp' in the bardic grammatical tracts.[78] David Stifter (pers. comm.) has accordingly suggested to me that it could be the word *dígértha* from *gér* 'sharp, sour' (cf. *géraid*, 'to turn sour'). If so, the term could mean 'un-soured' or 'not yet soured (cheese)', referring to curds in the literal sense as an early stage in the transformation of milk into cheese. Cf. also *eDIL* s.v. *gert*, where *gert* is defined as 'an indefinite word meaning any of the by-products of cattle except their young, gen[erally] used of milk'; see also the following note.

tāth. *eDIL* s.v. 1 *táth* gives 'welding, soldering, joining together' and 'a kind of cheese (made of curds?) under senses Ia and II of this term, respectively. Fergus Kelly notes that the word is mentioned as a foodstuff in several texts and relates its semantic development to the process of making pressed cheeses using curds.[79] See also the note on the word *dīgērta* above.

a tīrib grég tucud. This is one of a handful of remedies in Conla Mac an Leagha's treatise which reference the oriental origins of certain plants or recipes.[80] I have not identified a classical source for this remedy; it is possible, however, that the specification that it 'was brought from Greek lands' was merely an efficacy phrase intended to add authority to the cure.

§8: Cf. Pliny's *Natural History*, which states that 'It is thought that to fumigate the uterus with goat's horn is very beneficial' (*caprino cornu suffiri vulvam utilissimum putant*).[81]

§9: Cf. NLS MS Adv. 72.1.3, fol. 80r19–21.

§10: Cf. NLS MS Adv. 72.1.3, fol. 80r21–2.

§11: Cf. NLS MS Adv. 72.1.3, fol. 80r22–4.

§12: Cf. NLS MS Adv. 72.1.3, fol. 80r24–6.

§13: Cf. NLS MS Adv. 72.1.3, fol. 80rz–80v2; this clarifies the reading *ibhedh*, which is obscured in our MS due to damage to the page.

§15: ***Cetri losa…*** My translations of the four plants named in this tetrad are very tentative. *eDIL* s.v. *simsán* gives 'wood-sorrel' as a translation of this term but also cross-references it with the entry s.v. *simsóga*, defined as both 'sampsuchine' (marjoram) and 'wood-sorrel'. *Selgán* glosses *accetosa* in a glossary from Manchester, John Rylands University Library, MS 35 ('Lord Crawford's Medical Manuscript'), and might therefore be identified as common sorrel or garden sorrel (*rumex acetosa*).[82] The word itself, however, is clearly a

[78] See Eoin Mac Cárthaigh, *The Art of Bardic Poetry: A New Edition of Irish Grammatical Tracts I* (Dublin, 2014), 138–9 (§146).

[79] Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, 329.

[80] This and other examples are noted by Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchada, 'Michael Casey's medical transcripts in Gilbert MS 147', *Éigse* 40 (2019), 43–114, at 78 n. 68.

[81] Jones, *Pliny. Natural History*, 170–1 (XXVIII.lxxvii).

[82] See Stokes, 'Three Irish medical glossaries', 334 (§54).

diminutive form of *selg* 'spleen', and therefore may be a loan-translation for some variety of the plant 'spleenwort' (*asplenium*). *eDIL* s.v. *samad* defines this term as 'the plant sorrel', and the qualification *léna* suggests that here reference is being made to 'meadow sorrel'. The term *fed coille* is equated with *cardo capalínus*, *paleonius* and *gluinech* in the aforementioned glossary from the John Rylands manuscript. *eDIL* s.v. *glúinech* defines this plant as 'milkwort (?), knotgrass (?)', but the reference could be to *seamsóg ghlúineach*, 'pink-sorrel' (*oxalis articulata*).[83] A separate entry in Lord Crawford's Medical Manuscript equates '*fead c*aille' with Lat. *Panis cuculi*, typically translated as 'wood sorrel'. Hogan *et al.* translate *fead coille* as 'wild ambrosia', drawing on O'Reilly's dictionary, and *feada coille* as 'wood sorrel', drawing on Lightfoot's *Flora Scotica*. Another entry in the John Rylands manuscript gives *ruta siluestris .i. fead coille*, suggesting that it could refer to 'rue'.[84] I have tentatively opted for this translation here, on the basis that rue is frequently prescribed in the *Trotula* for gynaecological and obstetrical ailments of various kinds.

§20: *raidde.* This word, which must be in the genitive following *barr*, appears to refer to some kind of shrub, likely 'bog-myrtle'. *eDIL* s.v. *rait* renders this word as 'bog-myrtle' on the basis of D. A. Binchy's translation of an archaic legal poem that refers to restitution for damage to various plants classified as 'undergrowth of the wood' (*fedo forball*). There, however, Binchy expresses uncertainty as to whether the word should be taken as a dental stem with genitive singular *raited*.[85] *eDIL* also gives the definition 'bog-myrtle' under the forms *raideóg* and *raidleog*.

§22: Cf. the discussion of *aillium* 'garlic' in Tadhg Ó Cuinn's *Materia medica*, which attributes this teaching to the eleventh-century medical translator Constantinus Africanus:

> Ingne gairl*eoige* arna glanad da cur isin maclog & togairmidh an f*uil* m*ista* am*ail* adeir Constantin *no* an gairl*eog* da b*earbadh* ar uisce & in bean da chur ann co nuigi a himleinn & togairmig*idh* an f*uil* m*ista*.
>
> 'Cloves of garlic, cleaned and placed in the womb, provoke menstruation, as Constantine says; or, if the garlic be boiled in water, and the woman immersed in it up to her navel, it will provoke menstruation.'[86]

§23: *eōlus.* *eDIL* s.v. *eólas, eulas* gives the primary definition of this term as 'knowledge, information, esp. knowledge gained by experience or practice, acquaintance'. It also gives the more specialised definition of 'secret knowledge, a prescription, spell, charm', based on a citation from the legal compilation

[83] Zoë Devlin, *Wildflowers of Ireland*: https://www.wildflowersofireland.net/plant_detail.php?id_flower=194&wildflower=Pink-sorrel (accessed 11 February 2026).

[84] Stokes, 'Three Irish medical glossaries', 336 (§105).

[85] Binchy, 'An archaic legal poem', 158 and 164.

[86] Ó Conchubhair, 'An Irish *Materia Medica*', §31 (pp. 92 [ed.] and 474 [trans.], slightly modified here). My thanks to Siobhán Barrett for pointing out this parallel to me.

Senchas Már, where *in gert-bruthcan* 'milk pottage' is explained as *ag bruith in neich is cain do losaib 7 do* [*sic leg.*] *eolusuib do neoch bis a ngalur*; Plummer translates this as 'boiling what is good in the way of herbs together with charms for a sick man' and notes that '*eolus* is the regular word for magic knowledge, in the concrete a spell or charm'.[87] The term *eólus* is used in relation to ten remedies in our text, but none of these include a verbal incantation, as is implied by the translations 'spell' and 'charm'.[88] It is possible, however, that the use of the descriptor in our text carries a value-judgement of some kind regarding the origin or efficacy of the remedies in question, e.g. that they are considered to derive from local tradition rather than written authority or foreign sources. I have translated the term here simply as 'cure', which in Hiberno-English often carries the sense of a remedy derived from unwritten folk tradition or local custom, typically knowledge that is understood to have been passed down through multiple generations of a single family.

§25: *fín gabuir.* Presumably this refers to wine in which some part of a goat has been mixed: compare, for example, the advice in §8 that the scrapings of a goat's horn be mixed with honey and eaten in order to staunch excessive menstrual bleeding. Goat dung is recommended in §13. Another possibility is that it refers to wine preserved in a goat skin.

§27: *flidh do thégad ...* A corresponding remedy is found in the Irish treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff.[89] Similarly, the Latin version of the *Trotula* contains the advice that 'chickweed cooked in an earthenware pot and placed over [the belly] provokes the menses' (*morsus galline in testa coctus et superpositus menstrua prouocat*).[90] According to commentary on the seventh-century Irish medico-legal tract on injuries, *Di ércib fola*, the application of a chickweed compress was the standard treatment for a haematoma.[91]

§28: A similar remedy is found in the Irish treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff.[92]

§29: *saige.* I take this to be the word for 'sage' (*salvia officinalis*), likely an otherwise unattested loanword from English; the same spelling in §32, but the form is not recorded in *eDIL* with this meaning. The only name I can find attested for this plant elsewhere in Irish sources is *sáiste*/*sáitse*, which Risk includes in his study of loanwords from French.[93]

§30: A similar remedy is found in the Irish treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff.[94]

[87] Plummer, 'Notes on some passages in the Brehon laws', *Ériu* 8 (1916), 127–32, at 130, citing *AL* I, 300.14–16.

[88] See §§23, 25, 50, 52–6, 71 and 77.

[89] Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 74.22–4.

[90] Green, *The Trotula*, 76–7 (§15).

[91] Neil McLeod, 'Di ércib fola', *Ériu* 52 (2002), 123–216, at 173 (§3.3).

[92] Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 74.24–5.

[93] See Hogan et al., *Luibhleabhrán*, s.v. *sáiste, sáitse*, and Risk, 'French loan-words in Irish', *EC* 12/2 (1970), 585–655, at 607 and 623–4 (§§37, 100 and 103). *Saitsi* is the form given in a remedy for retention of the menses in the Irish *Trotula* text; see Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 74.31.

[94] Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 74.25–6.

§31: A similar remedy is found in the Irish treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff, reading *min cogail 7 mil 7 builg-lín do denam fo indamail meir do gairleoig arna brugh 7 arna bruith a hola 7 a him 7 a cur na feil 7 is tren togairmes an fuil mista*.[95] These instructions are evidently for the creation of a pessary to treat retention of the menses.

congaibe. *eDIL* s.v. *congab* gives this word with the meanings 'settlement, gathering, host', but also 'in a more specialized sense equipment, weapons, trappings', several of the citations for which suggest that it could be used as a euphemism for the penis. That this is the meaning intended in our text is indicated by a remedy for retention of the menses in the Latin *Trotula*, which advises the reader to make 'another pessary in the shape of the male member, and let it be hollow, and inside there let the medicine be placed and let it be inserted' (*Vel fiat aliud pessarium in modum uirge uirilis, et sit concauum, ibique inponatur medicina et iniciatur*).[96]

§32: A similar remedy is found in the Irish treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff.[97]

saderei. This form is not attested in *eDIL* which gives only the form *sabraei* for 'the herb savory', noting that this is an 'English or Romance loan-word' (*eDIL* s.v. *sabraei*). The form *saterei* is given for this word in the Anglo-Norman dictionary, however, citing its occurrence in several Anglo-Norman French medical texts.[98]

§33: ***ces.*** This term occurs elsewhere in Conla Mac an Leagha's Remedy Book, always before the name of a tree: see, for example, RIA MS 23 N 29 (467), fol. 1v12–13, which contains a remedy for intestinal ailments attributed to Dían Cécht and listing among its ingredients *ceis fern*a *7 ceis lemai*n *7 ceis darac*h 'a sprig of alder and a sprig of elm and a sprig of oak'.[99] I take it to be the word given in *eDIL* s.v. 3 *ces*, defined as 'spear'; presumably in this case the word refers not to a weapon, but to a small, pointed plant shoot or 'sprig'.

sairdes ré gréin. This is one of several cures in Conla Mac an Leagha's Remedy Book that include instructions to either use a plant that faces eastwards as an ingredient or to consume a medicament while facing eastwards.[100] Such instructions are also found in Old English remedies, leading Edward Pettit to observe that this direction was 'believed to be especially propitious'.[101] It is possible that there is a liturgical basis for the instruction, for as Edel Bhreathnach has recently noted in relation to early Irish monastic practices,

[95] Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 74.26–8.

[96] Green, *The Trotula*, 76–7 (§18).

[97] Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 74.28–30.

[98] See https://anglo-norman.net/entry/saterei (accessed 11 February 2026).

[99] My thanks to Siobhán Barrett for input on this term. For discussion of the remedy in question, see Hayden, 'Attribution and authority', 43.

[100] Another example is a cure for urinary disease edited in Hayden, 'Three versified medical recipes', 113.

[101] Edward Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Remedies, Charms and Prayers from British Library MS Harley 585: The Lacnunga*, 2 vols (Lewiston, NY, 2001), ii, 45.

'praying *ad orientem* "to the east" was associated with the belief that Paradise, the Garden of Eden, was located in the east. Through Christ's death on the cross and man's salvation, the supplicant prayed towards Paradise and came face to face with God, looked at the tree of life and sought forgiveness of his/her sins'.[102] This association with spiritual healing may have led to an analogous belief that physical ailments could be treated by ingredients found growing in this orientation. The specification in this case that the plant be growing 'south-east towards the sun' may, however, also reflect an understanding that plants facing in this direction would be likely to produce the freshest growth with the most therapeutic juice.

líath an droigin. This probably refers to the bark of a blackthorn tree, which is dark grey in colour. The scraped-off, green inner bark of trees (Ir. *etarsnam*) was considered pharmaceutically useful and is called for in other recipes from Conla Mac an Leagha's Remedy Book.[103]

§34: *glaisīn.* *eDIL* s.v. 1 *glaisín* defines this term as 'woad' and cross-references it with the headword *glasen*, which has the same definition. Woad, however, tends to grow in dry places and requires little water. It may be that the word here is instead that given in *eDIL* s.v. 2 *glaisín*, defined there as 'a streamlet'. Siobhán Barrett has suggested to me that the plant meant here could be *glaisín léna* or 'lesser spearwort' (*Ranunculus flammula*), which 'is usually found in still or slow-moving water such as lake margins, marshes and wet places'.[104] If this identification is correct, the definition given in *eDIL* s.v. *glaisléna* as 'peppergrass, pepperwort (?)' may be incorrect, as pepperwort is 'found on dry waste places and below hedgerows'.[105]

fūalraig. I take this to be the genitive singular of the metathesized form of *fúarlach* 'the marshy edge of a lake or river' (see *eDIL* s.v. *fúarlach*). *eDIL* also records the (tentative) form *fúalrad*, however, defining it as 'possibly a collective from 1 *fúal* (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *fúal*), which may have originally = 'fluid, liquid'. The dictionary only gives one citation of the latter form, drawn from the Middle Irish text *Saltair na Rann*.

§35: A similar remedy is found in the Irish treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff.[106]

fuil draice. This is a literal translation of Lat. *sanguis draconis*, and refers to a kind of red plant resin, mainly of southeast Asian origin but obtainable in the Mediterranean basin during the medieval period. Sharon Arbuthnot has noted the occurrence of the term in Irish medical cures for an ulcerated

[102]Edel Bhreathnach, *Monasticism in Ireland AD 900–1250* (Dublin, 2024), 289.

[103]See David Stifter, 'Zur Bedeutung und Etymologie von altirisch *sirem*', *Die Sprache* 45/1–2 (2005), 160–89 and Hayden, 'Three versified medical recipes', 112.

[104]Devlin, *Wildflowers of Ireland*: https://www.wildflowersofireland.net/plant_detail.php?id_flower=246#glos (accessed 11 February 2026).

[105]Devlin, *Wildflowers of Ireland*: https://www.wildflowersofireland.net/plant_detail.php?id_flower=199#glos (accessed 11 February 2026).

[106]Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 72.26–8.

womb.[107] Dragon's blood is similarly recommended in a recipe for constricting the vagina in the Latin *Trotula*.[108]

§36: The manuscript is difficult to read at the end of the second line of p. 76 in RIA MS 24 B 3 (445), but cf. the Irish treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff, which contains a remedy reading *min cogail 7 tuis do losgad ar clam derg 7 a dé do ligen fuithi tre soithech ina mbi poll 7 ullmuighid hi cum na coimperta*.[109] It appears that some words have been added interlinearly in our version, perhaps the missing phrase *ina mbi poll* or similar.

fuinēl. This term is not attested in *eDIL* but evidently replaces *soithech* 'vessel' in the version of the remedy from Wulff's edition of the Irish *Trotula* text (see the previous note). In the Latin *Trotula*, the word *embotum* is used to refer to a funnel through which smoke passes in a fumigation for pain in the womb.[110] The form *fuinēl* used in our text may be a loanword from English or Anglo-Norman French.

§37: A similar remedy is found in the Irish treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff.[111]

§39: ***satiregia.*** I have not found any attestations of this term elsewhere in Irish sources, but it likely refers to 'satyrion', a name for a variety of orchid.[112] The orchid (< Gk *ὄρχις* 'testicle') was associated in medieval medicine with human testicles due to the shape of the plant's tubers. Tadhg Ó Cuinn's *Materia medica* gives the following explanation:

> **Satuirion**, **priamiscus**, **leporina**: .i. **an tulcan** & aderur **magarlin** ris […] bidh prema na l*uibhe* a cosm*ail*eas uirgidh ainmighi & gairtear trit sin **magarlin** de & as cumachtach mhedaigheas in sperma agna mnaibh & agna fearaibh […]
>
> ***Satuirion, priamiscus, leporina:*** i.e. the **orchid**; it is called 'balls' […] the roots of the herb are like the testicles of an animal, and, for that reason, it is called 'balls'; it powerfully increases the generative fluid in women and men […].[113]

§40: A similar remedy is found in the Irish treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff.[114]

[107] Sharon Arbuthnot, 'Finding the words: translating medical texts in the late-medieval Gaelic world', LEIGHEAS Project Blog, 4 April 2024: https://leigheas.maynoothuniversity.ie/finding-the-words-translating-medical-texts-in-the-late-medieval-gaelic-world/ (accessed 11 February 2026).

[108] Green, *The Trotula*, 188–9 (§308).

[109] Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 72.28–30.

[110] See, e.g. Green, *The Trotula*, 156–7 (§225).

[111] Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 72.30–2.

[112] See https://anglo-norman.net/entry/saturion (accessed 11 February 2026), where the word 'saturion' is defined as '(bot.) variety of orchid'.

[113] Ó Conchubhair, 'An Irish *Materia medica*', §252 (p. 249 [ed.] and 623 [trans.]).

[114] Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 74.8–9.

§41: A similar remedy is found in the Irish treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff; this corresponds to a passage in the Latin text concerning 'Impediment to conception' (*De impedimento conceptionis*).[115]

§42: Similar remedies are found in the Irish treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff and in the Latin *Trotula* text.[116]

§43: ***magrall.*** *eDIL* s.v. *macrall* gives only the definition 'testicle' for this word, but see the note above on §39 for the idea that the roots of an orchid (*magarlín*, Mod. Ir. *lus na magairlí*) resemble testicles.

§45: ***in lechtúri risin aburtur trifera magna.*** See *eDIL* s.v. *lictuáire* for other attestations of this term in medical texts; it derives from Med. Lat. *electuāria*, and refers to a drug administered in the form of a paste that was licked from a spoon.[117] *Trifera magna* is recorded in a fourteenth-century Anglo-Norman medical pharmacopeia as a substance made of herbs and spices mixed with honey.[118] According to the *Antodotarium Nicolai* ('The book of compound medicines of Nicholaus'), which was composed in Salerno in the mid-twelfth century and came to be one of the principal pharmaceutical texts in medieval Europe, *Trifera magna* is prescribed for various purposes; it is said that, when mixed with wine in which mandrake or dwarf elder has been cooked, it helps children who are not able to sleep.[119]

§47: The treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff contains a comparable remedy, albeit with slightly different measurements.[120]

teodoricon anacardium. This is another electuary (*theodoriton anacardinum*) for which the ingredients are given in the *Antidotarium Nicolai*, where it is explained that the first word means 'Gift of God'.[121] It is mentioned in Tadhg Ó Cuinn's *Materia medica*; Ó Conchubhair notes that '*Anacardi* is the kidney-shaped nut of the Indian cashew tree, *Semecarpus anacardium*, which is included in Nicolaus' recipe. The number of other ingredients is not large, the main item being aloes. Principally a purgative, it also helps with the memory.'[122]

dunad. This must be the word given in *eDIL* s.v. *tunna*, meaning 'tun, cask, barrel'; the reading is clarified by the parallel remedy in the gynaecological treatise edited by Wulff (see note on this section above). The form given here is likely a phonetic spelling of the genitive plural.

[115] Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 74.10–12; Green, *The Trotula*, 94–5 (§76).

[116] Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 74.12–13; Green, *The Trotula*, 96–7 (§82).

[117] Brian Ó Cuív, 'The verbal noun ending *-áil* and related forms', *Celtica* 13 (1980), 125–45, at 135; Faith Wallis, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader*, Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures 15 (Toronto, 2010), 545.

[118] See https://anglo-norman.net/entry/trifera (accessed 11 February 2026).

[119] Green, *The Trotula*, 193 and 201–2; the relevant entry from the *Antidotarium Nicolai* is reproduced in Hunt, *Anglo-Norman Medicine*, i, 326.

[120] Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 74.14–18.

[121] The text is reproduced in Hunt, *Anglo-Norman Medicine*, i, 325.

[122] Ó Conchubhair, *An Irish materia medica*, 56.

§48: The treatise on gynaecology edited by Wulff contains a comparable remedy.[123]

§51: ***athair losa.*** This is translated as 'alehoof' or 'ground ivy' in Logan's *Luibhleabhrán* (s.v. *athair lus, athair lusa*), but the glossary in 'Lord Crawford's Medical Manuscript' contains the entry *serpentina .i. athir .l. .i. bilur Muiri .i. mudomun.*[124] Siobhán Barrett has suggested to me that it is more likely bistort, commonly known as 'snakeroot'.

uisce t[rá]iges. My reading is uncertain here due to fading of some of the letters in the second word, but other remedies in Irish sources call for *uisce tráiges*, lit. 'water which ebbs/recedes', possibly referring to water drawn from an ebbing sea-tide or a turlough.[125] It may be that a principle of sympathetic correspondence underlies this advice, i.e. the idea that just as ebbing water recedes from the beach, so the birth will recede from the woman seeking to abort a foetus.[126]

§53: ***ros ca[indinde].*** The final letters of this word are obscured by fading in the manuscript but may be identical to the form in §56. *eDIL* s.v. *cainnenn* offers the translation 'garlic, leek(s), onion (?)'. Fergus Kelly has argued on the basis of references in early Irish legal and literary texts, however, that the word refers specifically to onion (*allium cepa*), most likely a bunching or shallot type of the plant.[127] He also observes that 'The word *cainnenn* dropped out of general use in the Early Modern Irish period, and was replaced by *uinneman (uinniún)*, most probably a borrowing from Norman French *oignun* "onion" '.[128]

§58: ***loim con.*** *eDIL* s.v. *loimm* gives the meaning 'milk' for this term, but I know of no recipes in the *Trotula* tradition that recommend the milk of a dog as an ingredient. Pliny notes in his *Natural History*, however, that 'The foetus is retained by taking in drink the ash of porcupines, brought to maturity by drinking bitch's milk, and withdrawn by the afterbirth of a bitch' (*partus conceptos hystricum cinis potus continent, maturat caninum lacte potum, evocat membrana e secundis canum*).[129] This ingredient occurs again in §80.

melle. Fergus Kelly suggests that this word is a derivative of *mell* 'sphere, swelling', and notes that it has been identified with the plant called 'bitter vetch' or 'heath-pease' (*Lathyrus montanus*), which has edible tubers.[130]

[123]Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 74.18–20.

[124]Stokes, 'Three Irish medical glossaries', 333 (§28).

[125]See the discussion in Deborah Hayden, 'From the "king of the waters" to curative manuscripts: water and medicine in medieval Irish textual culture', in Marilina Cesario, Hugh Magennis and Elisa Ramazzina (eds), *The Elements in the Medieval World. Interdisciplinary Perspectives: Water* (Leiden, 2024), 75–98, at 89–90 and n. 45.

[126]My thanks to David Stifter for this suggestion.

[127]Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, 251–3.

[128]Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, 251, citing Risk, 'French loan-words in Irish (Part 2)', *EC* 14/1 (1974), 67–98, at 91.

[129]Jones, *Pliny: Natural History*, 358–9 (XXX.43).

[130]Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, 312, citing Gerard Murphy (ed.), *Early Irish Lyrics, Eighth to Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1956; repr. Dublin, 1996), 14 and Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Allerlei keltisches', *ZCP* 18 (1930), 100–10, at 105–6.

§59: *benet míl muige.* The Irish gynaecological treatise edited by Wulff notes that the rennet of a hare is one of the animal products that is good for conception and childbirth.[131]

§60: *ind in am na cōrach.* I am uncertain of the intended meaning here and my translation is tentative. Another copy of this remedy is found in NLI MS G 11, p. 269b8–10, where the end of the text instead reads *7 a n-aimsir na fola místa donite*r *sin* 'and that is done at the time of the menses'.

§63: As noted above, another copy of this remedy is found on fol. 672b of TCD MS H 3. 17 (1336), where it is one of several charms written in the margins and blank spaces of the manuscript that were collected and edited by R. I. Best in 1952.[132] Best understood it to form part of the same remedy as that given in §64 of our text, but the rubrication in our manuscript, as well as a line dividing the two remedies in the H 3. 17 copy, indicate that they were understood to be distinct cures (one for conceiving males, the other for a safe birth), even if their juxtaposition in both copies suggests either that one witness is a copy of the other or that both derive from a common source.[133] Another copy of the remedy occurs in NLI MS G 11, p. 268b29–30, where it is again followed immediately (but is clearly distinct from) the remedy in §64 of our text.

§64: Copies of this remedy are found on fol. 672b of TCD MS H 3. 17 (1336; see note on §63 above) and in NLI MS G 11, p. 268b30–5. R. I. Best pointed out the existence of the copy in Conla Mac an Leagha's Remedy Book in a footnote to his edition of the charms from the TCD manuscript.[134]

§65: *tendus.* This form is not recorded in *eDIL* with the sense given here, but cf. *eDIL* s.v. *tendad* 'pressing, straining, tightening' and Ó Dónaill's *Foclóir Gaeilge–Bearla*, s.v. *teannas* 'tightness, tautness; strain, tension'.[135] It is possible that the general sense of 'tightness' or 'tension' is intended, which could refer to a range of possible conditions. In the present context, however, it may be that the specific obstetrical phenomenon of contractions, whereby the uterine muscles tighten and then relax during labour, is what is meant.

§67: *glorium.* I am uncertain of the plant intended here. The glossary in Lord Crawford's Medical Manuscript contains the entry *scopa reghia 7 hipericon .i. gloriam .i. fenel.*[136] *Scopa regia* is a species of the plant goosefoot (*chenopodium scoparia*), whereas *hipericon* may refer to *hypericum* or St John's wort. *eDIL* s.v. *gloriam*, however, translates this word as 'the iris of gladiolus' on the basis of definitions in other medical manuscripts.

§69: This remedy is written continuously with the previous one (§68), with no rubrication to indicate the beginning of a new entry. The previous remedy

[131] Wulff, 'A mediaeval handbook', 56.1–2, 58.22, 70.26 and 70.34.
[132] Best, 'Some Irish charms'; see also the discussion above, p. 317.
[133] Best, 'Some Irish charms', 30 (no. V); Hayden, 'Premodern Irish rituals', 416–18.
[134] Best, 'Some Irish charms', 32 (n.)
[135] Niall Ó Dónaill, *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* (Dublin, 1977).
[136] Stokes, 'Three Irish medical glossaries', 333 (§22).

is stated to be for bringing on the menses, however, while this one appears to be for treating cattle when giving birth; I therefore take them to be intended as separate cures.

grībrācān. *eDIL* s.v. *gribracán* gives the uncertain definition 'pricking pain (?)' for this word on the basis of a single citation; cf. also *eDIL* s.v. *gribracach* 'tingling numbness, "pins and needles" '. *Gribracán* may be a compound of *rácán* < *ráca* 'rake (agricult[ural] implement)' (*eDIL* s.v. *ráca*) and *gríb* 'claw, talon (?)' (*eDIL* s.v. *gríb*), suggesting that the word could refer to some kind of cattle prod.[137] My translation is, however, tentative here.

§70: Cf. NLS MS Adv. 72.1.3, fol. 80r14–16.

§71: Cf. NLS MS Adv. 72.1.3, fol. 80r16.

ros bilair. Uí Chonchubhair and Ó Conchúir identify the plant *biolar* as 'watercress' (*Nasturtium officinale*) and observe that as an important medicinal herb of the Middle Ages, 'it was used for diseases of the chest and urinary tract, for bleeding and scurvy, to overcome melancholia and headache and to banish worms and blackheads. It was also believed to be effective for women's ailments, and in Dún Chaoin it was used as a poultice to ease labour pains.'[138]

§72: Cf. NLI MS G 11, p. 269a17–19. A similar fertility test is included in the Latin *Trotula*:

> Si mulier maneat sterilis uicio uiri uel sui, hoc modo percipietur. Accipe duas ollas et in utraque pone cantabrum, et de urina uiri pone in una earum cum cantabro, et in alia de urina Mulieris, et olle dimittantur per .ix. uel dies .x. Et si sterilitas sit uicio Mulieris, inuenies uermes multos in olla sua et cantabrum fetidum. Similiter in alia si sit uicio uiri. Et si in neutra inueneris, in neutron erit causa, et tunc poterunt medicine beneficio adiuuari ut concipiat.
>
> 'If a woman remains barren by fault of the man or herself, it will be perceived in this manner. Take two pots and in each one place wheat bran and put some of the man's urine in one of them with the bran, and in the other [put] some urine of the woman [with the rest of the bran], and let the pots sit for nine or ten days. If the infertility is the fault of the woman, you will find many worms in her pot and the bran will stink. [You will find the same thing] in the other [pot] if it is the man's fault. And if you find this in neither, then in neither is there any defect and they are able to be aided by the benefit of medicine so that they might conceive.'[139]

The same test appears in the Middle English gynaecological handbook edited by Rowland, who observes that it can ultimately be traced back to Egyptian papyri and the Galenic work *De antidotis* 'On antidotes'.[140]

[137] My thanks to Ruairí Ó hUiginn for this suggestion.
[138] Uí Chonchubhair and Ó Conchúir, *Flóra Chorca Dhuibhne*, 87.
[139] Green, *The Trotula*, 94–5 (§75).
[140] Rowland, *Medieval Woman's Guide to Health*, 34–5 and 168–9.

***lem*[*ach*] *muige*.** In the G 11 copy of the remedy, this line reads *ar duill*eog *i*n *lemaig*h *no a*r *copoig*. *eDIL* s.v. 1 *lemach* defines this word as 'the plant marsh mallow' and includes citations with the forms *lemach muighe* and *leamhach buíde*. It may be that our scribe simply omitted a suspension mark over the form *lem*, or perhaps the reference to a *duilleog* 'leaf' led him to confuse it with the form given in *eDIL* s.v. 1 *lem* 'elm-tree'.

***feōdaig*.** The G 11 copy of this remedy reads 7 *feodoch-*. *eDIL* does not record the form *feódaig* as an adjective derived from the verb *feódaigid* (*eDIL* s.v. *feódaigid*), but only the forms *feódaide*, *feóige* (*eDIL* s.v. *feódaide*, *feóige*) with the sense of 'withered, dry, wasted'. As David Stifter has pointed out to me, it may be that the form in our text stands for *féodaide*, with the final vowel elided before the following 'a'.

§73: Cf. NLS MS Adv. 72.1.3, fol. 80r11–13.

***māollugad*.** The context for this word suggests that it must be a verbal noun instructing the reader as to how to consume the prescribed ingredients. However, if it is the verb given in *eDIL* s.v. *maelaigid*, meaning 'blunts, depresses, abates', the precise meaning here is unclear. It is possible, however, that the term intended in this context is the same given in §77 as *maels*h*lug*ad (see note below), with the medial lenited 's' omitted. If so, it may be that the advice in this remedy is likewise to swallow the medicine quickly in order to avoid contemplating its unpleasantness.

§74: Cf. NLS MS Adv. 72.1.3, fol. 80r10–11.

§76: *slānasaigid*. This form is not attested in *eDIL*. Another copy of this remedy is found in NLI MS G 11, p. 269.5–6, however, where the equivalent word is given as *slānug*ad, which is recorded in *eDIL* (*eDIL* s.v. *slánugad*) with the medical sense of 'secundine'.

§77: *māelshlugad*. Another copy of this remedy is found in NLS MS Adv. 72.1.3, fol. 80r17–18, where the penultimate word reads *mu*n*s*h*lug*ud. Neither of these forms are attested in *eDIL*, but *māelshlugad* may be a compound of the word given in *eDIL* s.v. *sluiced, slocaid* 'swallows, engulfs'. The prefix *māel* has a range of senses including 'bald', 'bare' and 'blunt' (see *eDIL* s.v. 1 *mael*); Ó Dónaill notes that it can also be used as an intensifier (cf. the English idiom 'to go it bald-headed' in the sense 'to dash or charge forward, without heeding danger or obstacles; to stake everything, to disregard consequences; to attack without care or thought').[141] The intended meaning here may therefore have been that the patient was to swallow the ingredients quickly so as to avoid contemplating their unpleasantness. Cf. the form *maethslughudh* ('soft swallowing'), which is used in commentary to the Old Irish law-tract *Bretha*

[141] Ó Dónaill, *Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla*, s.v. *maol*²; *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'bald-headed (*adj.*)', https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1201232923 (accessed 25 February 2026). My thanks to Ruairí Ó hUiginn for pointing out this comparison.

Comaithcheso in relation to the trespass of hens swallowing bees.[142] See also the note on §73 above.

scindīn. This form is not attested in *eDIL*, but another copy of this remedy is found in NLS MS 72.1.3, fol. 80r17–18, where this word in question reads *sgidi*n. I therefore take it to be equivalent to the words recorded in Dinneen's dictionary, s.vv. *scidín* 'a trifle, a morsel, a small potato, anything small'; and *sceidín* 'a small spot or speck; a small star in the forehead of a beast; a small potato'.[143] The sense here is evidently a small lump of goat dung, which is to be covered with butter (presumably to hide it from the patient who must consume it).

§78: *semar scaithe finne* 7 *echsemar.* Presumably the distinction being made here is between white clover (*Trifolium repens*, recorded in Ó Dónaill's Modern Irish dictionary as *seamair bhán*) and red clover (*Trifolium pratense*, given in the same source as either *seamair chapaill* or *seamair dhearg*), which are two of the most common varieties of the plant.[144]

§79: *locholl.* *eDIL* s.v. *lochall* defines this as the 'name of a plant, found mainly in glossaries' and cites the entry *Pulleghium Planta Christi .i. bogha .m. .i. lochull* in Lord Crawford's Medical Manuscript.[145] *Pulegium* refers to pennyroyal, an ingredient frequently mentioned in the Latin *Trotula* text. Uí Chonchubhair and Ó Conchúir identify *lochall* with 'brooklime' (*Veronica beccabunga*), however, and note that 'In Dún Chaoin it was knotted and used as a poultice to ease labour pains.'[146]

Glossary of plant-names

abla	apple-tree	§17
aipsint	absinth	§38
argat lúacra	meadowsweet	§§9, 68, 75
arrament	atrament	§35
athair losa	bistort	§§51, 78
athair talman	yarrow	§§52, 65, 78
biatus	beet	§79
bilar	watercress	§71
briscén	silverweed	§60
búafallán (*líath*)	mugwort	§§4, 28, 32, 55–7
cainnenn	onion	§§53, 56

[142]Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Bretha Comaithcheso: An Old-Irish Law Tract on Neighbouring Farms*, Early Irish Law Series 9 (Dublin, 2022), 374.

[143]Patrick S. Dinneen, *Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla/An Irish-English Dictionary* (Dublin, 1904), s.vv.

[144]Ó Dónaill, *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla*, s.v. *seamair.*

[145]Stokes, 'Three Irish medical glossaries', 333 (§26).

[146]Uí Chonchubhair and Ó Conchúir, *Flóra Chorca Dhuibhne*, 196; the same identification is given in Niall Mac Coitir, *Ireland's Wild Plants. Myths, Legends and Folklore* (Cork, 2006), 238–9.

cairtenn	rowan	§17
calement	calamint	§32
cartlann	water-mint	§21
cogal	cockle-plant	§31
copóg	dock-leaf	§19
crúach Pádraig	greater plantain	§§16, 18
cumin	cumin	§32
dair	oak	§17
deda	centaury	§40
ditanntri	dittany	§64
dris	briar	§9
droigen	blackthorn	§61
echsemar	red clover	§78
edend talman	ground ivy	§68
ellenn	elecampane	§75
espóg bán	oxeye daisy	§67
fed coille	rue (?)	§15
fern	alder	§§17, 33, 61
fínscoth	wine blossom	§68
flidh	chickweed	§§27, 79
gallbilar	garden-cress	§66
glaisín	spearwort	§34
glorium	iris (?)	§67
grifin na cloiche	stonecrop	§51
ibar talmain	juniper	§11
imus	celery	§75
isoib	hyssop	§32
lemach	marsh mallow	§72
litronta	dittany	§32
locholl	brooklime	§79
lus creide	speedwell	§§26, 32
lus na croici	fennel	§§23, 32, 56
lus na sub	strawberry	§6
madra	madder	§§30, 32
magarlín	orchid	§§39, 43
mandrogora	mandrake	§45
mecun rata	root of a fern	§6
melle	bitter vetch	§58
mercuirial	mercury	§32
mintus	mint	§32
mirr	myrrh	§44
musdard	mustard	§32
nefpt	catmint	§§32, 37, 49
nemnaid	tormentil	§76
nenaid	nettles	§§32, 54
origanum	oregano	§32

pínán	gooseberry	§19
ragam	horseradish	§14
rait (?)	bog-myrtle	§20
rú	bedstraw	§32
saderei	savory	§32
saige	sage	§§29, 32
sail	willow	§20
samad bó	garden sorrel	§12
samad léna	meadow sorrel	§15
satiregia	satyrion	§39
scamonia	scammony	§48
selgán	spleenwort	§15
semar scaithe finne	white clover	§78
simsán	wood sorrel	§15
sinaip	mustard	§24
slánlus muc	swinecress	§79
stafesaigria	staveacre	§44
tenegal	houseleek	§7
tene talman	meadow saffron	§19
tenga énáin	stitchwort	§7

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MO-CHEAN DO THEACHT, A CHLÁIRSEACH: DÁN AR CHLÁIRSEACH AODHA DUIBH UÍ DHOMHNAILL (†1537)*

Achoimre

Maireann dán gairid (14 rann) dar tús *Mo-chean do theacht, a chláirseach* in dhá lámhscríbhinn a breacadh sa seachtú haois déag. Cuireadh an dán in eagar in *Irisleabhar Muighe Nuadhad* (Breathnach 1931: 39–40) agus in *Filí agus Filidheacht Chonnacht* (Ó Raghallaigh 1938: 197–99). Dá fheabhas na heagráin sin, níor cuireadh nótaí ná aistriúchán ar fáil, ná ní dhearnadh aon phlé ar chúlra ná ar ábhar an dáin. Tá an dán in eagar agam as an nua san alt seo. Tá cuid de na tagairtí sa dán doiléir, ach déanaim amach gur cumadh é d'Aodh Dubh Ó Domhnaill (†1537) thart ar an mbliain 1512 nuair a rinne sé oilithreacht ar an Róimh. Is é seo an t-aon dán a cumadh ar Aodh Dubh Ó Domhnaill atá tagtha anuas chugainn, go bhfios dom. Tá an dán i measc líon beag dánta i gcorpas fhilíocht na scol ina moltar an pátrún trí mholadh a dhéanamh ar earra dá chuid.

Ábhar agus cúlra an dáin

Ó id ar chláirseach is ea an dán seo agus tá sé ar an líon beag dánta i gcorpas fhilíocht na scol ina ndíríonn an file a mholadh ar earra de chuid an phátrúin. Is mar 'possession poems' a dhéantar rangú ar théacsanna den chineál seo i mBunachar Fhilíocht na Scol.[1] Is díol spéise a laghad dánta den chineál seo atá sa chorpas (dhá cheann déag ar fad a ndéantar an rangú sin orthu).[2] Is ar chláirseacha a cumadh ceithre cinn acu sin: *Mo-chean do theacht, a chláirseach*, *A chláirseach Chnuic Uí Chosgair* (*IBP* Dán 15), *Aithne charad cláirseach Bhriain* (McKenna 1947 Dán 8), agus *Tabhraidh chugam cruit mo ríogh* (Walsh 1933: 113–5).[3] Sa dán seo, déantar pearsantú ar chláirseach an phátrúin agus labhraíonn an file go díreach leis an uirlis. Ciúta liteartha é seo atá coitianta i ndánta den chineál seo agus a fheidhmíonn le tábhacht an earra agus an phátrúin araon a threisiú:

> D'fhéadfaí an chaint dhíreach le hearra an phátrúin a léamh … Ar dtús mar chomhartha ar an tábhacht a shamhlaítear leis an earra, is

*Táim buíoch d'Eoin Mac Cárthaigh, den léitheoir anaithnid agus d'eagarthóirí *Celtica* as a gcuid moltaí le barr feabhais a chur ar an alt seo. Is liomsa gach botún agus dearmad.

[1] https://bardic.celt.dias.ie/?submit=submit&classes=19 (ceadaíodh an 6 Samhain 2025).

[2] Féach Flahive (2007–10: 108): 'Bardic poems focusing upon objects (not including animals) are quite rare, although not unknown in the bardic tradition'.

[3] Déanaim amach go bhféadfaí *Ceolchar sin a chruit mo ríogh* (Walsh 1933: 111–13) a áireamh sa liosta sin chomh maith.

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> é sin go ndéantar pearsantú ar an earra mar chomhartha ar a luach. Sa dara háit, léamh atá gaolta leis sin: féachaint air mar leagan den phearsantú ar bhonn na sineicdicé. Is é sin go labhraítear le giuirléidí an phátrúin in ionad leis an bpátrún féin *pars pro toto*, agus aon mholadh a bhronntar ar an earra tá sé intuigthe go bhfuil sé bronnta ar an bpátrún … (Whelton 2008: 90)[4]

Is dóigh liom go bhféadfaimis an dán seo a léamh ar an dá bhealach sin; mar léiriú ar thábhacht agus ar luach na cláirsí sa tsochaí agus ar thábhacht an phátrúin araon.

Is d'Aodh Ó Domhnaill éigin a cumadh an dán seo (11a; 4d) agus déanaim amach gurb é Aodh Dubh Ó Domhnaill a bhásaigh sa bhliain 1537 atá i gceist. Tugtar na teidil seo a leanas ar an bpátrún sa dán: *rí bin*n *Boirc*[*h*]*e* (1c), *Ó Do*m[*h*]*naill Daoile* (4d), *rí mīolla Muaidhe* (5a), *rí cnisgheal ó cConuill* (6c), *leómhan Locha hĒirne* (9d), *an tAodh Eanghach* (11a). Tá a fhios againn gur samhlaíodh Aodh Dubh leis an gceannaire tuartha Aodh Eanghach lena linn.[5] Féach an cur síos seo a dhéantar air tar éis a bháis in *ALC* agus in *AC*:

> ocus do saeiledh gur b'é an t-Aedh Eanccach do tairngedar fáidhi ocus fissidh é.
>
> 'And it was thought that he was the Aedh Engach whom prophets and wise men had foretold.' (*ALC* 1537)
>
> et ni heth fós acht do saoil*edh* et do creid*edh* co mor do rer thairng*ir*i na Naomh et na comarrtha cosm*aile* t*ar*la air fein et aran aimsir rea linn gurb e-sin int Aodh Engach do gelladar fáithi ⁊ fis*idh* ⁊ ardnaoim eol*chu* Er*enn* do thecht a ndeir*edh* aimsire, et o nárb é ni shaoílim a thecht co bruinne mbráthu et co deóigh an doman.
>
> 'Moreover it was thought and widely believed, according to the prophecies of the Saints and the likely signs that appeared in him and in his time, that he was that Aed Engach whose coming late in time the prophets and seers and great learned Saints of Ireland had promised; and since he was not, I do not think [that Aed] will come till the day of doom and the end of the world'. (*AC* 1537.10)

Ní thugtar mórán sonraí faoin bpátrún sa dán, ach déantar tagairt d'oilithreacht a rinne sé chun na Róimhe *ag íoc ceana a chloidh*imh (11c), agus déantar tagairt do Londain chomh maith (12ab). Tá a fhios againn go ndeachaigh Aodh

[4]Luann Whelton an tríú feidhm a d'fhéadfadh bheith leis an gcaint neamhbheo le hearra chomh maith: 'Sa tríú háit toisc gurb é an rud dodhéanta atá á dhéanamh nuair a labhraítear le rudaí atá gan cumas éisteachta agus tuisceana sa saol mór d'fhéadfaí a rá go ndéanann an file iarracht gnáthdlíthe na cumarsáide a shárú sa chaint le rudaí neamhbheo … Tugtar 'tú' ar an rud, ach fanann an rud ina rud i gcónaí, agus bheadh an file ag cur béime ar a chumacht chun teagmháil litriúil a dhéanamh le rudaí neamhbheo' (Whelton 2008: 90).

[5]Is iomaí duine a samhlaíodh le hAodh Eanghach i bhfoinsí stairiúla agus sa dán díreach, ar ndóigh. Féach Ó Buachalla (1989: 202).

Dubh Ó Domhnaill ar oilithreacht chun na Róimhe sa bhliain 1510 tar éis dó blianta a chaitheamh i mbun cogaíochta, agus gur chaith sé tréimhse i Londain agus é ag dul anonn agus arís agus é ar an mbealach ar ais go hÉirinn. Tugtar cuntas ar imeacht Aodha chun na Róimhe sna hannála:[6]

> O Domhnaill Aodh mac Aodha Rúaidh do dhol don Róimh dia oilithre, ⁊ an ccein do bhai amuicch battar a rann ⁊ a charaid i mbrón, i ndoghailsi, ⁊ i ndoimhenmain ina dheadhaidh, ⁊ Maghnas Ó Domhnaill a mhac d'fhagbháil dó ag iomcosnamh an tíre an ccein no bhiadh ina féccmais.
>
> 'O'Donnell (Hugh, the son of Hugh Roe), went upon a pilgrimage to Rome. While he was abroad, his adherents and friends were in grief and sadness after him; and his son, Manus O'Donnell, was left by him to protect the country, while he [himself] should be absent from it.' (*AFM* 1510)
>
> hUa Domnaill, idon, Aodh, mac Aodha Ruaidh, tigerna Tíre-Conaill ⁊ Ichta[i]r Chonnacht & Ceniuil Moain ⁊ Innsi-hEoghain ⁊ Fer-Manach, do dhol a lár a aisi ⁊ a neirt, d'aindeoin gach aín, d'á oilithre docum na Romha.
>
> 'Ua Domnall, namely, Aodh, son of Aodh the Red, lord of Tir-Conaill and of Lower Connacht and of Cenel-Moen and of Inis-Eogain and of Fir-Manach, went in the midst of his age and power, in despite of everyone, on a pilgrimage to Rome.' (*AU* 1510.5)

Déantar cur síos ar fhilleadh Uí Dhomhnaill ar Éirinn sna hannála chomh maith, agus insítear dúinn gur thug sé cuairt ar Rí Shasana agus é ar an mbealach ar ais go hÉirinn. Is mar cúis cheiliúrtha a dhéantar cur síos ar a fhilleadh ar Éirinn:[7]

> O Domhnaill Aodh mac Aodha Ruaidh do thoidheacht ón Róimh iar fforbadh a oilithre iar mbeith sé sechtmhaine décc hi Londain acc dol soir, ⁊ sé sechtmuine décc ele acc teacht anoir. Fuairsiomh dna onoir ⁊ airmhidin ó Righ Saxan King Hanri, táinic iaramh slán co hErinn, ⁊ baoí lé hathaidh hi ffiabhrus san Midhe, ⁊ iar ffaghbháil sláinte dó táinicc dia thicch, ⁊ bá subhach forbfaoiligh cealla ⁊ tuatha dia thoidhecht.
>
> 'O'Donnell (Hugh, the son of Hugh Roe) returned from Rome, after having finished his pilgrimage, and having spent sixteen weeks in London on his way to Rome, and sixteen weeks on his return. He received great honour and respect from the King of England, King Henry. He arrived safely in Ireland, but was for some time [lying] ill of a fever, in Meath. On recovering his health, he went

[6] Féach freisin *ALC* (1510.3) agus *AC* (1510.7).
[7] Féach freisin *ALC* (1512.1) agus *AC* (1512.2).

> home to his house; and the clergy and laity were glad and joyous at his return.' (*AFM* 1512)
>
> O Domnaill, idon, Aodh, do thecht o'n Roim, iar faghail morain cunntaberta ar muir ⁊ ar tir ⁊ ar faghail grás mór ⁊ loghaid na n-uile pecad o'n Pápa. Ocus fuair a cuairt co h-onorach ac dul ⁊ ac teacht ac rígh Saxan ⁊ fuair tinnlaici móra; óir ní minic fuair nech d'ár' fhácaib Éire lethéd na h-onora fuair o'n rígh. Ocus tainic a tír a Cairlind ⁊ sé tend o fhiabrus & do bí a fad 'n-a luighi 'sa Midhe ⁊ tic slán d'a thigh a cenn bliadhna co leth o'n uair fá'r' imdhigh.
>
> 'O'Domnaill, namely, Aodh, came from Rome, after experiencing much danger on sea and on land and after obtaining great favours and plenary Indulgence from the Pope. And he received honourable reception in going and in returning and got large donatives from the king of the Saxons; for not often did any one that left Ireland receive an equal amount of honour as he got from the king. And he came to land in Cairlinn and he prostrate [*lit. violent*][8] from fever and he was long lying [*ill*] in Meath and came safe to his house at the end of a year and a half from the time in which he went.' (*AU* 1511)

Déanaim amach go mb'fhéidir gur cumadh an dán seo mar cheiliúradh ar fhilleadh Aodha go hÉirinn. Cuireann an fáiltiú ag tús an dán (*Mo-chean do theacht*) taca faoin léamh sin ar an dán.

Níl dán ar bith ar Aodh Dubh Ó Domhnaill ar marthain go bhfios dom. Is díol spéise, áfach, go bhfuil sé i measc na bpearsan stairiúla ar a dtugann an Ceithearnach cuairt i leaganacha áirithe den scéal próis *An Ceithearnach Caoilriabhach*, agus go n-aortar a chuid cláirseoirí ann (O'Grady 1892: i, 276–7; ii, 312–13).[9]

Apalóg

Tá apalóg ghairid sa dán (ranna 7–10) faoi 'ghléastóir' Albanach a mhair in aimsir Cholm Cille darbh ainm mac Samháin, a raibh sé de bhua aige *gléas* (nó tiúnáil) a chur ar chláirseach a mhairfeadh bliain iomlán. Ní heol dom foinse an scéil seo. Mar a deir Ó Caithnia (1984: 170), is cosúil go mbíodh stádas cuibheasach ard ag gléastóirí sa tsochaí Ghaelach.[10]

[8] Déanaim amach nach é *teann* (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *tend*) atá i gceist anseo, ach *teinn* (*eDIL* s.v. *tinn, teinn*) 'sick'.

[9] Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill, seachas Aodh Dubh, a luaitear i leaganacha áirithe den scéal, áfach. Féach Ní Bhuachalla (2025: 88).

[10] Luann Ó Caithnia an tagairt seo do ghléastóir sna hannála: *Aed mac Duinn h. Sochlachan airchinnech Cunga, sai chantuirechta & certglesae & glesa crot* 'Aed son of Donn O Sochlachain, erenagh of Cong, a man eminent for chanting and for the right tuning of harps' (*AC* 1226). N'fheadar an ionann *certglesae* agus *glesa*, faoi mar a thugtar le tuiscint san aistriúchán.

An file

Is ar fhile darb ainm Cian Ó hUiginn a leagtar an dán seo i Leabhar Uí Chonchubhair Dhoinn. Ní mhaireann aon dán eile leis an bhfile seo, go bhfios dom.[11] Leagtar an dán ar Mhaol Muire Ó hUiginn, easpag Thuama, i lámh níos déanaí sa lámhscríbhinn chéanna (a*cht* Maolmuire ua huigin*n* .i. *air*d Esbag Tua<…>), agus leanann Ó Raghallaigh an údarthacht sin ina eagrán siúd den dán. Is cosúil gur bhásaigh Maol Mhuire Ó hUiginn *c.* 1590. Más fíor gur cumadh an dán seo *c.* 1512, bheadh sé an-óg agus an dán seo á chumadh aige.

Lámhscríbhinní

Tá an dán seo ar marthain i bpéire lámhscríbhinní a breacadh ar an Mór-Roinn sa seachtú haois déag.

C: Teach Chluain Mhalais, Leabhar Uí Chonchubhair Dhoinn, fóiliónna 173v–174r: Scríobh Aodh Ó Dochartaigh an lámhscríbhinn seo do Shomhairle Mac Domhnaill idir Eanáir agus Nollaig na bliana 1631.[12] Is in Ostend a bhí sé i mbun pinn. Tá an dán ar marthain ar fhóiliónna 173v–174r. Tá sé i rannóg den lámhscríbhinn ina bhfuil dánta ar Chlann Dálaigh ar marthain.[13]

D: Leabharlann Ríoga na Beilge LS 6131–33 (Leabhar Inghine Í Dhomhnaill), fóilió 60v: Cuireadh an lámhscríbhinn seo i dtoll a chéile do Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill idir na blianta 1622 agus 1640 (Ó Macháin 2007/8: 40–1). Dánta ar Chlann Dálaigh is mó atá ar caomhnú inti.

An t-eagrán seo

Is beag idir téacs an dáin sa dá lámhscríbhinn. Is fearr léamha C uaireanta (m.sh. 1d *cuir is* (C); *cuireas* (D); 8b *saormhacámh* (C); *faoi macamh* (D)) agus uaireanta eile is fearr léamha D (m.sh. 4c *do co*mh*roin*n (C); *dá ccomhroin*n (D)). Tá focail in easnamh ar D anseo agus ansiúd (m.sh. 12b), agus mar sin bheartaigh mé an t-eagrán a bhunú ar C. Tugaim léamha malartacha ó D.[14]

Tá scaradh na bhfocal agus an phoncaíocht tugtha chun rialtachta agam. Scaoilim noda i gcló iodálach agus tá litreacha breise curtha ar fáil agam idir lúibíní cearnacha. Tá suíomh na síntí fada laistigh de shiollaí tugtha chun rialtachta agam, agus tá síntí fada atá in easnamh curtha ar fáil agam le macrain. Baineadh sínte fada de na défhoghair ía, úa agus áoi. Is mar *e* nó mar *ea* a scaoilim 'e ard' de réir mar is cuí.

[11]Tuairimíonn Knott go mb'fhéidir gurb ionann an Cian Ó hUiginn seo agus 'Kian O Higgen' ar tugadh pardún dó sa bhliain 1593 (*TD* ii 308).

[12]Déantar cur síos ar ghnéithe éagsúla den lámhscríbhinn seo in Ó Macháin (2010).

[13]Tá tras-scríbhinn den fhinné seo ar fáil i leabhar nótaí de chuid E. C. Quiggin atá ar caomhnú i Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hAlban anois (LS 14872) agus in ARÉ 3 C 12 (625), tras-scríbhinn Uí Chomhraí de Leabhar Uí Chonchubhair Dhoinn.

[14]Ní chuirim na nithe seo a leanas san áireamh: noda a bheith ann nó as, sínte fada nach bhfuil aon amhras ann fúthu, malartuithe comónta litrithe, séimhiú i lár nó ag deireadh focail.

Meadaracht an dáin

Is in *rannaíocht bheag*, *ógláchas* a cumadh an dán seo.

- Tá cinnteacht siollaí i ngach líne cé is moite de línte 7a, 12c agus 13a. Pléim na cásanna seo sna nótaí téacsúla.
- Faightear cuibheas deiridh (comhardadh slán nó comhardadh briste) idir línte b agus d i ngach rann.
- Faightear aicill i ngach leathrann. Comhardadh (slán nó briste) atá i bhformhór na leathrann, ach faightear dhá shampla de chuibheas níos scaoilte i rann 6 (*míosa* : *síthe* agus *cconuill* : *urruim*).[15] Tá aicill ar iarraidh i líne 12d, ach tá líon na siollaí as riocht i líne 12c, agus mar sin ní féidir bheith cinnte céard a bhí ag údar an dáin.[16] Cuibheas scaoilte (*amas*) atá in aicill 10cd (*foll*us : *nod*). Déanaim amach gur botún seachadta is cúis leis an neamhréireacht seo a thagann salach ar na samplaí eile (agus, go deimhin, a sháraíonn na rialacha meadarachta), agus tá coigeartú déanta agam dá réir (*foll*us : *noda*).[17]
- Is minic a fhaightear uaim sa dán seo, cé nach bhfuil a leithéid riachtanach in *ógláchas*.

Teanga

Tá teanga an dáin clasaiceach den chuid is mó. Déantar plé ar nithe ar leith ar díol suntais iad sna léamha.

Téacs

1. Mo-chean do thea*cht* a chláirs*ea*c[h],
   a-t*ú*-sa fáilt*ea*c[h] romhad;
   do sh[e]in*n* ort rí bin*n* Boirc[h]e
   cuir is puirt, coirche is co*m*[h]ad.

Aistriúchán

1. I welcome you, O harp, your arrival is joyous; the melodious king of the Mournes once played melodies and tunes, [and] chords and metres upon you.

Léamha lámhscríbhinne

1a. D clairseach, romhatt; 1c. D do sin*n*; 1d. cuir is] D cuireas, D comhatt

[15] D'fhéadfaí comhardadh slán a chur ar fáil sa dá chás sin ach *síotha* (: *míosa*) a léamh in áit *síthe*, agus *orruim* (: *cConuill*) a léamh in áit *urruim*. (Féach go dtugtar na foirmeacha seo a leanas in *IGT* ii *uirrim*, *oirim* (§13) *urraim*, *uirrim*, *oirim* (§42). Glacaim leis, dá ainneoin sin, go gceadaítí an fhoirm *orraim*, cé nach bhfuil sampla ar bith le deimhniú meadarachta ar m'eolas). Ní chuirim na coigeartuithe seo i bhfeidhm ós rud é nach sáraíonn na samplaí d'uaithne na riachtanais mheadarachta.

[16] Déanaim plé ar an sampla seo sna nótaí téacsúla.

[17] Tabhair faoi deara, áfach, go bhfaightear a leithéid sa rannaíocht dhéanach.

2. Mór n-adhbhann ria*m*[h] go roicheól
do rin*n* bhoigmheóir mhaoith m[h]*ear*dha,
ort a c[h]*ru*it ghléusda g[h]uithbhin*n*,
do s[h][e]in*n* cioth s*ru*ithbhin*n* seanma.

3. Sgotha sgolārdha sgia*mh*dha,
cuir is puirt, stialla amh*ra*,
do s[h][e]in*n* ort rí fial Fin*n*e,
caointéada bin*n*e balbha.

4. Dán co*m*[h]ráidh daingean, duana,
is laoidhe suarca saoire;
meinic réd bog dá gcomhroinn
's réd c*ru*aidh Ó Do*m*[h]naill Daoile.

5. Fāgbhais rí mīolla Muaidhe
suantairghléas suaimhneach ortsa,
a c[h]o*mh*dha na ccor nglēasda;
's é m*ur* an ccéadna a-nosa.

6. Trí bl*iadh*na is teóra míosa,
do chuir glés síthe seanma
ort rí cnisgheal ó cConuill,
fuair urruim gacha tean*n*ta.

2. He played many a strain of great music [and] sweet-streaming shower of music upon you with the tip of [his] tender, soft, lively finger, O tuned, sweet-voiced harp.

3. The generous king of the River Finn played learned, beautiful utterances, melodies and tunes, and wonderful lines of verse (?) [on your] sweet, muted strings.

4. Eloquent, well-constructed poetry, praise poems and sweet noble lays; Ó Domhnaill of the Deel often played easy and difficult material.

5. The gentle king of the Moy left a soothing *gléas* upon you, O protector (?) of the perfectly-pitched tunes, so it is now again.

6. For three years and three months the fair-skinned king of Conall's descendants, who won respect from every battle, put a mystical melodious *gléas* upon you.

2a. C nádhban*n*; 2b. D boigmhéoir, D maoit, D m*ear*da; 2c. D glesda, D guthbin*n*; 2d. D do sin*n*, D cith; 3a. C Sccotha; 3b. D cuiris; 3c. D do sin*n*; 4a. D Dan; 4b. is] C ⁊, C shaoíre; 4c. D minic, D r*éad*, C do co*mh*roin*n*; D da ccomhroin*n*; 4d. D sr*éad*; 5b. C súaint*ear* ghlés, D suant*ur*gles; C súaithn*idh*, D suaibhneach; 5c. D comda; 5d. D se m*ur* an anosa; 6a. C míosha; 6c. C ccnisgeal, D cnisgeal

7. Do-chuala go raibhe romhuin*n*,
a n-ai*m*sir Coluim C[h]ille,
glēastóir a mhaca samhla,
do-níodh cuir chalma chlisde.

8. Mac Samháin do char ban*ntracht*,
saormhacámh Alban āille;
a ghlés dīog*rais*ea*c*[h] diamhair,
do-bhīoth bliadhain ar chláirsigh.

9. Mac Samhāin fīrg[h]*rinn* fosaidh,
a*cht* g*ēr* chosm[h]uil a ttréidhe,
samhail dā chéile ar eól*us*,
ē is leómhan Locha hĒirne.

10. Nī as sia nī leanfa misi
sdair an laoich chliste cheōlch*air*;
in gach sgél bhíos go foll*us*,
's lór noda do na heōlc[h]uib[h].

11. An tAodh Eanghach séimh sona,
a sdéd ag f*ro*m[h]ad[h] róda,
ó [a]-tá ag íoc cheana a chloidhi*mh*,
rāinig roi*m*[h]i raon Rómha.

7. I heard that there was before, in the time of Colum Cille, a tuner to equal him who used to play vigorous, complicated melodies.

8. Mac Samháin, the beloved of women, the noble youth of lovely Scotland: his enduring, mysterious tuning used to last a year on a harp.

9. Though their accomplishments are similiar, the precise, steadfast mac Samháin and the lion of Loch Éirne are [also] matched in knowledge.

10. I will not trace the history of this skilled, musical hero any longer; [as] in every obvious case, a hint is enough for those in the know.

11. Since the gentle, prosperous Aodh Eanghach is compensating for the deeds of his sword, the path to Rome has opened in front of him, his steed testing the path.

7b. D cille, 7c. D macasamhla; 7d. D calma, D clisde; 8b. D faoi macamh; 8c. D a gles, D diamh*ar*; 8d. D do biodh, D bliagui*n*, D clairsigh; 9a. C fosaigh, D foss*aidh*; 9b. D cosmhuil, D ttréighe; 9c. D ceile; 9d. is] D as, C leóghan; 10a. C meisi; 10b. C stair, D laoigh, D clisti, D ceolchuir; 10c. D an*n* gach, D bios; 10d. 's lór noda] C ní beag nod; D is lor nod; 11b. CD stéd; 11c. D o thá, D ceana, D cloidhimh; 11d. D ranic

12. Cruit deislín duinn a Lon[n]doin
'na ghlaic c[h]orrbhuig úir fhéta;
re faoidhe a chu[i]r chinīl
ní fearr … do*m* b[h]réagad[h].

13. Ní mé díogha do chléir Bhanbha,
'sam saoi, niam da*m*[h]na duadha,
do-b[h]*eir* mo s[h]eisi i subha
mo c[h]r*oidh*e g*us*m[h]*ur* g*ru*amdha.

14. Íosa agus Matha milis,
San Séam is Pilip amhra,
Colum is Mārtain mīliodh,
go ttí do dhídion m'an*m*o.

12. A harp of lovely brown strings from London in his soft-fingered, fresh, steady hand; … enticing me with the sounds of his familiar melody (?).

13. I am not a dreg of Ireland's poets, I am a sage, I am not destined for failure (?); my companion brings my mournful gloomy heart into gladness.

14. May Jesus and sweet Matthew, Saint James and wonderful Philip, Colum and Martin the soldier come to protect my soul.

12a. CD deislin*n*, C dúin, D duin*n*, CD os, D lunduin; 12b. D na glaic uir fhedta [agus spás fágtha ag an scríobhaí idir *glaic* agus *uir*]; 12c. D a cuir cinil; 12d. …] CD dinis, D bréaga; 13a. Ní mé] D is me; díogha] C diú, D diu, D cleir; 13b. C sum, D saoidh, D niom, C *nia*m**; 13c. D do ber, D seisi, i subha] CD a subd*ur*; 13d. D croide; 14a. agus] C is, D ⁊; 14c. CD Coluim, D mil*idh*; 14d. D go ttid, D do didean, D mhanma

Nótaí

1c. do sh[e]in*n*: Tá *do s(h)in*n na lámhscríbhinní coigeartaithe agam go dtí *do sh*[*e*]*in*n (anseo agus in 2d agus 3c). Tá an fhoirm *do s(h)inn* coitianta i lámhscríbhinní ach ní heol dom sampla ar bith le deimhniú meadarachta. Bheimis ag súil le *do sheinn* sa réim chlasaiceach (féach *IGT* iii §76).

rí bin*n* Boirche: *Onom.* s.v. *bairrche* 1; *HDGP* ii s.v. *Boirche* (1). Is mar aidiacht atá *binn* á léamh agam sa líne seo. Tá seans ann, áfach, gurb é *rí Beann mBoirche* a bhí ag údar an dáin (*Onom.* s.v. *benn boirche*).

1d. cuir is puirt: Is mar théarma ginearálta do cheol a thuigim an focal *cor*. Féach an sainmhíniú seo i ngluais Uí Chléirigh: *cor .i. ceol* 'music' (Miller 1879–80: 390). Is léir brí ghinearálta leis an téarma ó na comhthéacsanna éagsúla ina bhfaightear é; féach mar shampla go n-úsáidtear 'cor' le cur síos a dhéanamh ar cheol na n-éan sa leathrann *Mo laegh mo lon labras go ciúin* / *ag senm a chor* 'My beloved [is] my blackbird who speaks softly / while singing its tunes' (*IGT* V §61; Ó Riain 2025: 106–7).

Tugtar le tuiscint san fhoclóir gur brí dhéanach leis an bhfocal *port* is ea 'a tune, melody' (*eDIL* s.v. 2 *port*). Tá sampla den fhocal leis an gciall sin sa téacs *Bás Cearbhaill agus Farbhlaidhe* a cumadh, is cosúil, uair éigin idir 1406 agus 1555: *Glacais Cearbhall a chruit 7 sinnis cuir 7 puirt adhbhainn* (Ní Laoire 1986: 46).

Tabhair faoi deara go bhfuil foirmeacha an ainmnigh (*cuir* agus *puirt*) in áit an áinsígh ceart sa leathrann seo; féach *BST* 70b.2–37.

1d. coirche: Pléitear brí an fhocail seo in Nic Chárthaigh (2023), agus Breatnach (2023) á leanúint ag an údar. Tá an fhoirm *coirche* (seachas *cairche*) deimhnithe ag an meadaracht i ndánta eile; m.sh. *coirche* (: *oidhche*) (McKenna 1951: dán 18); *coirche* (: *fhoirfe*) (McKenna 1951: dán 16).

1d. comhad: Is éard is *comhad* ann leathrann deireanach i rann, ach is léir go bhfuil brí níos leithne leis sa chomhthéacs seo. Faightear an focal leis an mbrí 'filíocht' go coitianta san ochtú haois déag: 'Baineann filí na hochtú aoise déag (Sean na Ráithíneach, P. Mac Gearailt, Eón Rua, T. Gaelach, agus mar leanas) brí níosa fhairsinge as an bhfocal, .i. ceathrú, rann, déantús filíochta' (Breatnach 1958–61: 164). Féach an sampla seo ag Ó Bruadair: *Tuigseach cúmhtha ciuil is cómhad* 'Proficient in music and metre' (Mac Erlean 1913: 228–9). Níl an consan neamhshéimhithe deimhnithe ag an meadaracht ach féach litriú lámhscríbhinn D *comhatt*. Féach freisin *eDIL* s.v. 3 *comad* 'with unlen. -d'.

2c. Maidir leis an aistriúchán 'tuned' ar *ghléusta* féach Nic Chárthaigh (2023: 6).

3b. Táim in amhras faoi bhrí an fhocail *stialla* sa chomhthéacs seo, ach is léir gur ag déanamh cur síos ar cheol atá sé. An bhunbhrí atá leis an bhfocal ná 'strip, panel' (*eDIL* s.v. *stíall*), agus b'fhurasta a shamhlú go bhféadfaí an bhrí 'líne (filíochta)' a bhaint as dá réir (cf. freisin *Ó Dónaill* s.v. *stiall* (b) 'piece, part'). Tá sampla den chineál céanna forbartha séimeantaí le sonrú ar bhrí an fhocail *stave* sa Bhéarla. Brí amháin a bhí leis an bhfocal, 'each of the thin, narrow shaped lengths of wood which are fitted tightly together to make the sides of a wooden barrel …', agus brí eile 'A section or division of a poem, song, etc.' (*OED* s.v. *stave*).

4d. Ó Do*m*[h]naill Daoile: An Daoil i gCo. Dhún na nGall (*Onom.* s.v. *dael 1*). Féach sampla eile den teideal 'Ó Domhnaill Daoile' i ndán a chum Eóghan Ruadh Mac an Bhaird do Rudhraighe Ó Domhnaill (d. 1608): *iomdha anoss fá dhoghruing de,* / *'s ní a los Í Dhomhnuill Daoile*, 'many now are afflicted, and not (merely) because of O'Donnell of the Deel' (*IBP* dán 4.15cd).

4cd. Tá neart samplaí den aidiacht 'bog' leis an gciall 'easy, simple' sa chorpas. Déantar cur síos ar dhán simplí mar dhán *bog* sa dán *A mhacaoimh dhealbhas an dán* cuirim i gcás: *Dar do láimh, a dhuine ghrinn,* / *is tú féin do mhill bhur modh* / *mar nach tángais fear-mar-chách* / *ar cuairt chugam le dán bog* '(I swear) by your hand, my fine fellow (that) it is you yourself who has spoiled your performance, because you did not come like any ordinary man to visit me bringing a facile poem' (Ó Háinle 1985: 18–19; rann 6). Ar an gcaoi chéanna, glacaim leis gurb éard is brí le *cruaidh* sa chomhthéacs seo 'difficult'.

Ba litriúla 'often shared/bestowed' mar aistriúchán ar '*meinic … dá gcomhroinn*'.

5b. Is léir go bhfuil bríonna éagsúla leis an bhfocal *gléas*. Brí amháin atá leis ná 'tiúnáil' (féach ranna 7 agus 8). Brí níos doiléire atá leis sa chomhthéacs seo (agus i rann 5) agus níl sé aistrithe go Béarla anseo agam dá réir sin. Is mar 'mode of playing' a aistrítear in amanna é (féach *eDIL* s.v. *gléas* (d)), ach táthar in amhras faoina chirte agus atá an téarma 'mód' le cur síos a dhéanamh ar cheol na cláirsí Gaelaí.

Faightear an comhfhocal *suantar* + *gléas* mar ainm ar shreang ar lir a bhí ag Scathach in *Duanaire Finn* (*DF* I ll. 90–4; féach freisin Kelly (2025: 200–1)).

D'fhéadfaí glacadh le léamh C, *súaithn*idh, anseo chomh maith, ach dar liom gur fearr a dhéanann *suaimhneach* cur síos ar *suantairghléas*.

5c. Táim in amhras faoin mbrí atá leis an gceathrú seo. Seans go bhfuil an léamh lochtach agus go raibh *cumhdach* ag an bhfile: *ag cumhdach na ccor nglēasda*, 'composing the perfectly-pitched tunes'.

6a. Ainmneach iolra atá ar lorg *teóra* in *teóra míosa* (6a). Bheimis ag súil le ginideach iolra (*teóra míos*) sa teanga chlasaiceach (féach *SnaG* IV §8.3). D'fhéadfaí *trí míosa* a léamh in áit *teóra míosa* gan an mheadaracht a chur as riocht.

7a. Tá an iomarca siollaí sa cheathrú seo. D'fhéadfaí *Do-clos* ('it was heard') a léamh in áit *Do-chuala* ('I heard'), nó an fhoirm iarchlasaiceach *raibh* a léamh in áit *raibhe*.

7b. D'fhéadfaí an easpa séimhithe ar lorg ainmfhocal sa tabharthach uatha in *a n-aimsir* ***C****oluim C*[*h*]*ille* a thuiscint mar shléagar (Mac Cárthaigh 2015).

7d. Faightear an t-ainmneach iolra *cuir* i suíomh áinsígh anseo.

11c. Is cosúil go ndeachaigh Aodh Dubh Ó Domhnaill chun na Róimhe tar éis dó feachtas míleata a reáchtáil i gcoinne na mBrianach: 'In 1510 Aodh accompanied Kildare on an expedition to Munster against their common enemy O'Brien of Thomond. Aodh distinguished himself in battle when Kildare's rearguard was ambushed by O'Brien at Monabraher, near Limerick city. However, this seems to have been a very close call for Aodh: he decided to go on a year-long pilgrimage to Rome, in thanksgiving for having come through the battle' (McGettigan 2009).

12. Tá deacrachtaí téacsúla ag baint leis an rann seo (féach thíos) agus táim in amhras faoin aistriúchán dá réir. B'fhéidir go bhféadfadh léamh eile bheith i gceist: *Ní fearr cruit deislín duinn a Lonndoin 'ná* [*a*] *ghlac …* 'A harp of lovely brown strings from London is no better than his hand …'

12ab. Déanaim amach gurb é an comhfhocal *deas* + *líon* atá againn i líne 12a, agus gur tagairt atá anseo do shreanga na cláirsí.

12cd. Tá an leathrann seo truaillithe sna lámhscríbhinní agus táim in amhras faoin téacs agus faoin aistriúchán dá réir sin. Tá siolla ar iarraidh in 12c sa dá

lámhscríbhinn (C *re faoidhe a chur chinil*; D *re faoidhe a cuir cinil*). Tá seans ann, áfach, nár bádh na gutaí.

Ní thuigim an léamh *dinis* (CD). B'fhéidir gur cheart *d'innisin* a léamh, ach ní dhéanfadh sé aicill le *chiníl* agus chuirfeadh sé líon na siollaí as riocht. Ní fheicim aon réiteach ar na deacrachtaí seo agus, mar sin, tá bearna fágtha sa téacs agam.

13a. Tá siolla sa bhreis sa cheathrú seo. D'fhéadfaí é seo a thabhairt chun rialtachta ach *niam* a léamh in áit *Ní mé*.

13b. Ba litriúla 'and I am not an heir of bad fortune' mar aistriúchán ar *niam da*m[*h*]*na duadha*.

13c. In áit *mo s*[*h*]*eisi*, 'my companion', d'fhéadfaí *mo shéis-se*, 'my melody', a léamh.

Ní thuigim an léamh *subd*ur, agus déanaim amach gur ceart *subha* a léamh.

13d. B'fhéidir gur cheart *gru**amdha*** a choigeartú go *gruama* le dúnadh a chur ar fáil (*grua**ma mo**-chean*), óir is rann *iargcomhairc* é an chéad rann eile. Ní heol dom aon sampla den aidiacht seo atá deimhnithe ag an meadaracht.

14b. Glacaim leis gurb ionann *Martain mīliodh* agus Martin de Tours.

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RUG AN BÁS BÁIRE AN EINIGH: MARBHNA IS CAITHRÉIM A CUMADH DO NIALL CONALLACH Ó NÉILL (†1544)*

Achoimre

Chum Seaán Mac Con Midhe an dán seo do Niall Conallach Ó Néill i ndiaidh bhás Néill in 1544. Tá an dán seo ina dhá chuid: marbhna agus caithréim. Baineann an marbhna le brón is cumha an fhile is muintir Néill i ndiaidh bhás Néill, agus lena bhfuil i ndán d'Éirinn anois. Déanann an file cur síos ar na daoine ar fad atá bailithe timpeall na huaighe chun Niall a chaoineadh. Rianaíonn an chaithréim cathanna is éachtaí Néill timpeall na tíre. Tá an dán seo i rannaíocht bheag, dán díreach, is tá go leor cuibhis bhreise ann (mar ornáid, de réir mar a thuigim) agus breacadh. Tá an dán in eagar anseo ón aon chóip neamhspleách amháin atá ar marthain, ARÉ LS 23 F 16 (2), lgh 73–5. Tá eagrán dioplómaitiúil den dán foilsithe cheana féin in *ABM* (403).

Niall Conallach Ó Néill

Is é Niall Conallach Ó Néill a mholtar sa dán seo. Ba dhuine de Shliocht Airt Óig ón Srath Bán é.[1] Mhair sé sa chéad leath den séú haois déag, is fuair sé bás in 1544 de réir na nAnnála. Ina nóta báis, deirtear linn gur *fear lán d'iúl agus d'aithne ar gach n-ealadhain* a bhí ann is go bhfuair sé bás de ghalar obann sa Seanchaisleán.[2] Ba mhac le hArt Óg mac Coinn Uí Néill é agus bhí sé ina thánaiste ag Conn Bacach mac Coinn, Ó Néill agus Céad-Iarla Thír Eoghain. Is beag trácht atá déanta air i staireagrafaíocht na tréimhse ach amháin go maireann a chlú mar athair Thoirdhealbhaigh Luinigh, a bhí ina cheann fine níos déanaí san aois sin. Duine de mhuintir Néill Thír Eoghain a bhí ann is bhí a athair ina cheann fine go dtí a bhás in 1519. Malartaíodh é lena athair Art Óg in 1511 ar theacht i gcumhacht d'Art Óg is tugadh Niall mar bhrá do Chlann Dálaigh is ceaptar gur ón dtréimhse a chaith sé leosan a tosaíodh ar 'Niall Conallach' a rá leis.

> Art Óg, mac Cuinn Uí Néill, do bhí i láimh ag Ó Domhnaill ag imtheacht dó, do ligean do Mhaghnus, mac Uí Dhomhnaill as

*Ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil leis an Dr Mícheál Hoyne, Dr Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh, Dr Eoin Mac Cárthaigh, Dylan Byrans, eagarthóirí *Celtica* agus leis an léitheoir anaithid as a gcuid moltaí le barr feabhais a chur ar an alt seo. Mé féin faoi deara gach botún agus dearmad.

[1] Devlin (2018: 202, 213).

[2] *AFM* 1544.3. Tá an Seanchaisleán gar don Bhaile Nua i dTír Eoghain, McKay 2007: 118. Féach an méid ag Paul Walsh (1930: 70), 'Niall's stronghold was Baile an tSeanchaislein, where he died. […] The "old castle" referred to is marked "Shancasla" adjoining "Newton" on the baronial map of the year 1609, Maps of the Escheated Counties iii, I 5'.

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> a bhraighdeanas gan chead d'Ó Domhnaill agus a mac, eadhon, Niall Óg, do theacht 'na ionadh i ngill ré comhall.[3]

Is cosúil gur scaoileadh Niall saor in 1514 i ndiaidh catha idir Ó Domhnaill is Art Óg Ó Néill.[4] Leanadh den nasc idir an dá mhuintir, is bhí Niall pósta ar Rós, deirfiúr Mhaghnuis Uí Dhomhnaill, agus b'ise máthair Thoirdhealbhaigh Luinigh. Bhí ról gníomhach ag Niall i gcúrsaí míleata an chúige. Feicfear fianaise ar a chuid gníomhaíochtaí sa chaithréim thíos. Chomh maith leis sin, bhí Niall ina phátrún ar an lámhscríbhinn UCD-OFM LS A 8, ina bhfuil cóip de *Bheatha Cholaim Chille* a scríobh Eoghan Carrach Ó Siadhail dó, agus is dóigh go raibh sé ina phátrún ag na filí chomh maith.[5]

Luaitear deartháireacha éagsúla le Niall sna hannála. Mharaigh deartháir leis, Ruaidhrí, Conn mac Néill mhic Airt Uí Néill (an Fheadha) in 1528 agus, mar éiric air sin, crochadh beirt deartháireacha eile leis, Éinrí Balbh is Cormac.[6] Chroch Conn Bacach beirt deartháireacha eile leis, Domhnall agus Tuathal, in 1532.[7] Bhí ar a laghad triúr mac aige. Cailleadh mac amháin, Art, in 1513, i dTír Chonaill.[8] Fuair mac eile, Brian, bás le hadhairt in 1542 sa Seanchaisleán is luaitear an bheirt mhac sin i ndán do Thoirdhealbhach Luineach, mac eile leis.[9]

Feicfear crann ginealaigh Néill Chonallaigh Uí Néill ar lch. 362 síos.

File

Is é Seaán Mac Con Midhe a thugtar mar ainm an fhile san aon chóip amháin a mhaireann den dán. Níl aon eolas ar fáil ina thaobh seo, faraor, ach ní haon ionadh go mbeadh duine de chlann Chon Midhe ag cumadh dán díreach do dhuine de mhuintir Néill.[10]

[3] *AU* 1511.1, 'Art junior, son of Conn O'Neill, who was in custody with O'Domnaill at his departure, was let out by Maghnus, son of O'Domnaill, from his captivity, without leave from O'Domnaill and his [Art's] son, namely, Niall junior, went in his stead in pledge for fulfilment.'

[4] *AConn* 1514.13: *Cocad mor d'erghi itir O nDomnaill et O Nell & moran daoine d'fosdad doib gaca taebha, & a mbeith a fad a foslongport ar comoir a celi ac droichet Ardo Sratha, & cairdes Crist do denom re cheli doib iar sin et cartacha nuaa, maille re daingniugad na sencartac, do tabairt d'Ua Nell d'O Domnaill ar Cenel Moain & ar Inis Eogain & ar Feraib Manac, & O Domnaill do thidhnacal a meic d'O Nell do bi re fado roime sin a mbraighdenus ac O Domnaill.* 'Great war broke out between O Domnaill and O Neill. Both sides hired many men and they were a long time encamped opposite each other at the bridge of Ardstraw. In the end they established gossipry with each other and O Neill granted to O Domnaill new charters, with confirmation of the old charters, [recognising O Domnaill's lordship] over the Cenel Moain, Inishowen and Fermanagh, and O Domnaill gave up O Neill's son, whom he had held in captivity a long time previously, to O Neill.'

[5] Ó Suilleabháin (1976: 203–13); Walsh (1930: 71).

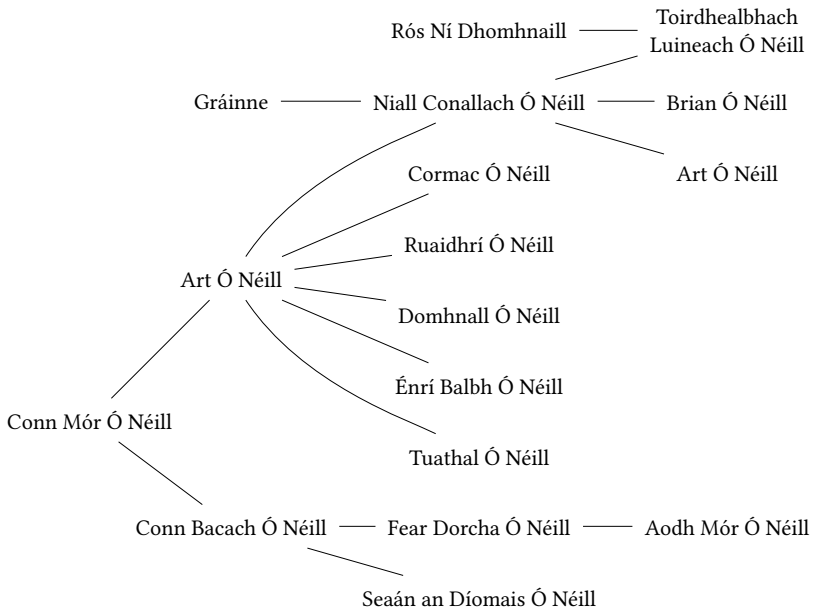
[6] *AU* 1528.5; *AConn* 1528.5.

[7] *ALC* 1532.4.

[8] *AFM* 1513.11.

[9] *Do thogh Éire fear faire*, *ABM* 194.26a.

[10] Ó Muraíle (2019: 1–23); Williams (1980: 2).



Crann ginealaigh Néill Chonallaigh Uí Néill

Ábhar an dáin

Tá an dán ina dhá chuid, marbhna (1–35) agus ansin caithréim (36–73). Sa mharbhna, baineann an file leas leanúnach as íomhánna na huaighe. Insítear dúinn nach n-oirfeadh gnáthuaigh do Niall (4) agus go bhfuil go leor daoine croíbhriste bailithe timpeall na huaighe. Tá na mná ag caoineadh timpeall na leice (16ab), is caitheann bean óg an lá cois uaighe (20c). Tá sé an-deacair faill a fháil ar an bhfeart (21). Fanann an file ina luí ar an uaigh, á téamh in éineacht le gach aonfhear (22). Tá náire ar na filí nach bhfuair siad an chéad seal ar an uaigh, ach bhí saighdiúirí ann rompu gléasta ina gcathéide (32). Tagann an dán seo go maith lena bhfuil pléite ag Katharine Simms agus Pádraig A. Breatnach i leith na bhfilí agus bhás a bpátrún.[11] Anois, agus Niall marbh, tá an nádúr imithe ar strae; tá sáile anois ar thalamh (26), is beag cnó atá anois ar fáil, is goideadh na húlla ó na crainn (28), is féidir le namhaid teacht i dtír ar Chúige Uladh go héasca (29) agus tá na gialla anois saor is ag triall abhaile (29).[12]

I ndiaidh an mharbhna, faightear an chaithréim, a rianaíonn éachtaí Néill is na creacha is na cathanna éagsúla inar ghlac sé páirt. Luaitear go leor ainmneacha is logainmneacha ann is gheofar cibé sonraí atá aimsithe agam sna nótaí. Tá na logainmneacha ar fáil mar aguisín den eagrán seo. Tagann an chaithréim seo lena bhfuil pléite ag Pádraig Ó Macháin faoi chaithréimeanna is marbhnaí a bheith cumtha mar phéire dánta, nó go mbeadh an chaithréim

[11] Simms (1989: 400–11); Breatnach (1997: 50–63).

[12] Féach an plé ag McManus (2006: 65–6) ar íomhánna an nádúir tar éis bhás an phátrúin.

mar aguisín le marbhna.[13] Tá dhá dhúnadh sa dán seo. Faightear dúnadh ar an marbhna sa dán seo i rann 35 *saoibhe* ***rug*** *bás an báire* sula leanann an file ar aghaidh ag tabhairt na caithréime. Faightear dúnadh arís le tús líne 1a ag deireadh an dáin uile i líne 73d (*urc*[*h*]***ra***), ag léiriú naisc idir an marbhna is an chaithréim.[14]

An Lámhscríbhinn

Tá an dán seo ar marthain in ARÉ LS 23 F 16 (2) (Leabhar Uí Ghadhra), a scríobhadh i lár an seachtú haois déag, ar leathanaigh 73–5. Chomh fada agus is eol dom, is sa lámhscríbhinn seo amháin a mhaireann cóip den dán seo. Tá cuntas scríofa ag Pádraig Ó Macháin ar an lámhscríbhinn seo. Scríobh an tAthair Nioclás nó Fearghal Dubh Ó Gadhra, sagart Agaistíneach, í. Theith an tAthair Nioclás ó Éirinn go dtí an Ísiltír ar theacht d'fhórsaí Chromail sna 1650idí is scríobh sé an lámhscríbhinn idir 1655 is 1659 is é ar an Mór-roinn.[15] Tá thart ar 203 'items of verse' ar fáil sa lámhscríbhinn, dánta is rannta imill san áireamh. Is dánta tuata den chuid is mó iad, le haird ar leith ar dhánta do theaghlaigh uaisle na hÉireann. Tá 22 dán do mhuintir Néill inti.[16] Is soiléir go maith atá lámh an scríobhaí, agus is sampla ar leith í an lámhscríbhinn seo den saothrú a bhí á dhéanamh ar an léann Gaelach a bhí ag dul ar aghaidh ar an mór-roinn le linn an seachtú haois déag.

Tógadh an lámhscríbhinn ar ais go hÉirinn nuair a ceapadh an tAthair Nioclás mar phrióir Bheannada i Sligeach. Choinnigh Muintir Ghadhra an lámhscríbhinn ina seilbh go dtí lár an ochtú haois déag, ag dul ó shealbhóir príobháideach go chéile go dtí gur cheannaigh Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann í sa naoú haois déag. Tá cóip den lámhscríbhinn seo, Egerton 111, i Leabharlann na Breataine.[17]

Meadaracht

Is í rannaíocht bheag, dán díreach, meadaracht an dáin seo. Tá neart cuibheas breise sa dán seo is tabharfar samplaí de thíos.

Cuibheas sa seoladh

Faightear cuibheas de shaghas éigin idir focail aiceanta *ab* (.i. an seoladh), ó amas go comhardadh slán i ngach aon rann den dán.[18] Faightear comhardadh slán (*searc* : *dteacht*, *reic* : *leic*, 16ab), comhardadh briste (*teas* : *meath*, 25ab),

[13] Ó Macháin (2010: 94).

[14] Faightear a leithéid seo de dhúnadh in *Rugadh dá chluiche ar Chloinn Suibhne* agus sa chaithréim a théann leis, *Mór re cuma caithréim deise*. Féach Ó Foghlú (1992: 52). Ar dhúnadh, féach Ní Dhomhnaill (1981).

[15] Ó Macháin (2013: 135–62).

[16] Ó Macháin (2013: 141).

[17] Ó Macháin (2013: 137–8).

[18] Féach an plé ag P. A. Breatnach (2017: 293–337) agus sampla eile de dhán le cuibheas breise in *ab* ag Ó Raghallaigh (2022).

uaithne shlán (*srotha* : *ndatha*, 27ab), uaithne bhriste (*Mhuine* : *thuireamh*, 54ab), amas (*éidir* : *bhrēig*, 56ab).

Comhardadh idir déanaigh a agus c, agus focal aiceanta in d
I rannta áirithe (~9%) faightear comhardadh slán idir déanaigh *a* agus *c* agus is ionann déanach *a* agus focal aiceanta i líne *d*. Comhlíonann na samplaí na riachtanais do bhreacadh fíre chomh maith.[19] Déantar plé níos cuimsithí ar bhreacadh thíos.

Nuair is ionann déanach *a* is aiceantach inmheánach in *d*

1 *einigh* : *deighfhir* : *einigh*
4 *dtroighibh* : *doiligh* : *dtroighibh*
43 *cumhadh* : *ndubhadh* : *cumhadh*
44 *dhoiligh* : *dhoighir* : *doiligh*
46 *doilghe* : *oirne* : *doilghe*
70 *fiadhain* : *Niallfhuil* : *fiadhain*

I rannta eile (~12%), déanann déanach *a* comhardadh slán le déanach *c* nuair nach ionann déanach *a* agus focal aiceanta in *d*. Tá a oiread de ann is gur dheacair gan glacadh leis gur d'aonghnó atá sé ag an bhfile.

Nuair nach ionann déanach *a* is aiceantach *d*

8 *a-nuraidh* : *Lughaidh* : *cumhain*
24 *Aoinfhear* : *chaoineadh* : *Gaoidheal*
33 *d*[*h*]*oiligh* : *n-oinigh* : *moidhidh*
51 *Tríocha* : *tríotha* : *críocha*
53 *faghlaibh* : *Chalbhaigh* : *damhraidh*
57 *fhalaidh* : *haghaidh* : *maraidh*
61 *ndeachadh* : *gcreachadh* : *Beathadh*
62 *adhnadh* : *adhnadh* : *fag*[*h*]*mhar*
66 *hadhnaidh* : *talm*[*h*]*ain* : *faghla*[*idh*]

Comhardadh breise eile
I rann 68, tá déanach *a* ag déanamh comhardaidh le déanaigh *b* agus *d* (*romh-aibh* : *chobhair* : *oraibh*), ach d'fhéadfaí seo a leasú go *reamhuibh* chun an comhardadh a sheachaint. In 62 tá *adhnadh* ag déanamh comhardaidh leis féin anseo. De ghnáth bheadh seo in aghaidh rialacha an dáin dhírigh ach tá seans ann gur cineál breacaidh atá sa chomhardadh *faghmhar* (: *adhnadh* : *adhnadh*). Faightear comhardadh breise idir an seoladh agus an comhad, mar shampla, i rann 26, *lán* : *sál* : *fál*. Ar an iomlán tá comhardadh breise ar fáil síos tríd an dán agus is léir go raibh an file á dhéanamh d'aon ghnó. Tá ceisteanna fós ann maidir le minicíocht na hórnáidíochta seo a réiteofar le tuilleadh taighde.

[19] Ó Máille (1973: §24).

Breacadh
Táim ag tuiscint 'breacadh' mar dhá fhocal aiceanta atá mar an gcéanna ag déanamh comhardadh slán leo féin agus le focal aiceanta eile sa rann. Tá neart samplaí de bhreacadh sa dán seo, mar shampla, *bás* : *cás* : *bás*, i rann 1. In éineacht leis an mbreacadh, faightear an locht ar a dtugtar 'caoiche' (*IGT* v §8), an dá fhocal chéanna ag déanamh comhardaidh lena chéile, mar shampla i 20cd, *lá* : *lá*. Agus an dán seo chomh hornáidithe agus maisithe ní dóigh liom gur 'botún' de chuid an fhile atá i gceist leis an gcaoiche anseo ach gur déanta d'aon ghnó í. Tá sé maíte ag Ní Dhomhnaill agus ag Ó Máille gur leigheas ar an gcaoiche é breacadh is nach gá go nglacfaidh na focail chaocha páirt sa bhreacadh.[20] Tá samplaí de chaoiche agus comhardadh breise idir an seoladh agus an comhad in aon rann ar fáil sa dán seo, mar shampla i rann 56, *gcreach* : *creach* agus *bhrēig* : *céim* : *c*[*h*]*éill*. Nílim cinnte an sásaíonn sé sin na rialacha i dtaobh caoiche mar a bhí ag na filí ach ní dhéanaim leasú ar an dtéacs chun an chaoiche a bhaint. B'fhéidir, leis, gur ag caitheamh le focail ar nós 'péirí macasamhla' a bhí an file is gur ceadaíodh é sin.[21] Mar shampla faightear *chuairt* : *c*[*u*]*airt* agus *chláir* : *chláir* i rann 39cd. Tá tuilleadh taighde le déanamh ar bhreacadh sa dán díreach is na rialacha a bhain leis agus in éagmais na taighde sin, cloím le leagan an dáin mar atá sé sa lámhscríbhinn i dtaobh cúrsaí meadarachta.

Teanga

Tagann teanga an dáin leis an gcaighdeán atá leagtha síos sna tráchtais ghramadaí ach amháin mar a phléitear thíos.

Athruithe Tosaigh
- Ní chuirim urú ar fáil ar chonsan lom ar lorg áinsíoch uatha ach, má tá sé ann sa lámhscríbhinn, fágaim ann é (m.sh. *ndoil*igh 1b.).
- Soláthraím séimhiú ar chuspóir briathair atá éagsúil leis an ainmneach agus a thagann díreach tar éis an bhriathair (.i. *focail asa dtéid a réim*), mar shampla i líne 19c (*d*[*h*]*eo*[*i*]*r*).[22]
- Séimhím focal ar lorg tabharthach uatha (mar shampla i líne 23d (*ag cuimhne c*[*h*]*óra*), ach amháin má chomhlíontar coinníollacha sléagair.[23]
- Tá urú calctha ar lorg foirmeacha de *síol* sa lámhscríbhinn. Coinním an t-urú ar lorg an ainmnigh ach bainim é ar lorg tuiseal eile, mar shampla i líne 11d, *trēidhe an tsíl Chuinn-se*.

Briathra
- **Dleasdar** – tá *dleasdar* (: *measdar*), briathar saor aimsir láithreach i rann 45. Tuigim é mar fhoirm de *dleasdain* (*IGT* iii §35). De réir na dtráchtas

[20] Ní Dhomhnaill (1975: §100); Ó Máille (1973: §9, 57).
[21] Ní Dhomhnaill (1975: §100 (v), (vi)).
[22] *SnaG* IV §4.4.
[23] Mac Cárthaigh (2015).

gramadaí ní cheadaítear foirmeacha in *dleas-* ach amháin sa mhodh coinníollach agus sa mhodh foshuiteach caite.

- **Beith/beath** – faightear *beith* agus *beath* sa lámhscríbhinn mar 3ú pearsa uatha modh foshuiteach caite den bhriathar *bí* ach is í an fhoirm *beath* an t-aon cheann le deimhniú meadarachta sa chomhad *mbeath* : *creach* (57cd). Cé go bhfuil *mbeith* ag déanamh comhardadh briste le ceilt (9ab), d'fhéadfaí é a athrú go *beath* is uaithne bhriste a sholáthar. Tá uaithne bhriste ann in 31ab *teacht* : *mbeith*, agus *amas* in 41ab eile : *mbeith*, ach d'fhéadfaí sin a leasú go *beath* gan an mheadaracht a shárú.[24]

Síneadh meánach

- In 24a tá *tarla* (: *fáidheadh*), á réalú mar *tarrla* le *á* le go mbeidh fad an ghuta níos cosúla le *fáidheadh*. Feictear seo arís in 65b le *cungnamh* (: *Rúta*) á réalú mar *cúnamh* amhail is go bhfuil sé ag déanamh comhardadh briste le *Rúta*.

Modh Eagarthóireachta

Ar ARÉ LS 23 F 16 (2) atá an t-eagrán thíos bunaithe. Os íseal, i dtéacs an eagráin, athraím an réamhfhocal *a n-* go *i n-*, an chopail ó *as* go *is*, agus an t-alt ó *in* go *an*. Athraím *cc* go *g*/*gc*, *tt* go *d*/*dt*. Athraím *nd* go *nn*. Tá *-i* neamhaiceanta ag deireadh focal athraithe agam go *-e*. Athraím *éu* go *éa*. Bainim síneadh fada de *eó*, *ía*, *úa*, *áo*. Déanaim normalú ar *gh*/*dh* agus ar *mh*/*bh*.

Scaoilim noda na lámhscríbhinne i gcló iodálach. Mé féin faoi deara poncaíocht, ceannlitreacha, suíomh na síntí fada taobh istigh de shiollaí agus scaradh na bhfocal. Úsáidim macrain chun síntí fada atá in easnamh ón lámhscríbhinn a chur ar fáil. Fágaim séimhiú ar thúslitreacha forainmneacha réamhfhoclacha má tá sé ar fáil sa lámhscríbhinn. Cuirim aon litir bhreise isteach idir lúibíní cearnacha. Bainim litreacha dúbailte neamhchlasaiceacha. Má tá aon athrú eile ann, beidh léamha lámhscríbhinne ag bun an leathanaigh. Sna léamha coinním léamh na lámhscríbhinne gan na hathruithe thuasluaite a chur i bhfeidhm.

[24]Féach an plé ag McManus (2024: 147) agus Mac Cárthaigh (2019: 92, nóta 33).

Téacs

1. Rug an bás b*áir*e an einigh;
do budh b*rái*ghe *ar* dháimh ndoil*igh*,
ní mó an cás dóigh an deighfh*ir*,
bás an einigh d'fhóir Oil*igh*.

2. Sgé[a]l is doil*igh* d'fhád Fhion*n*tain,
bás an oinigh i n-Ultaibh;
do bhuing a sé[a]n dar seabhcaibh
é[a]n d'ealtain an fhuinn Ultaigh.

3. Ē[a]nb[h]*ra*t rīogh muighe Meidhbhe
do snoigheadh dar síol Chuinn-ne,
ní hé a bhuing dhín*n* b*udh* doilghe,
roighne shíl Chuinn dā gcuimhne.

4. Dā dtí sē le sea*cht* dtroighibh
nī[o]r theach do mhéad a mhuirir;
Niall Óg – ní heacht nach doil*igh* –
ar shea*cht* dtroighibh d'fhód fhuinidh.

5. Beag más doilghe dí[o]th ēinfhir
g*an* chuimhne *ar* dhī[o]l do dheor*aibh*,
an chliar do-chluin dā sgé[a]l*aibh*
déanaimh siar t*ar* fhuil Eogh*ain*.

Aistriúchán

1. Death has defeated honour; the way the great man, who was hostage to difficult poets, is [dead] is tantamount to the death of honour among the host of Oileach.

2. The death of honour in Ulster is a difficult story for Ireland; a bird of the flock of Ulster has deprived our hawks of their prosperity.

3. Losing the one cloak of the kings of Ireland which was wrought for our seed of Conn is not what is most difficult for us but remembering the best of the seed of Conn.

4. If Niall Óg fits into a [regular] seven-foot grave, it would not be a [big enough] house for the size of his retinue; Niall being in seven feet of Ireland's land makes this a difficult time.

5. The loss of one man is hardly more difficult than going back over [all] the blood of Eoghan, not to mention all the tears shed by the poets who have heard stories of their exploits.

Léamha lámhscríbhinne

1b. do bó; 1c. dóip; 2b. ulltaibh; 2d. ullth*aigh*; 3b. ccu*inn*e; 3d. ccuin*n*; 4c. hé*acht*

6. Gan chuairt chléire um chlár nOil*igh*
– n*ár* a*n* céim-sin dá chumhaidh –
bídh a chu*air*t féin ag fil*idh*
cu*air*t chinidh Nēill a-nur*aidh.*

7. Ulaidh do chuir fā chánaidh;
a gcumha nī[o]r chuid mhaoidhimh,
súil do chaoi idir chrú Eog[h]*ain*
do bhaoi *ar* dheor*aidh* clū chaoinidh.

8. Cách ag reic Nēill a-nur*aidh*
leis eidir chléir is choraidh;
'na tost is f[h]earr leac Lug*haidh*
cumhain leam gur reac roghain.

9. Dā mbeith – ní n*ār* don Niallfhuil –
ceilt ré ndáimh *ar* a ndeor*aidh,*
go dáil ch*ru*idh fā ól d'aoidh*idh*
b*rō*n faoil*idh* ar fhuil Eogh*ain.*

10. Do shaoil Niall uadh nárbh anta
a-tuaidh 'na dhiaidh nī[o]r dhulta;
do-ch*uaidh*, is nī *ar* ceann t*eacht*a,
ceann ea*cht*ra uaibh, a Ulta.

6. Without the visitation of a poet-band about the land of Ulster; an [individual] poet will [now] have his own circuit – a sad (?) step in grieving him - circuiting the people of Niall of yester-year (i.e. visiting graves).

7. It has oppressed Ulstermen; their sadness would be no reason for boasting; [many] an eye has wept among Eoghan's descendants; a poet has gained a reputation for crying.

8. Everyone was celebrating Niall last year; both poets and fighting-men were with him; the stone of Lughaidh is best silent; I remember [when] it [Tara] proclaimed a choice [king].

9. If Eoghan's bloodline, no shame to them, could hide their tears from poets until they are bestowing cattle on guests over drinks, they would have a happier sadness.

10. Niall thought that he should not stay away from it; it was not possible to go from the north after that; he went, with no prospect of returning; you have lost an expedition leader, o Ulstermen.

6c. féain; 8d. cum*aidh*; 9b. ndháimh; 10c. ceand

11. Ceard mholta fā m[h]ac G*rā*inne:
gol *ar* nach gabhthar saoire;
clú a dtuirse ōn tír go [a] chéile
t*rē*idhe an tsíl Chuinn-se caoine.

12. Tug an uaig[h] do mhnaoi an mhallghuil;
ní uair sí a-muigh n*ār* m[h]eabhr*aigh*
cóir do bhí a huain ag i*nghin*
u*air* d*ār* imdhigh sí an seanmhuir.

13. Srian toirse leo nī[o]r leigeadh
seol a loingse gur leagadh;
dob f[h]e*arr* don chléir a chogadh
cog*ur* Néill leam nī leagar.

14. Lá don chléir – doil*igh* ndíola –
téid fol*amh* – ní fáth rúna –
rug cliar do-chóidh fā é[a]ra
sgé[a]la *ar* mb*ró*in fā fhiadh Úna.

15. Brón fós ag n*ach* fuil deir*eadh*,
brón a-muigh is mór seanadh;
do-bhé[a]ra a sheal d'f[h]óir Ul*adh*
dub*hadh* b*ró*in n*ach* geabh geal*adh.*

11. Praising Gráinne's son is [like] a trade, one of unceasing lamentation; the sound of their sorrow [is to be heard] from one country to another; lamentation is the [defining] characteristic of Conn's progeny.

12. Give the grave to the woman of the slow-lament; she did not find abroad anything that she did not recall and reflect upon; it is right that a young woman should have her opportunity in which she travelled the old sea.

13. They did not permit their sorrow to be restricted until the sail[s] of his fleet were lowered; his warring was better for the poets; I do not stray from Niall's counsel.

14. One day for the poets who are hard to pay, they go emptyhanded – it is well known – poets who had been refused brought the news of our sorrow about Ireland.

15. A sorrow still that has no end, a sorrow shared by multitudes; it will bring a time of unrelieved darkness for the host of Ulster.

11b. gola; 11d. thsíl, ccuin*n*si; 12b. fhú*air*; 12d. imghidh; 13a. tuirrsi; 13b. luingsi; 15a. bhfuil

16. A shearc dā reic ag rīog[h]*ain*
ar dt*eacht ar* an leic línigh;
a caoi féin is dā fiadhain
liam[h]*ain* Nēill *ar* mhnaoi mhíl*idh.*

17. Craoithe do chuir fām chumhaidh
cur do m[h]aoithe do mheabh*air*;
guala a rī[o]gh féin ag fil*idh,*
dlig[h]*idh* dhí[o]m d[h]éir 'na d[h]eagh*aidh.*

18. Tig sí[o]dh *ar* th'fhéin dā hathch*ar*
fa-ríor n*ach* réidh do-gheibhthear;
gidh é an síodh féin ní fuighthear
cuirthe*ar* síol Néill i neimhchean.

19. Ar dte*acht* Ul*adh* g*an* i*arr*aidh,
an f*ear*t ag dula i ndaoinibh;
fu*air ar* th'f*hear*t d[h]eo[i]r dom dhē[a]r*aibh*
d*ear*c ag déana[i]mh eoil d'aoidh*idh.*

20. Dā dtréigeadh tocht ar th'fhog[h]l*aidh*
toil ag féinidh dā fuighl*ibh;*
cait[h]tear lá *ar* [t]h'uaigh le hi*nghin*
lá ar iml*ibh* cuain do chuimhn*igh.*

16. A queen declares [her] love for him when she comes to the engraved grave slab (?), weeping for herself and for her companion – the allegation of [having loved] Niall against a soldier's wife.

17. Bringing sadness over you to mind has shod [i.e. increased] my sorrow; a poet has the shoulder of his own king; he is entitled to a tear from me in his wake.

18. Peace is being reimposed upon your warrior band; unfortunately, it is not attained smoothly; indeed, true peace is not attained; the seed of Niall are put in low esteem.

19. At the coming of the Ulstermen without being invited (?), the graveside is becoming crowded; an eye giving guidance to guests has found one of my tears on your grave.

20. A day is spent at your grave by a young woman, remembering a day about a harbour shore; were grief to abandon your soldier[s], soldier[s] would [still] have interest in her words [of lamentation].

16b. línidh; 16c. feain; 18b. do geiphtear; 20a. treigh*eadh*, t*acht*; 20b féinn*idh*

21. A mh[e]ic *Air*t n*ār* thuill toibhēim
gan roin*n* dot' fhe*ar*t nī aráil;
beag mór fān uaigh ar n-anóir
sódh anshóidh a huain d'fhag[h]āil.

22. Ō t'f[h]eart nī aghaim fu*ar*adh
anaim ar th'fhe*ar*t gá thēaghadh;
bím *ar* [t]h'uaigh leis g*ach* n-aoinfhear
ar sgaoil*eadh* uaidh [im'] ē[a]nar.

23. Beag a ndíol riamh do*n* rádha
líon gliadh ar th'fhe*ar*t go hón*n*a;
duilghe i[o]nā an síodh *ar* sé[a]na
sīol Ē[a]nna ag cuimhne c[h]óra.

24. M*ar* sin t*ar*la d'*Ar*t Aoinfhe*ar*
breath na bhfáidheadh ní[o]r fíoradh;
saobh an lá linn dod' chaoineadh
lā Gaoidheal rinn fād rīoghadh.

25. Goil gan teas ar a dteintibh
ag meath an oirir Ultaigh;
do roinn sí re fiadh Fionntain
grian n*ach* fionntair í i nUlt*aibh.*

21. O son of Art who earned no reproach, it is impossible to get near your grave; [because] the great and small are around your grave after [receiving] honour, it is a discomfiting comfort to get near it.

22. Your grave does not make me cold; I stay on your grave heating it; I am on your grave with every other man, and yet separated from him, all alone.

23. A battle complement to whom words never meant much attend your grave timidly; remembering [a time of] justice is harder for the seed of Éanna than peace being denied.

24. That is what happened to Art Aoinfhear: the prediction of the prophets did not come to pass; it is unwise for us to spend the day mourning you when the Gaels oppose us concerning your kingship.

25. Smoke without heat upon their fires is wasting the land of Ulster; a sun that is not found in Ulster has shared [her bounty] with the [rest of] land of Ireland.

21b. furail; 22a. fhaighaim; 22d. bim *roimh* ar; 23c. doilghe; 24c. dot; 25a. ttein*n*tibh; 25b. ulltaigh; 25c. fionntáin; 25d. bhfion*ntair*, ullt*aibh*

26. Gach s*ru*th lán i n-iath Oil*igh*
'na th*rā*igh fā Niall a-nur*aidh*;
tig sál dā thaoibh um theal*aigh*
geabh*air* fál b*ra*oin ag brugh*aidh*.

27. Srotha doimhne i ndeoidh c[h]eatha
ní hoircheas g*an* deoir ndatha;
cr*éad* dob áil d'ísle a ngotha
srotha an chl*āir* m[h]ín-se Mhacha?

28. Tír fhag[h]l*adh* uair a hitche
do-ch*uaidh* fār n-abhl*aibh* aibche;
doilghe fá d[h]ó na heitne
teirce cnó um oighre *ar* nAirt-ne.

29. Turb[h]*adh* cean i gcionn Ul*adh,*
gach sreabh os cionn a comhadh,
tig sreabh i dtír le t*aradh*,
cal*adh* sídh na bhfear bhfol*adh.*

30. Gēill B[h]anbha ag triall dā dtig[h]*ibh*
srian faghla re féin Oil*igh*;
sgaoiltir cóig gēill a geimhil
le deim*hin* Nēill Óig d'oighidh.

26. Every stream [now] full in the land of Oileach was low under Niall last year; [this year], because of him dying, saltwater surrounds a hilltop, [and] a farmer finds a dripping hedgerow.

27. It is not fitting that deep streams after a shower be without colourful tears; why would the streams of this smooth plain of Macha be quiet?

28. A plunderers' land has received her request – they have gone around [i.e. stolen] our ripe apple trees; twice as hard is [the loss of] the kernels, there is a scarcity of nuts over the heir of our Art.

29. A cessation of triumphs awaits Ulstermen; every stream is breaking its banks; a stream comes into the land with produce, [we have become] a safe haven for enemies.

30. The hostages of Ireland are making their way home; a check on fighting restricts the warriors of Oileach; five hostages are released from fetters upon confirmation of Niall Óg's tragic death.

28a. fuair; 28b. aipche; 29b. copadh; 30d. lé

31. Tea*cht* a-rís dóibh is deir*eadh*
dā mbeith brígh 'sa[n] bhróin chur*adh*
má tā an uaigh go fōill fal*amh*,
ní sg*aradh* Luain d'f[h]ōir Ul*adh.*

32. Náir le dáimh na gcōig gcóig*eadh*
n*ach* dáibh do-cháidh an céidsheal;
líon gleo fān uaigh 'na n-éid*eadh*
éigean uain leo do lēigea*n.*

33. Do bhean dé[a]ra a dāimh d[h]oil*igh*;
na dé[a]ra do dháil dlighidh;
do luadh t*ar*la *ar* fhear n-oinigh
moidhidh s*r*eabh abhra *ar* fhil*idh.*

34. Tug Niall – ag sin a*n* saog[h]*al*
an chlia*r* soirin ag seoladh;
ciall cháigh i Niall do nuaghul;
sluaghadh si*ar* ag dái*mh* d[h]eor*adh.*

35. Do sgaoil glas Bhragha Bóin*n*e
gan mh*ar*thain do m[h]*a*c G*r*áin*n*e;
giodh saobh tug cás *ar* gcaoine
saoibhe rug bás an b*āire.*

31. The outcome is that, if there is any life left in the company of warriors, they will come again [to the grave]; if the grave is unattended for now, it is not a separation until Doomsday for the band of Ulster.

32. The poets of the five provinces consider it shameful that they did not get the first turn [at the grave]; it is necessary to give precedence at the grave-side to the armoured battle-host.

33. [His death] has squeezed tears from sorrowful poets; the crying of tears is proper; a stream bursts from the eyes of a poet at the mention of a man of honour.

34. Niall['s death] – such is life – has sent poets wandering [both] east [and west]; this is a cause for everyone to mourn Niall anew; wandering poets make a westward hosting.

35. The death of Gráinne's son has unlocked Brugh na Bóinne [Ireland]; however underhandedly death has caused our sorrow, it winning the game is even more unjust.

31b. mb*r*óin; 33d. moighidh, fhabh*ra*; 34d. shluaghadh; 35c. gé sáoph; 35d. sáoiphe
I ndiaidh an rainn: rucc. an . bás . b*aire* an einigh

36. Ōn t*rē*id-sin is t*earc* minchéim
t[e]*acht* t*ar* chéimibh an c[h]athshlóigh
fada si*ar* ō fhrēimh raithNēill
caithréim Nēill n*ār* i*arr* athchóir.

37. Ní tosach dhūin*n* nach doil*igh*
tús do chontas dā chean*aibh*
dā dtī a ríomh riom ōn chumhaidh
cum[h]*ain* liom g*ur* díom dleagh*air.*

38. Go Ráith C*ru*achan – cúis diomdha –
do chuartaigh cú na hEamhna;
do sgaoil uaidhe a ord faghla;
t*ar*la *ar* bhord Muaidhe a m[h]eanma.

39. Do léig sirthe go Sionain*n*
n*ār* fill*eadh* go fréimh gConuill;
dob fhada ó chu*air*t chl*áir* Geanainn
c[u]airt sheanfhuin*n* chl*áir* an Choruin*n.*

40. Baile Í Cho[i]til – céim foghla[idh] –
téid an toir-sin go talm[h]*ain*;
lorg a chreach t*ar* Muaidh maighr*igh*
creach ō Laighn*ibh* uair amhl*aidh.*

36. [When] discussing the moves of the battle-host, minor deeds are few from that flock; the battle roll of Niall who sought no right additional [to his hereditary rights], has a lengthy history from the roots of prosperous Niall [Frasach].

37. It is difficult to begin to give an account of his triumphs; [even] if it pains me to reckon them because of my grief, I have not forgotten that I am the one whose duty this is.

38. The hound of Eamhain circuited as far as Rathcroghan earning [himself] hostility; he issued his plundering order[s, and] his spirits were high on the banks of the Moy.

39. He sent search-parties as far as the Shannon that were not turned back until they reached Conall's descendants; the circuiting of Dungannon was far from circuiting the old plain of Kesh Corann.

40. Cottlestown – a plunderer's step – that tower is brought down; the track of his plunders goes past the salmon-plentiful Moy, he likewise took plunder from Leinstermen.

37b. chondún *in áit* chontas; 38a. cuir; 38d. muaighe; 40c. lórg, chréach; 40d. fúair

41. Lá eile i nInis Sgreabhainn,
a bhris*eadh* dā mbeith oruin*n*,
sgaoil*eadh* t'fhian uaid dā gceilin*n*,
do-gheibhin*n* thi*ar* ruaig romhu*inn*.

42. Cluain chruidh do chlan*n*aibh Eog[h]*ain*
ar Ghall*aibh* do chuir c[h]ánaidh;
sirthe Nēill fā Bhóin*n* mbr*aon*a*igh*
glóir s[h]aog[h]*ail* í Néill nár*aigh*.

43. Losgadh Teamhra – is tuar cumh*adh* –
an gealbhrugh 'na ghual thein*eadh;*
Baile Sláine dhó *ar* ndubh*adh*
ró cumhadh dāimhe a d[h]eireadh.

44. Baile Fhir Dhiadh gér dhoil*igh*
tig 'na smál diadh 'na d[h]eagh*aidh* –
tug Niall fā dhó 'na dhoighir;
doil*igh* ri*ar* dó re ndeabh*aidh*.

45. Baile Agairt leo loisg[th]ear
a n-agairt giodh mór measdar;
fá Dhún Léire do losg*adh*,
brosdadh déire dún*n* dleasdar.

41. Another day in Inishcrone, even if the battle went against us [or] if I were to leave out the unleashing of your companies by you, I [still] used to find a rout before us in the west.

42. He put a tax of a meadow of cows for the children of Eoghan on foreigners; Niall's expeditions about the wet Boyne were the worldly glory of this descendant of noble Niall.

43. The burning of Tara – an omen of heartbreak – the bright palace blackened by fire, Slane burnt by him: it ended with an excess of sorrow for poets.

44. Though it was difficult, Niall burned Ardee twice, leaving it a burnt shell in his wake; it was hard to satisfy him when he was facing battle.

45. Haggardstown is burned by them, although their petitioning about Dunleer being burned is considered significant; a stirring up of a tear is due from us.

44a. baile átha fhir dhiadh; 45a. agaird; 45b. gé *in áit* giodh

46. Fir Mhanach dháibh ní doilghe
lá na gcartach do chuimhne;
mór le a gc*re*ich a gcóir oirne
doilghe dóibh bheith g*an* b[h]*ru*ighne.

47. Taobh si*ar* do Loch lá eile,
Niall ag cur cháich fā oire;
Sliabh Dhá Chon a cheann uidhe,
Glean*n* Buidhe g*an* c[h]*ro*dh gcoire.

48. Áth Camais *ar* Cl*oinn* nDál*aigh*
do b[h]l*ogh*ais gérb[h] fháth uamh*ain*;
ní frī[o]th libh glais dā ngiall*aibh*;
fiadhain sin *ar* ais uadh*aibh*.

49. Māg Aong[h]usa uair d'onóir
d'aontach*adh* uaidh a ghabháil;
ní[o]r chlea*cht* sé a thuar do thoibhéim
g*ur* roiréidh uadh é d'fhagháil.

50. Bris*eadh* Albanach d'*áir*imh
t*ar*gam*ur* d'fhine Eoghain;
buain B[h]riain díobh t*ar* a ndaoinibh
sgaoil*idh* c[h]iaigh díom fā dheor*aibh*.

46. It is not difficult for the Fermanagh men to remember the day of the charters; great their claim against us on account of [our] plundering of them [and] it was more difficult for them to be without buildings.

47. Another day, west of Lough [Erne], Niall burdened all; Dog Big and Dog Little, Fermanagh [were] his destination; Glenboy [was left] without meat for their pots.

48. You broke Clann Dálaigh (The Uí Dhomhnaill) at Camus, though it was a reason for terror; you did not have [enough] fetters for [all] their hostages; that is testimony coming back from them.

49. Mág Aonghusa had the honour of agreeing to his taking; he did not suffer as much misfortune as he predicted – he got very generous terms.

50. We allowed the kindred of Eoghan to count [i.e. take credit for] the breaking of the Scots; the taking of Brian from them despite their men lightens my sorrow and tears.

46c. :re: le; 46d. beaith; 47b. oirne; 47c. slíaph, cheand; 49a. fú*air*; 49d. dfhágh*áil*; 50a. d*áir*eamh

51. Tu*ar* bróin bris*eadh* an T*rí*ocha;
tóir le til*eadh* gach iatha
tiocfa diomdha ō thuaidh t*rí*otha;
iomdha c*rí*ocha ō bhfu*air* fiacha.

52. Téid sin fā fhe*ar*aibh Ultach
b*ris*eadh Bhealaigh na mBracthach;
téid fā b[h]uaibh cháigh go cogthach;
doc*ra*ch fu*air* c*áir* a chartach.

53. Lá na Finne – is dá faghlaibh –
bristear an t-áth le a ealb[h]*aibh*;
nī[o]r an ó fhéin an Chalb[h]*aigh*
damhr*aidh* Nēill g*ur* bhlagh b[h]earnaidh.

54. Creach Mhuine Mhóir do mheabh*air*
a thuireamh fá dhó is duiligh;
m*ur* sin do Ghlean*n* Con Cadhain;
Ceann Maghair a ch*r*odh cuir*idh*.

55. Ceann Tighearnáin do thuirimh
be*ar*n arbh ioniom*rá*idh t'fhead[h]ain;
t*ar*la clú ón fheidhm oraibh
blogh*aidh* tú B[h]eirn an Bheal*aigh*.

51. The breaking of Trough evokes sorrow; [he had] a host to occupy every land; hostility will come north[wards] through them; many are the lands from which he got payments.

52. The sacking of Bealach na mBracthach undermines the men of Ulster; he goes about the cattle of everyone in a warlike manner; he won the right of his charter the hard way.

53. At the battle of the river Finn – it is one of the days she was plundered – the ford is taken by his troops; Niall's retinue did not relent from the warriors of an Calbhach until they opened a gap.

54. Remembering the plunder of Moneymore twice is difficult [i.e. causes us sorrow]; likewise, Glenconkeyne; Kinnaweer is relieved of its cattle.

55. To recall Ceann Tighearnáin – a [battle] gap in which your army distinguished itself; you earned fame in that engagement, you smash[ed] Barnewall (?).

53a. fhagl*aibh*; 53b. lé; 53c. fhan; 53d. bladh; 54b. doil*igh*; 54c. an *in áit* Con, chadhain; 54d. mhagh*air*; 55a. tin*n*eagáin, thuireamh; 55b. orbh; 55d. blodh*aidh*

56. Slio*cht Air*t nī[o]rbh éidir d'áirimh
gan bhrēig *ar* bhean dā ndaoinibh;
ríomh a gcreach nī céim ēinfhir,
creach do rēidh*igh* c[h]éill gcaoinidh.

57. Síol gCatháin uaidh fā fhalaidh
Ó Catháin uair a oidhidh;
dā mbeath orra re a hagh*aidh*
m*ar*aidh creach Dhroma Droighin.

58. Cuimhne lá Léime an tSionn*aigh*
cách dā chéile do cheangail;
iomdha ō ghníomh Néill a-nallain
ar clann*aibh* ríogh céim ceannaigh.

59. Fiú [t]h'easb[h]*aidh* don fhóir Ult*aigh*
an chreach-sain leo mā leant*air*;
tú i seilbh na gcreach do-c[h]luintir;
creach do M*huintir* Bheirn beantair.

60. Maidhm Tolcha an Charbaid chaoinim
tarla 'na orch*ra* d'Éirinn;
dob é a dhóigh, Niall dā nuaroinn;
luaghoill b[h]*ró*in fā fhiadh bhFēilim.

56. Without a lie, what he took from Sliocht Airt's followers is beyond reckoning; the counting of their plunders is not a task for a single man, plunder which cleared the way for lamentation.

57. Ó Cathain was slain; because of it, Síol gCatháin were hostile; the plunder of Drumadreen survives, were there only a guarantor for it.

58. Remembering the day at Leamashinny has brought everyone together [in grief]; because of Niall's deeds of yore many are *céim ceannaigh* (?) on kings' sons.

59. Your loss matters to the Ulster host, if they track down that plunder [i.e. your loss]; Minterburn was plundered; [now] one hears you are in possession of [both] the plunders.

60. The rout of Tullycorbert, which I mourn, is a sorrow for Ireland; Niall's way was to divide it [Ireland] anew; sorrow now stalks the land of Féilim.

56a. dh*áireamh*; 57a. fál*aidh*; 57b. f*úair*, oighigh; 57c. urra; 58d. c*endaigh*

61. Maidhm Í Nēill dín*n* dā ndeach*adh*
ón chléir g*an* ríomh ní rach*adh*;
m[e]inic rug céim dā gcreach*adh*
fā Shléibh Beath*adh* tug tach*ar*.

62. Tug Muineachán uaidh d'adhn*adh*
coimhthionāl fā bhuaibh biodhb[h]*adh*;
d'ēis a chinn os *air*d d'adhn*adh*
fag[h]mhar Chinn *Air*d is iongn*adh*.

63. Clann Domhnaill Í Néill n*áirigh*
léir ōd' g[h]ormloinn ga*n* g[h]uaill*idh*;
maidhm an Tríocha is tu*ar* caoinidh;
dual maoidhimh t'fhīocha *ar* u*air*ibh.

64. Do bhris Niall – cóir n*ach* ceilim;
– re cóir a fhiach ní fhuilim –
baile Í Nēill fa rún reamhuin*n*,
Dún Geanu*inn* i gcēill cuirim.

65. Creach an Rúta is tuar tuirse;
ní uair cungnamh fān gcreic[h]-se
do no*cht* a bhrón d*ār* mbais-ne
to*cht* tairse mās lór leibhse.

61. Even if I failed to mention the route of Ó Néill, the poets would not fail to recount it; he gave battle around Slieve Beagh, he often moved to plunder them.

62. Monaghan being torched at his instigation brought about an assembly around enemies' cows; after it being burnt openly, I am surprised that Kinnard has produced a harvest.

63. The sons of noble Domhnall Ó Néill are seen to be without supporters because of your shiny sword; the defeat of the Tríocha evokes sorrow [yet] it is natural to boast of your anger sometimes.

64. I do not conceal his right [to do so though] his rights are not my main concern here; Niall storming the town of Ó Néill, by which I mean Dungannon, was our intention.

65. The plunder of the Route evokes sadness; he did not get any aid on that raid; [that raid caused] his sorrow to manifest itself in our beating hands; it is a mention of sorrow that must suffice for you.

61c. r*uc*; 62a. muineacháin; 62d. fagmhúr; 64a. cceilim; 65a. tuirrse; 65b. fhúair; 65d. libhsi

66. Tearc tu*ar*asgb[h]*āil* a hadhn*aidh*
b*ear*t fān Uamhabhāil imridh;
do leag sé an tor go talm[h]*ain*
faghla[idh] fá c[h]rodh é *ar* inghin.

67. Áth Sgilleann giodh sgē[a]l doil*igh*
eisiomlā*ir* dé[a]r 'na d[h]eagh*aidh*;
do chuir sé srian re comhaidh
blogh*aidh* Niall é re a fheadhain.

68. Cách go rodhána romhaibh
d'Ō Chondálaigh nī[o]r chobh*air*;
a gcoimhriar is díol doil*igh*
oig[h]*idh* ríogh Oirghiall oraibh.

69. Port an Fhailleagáin d'f[h]éaghain
ba raitheannáil dá-ríribh,
mac Í Fhloinn uadh san áirimh;
táiridh luagh 'sa[n] loinn línigh.

70. Bris*eadh* na Finne ar fiadhain,
dā gceileadh cineadh Dál*aigh,*
mór a chlú a-nú don Niallfhuil;
cú fiadh*ain* thú don tánaidh.

66. He carried out manoeuvres around An Uamhabháil (?) [though] there are few reports of it being torched; a plunderer who made possible many a dowry knocked the tower to the ground.

67. Though it is a sad tale which inspires tears now, Niall smashed Enniskillen with his band [and] put a limit to terms.

68. Everyone being so bold before you was no help to Ó Condálaigh; their submission was a difficult thing; you caused the killing of the king of Oriel.

69. Attacking Portnelligan, it was a huge blaze indeed; as a result, the son of Ó Floinn was added [to the body count]; the ornamental sword shows its value.

70. Even if the Uí Dhomhnaill were to conceal it, the victory [at the battle] of the Finn bears witness; great still is the fame it earns Niall's descendants; you were an untamed hound for the host.

69b. roitheandáil; 69c. fhlainn, áireamh; 69d. t*árr*idh; 70a. fhiadhain; 70b. gcéil*eadh*; 70d. tánaigh

71. Ō Thír Fhiach*ra*ch fhuin*n* Muaighe
go fialchath bhuird na Bóin*n*e
go bás Nēill, an fáidh fíre,
cáin gach tíre rēidh róin*n*e.

72. Bíodh ar fhiadh*ain* fhuin*n* Oil*igh*
gan g[h]rian cumtha dá cheanaibh;
ní bhiam réidh uaidh g*an* fhol*aidh*;
foghail Nēill uain*n* go hEamhain.

73. Ní beag le [a] f[h]e*ar*aibh iomtha
a bhfuil dá cheanaibh cumtha;
do g[h]náth*aigh* sē sé[a]n deabhtha;
sg*éal* de*ar*bhtha é *ar* an urc[h]ra.

71. Until the death of Niall, the true prophet, the tribute of every land was ours to take, from Tireragh by the Moy to the noble battalion bordering on the Boyne.

72. Let the [people] of Oileach's land witness that I have not enumerated all of his triumphs; [since] Niall's plundering stretches from here to Eamhain Mhacha, I will not get away without [incurring] hostility.

73. Rivals will not think little of what has been enumerated of his triumphs; he was successful in battle; it is an assured story about sorrow.

71c. ni (?) *in áit* an; 72b. cheanaiph; 73. ag *deireadh an rainn* rucc. an. bás. b*áir*e ⁊lā

Nótaí

3b. *Chuinn-ne* : *gcuimhne*: Ar an gcomhardadh idir *nn-n* agus dhá chonsan eile féach an plé ag Damian McManus (2014: 214–15).

6. B'fhéidir go bhfuil an file ag tagairt anseo don reilig ina gcuirtí Sliocht Airt Óig ar an Ard Stratha gar don Bhaile Nua (Ó Doibhlin 2018: 202; cf. *LCAB* x.1a, *Truagh m'aisder go hArd Sratha*).

8c. *leac Lughaidh*: Tuigim *leac Lughaidh* mar ainm eile ar an *Lia Fáil*, an chloch a labhrann amach ar theacht don rí ceart ar Éirinn. Faightear tagairtí eile dó i gCorpas Fhilíocht na Scol (Mac Cárthaigh, Uí Dhonnchadha 2020: 85–99): *LCAB* 13.29, Ó Raghallaigh (2008: 5.20), Ó Cléirigh (1939: 45.8), *DMU* 4.1. Faightear a mhalairt d'íomhá sa dán seo ina bhfuil *leac Lughaidh* ag fanacht ina tost anois agus Niall marbh.

8d. *cumhain*: Athraím *cumaidh* na lámhscríbhinne go *cumhain* ar mhaithe le ciall an rainn mar a mholtar in *ABM* 709, nóta 403. Tá seans ann, áfach, go bhfuil *cum*[h]*aidh* á úsáid anseo in áit an ainmnigh, *cumha* (*IGT* ii §4).

10c. *ar ceann teachta*: Faightear an frása seo i ndán amháin eile sa chorpas. '*Gluaisid reompa ón Róimh anoir / go hEasbáin an fhóid iobhraigh; / líon eachtra dob fhearr obar, / ní ar cheann teachta tángadar.*' 'Westwards from Rome they travelled to Spain's yew-treed soil, a goodly band of adventurers, they had not come on an embassy (?)' (*TD* 24 20). Deir Knott, ag lua ár ndáin-ne, sna nótaí:

> §20 'on an embassy;' *ar c. teachta* 'for a coming' (?) (i.e. in order to return). Cf. *Do-chuaidh is ní ar ceand techta . ceann eachtra uaibh a Ulta* (of a dead chief) 23 F 16, 73.

11d. *caoine*: Faightear an dá leagan den ainm briathartha seo, *caoine* agus *caoineadh* cf. *IGT* iii §71.

13abd. *leag-*: Feictear sa rann seo an dá chiall leis an mbriathar. Féach *IGT* iii §36 *leagadh* (duit) agus *IGT* iii §80 *leagadh* (na cró).

14a. *doiligh ndíola*: De réir na teanga clasaicí, leanann urú an aidiacht fhaisnéiseach nuair atá ginideach tagrach faoi réir aici (cf. *SnaG* IV §3.3, agus *TD* i, lxix).

15b. *seanadh*: Tuigim *seanadh* mar 'synod' (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *senad*) ach d'fhéadfadh ciall eile a bheith leis. Cf. an dán *Damhaidh dúind cóir, a chléirche*, le Maol Muire Mág Raith:

5. Riar ēigeas as sé an seanadh –
do-ghebham so a seinleabhar –
as lēigheand leabhar mbriondach
seanadh Ēireand d'aithearrach

'To maintain poets is the old tradition – we find this in any ancient book – to alter the old tradition is learning from false books.'

Ina eagrán (Ó Cuív 1971) deir Ó Cuív:

> 5 *a*, *d*. Here *seanadh* seems to have some meaning other than "synod" or "assembly". We may compare the following quatrain from a poem by Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn (*Aithdh. D.* 17 § 2):
>
> > *Breath na leabar is lé a-tám,*
> > *is é an seanadh é más fhíor ;*
> > *gan bheith 'n-a bhun ní dleach dúnn*
> > *ná dul ar gcúl ón reacht ríogh.*
> >
> > McKenna translates: "I adopt the judgment of the law books, they are supposed to be the old tradition ..." and in a note on *seanadh* he comments: "could mean 'source of authority'? but more probably is for *sean-nadh* (*nadh*<*nath*) 'old saying'." This explanation had been adopted in *RIA Contribb. S* where the example from Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn is given under *sennath* (col. 181). (Ó Cuív 1971: 103)

Is annamh a fheictear *seanadh* 'synod' sa chorpas. An sampla is soiléire ná an ceann seo ón ndán *Teasda Éire san Easpáinn* agus Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird

ag trácht ar bhás Caesar sa seanad sa Róimh, *Aimser aith*[g*he*]*rr dá éis soin* / *do mharbh in seanadh Sésair* 'A short time after that the senate put Caesar to death' (Breatnach 1973: 49ab).

16c. *a caoi féin is dā fiadhain*: Aistriúchán eile ar an líne seo ná 'her own crying bears witness to it'. Féach *eDil* s.v. 2 *fíada* (b), (c).

17a. *craoithe*: Tuigim *craoithe* mar ainmneach iolra *cró* (*IGT* ii §87; *eDil* s.v. *cruë*).

17c. *guala a ríogh*: Féach an plé ag Pádraig A. Breatnach in 'The Chief's Poet' (Breatnach 1983: 45–6).

17c. *dlig*[*h*]*idh*: Ar úsáid aistreach an bhriathair *dlighidh*, féach *eDIL* s.v. *dligid*, (b).

19b. *dula i ndaoinibh*: Tá cúpla sampla den fhrása seo sa chorpas, *dul i ndaoinighe* (*AiD* 77.11a, *AiD* 68.11d, *AiD* 65.33d) agus *dul i ndaoinibh* (*AiD* 59.11c). Aistríonn McKenna é mar 'getting crowded' (AiD 68.11d).

25. Tá síneadh meánach le sonrú i ndéirí na línte seo *Ultaigh* (: *bhfionntain*) srl.

25–7. Tagann na híomhánna anseo go maith le plé Damian McManus ar íomhánna an nádúir tar éis bhás an phátrúin:

> As well as being the guardian of the moral order, the king is also the guarantor of cosmic harmony, and his death has catastrophic consequences for the elements. The winds howl, the seas swell and torrential rains cause rivers formerly of no great consequence to burst their banks. Mountainous seas, higher than the sails of ships toss boats from their moorings in the bay and flood coastal plains and hills, forcing farmers to remove crop-stores and cattle to higher ground for protection. Freezing temperatures make frozen highways of inland lakes in mid-summer, locking birds into what little shelter their nests can provide, fish into a frozen grave, and putting an end to all farming activity. The firmament is a mass of fire, the lightning brightening up an otherwise blackened sky. The sun is a stranger in this landscape constantly eclipsed by dark rain-laden clouds. Howling winds, roaring thunder and gushing tidal and river waters are the sounds of elegy, drowning out all else but combining with the keening of men and women in a fitting lament for the dead king. (McManus 2006: 65–6)

28d. *oighre ar nAirt-ne*: Is dóigh gur tagairt é seo dá shliocht, Sliocht Airt Óig an tSratha Bháin.

30c. *sgaoiltir cóig gēill a geimhil*: Tá úsáid an tabharthaigh uatha de *geimheal* deimhnithe ag an meadaracht anseo. Tá dhá dhíochlaonadh ar *geimheal* sna tráchtais, firinscneach (*IGT* ii §53) leis an tabharthach uatha leathan *geimheal*, agus baininscneach (*IGT* ii §54) leis an tabharthach uatha caol *geimhil*. Seans

go mbeifí ag súil le hiolra an fhocail agus an file ag trácht ar chúigear giall. Níor tháinig mé ar aon samplaí eile d'úsáid an uatha sa chomhthéacs seo sa chorpas. Seans gurb ionann seo agus an úsáid 'ardaigí bhur gcroí' i dteanga an lae inniu.

31b. '*sa*[*n*]: Ar úsáid na foirme '*san*, féach an plé ag Damian McManus (2019: 167–9).

31d. *sgaradh Luain*: Tuigim é mar 'a separation until Doomsday' (cf. *eDIL* s.v. 1 *lúan* (b) agus s.v. *scarad* (d)). Tá tagairt amháin eile do *sgaradh Lúain* aimsithe agam sa chorpas:

> Cur an laoisin ar lá eile
> ní fhéadfa mé – cá mó glas?
> ní maith sgaradh Luain dá lamhthaoi
> ní lamhar buain athlaoi as.
>
> 'I can not put off the Monday – could my strait be worse? Even if one were allowed to escape that Monday 'twould avail little, for one can not escape the day (of punishment) following.' (*AiD* 77.8)

32b. *do-cháidh*: D'fhéadfaí *do-chóidh* a sholáthar anseo le go mbeadh comhardadh slán ann le *gcōig* i líne *a* (cf. *IGT* iii §8) ach tá comhardadh slán breise ann san rann le *náir* : *dáimh* : *dáibh*.

34a. *ag sin an saoghal*: Féach an t-aistriúchán ag Bergin ón dán *A dhuine chuireas an crann, mo chreach! ag sin an sáoghal*, 'alas! such is the world' (*IBP* 34.2d).

37b. *chondún* (LS): Táim den tuairim gur botún ón scríobhaí é *chondún* na lámhscríbhinne. Faightear leaganacha de *cuntas* leis an litriú *con(n)dus* (*eDIL* s.v. *cuntas*).

44a. Tá an líne seo hípearshiollach. Bainim *átha* ar mhaithe le líon na síollaí a cheartú. Tá seans ann go bhfuil an file á thuiscint mar *Bail' Áth' Fhir Dhiadh*, a bheadh neamhchlasaiceach.

45ab. *Baile Agairt*: Athraím *agaird* go *agairt*, ag seachaint síneadh meánach le go mbeidh cuibheas idir *agairt* : *agairt*.

46. Táim den tuairim gur tagairt é an *lá na gcartach* seo don eachtra seo a luaitear in *Annála Uladh* nuair a rinneadh is a athnuadh cairteacha idir Art Ó Néill agus Aodh Ó Domhnaill ar Fhir Manach agus ar thiarnais eile agus nuair a tugadh Niall Conallach (fear ár ndáin-ne) ar ais dá athair ó Ó Domhnaill.

> *AU* 1514.10 Coccadh ar n-erghi ider O n-Domnaill (.i. Aod) & O Neill (.i. Art Oc) & moran doíne d'fhostadh gacha taoba doib & a m-beth a fad a faslongport ar comair a cheile. Ocus a techt do rath an Spirita Naim & do comairle na n-deghdaine síth cairdemail do denam doib & a n-dol a cend a celi ar droicheat Arda Sratha & cairdes-Crist do denam dóib ré ceile. Ocus cartacha nuaídhe, maille ré daingniughudh na sencartach, do thabairt la h-Ua Neill d'U*a*

> Domnaill ar Ceniul Moain & ar Innis Eogain & ar Feruibh Manach. Ocus O Domnaill do thindlacudh a mic d'O Neill, .i. Niall O Neill, do bí a fad roime-sin a n-gill ré tairisecht.
>
> 'War arose between O'Domnaill (namely, Aodh) and O'Neill (namely, Art junior) and many persons were hired on each side by them and they were long in camp opposite each other. And it came of the grace of the Holy Ghost and of the counsel of worthy persons that cordial peace was made by them and they went to meet each other on the bridge of Ard-stratha and gossipred was made by them with each other. And new charters, along with confirmation of the old charters, were granted by Ua Neill to Ua Domnaill for Cenel-Moen and for Inis-Eogain and for Fir-Manach. And O'Domnaill delivered to O'Neill his son, namely, Niall O'Neill, who was for a long time before that in pledge for fidelity.'

47a. *do Loch*: In éagmais an ailt anseo, tuigim *Loch* mar thagairt do *Loch X* éigin agus *loch* a thuiscint mar *ainm coimhleanamhna* (cf. McManus 2012). Tá an dá áit, *Sliabh Dhá Chon* agus *Gleann Buí* ar an taobh thiar theas ó Loch Éirne, is mar sin déanaim amach gur tagairt do Loch Éirne atá i gceist leis. Tá sampla eile den úsáid seo aimsithe agam sa chorpas. I mo thuairim is cóir *do loch* sa dara rann anseo a thuiscint mar *do Loch* [*Éirne*]:

6. Ar Loch Eirne an inbhir ghloin
   gan fhaicsin uain bhar n-arthraigh
   deór le gruaidh Manchoigh ní mall
   le fuaim arthraigh na n-eachtronn.

   'On Loch Éirne of the pure estuary, without seeing *uain* of your vessel, a tear against the cheek of a Fermanagh man is not slow [to come] with the sound of the vessel of the foreigners.'

7. An tír ar gach taobh do loch
   mar do chíd cách gan chodhnach
   beag le gach aon cuid dá chrodh
   ná tuig nach taom dot thurnamh.

   'The land on every side of [a] lake, as everyone sees [now] without a leader, every piece of its wealth is of little value, do not think that your decline is not an attack.' (Walsh 1929: 3.6–7)

47b. *oire*: Athraím leagan na lámhscríbhinne *oirne* go *oire* ar mhaithe leis an gcomhardadh le *gcoire* mar a mholtar in *ABM* (403).

51. *An Tríocha*: Tá alt ag Nollaig Ó Muraíle ina rianaíonn sé stair an logainm seo. Déanann sé amach gurb é an Tríocha Chéad nó An Tríocha ainm na háite is gurb í an bharúntacht An Triúcha nó *Trough* i gCo. Mhuineacháin atá i gceist. Ba iad muintir Chionnaith a bhí i seilbh na háite.

> Mac Kenna is said to be lord of what is referred to quite simply as *An Tríocha Céd* or *An Triúcha.* […] In southern Oirghialla in

> later medieval times, in other words Mac Kenna's territory was *the* triocha céad. (Ó Muraíle 1984: 402)

52a. Tuigim *Ultach* anseo mar ghinideach iolra. Nílim iomlán cinnte faoin mbrí a bhaineann le 'téid X fa Y' sa chás seo (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *téit* (8)).

52b. *Briseadh Bhealaigh na mBracthach* – Níor éirigh liom teacht ar an áit seo. B'fhéidir gurb é *Baile na mBrághad* atá i gceist. Is áit i mbarúntacht an tSratha Bháin Íochtair atá ann dála *Fhoclóir Stairiúil Áitainmneacha na Gaeilge* (Ó Riain 2005: 41) nó gur tagairt é don *Bhrághaid* i gContae Aontroma (Ó Riain 2005: 168). B'fhéidir chomh maith gur logainm cosúil le *Bealach an Bhrocaigh* atá ann. Ní shásódh siad an mheadaracht anseo.

53a. *Lá na Finne*: In 1522, rinne Ó Néill creach ar Thír Chonaill ón bhFinn siar go Ceann Maghair (*AFM* 1522.6). Ar *lá* mar *chath* féach Hoyne (2018: 3.87–8, nóta).

54c. *do Ghleann*: Faightear an t-ainmneach anseo in áit an tabharthaigh, *glionn* (*IGT* ii §66). Caithim leis seo mar *ainm coimhleanamhna* (cf. McManus 2012). Soláthraím an *Con* in áit an *an* i bhfianaise na huama riachtanaí agus an chomhardaidh le *chrodh*. Ar an logainm féin, féach alt Shéamais Uí Cheallaigh ina dtugann sé cuntas béaloideasa ar bhunús an ainm (1927: 58–60).

54d. Tá an séimhiú ar *mhagh*air (LS) neamhchlasaiceach is, mar sin, bainim é.

55ab. *Tinneagáin* (LS): Níor éirigh liom teacht ar aon áit darbh ainm *Tinneagá(i)n*. Is annamh a fhaightear an focal *ioniomráidh* sa chorpas. Tá trí sampla eile aimsithe agam agus *tighearnáin* mar chéile cuibhis ag dhá cheann acu: *iniomráidh* (: *chiniodhnáir*) (*A mheic, ná meabhraigh éigse*, O'Conor Don, 403a, 12cd (téacs an dáin ar *Bhunachar Fhilíocht na Scol*)); *ioniomráidh* (: *Tighearnáin*) (Mac Mathúna 1997: 3cd.); *iniomráidh* (: *Tighiornáin*) (*LBran* 18.76cd). I bhfianaise na gcéilí cuibhis, cé nach bhfuil comhardadh slán riachtanach sa seoladh, measaim gur chóir *tinneagáin* a athrú go *Tighearnáin* ar mhaithe le ciall an rainn. Bhíodh muintir Thighearnáin i gceannas ar Theallach Dúnchadha i gContae an Chabháin, is seans gur ag trácht ar chreach a rinneadh orthu atá an file anseo (Parker 1995).

Tá seans ann chomh maith gur tagairt do Thuíneán i gContae Ard Mhacha atá ann:

> tugneda *tuigneda*Uncán Tugneda, LL 361, MartT (ed Kelly); Tughnetha, MartD; *airchinnech* Tuidnida, tl. & p.Tynan, c. Armagh, *AFM*-ndx; Tuidnigha, *al.* Tuighnidha, AU-ndx; but Uncan Tuigneath no Unnic Tuignech in Uí Dortain, MartO². (*Onom.* 27127)

55d. *B*[*h*]*eirn an Bhealaigh*: Tá seans ann gur tagairt do mhuintir Barnewall atá i gceist. Bhí John Barnewall mar Ard-Seansailéir na hÉireann 1534–8. Aistrítear Barnewell mar Bearna Bhalach in *Annála Uladh*:

> *AU* 1510.1 […] marbthar léo and **Barún Cint** & **Bearna Bhalach Circistoún** & dóine maithi eile nach airimter sund.

> '… there were slain by them there baron Kent and Barnwell of Circistown and other noble persons who are not reckoned here.'

Is dóigh mar sin gur tagairt don duine, Barún Chirciostúin, nó don áit, Circiostún, i gContae na Mí atá i gceist.

57. Is dóigh gur tagairt é an rann seo don eachtra seo inar mharaigh Niall Gofraidh Ó Catháin:

> *AFM* 1526.9 O Catháin .i. Gofraidh mac Gofradha do mharbhadh ag Bealach an Chamáin lá mac I Néill .i. Niall Ócc, & Niall fein do ghabháil fo chend trill iarsin lá h-Ua Neill, & a beith i m-braighdenas frí ré fhoda.
>
> 'O'Kane (Godfrey, son of Godfrey) was slain at Bealach-an-Chamain, by the son of O'Neill (Niall Oge); and Niall himself was soon afterwards taken prisoner by O'Neill, and he was detained a long time in captivity.'

Is dóigh liom gurb é Droim an Draighin i mbarúntacht Chianacht (Uí Chatháin) i gContae Dhoire atá i gceist anseo ach d'fhéadfaí gur logainm eile atá ann.

58d. *céim ceannaigh*: Níl aon sampla eile de seo aimsithe agam sa chorpas. Nílim cinnte faoi bhrí an fhrása.

59a. *easbhaidh*: Tá *easbaidh* lochtach de réir *IGT* ii §149 agus, dá bhrí sin, tá séimhiú curtha ar an *b* agam san eagrán.

59d. *Mhuintir Bheirn*: Ceantar agus pobal is ea Muintir Bhirn i dTír Eoghain (Ó Doibhlin 1971: 20–1).

60d. *fā fhiadh bhFēilim*: Tá easpa uama sa líne seo is ní fhaightear *f* lom i ndiaidh *fa* riamh sa chorpas. D'fhéadfaí *fiadh* a thuiscint mar thabharthach agus séimhiú a sholáthar ar *Féilim* ach ní thiocfadh sin le ciall an fhrása, 'about/thoughout Ireland'. Réiteach amháin air ná leagan malartach de *Fhéilim* a sholáthar. Faightear *Éilim* deimhnithe ag an meadaracht sa dán *A fhir táinig re tasg mBriain* le Tadhg Mór Ó hUiginn,

> Do ghabh Éilim gan fhalaidh
> teach ar Fiacha Fionnalaidh;
> dá adhbhar gon ghaoith fa ghul
> marbhadh an laoich 's a losgudh.
>
> 'Blameless Éilim captured the house of Fiacha Fionnolaidh; the wind had two reasons for lamenting that hero, his death and his burning.' (*Magauran* 4.33)

Ní thugtar leagan dar tús guta in *IGT* ii §112, mar a dtugtar *Félim, Féidhlim, Fedhlim. Félimidh, Feidhlimidh, Feidhlimidh*, le difear suntasach idir na lámhscríbhinní. Níor éirigh liom teacht ar aon sampla eile de *Éilim* le deimhneacht mheadarachta agus, dá bharr sin, fágaim é san eagrán mar atá sé sa lámhscríbhinn.

61. *Shléibh Beathadh*: Tá Sliabh Beatha suite i ndeisceart Thír Eoghain. Tá cur síos spleodrach ar eachtra in 1532 ag *Annála Uladh*, is déanaim amach gur ag tagairt dó sin atá an file anseo:

> *AU* 1532.15 An Giuisdis gu na th-Shaxanachaibh & Goill na Midhe do dhul a Tir Eoccain & sluagh Ghaidhel do eirghi amach ina coinne, mar ata, Níall Og O Neill & Mag Uidhir & O Raighilligh & Mag Mathgamna & slicht Aodha h-Ui Neill & slicht Aodha Buidhe & Clanna Rughraidhe do 'n taobh a tuaigh 'gadam doibh 'ga tuirimh.[25] Acht do impoadur Gaidhil Letha Cuind uile ar O Neill 'munn amsa, achtmadh becc. Rangadur na sluaigh-so, leth ar leth, gu Dún Gheanainn a coinne a cheile, gur' brisedh & gur' blaghadh, gur' muradh & gur' mughaighedh, gur' toirnedh & gur' trascradh, eter chrunn & cloich, eter tighibh & teccar, eter duinedh & deccharus, in baile, gu nar' aithgin Gall na Gaidhel, da faca roime ariamh, ar in tres lá e. Do h-indredh & do h-innarbadh, do dilghiedh & do dilaithridhedh, do loiscedh & do lainmhilledh in tir uile a or gu h-or leo. Do-chuadur almha & innile thire h-Ui Neill gu h-imshlan ar fainnel & ar fordul, no gu rangadur Sliabh Betha, mhic Naói. Do leanadur na Gaidhil-so adubramur romhaind íat, no gu rucadur orra & do thóccbhadar ín bhorumha dhoairme-so leó, no gu rangadur amesc Ghall. Do boi mart ar in m-bonn & mart gacha bhond ag Gallaibh in oidhci-sin. Do-rinnetar Goill & Goidhil a cadach & a caradradh, a cuir & a cumartha, do cheangal re cheile ar lo. Do impádur Goill da n-duintibh & Gaidhil día n-deghbhailtibh gu m-buaidh coscair & araile. Is and do bhai O Domhnaill in uair-sin & Mac Domhnaill na h-Alban & a fheacht ina fhochair, ag gabail neirt a Cuigedh Medhbha.
>
> 'The Justiciary with the Saxons and Foreigners of Meath went into Tir-Eogain and a host of Gaidhil rose out to meet them, that is, Niall O'Neill junior and Mag Uidhir and O'Raighilligh and Mag Mathgamna and the descendants of Aodh O'Neill and the descendants of Aodh the Tawny and the Clanna-Rughraidhe of the northern side… For the Gaidhil of all the Half of Conn, except a few, turned on O'Neill about that time. These hosts went, side for side, to Dun-Gennain to meet each other, so that the town, both wood and stone, both houses and furniture, both fort and fair habitation, was broken and dismembered, destroyed and deleted, overturned and prostrated, so that Foreigner or Gaidhel of those who saw it ever before recognised it not on the third day. The whole territory from border to border was harried and raided, punished and wasted, burned and totally destroyed by them. The herds and other cattle of the territory of O'Neill went in their entirety in fright and constant progress, until they reached the Mountain of Bith, son of Noah. These

[25] Is cosúil nár thuig Mac Carthy, *gadam doibh ga tuirim* (= *gá dám 'gá dtuirimh*, 'What am I at, listing them off?'). Tá mé an-bhuíoch don Dr Mícheál Hoyne as seo a chur ar mo shúile.

> Gaidhil we mentioned before followed them, until they overtook them and carried off with them this cattle-spoil hard to count, until they came among the Foreigners. The beef was for the groat and a beef for every groat with the Foreigners that night. Foreigners and Gaidhil united their alliance and their friendship, their bonds and ratifications, with each other on the next day. The Foreigners returned to their keeps and the Gaidhil to their good houses with victory of overthrow and so on. Where O'Domnaill and Mac Domnaill of Scotland and their force with them were at that time is acquiring power in the Province of Medhbh.'

62. Is dóigh gur ag tagairt don eachtra seo in 1531 atá an rann seo. Bhí Niall ag obair i ndlúthpháirt le hÓ Domhnaill i gcoinne Choinn Bhacaigh Uí Néill, is rinne siad creachadh ar Mhuineachán agus ar Chaisleán Chinn Aird.

> *AU* 1531.5 Sluaighedh leisin n-Gíuisdís Saxanach & le h-Iarla Chilli Dara & le maithibh Gaidhel Erenn a Tir n-Eogain ar tarraing Uí Domnaill & Neill Óig Uí Neill & t-slechta Aodha Uí Neill. Ocus Tir Eogain do loscadh leó o Dhun g-Cal gu h-Abhainn Mhoir & caislen nua Phuirt an Fhaillegain do brisedh leo & duthadh Briain na Mocheírghi do crechloscadh leo & Muinechan d'fhagbail folam ré n-ucht. O Domnaill & Níall Óg do dhul a cend an t-sluaigh Ghallda h-isin gu Cinn Aird & caisdiall Chinn Airtt do brisedh leó. Ocus O Neill do beth, sluagh dí-armhe, re n-ucht & nar' lamhadur a dhul teris-sin a Tir n-Eoghain & do impodur na sluaigh-sin, leth ar leth, dia tighibh fó bhuaidh coscair, gan sith, gan osadh, ag Ua Neill friú.
>
> 'A hosting by the Saxon Justiciary and by the Earl of Kildare and by the nobles of the Foreigners of Ireland into Tir-Eogain, at instigation of O'Domnaill and of Niall O'Neill junior and of the descendants of Aodh O'Neill. And Tir-Eogain was burned by them from Dun-cal southwards to Abhann-mor, and the new castle of Port-an-faillegain was broken down by them, and the district of Brian of the early rising was raided and burned by them, and Muinechan was left empty at their approach. O'Domnaill and Niall junior went to meet that Foreign host to Cenn-ard, and the castle of Cenn-ard was broken down by them. And O'Neill was, with a host hard to count, in front of them, and they attempted not to go beyond that into Tir-Eogain, and those hosts turned, side for side, to their houses with victory of overthrow, without O'Neill having peace or truce with them.'

62cd. Tá imeartas focal ar siúl ar an bhfile anseo le *chinn os aird* agus *Chinn Aird.*

63a. *Clann Dhomhnaill Uí Néill*: Rinne athair Néill, Art Ó Néill, maidhm ar chlann Dhomhnaill Uí Néill in 1514. Bhí Domhnall ina cheann fine go dtí 1509.

Bhí Niall Ó Néill ina ghiall ag Ó Domhnaill go dtí an bhliain sin ach níltear cinnte an raibh Niall amach lena athair i gcoinne Chlann Dhomhnaill Uí Néill.

> *AU* 1514.5 Maidm do thabairt les O Neill ar cloinn Domnaill Uí Neill & ar cloinn Airt Uí Neill & móran d'echaibh & d'étedh & do daínibh do buaín dib.
>
> 'Defeat was given by O'Neill to the sons of Domnall O'Neill and to the sons of Art O'Neill and many horses and armour-suits and persons were taken from them.'
>
> *AU* 1514.9 Maidm do thabairt d'O Neill (.i. Art Óc) ar Aod, mac Domnaill Uí Neill & ar Conn, mac Neill, mic Airt, d'ar' marb & d'ár' ghab moran d'a muinntir & dar' ben a n-eich & a n-éidedh dib & d'ar' ainfainnigh iat, innus gur' an tigernus Tire h-Eogain can imresain aige o shin amach.
>
> 'Defeat was given by O'Neill (namely, Art junior) to Aodh, son of Domnall O'Neill and to Conn, son of Niall, son of Art, wherein he *either* slew *or* took many of their people and wherein he wrested their horses and their accoutrement from them and whereby he humbled them then, so that lordship of Tir-Eogain remained without dispute with him from that out.'
>
> *AU* 1514.10 Coccadh ar n-erghi ider O n-Domnaill (.i. Aod) & O Neill (.i. Art Oc) & moran doíne d'fhostadh gacha taoba doib & a m-beth a fad a faslongport ar comair a cheile. Ocus a techt do rath an Spirita Naim & do comairle na n-deghdaine síth cairdemail do denam doib & a n-dol a cend a celi ar droicheat Arda Sratha & cairdes-Crist do denam dóib ré ceile. Ocus cartacha nuaídhe, maille ré daingniughudh na sencartach, do thabairt la h-Ua Neill d'Ua Domnaill ar Ceniul Moain & ar Innis Eogain & ar Feruibh Manach. Ocus O Domnaill do thindlacudh a mic d'O Neill, .i. Niall O Neill, do bí a fad roime-sin a n-gill ré tairisecht.
>
> 'War arose between O'Domnaill (namely, Aodh) and O'Neill (namely, Art junior) and many persons were hired on each side by them and they were long in camp opposite each other. And it came of the grace of the Holy Ghost and of the counsel of worthy persons that cordial peace was made by them and they went to meet each other on the bridge of Ard-stratha and gossipred was made by them with each other. And new charters, along with confirmation of the old charters, were granted by Ua Neill to Ua Domnaill for Cenel-Moen and for Inis-Eogain and for Fir-Manach. And O'Domnaill delivered to O'Neill his son, namely, Niall O'Neill, who was for a long time before that in pledge for fidelity.'
>
> *AFM* 1514.9 Coccadh d'eircce etir Ó n-Domhnaill (Aodh mac Aodha Rúaidh), & Ó Néll (Art mac Cuinn), & móran daoineadh d'fhostadh doibh ar gach taoibh, & a m-beith a b-fad h-i f-foslongport i n-aghaidh aroile, & a thecht do ghrásaibh an Spirait Naeimh, & do chomhairle a n-dagh-dhaoineadh sídh chairdemhail do dhénamh

doibh re 'roile, & a n-dol h-i c-cend aroile ar droichet Arda Sratha, & cairdes Crist do dhénamh doibh le chéle, & cartacha nuaa (amaille le daingniucchadh na sen-chartach) do thabhairt la h-Ua Neill d'Ua Dhomhnaill ar Chenel Moáin, ar Inis Eoghain, & ar Fheraibh Manach, & Ó Domhnaill do thabhairt a mheic mar aisccidh d'Ua Néll .i. Niall Ócc baí a f-fad riasan tan-sin i l-láimh aicce i n-gioll le tairiseacht.

'A war arose between O'Donnell (Hugh, the son of Hugh Roe) and O'Neill (Art, the son of Con); and they hired many persons on both sides, and remained for a long time encamped opposite each other. It happened, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, and the advice of their chieftains, that they made a friendly peace with each other, and came to a meeting with each other on the bridge of Ardstraw; and they became gossips to each other. And new charters were given by O'Neill to O'Donnell (together with a confirmation of the old charters) of Kinel-Moen, Inishowen, and Fermanagh. O'Donnell also delivered up, as a free gift, to O'Neill, his *O'Neill's* son (Niall Oge), whom he had for a long time before in his custody as a hostage for the observance of fidelity.'

AFM 1514.12 Indsaicchidh la h-Aodh mac Domhnaill Í Néll, & lá Conn mac Neill ar Shean mac Cuinn go Cluain Dabhail, & Baile Sheain do losccadh leó. Creacha an tíre do chor rempa dóibh. O Neill, & Mac Domhnaill do breith orra tóir trom, na crecha do bhein díobh, & briseadh orra. Cúiccer do Shliocht Airt Í Néll do mharbhadh ann .i. Toirrdhealbhach, mac Neill mic Airt, Failghe mac Nell, Ruaidhri mac Aodha mic Airt, Domhnall Ballach mac Airt an Chaisléin, & Aodh mac Emainn mic Airt Í Néill. Do marbhadh ó Aodh ann dá mhac Mhec A Ghiorr .i. Art Ócc & Brian. Ro marbhadh ann bheós Félim Ócc Ó Meallain, & Conn Ó Concobhair, & ro benadh deich n-eich fichet do Chonn don chur-sin.

'An irruption was made by Hugh, the son of Donnell O'Neill, and Con, the son of Niall, into Cluain-Dabhaill, against John, the son of Con; and they burned John's town, *and* they sent the preys of the country before them. O'Neill and Mac Donnell, with a strong body of troops, pursued and overtook them, deprived them of the preys, and routed them *in a conflict, in which* were slain five of the descendants of Art O'Neill, i.e. Turlough, the son of Niall, son of Art; Failghe, the son of Niall; Rory, the son of Hugh, son of Art; Donnell Ballagh, the son of Art-an-Chaislein; and Hugh, the son of Edmond, son of Art O'Neill. There fell also on the side of Hugh the two sons of Mac-a-ghiorr *Mac Kerr*, i.e. Art Oge and Brian. There were also slain there Felim Oge O'Meallain and Con O'Conor; and thirty horses were taken from Con on that occasion.'

64. Measaim go bhfuil an rann seo ag trácht ar imeachtaí na bliana 1532 nuair a bhí Niall i gcomhpháirt le hÓ Domhnaill, Mág Uidhir, agus an Giúistís.

AFM 1532.13 O Domhnaill, & Mag Uidhir ar n-dol h-i c-cenn an iustis Shaxanaigh .i. Uilliam Sceimonton, & rann & cattach do chengal dóibh ré 'roile, an iustis do theacht leó h-i t-Tír Eoghain, & Dún n-Genainn do briseadh, & an tír do milleadh.

'O'Donnell and Maguire went to the English Lord Justice, William Skeffington, and after they had formed a league of mutual friendship and amity with each other, the Lord Justice went with them into Tyrone. The castle of Dungannon was broken down and the country was ravaged.'

64a. *cceilim* (LS): Bainim an t-urú ar lorg *nach* toisc go bhfuil sé neamhchlasaiceach.

65c. *mbais-ne*: D'úsáidtí an bualadh bos mar chomhartha bróin. Feictear a úsáid sa chorpas:

A lucht bhuaileas na bosa
ga bhfuil an gháir gholosa,
a-tá an gol is-tigh fam thuinn
ag cor libh gin go labhruim.

'Ye folk who beat your hands and make sad lament, that lament is in my heart too in sympathy with you; though I say no word aloud.' (*AiD* 10.14)

14. Nior fuilgadh thrá hé gan fhios
a n-ég do chach mar do-chlos
tug ar slúaighibh thuaidh tes
treas fan uaigh ar bualadh bos.

'No time was allowed to pass without making known
The death to all persons as soon as they heard it,
Our hosts conveyed it as a message,
Around the grave they clapped their hands.'
(MacBain, Kennedy 1894: 234–5)

66b. *Uamhabhāil*: Níor éirigh liom teacht ar an bhfocal seo áit ar bith eile. Is dócha gur logainm atá i gceist. B'fhéidir gur leagan den Uaimh atá i gceist, áit ar a ndearna Ó Néill agus Ó Domhnaill ionsaí in 1539/40. Thugtaí An Nuachongbháil ar an Uaimh tráth (cf. logainm.ie *an Uaimh*) agus tá dhá shampla curtha i gcló trom agam thíos:

AU 1540.15 Sluaghadh do denam leis h-Ua n-Domnaill & leis h-Ua Neill docum Gall & bailte do brisad doibh ann, .i. baile Atha Ría & **an Uaimh**. Ocus an sluagh Ghoidhel do filliudh & foslongport do gabail a Fern Magh.

'A hosting was made by Ua Domnaill and by Ua Neill against the Foreigners and towns, namely, the town of Ath-ria and the Cave, were broken down by them. And the host of the Gaidhil turned and took up an encampment in Fern-magh.'

> *AFM* 1539.5 Slóiccheadh lá h-Ua Néill Conn, & lá h-Ua n-Domhnaill, Maghnus d'aon-comhairle & d'aon-aonta gusan Midhe & an rob aimhriarach dóibh dona tíribh-sin do mhilleadh & do losccadh rempa go Temhraigh. Fó-ríth edala aidhbhle iomdha don turus-sin ar ní ro thionoilsiot Gaoidhil do shaighidh Gall isna h-aimsearaibh deidhenchoibh aon-sloighedh as mó lér milleadh do maithes na Midhe inás an creach-shloigheadh íshin, dóigh rob iomdha édala óir & airccitt, umha, & iarainn, ionnmus, & iolmhaoine, & gacha maithesa archena tuccsat a Baile Atha Fhirdhiadh, & as a **Nua-chongbháil** iarna lom-arccain leó don turus-sin.
>
> 'An army was led by O'Neill (Con) and O'Donnell (Manus), with one will and accord, into Meath; and such part of these territories as were disobedient to them they spoiled and burned before them, as far as Tara, and the possessions of all those who refused to submit to them. They obtained immense and innumerable spoils on this expedition, for the Irish had not in latter times assembled to oppose the English army, that destroyed more of the property of Meath than this plundering army; for many were the spoils of gold and silver, copper, iron, and every sort of goods and valuables besides, which they took from the towns of Ardee and Nuachongbhail, which they entirely plundered on that expedition.'

66d. *faghla*[*idh*] *fá c*[*h*]*rodh é ar inghin*: Ba litriúla an t-aistriúchán 'he was a plunderer about cattle in return for a maiden' .i. 'a dowry' (cf. *eDIL* s.v. 1 *crod* (c)).

67a. *Áth Sgilleann*: Tuigim seo mar leagan d'Inis Ceithleann (cf. logainm.ie *Inis Ceithleann*). Ba mhinic a ionsaíodh an áit, mar sin, is deacair a fháil amach cén eachtra atá i gceist anseo.

67b. Ba litriúla b'fhéidir, líne *b* a thuiscint mar 'leaving a tearful pattern in his wake'.

67d. *re*: Tá *re* in úsáid anseo mar *le* na huirlise (cf. *eDIL* s.v. *la* III (b)).

68b. *Ó Condálaigh*: D'ionsaigh Art Ó Néill, athair Néill, Oirghialla in 1515 is maraíodh ann Art Balbh mac Mhéig Mhathghamhna agus Éamonn Ó Condálaigh.

> *AFM* 1515.11 Slóiccheadh lá h-Ua Néill (Art) i n-Oirghiallaibh, & teccmhail do druing don t-sluagh fri Muintir Meg Mathghamhna, & Art Balbh mac Még Mathghamhna saoí chinn fhedhna do mharbhadh lásan sluagh, & Ua Condalaigh .i. Emann.
>
> 'An army was led by O'Neill (Art) into Oriel; and a part of this army met MacMahon's people, and slew Art Balbh, the son of MacMahon, a distinguished captain, and O'Conolly, i.e. Edmond.'

Bheifí ag súil le *Ú* in áit *Ó* mar thabharthach uatha (*IGT* ii §168).

69a. *Port an Fhailleagáin*: Féach an nóta ar rann 62.

69d. *táiridh*: Athraím *tárridh* go *táiridh* ar mhaithe le comhardadh slán le *áirimh*; cf. *IGT* iii §16.

línigh: Féach an plé ag Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh ar *litreach* is *líneach* 'ornamental' (Ó Raghallaigh 2006: 28d nóta).

70a. *fiadhain*: Bainim an séimhiú i ndiaidh *ar* is deimhniú uama sa líne.

71c. *fáidh fíre*: B'fhéidir gurb é atá i gceist leis an bhfáidh fíre anseo ná go bhfuil cáin gach tíre ag Niall is dearbhaíonn sin gurb é an rí ceart é.

72b. Ba litriúla líne *b* a thuiscint mar 'that I have not got to the bottom of his triumphs', cf. *eDIL* s.v. *grian*.

Aguisín 1. Logainmneacha a luaitear sa dán

Dán	**Logainm.ie/ Placenames NI**	**Béarla**
An Fhinn	An Fhinn	River Finn, Donegal
An Mhuaidh	An Mhuaidh	River Moy
An Rúta	An Rúta	The Route, Antrim
Áth Camais	Camas	Camus, Donegal
Áth Sgilleann	Inis Ceithleann	Enniskillen, Fermanagh
Baile Agaird	Baile Hagaird	Haggardstown, Louth
Baile (Átha) Fhir Dhiadh	Baile Átha Fhirdhia	Ardee, Louth
Baile Sláine	Baile Shláine	Slane, Meath
Baile Uí Choitil	Baile Uí Choitil	Cottlestown, Sligo
Bealach na mBracthach		
Bearn an Bhealaigh	Circiostún	Crickstown, Meath
Beirn	Muintir Bhirn	Minterburn, Tyrone
Bóinn	An Bhóinn	River Boyne
Ceann Maghair	Ceann Mhaghair	Kinnaweer, Donegal
Ceann Tinneagáin		
(Céis) Chorainn	Céis Chorainn	Kesh Corann, Sligo
Cionn Aird	Cionn Aird	Kinnard (Caledon), Tyrone
Droim Dhraighin	Droim an Draighin	Drumadreen, Derry
Dún Geanainn	Dún Geanainn	Dungannon, Tyrone
Dún Léire	Dún Léire	Dunleer, Louth
Eamhain	Eamhain Mhacha	Navan Fort, Armagh
Fir Mhanach	Fear Manach	Fermanagh
Gleann Buidhe	Gleann Buí	Glenboy, Leitrim
Gleann Con Cadhain	Gleann Con Cadhain	Glenconkeyne, Derry
Inis Sgreabhainn	Inis Crabhann	Inishcrone, Sligo
Léim an tSionnaigh	Léim an tSionnaigh	Leamashinny Weir, Donegal
Loch	Loch Éirne	Lough Erne, Fermanagh
Muine Mór	Muine Mór	Moneymore, Derry

Dán	Logainm.ie/ Placenames NI	Béarla
Muineachán	Muineachán	Monaghan
Oirghialla	Oirialla	Oriel, Monaghan
Port an Fhailleagáin	Port an Fhailleagáin	Portnelligan, Armagh
Ráth Cruachan	Ráth Cruachan	Rathcroghan, Roscommon
Sionainn	An tSionainn	River Shannon
Sliabh Beathadh	Sliabh Beatha	Slieve Beagh, Tyrone, Fermanagh
Sliabh Dhá Chon	Sliabh Dá Chon	Dog Little, Dog Big, Fermanagh
Teamhair	Teamhair	Tara, Meath
Tír Fhiachrach	Tír Fhiachrach	Tireragh, Sligo
Tríocha	An Triúcha	Trough, Monaghan
Tulach an Charbaid	Tulaigh Charbaid	Tullycorbet, Monaghan

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DUAN NA FEIRSDE: DÁN AR CHATH FEARSAID MHÓR, 1567[1]

Achoimre

Uilliam Óg Mac an Bhaird a chum an dán seo, a dtugann an file 'Duan na Feirsde' air, d'Aodh (mac Mhaghnais) Ó Domhnaill tar éis do Chineál Chonaill bua suntasach a bhaint amach ar fhórsaí Sheaáin Uí Néill i gcath Fhearsaid Mhór, a thit amach ar 8 Bealtaine, 1567. Cur síos ar an gcath féin agus ar an méid a tharla ina dhiaidh atá sa chuid is mó den dán, ach tá roinnt rann ag déanamh cur síos ar luach an dáin féin, agus ceithre rann ag an deireadh ag moladh bhean an phátrúin, Fionnghuala iníon Mhic Dhomhnaill, 'an Inghean Dubh'. Tá an t-eagrán thíos bunaithe ar an aon chóip amháin de a mhaireann, i LS G 167, Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann. Foilsíodh tras-scríbhinn den dán seo in *ABM* sa bhliain 2010 le heagarthóireacht éadrom déanta air. Tá aistriúchán Béarla ar an dán curtha ar fáil anseo, chomh maith le plé ar ghnéithe den teanga agus den mheadaracht sa réamhrá agus sna nótaí.

An File

Uilliam Óg (mac Cormaic) Mac an Bhaird (†1576) a chum an dán seo d'Aodh Dubh (mac Mhaghnais) Ó Domhnaill (†1600). De réir *AFM* s.a. 1576, ba é Uilliam Óg *ollamh Uí D*[*h*]*omhnaill lé dán*, agus fuair sé bás ar 22 Feabhra an bhliain sin i nDroim Mór, gar do Bhaile Dhún na nGall. Maireann, ar a laghad, ocht ndán eile de chuid Uilliam Óig, agus tá ceithre cinn acu sin in eagar go dtí seo: *Biaidh athroinn ar Inis Fáil* (Ó Cuív 1977), dán leathaoire a chum sé sa bhliain 1572, leath de ag moladh Aodha Uí Dhomhnaill, agus leath de ag aoradh iarla Thuamhan, Conchubhar Ó Briain; *Trí Coin chosnas clú Gaoidheal* (*DMU*, dán 18), a chum sé do Chú Chonnacht Mág Uidhir am éigin idir 1566 agus 1576; *Trom an suan-sa ort, a Aodh* (Mac a' Ghoill 2021) agus *Mithigh th'athdhúsgadh, a Aodh* (Mac a' Ghoill 2022) dhá dhán a bhrostaíonn an Aodh céanna le dul i gcoinne riail na Sasanach in Éirinn agus ardríocht na tíre a ghabháil dó féin. Tá na ceithre cinn eile i gcló in *ABM*:[2]

[1] Chuir mé eagrán den dán seo i gcló don chéad uair mar chuid de mo thráchtas dochtúireachta a cuireadh i gcrích in 2021. Tá mé buíoch den stiúrthóir dochtúireachta a bhí agam, an Dr Eoin Mac Cárthaigh, agus den Dr Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh agus den Dr Damian McManus as a gcuid moltaí le barr feabhais a chur ar an tráchtas ag an am sin. Tá mé buíoch freisin d'eagarthóirí *Celtica* agus an léitheoir a cheap siad as a gcuid moltaí le barr feabhais a chur ar an alt seo. Mé féin faoi deara gach botún agus dearmad.

[2] Ní bhíonn sé soiléir i gcónaí cé acu Uilliam Óg Mac an Bhaird nó a mhac, Uilliam Óg mac Uilliam Óig Mhic an Bhaird, atá i gceist nuair a chuireann scríobhaí an t-ainm seo le dán. Go minic, déanann scríobhaithe idirdhealú idir an dá Uilliam Óg sna ceannscríbhinní, nó is féidir a dhéanamh amach cé acu atá i gceist ó eolas eile faoin dán (dáta, pátrún, eachtraí, srl.).

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ABM 230 *Fada súil Éireann re hAodh*, d'Aodh mac Mhaghnais Uí Dhomhnaill, am éigin idir 1566 agus 1576. Cosúil leis na dánta eile leis an bhfile seo don Aodh céanna, deirtear sa dán seo gurb é an pátrún Aodh Eanghach, tairngeartach a d'aontódh an tír agus a thabharfadh muintir na hÉireann slán ó na Gaill, agus brostaíonn an file é chun é sin a dhéanamh.

ABM 266 *Gaoidhil meallta nó mac Néill*, do Thoirdhealbhach mac Néill Uí Néill. Dán a bhrostaíonn muintir na hÉireann le dul i gcoinne riail na Sasanach i ndáil Uí Néill.

ABM 273 *Gluais, a theachtaire théid siar*, do Sheaán Mac Uilliam de Búrca. Sa dán gearr seo, cuireann an file teachtaireacht chuig an bpátrún le cáineadh éagórach a rinneadh air i ndán(ta) eile a chúiteamh.

ABM 384 *Olc cúitighthear comaoin Dé*, dán cráifeach.

An pátrún agus Seaán Ó Néill

Is é Aodh Dubh (mac Mhaghnais mhic Aodha Dhuibh) Ó Domhnaill pátrún an dáin. Tháinig sé i gcomharbas ar a dheartháir, an Calbhach Ó Domhnaill, mar thiarna ar Thír Chonaill tar éis bhás an Chalbhaigh sa bhliain 1566. Bhí Aodh i gceannas ar Thír Chonaill le linn na tréimhse achrannaí in Éirinn agus concas na dTúdarach faoi lán seoil sa dara leath den séú haois déag. Sheas sé siar ó ról na ceannaireachta sa bhliain 1592 nuair a rinneadh tiarna dá mhac, Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill. De réir *AFM*, fuair Aodh Dubh bás ar 7 Nollaig 1600. Baineann an dán seo thíos leis an mbua mór i gCath Fearsaid Mhór a bhí aige agus ag muintir Thír Chonaill ag tús a ré.

Is é Seaán (mac Cuinn mhic Cuinn) Ó Néill, 'Seaán an Díomais', céile comhraic an phátrúin.[3] Bhí faltanas idir muintir Néill agus clann Dálaigh i bhfad sular tháinig Seaán i gcomharbas ar a athair mar cheannaire Thír Eoghain sa bhliain 1559. Bhí sé i gceist ag Seaán ceannaireacht dhaingean ar Chúige Uladh a bhaint amach do mhuintir Néill, rud a chothaigh an naimhdeas idir é agus teaghlaigh mhóra eile sa chúige, go háirithe muintir Dhomhnaill i dTír Chonaill agus clann Domhnaill san oirthuaisceart[4]. Ba iad Aodh Ó Domhnaill agus Seaán Ó Néill na ceannairí ar an dá thaobh i gCath Fearsaid Mhór, agus pléann an dán le bás Sheaáin Uí Néill a tháinig go gairid i ndiaidh an chatha in 1567 agus na cúinsí thart timpeall air sin.

Ábhar an dáin

Seo an t-eolas a thugann an scríobhaí Séamas Mág Uidhir dúinn sa cheann-scríbhinn a chuir sé roimh an dán, ar leathanach 129 [= 137] de LS G 167:

> Uilliam Óg M*a*c an Bhaird do-rin*n*e an dán-so dā thigh*ear*na,
> Aodh m*a*c Maghn*a*sa, inar chuimhn*igh* mar do bhris an tAodh-sin

[3] Cé nach dtugtar 'Seaán an Díomais' ar Sheaán Ó Néill sa téacs seo, tugann an file *mac Cuinn na gcéimeann neamhnáir* air i líne 33*b* ar féidir an chiall chéanna bhaint as.

[4] Is féidir plé a fháil ar thiarnas Sheaáin Uí Néill agus ar an gcaidreamh a bhí idir na Niallaigh agus tiarnais eile máguaird sna blianta roimh an gcath in Brady (2015).

> maidhm Feirsde Súilidhe ar Ó Néill, Seaān m*a*c Cuin*n*, an chēad bhliadhain do goir*eadh* tigh*ear*na don Aodh-soin m*a*c Maghnasa, 1567.
>
> 'Uilliam Óg Mac an Bhaird composed this poem for his lord, Aodh, son of Maghnas, in which he recalled how that Aodh inflicted the rout at Farsetmore on Ó Néill, Seaán, son of Conn, in the first year of the lordship of that Aodh son of Maghnas, 1567.'

Is ar 8 Bealtaine 1567 a troideadh cath Fhearsaid Mhór. Tá cur síos cuimsitheach ar an gcath seo in Hayes-McCoy (1990) agus in *AFM* 1567 agus, den chuid is mó, tagann na fíricí sna cuntais sin leis an gcuntas atá sa dán seo. Cur síos ar an gcath féin agus ar an méid a tharla ina dhiaidh atá sa chuid is mó den dán. Deir an file linn gur tháinig Seaán Ó Néill isteach i dTír Chonaill le slua de thuairim is míle fear chun an tír a chreachadh. Chuaigh siad chomh fada le Leitir Ceanainn agus chuaigh siad trasna inbhear na Súilí ag Fearsaid Mhór le lag trá (rann 2). Bhí Aodh ar Ard an Ghaire ag an am sin le feadhain bheag fear (rann 3). Ní raibh na Conallaigh ag súil leis an ionradh seo de réir rann 4, agus chuir Aodh marcshlua beag amach i gcoinne fhórsaí Uí Néill (rann 6) ar dtús ionas gurbh fhéidir leis dul siar agus a fhórsaí féin a chruinniú agus a chur in eagar.

Déanann an file liosta de na teaghlaigh i dTír Chonaill a tháinig agus a bhí páirteach sa chath, ag cur na Suibhneach chun tosaigh: Mac Suibhne Bághuinigh (rann 14), Mac Suibhne na dTuath (rann 15), Mac Suibhne Fánad (rann 16). Ina ndiaidh sin, luaitear muintir Uí Bhaoighill (rann 18) agus muintir Ghallchobhair (rann 19). Is léir go raibh páirt lárnach ag na Suibhnigh sa chath, agus luann an file arís iad i rann 11, áit a ndeir sé go raibh siad ann nuair a rinneadh an cinneadh dul in éadan fhórsaí Uí Néill. Chruinnigh Ó Domhnaill thart ar cheithre chéad fear (rann 13) chun dul ina gcoinne, agus nuair a thug na Conallaigh aghaidh ar na hionróirí d'éirigh leo an ruaig a chur orthu (rann 22). Theith fórsaí Uí Néill ar ais i dtreo Fearsaid Mhór, ach faoin am a shroich siad an t-inbhear bhí sé ina lán mara. Bádh cuid mhór den slua nuair a rinne siad iarracht teitheadh trasna an inbhir, agus maraíodh cuid eile díobh agus iad gafa idir an t-uisce agus na Conallaigh a bhí ar a dtóir (rainn 23–4).

De bharr na náire a tharraing an cath ar Sheaán Ó Néill agus ar a mhuintir, d'iarr sé cabhair ar mhuintir Mhic Dhomhnaill chun díoltas a bhaint amach ar Chineál Chonaill. De réir an fhile, níor thug sé aird ar an naimhdeas eatarthu agus chuaigh sé chucu gan aon chosaint ná coimirce a bheith aige agus, dá bharr sin, mharaigh muintir Mhic Dhomhnaill é ar a dtalamh féin ar 2 Meitheamh 1567. Ceiliúrann an file an bua seo ar Ó Néill agus ar a mhuintir sa dán, agus deir sé go bhfuil na Conallaigh tar éis díoltas a bhaint amach orthu as gach éagóir a rinneadh ar Chineál Chonaill le linn na coimhlinte fada idir an dá dhream. I rann 31, tagraíonn an file do Dhomhnall Óg Ó Domhnaill, a maraíodh i nDíseart Dá Chríoch (i gCo. Thír Eoghain an lae inniu) i gcath in éadan na nEóghanach sa bhliain 1281.

I dtreo dheireadh an dáin, molann an file an pátrún agus brostaíonn sé é chun dul agus níos mó a dhéanamh anois. Luann sé cathanna eile a bheidh le

troid sa todhchaí de réir na tairngreachta: cath Mhaisdean, cath Shligigh agus cath Shaingeal (rann 46). Tá tagairt do na cathanna seo, cathanna a bhí fós le teacht, le feiceáil i ndánta eile freisin. Féach, mar shampla, *DiD*, dán 97, rainn 42–3, a chum Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh do Thadhg (mac Dhomhnaill) Mac Carthaigh (†1413):

> Cuirfidh **cath Mhullaigh Maisdean**
> gleo re bhféachfaidh fíorghaisgeadh;
> brisfidh calg fa mhagh Midhe;
> gar do Thadhg an tairngire.
>
> **Cath díbheirgeach Dúin na Sgiath**
> cuirfidh oidhre fhóid fhinnChliach;
> re a ré muidhfidh gach mearchath
> is cuirfidh sé **an Saingealchath**.
>
> 'He will engage in the battle of Mullamast; a battle in which he will attempt true skill at arms; he will fight on the plain of Meath, near is the prophecy to Tadhg
>
> The heir of the bright land of Cliu will engage in the in the battle of Donaskeagh; during his time every furious battle will break out and he will engage in the battle of Saingeal.'

Luaitear cath Saingeal i rann 35 den dán *Cia is sine cairt ar chrích Néill* (Ó Raghallaigh 2008: 134):

> Tusa chuirfeas **cath Saingeal**,
> tú an cniocht ar ar céadchailleadh,
> tú an aoibheal dá n-éir doighear;
> fa fhéin nGaoidheal gríosfaidhear.
>
> 'It is you who will fight the battle of Saingeal, you are the knight who was first betrayed, you are the ember from which the flame rises: the Gaelic host will be stirred up [by you].'

Brostaíonn an file Aodh chun Leath Chuinn a ghabháil agus caidreamh a chothú le muintir Uí Bhriain i Leath Mhogha (rann 48).

Tagann deireadh leis an dán le trí rann (rainn 49–52) don Inghean Dubh (.i. Fionnghuala iníon Mhic Dhomhnaill, †1608), bean an phátrúin agus máthair Aodha Ruaidh Uí Dhomhnaill. De réir mar a chuaigh Aodh Ó Domhnaill in aois, is léir go raibh ról níos lárnaí ag a bhean i reáchtáil an tiarnais. Tá sé feiliúnach go bhfuil cúpla rann dise sa dán seo mar bhean Aodha mhic Mhaghnais Uí Dhomhnaill, ar ndóigh ach freisin mar iníon Mhic Dhomhnaill, ós ábhar ceiliúrtha a bhí ann don dá theaghlach go raibh an bua ag Cineál Chonaill sa chath agus gur maraíodh Seaán Ó Néill.

Lámhscríbhinn

Ní mhaireann an dán seo ach in aon LS amháin, is í sin LS G 167 i Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann, duanaire chlann Dálaigh. Tá alt ag Ó Cléirigh (1939–40)

ina bhfuil cur síos cuimsitheach ar an LS seo, agus tá cur síos uirthi i gcatalóg LSí Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann chomh maith (Ní Shéaghdha 1979: 8–15). Séamus Mág Uidhir a scríobh an LS ar fad, an chuid is mó di sa bhliain 1727 (an chóip den dán seo san áireamh) agus chuir sé 19 leathanach eile léi ní ba dhéanaí, am éigin tar éis na bliana 1738. Aodh Ó Domhnaill, Ceathrú Mhic Oireacht, Co. Liatroma, a choimisiúnaigh an LS. Tá 406 leathanach inti ([viii] + 398), agus 112 dán éagsúil (chomh maith le hocht sliocht as Saltair na Rann ag an tús). Tá an chóip den dán seo ar leathanaigh 129–34 de réir uimhriú an scríobhaí [= 137–42 in Ní Shéaghdha (1979) agus ar *ISOS*].

Polasaí eagarthóireachta

Mé féin faoi deara ceannlitriú, poncaíocht, suíomh an tsínidh fhada taobh istigh de shiolla, agus scaradh na bhfocal. Tá noda scaoilte agam i gcló iodálach, agus tá comharthaí séimhithe scaoilte agam mar 'h' gan a bheith i gcló iodálach. Úsáidim macran le síneadh fada nach bhfuil sa LS a chur ar fáil, agus tá síntí fada neamhstairiúla bainte agam os íseal (m.sh. *n-ordúgh*adh > *n-ordugh*adh, líne 21*d*). Tá síntí fada bainte agam os íseal de na défhoghair *ao*(*i*) agus *ua* agus tá síntí fada curtha ar fáil agam ar an défhoghar *eó* le macran nuair is cuí. Úsáidim lúibíní cearnacha chun litreacha nach bhfuil sa LS a chur ar fáil (m.sh. *sgél* > *sgé*[*a*]*l*, líne 8*c*).

Tá normalú déanta os íseal agam ar litriú roinnt focal coitianta neamhaiceanta: *a* > *i* (= an réamhfhocal *i n-*), *as* > *is* (an chopail/an cónasc); agus athraím *cc-* > *gc-* agus *tt-* go *dt-* (m.sh. *ttrea*s > *dtrea*s, líne 3*a*). Déanaim normalú os íseal freisin ar ghutaí neamhaiceanta nach bhfuil fada (m.sh. *thuirsi* > *thuirse*, líne 33*a*) ach amháin i gcás roinnt siollaí meánacha i gcuibheas (m.sh. *c*[*h*]*oill* : *gConoill*, línte 18*cd*).

Léirím gach athrú eile trí na léamha, le tuilleadh plé ar athruithe sna nótaí nuair is cuí.

Teanga agus meadaracht

Deibhidhe, dán díreach, meadaracht an dáin seo, agus tagann téacs na LSe leis na rialacha a bhaineann leis an meadaracht sin den chuid is mó, chomh maith leis an teanga Chlasaiceach. Déanaim tuilleadh plé ar cheisteanna a bhaineann leis an teanga agus leis an meadaracht sna nótaí.

Cuibheas breise

Tá cuibheas breise sna rainn seo a leanas nach mbeifí ag súil leis de réir na riachtanas meadarachta:

1*a*	duan	1*b*	—	1*c*	duan	1*d*	duan
9*a*	dhóibh	9*b*	—	9*c*	do-chóidh	9*d*	cóir
11*a*	Síol	11*b*	—	11*c*	ghníomh	11*d*	shíol
12*a*	slógh	12*b*	mhór	12*c*	sról	12*d*	chlódh
24*a*	mór	24*b*	—	24*c*	tslógh	24*d*	bhrón

25*a*	—	25*b*	mac	25*c*	mac	25*d*	slat
30*a*	—	30*b*	—	30*c*	gleó, teó	30*d*	gleó
36*a*	—	36*b*	duan	36*c*	luagh	36*d*	*Duan*
37*a*	—	37*b*	duan	37*c*	duan	37*d*	luagh
38*a*	—	38*b*	duain	38*c*	duain	38*d*	thuaidh
40*a*	Síol	40*b*	díol	40*c*	dhíobh	40*d*	ngníomh
44*a*	Duan	44*b*	duan	44*c*	duan	44*d*	—
46*a*	Cath	46*b*	cath	46*c*	cath	46*d*	—
49*a*	Clú	49*b*	—	49*c*	tú	49*d*	clú

I gcás an chuibhis bhreise i rainn 1, 11, 25, 30, 36-8, 44, 46 agus 49, áit a bhfuil an focal céanna ann níos mó ná uair amháin laistigh den rann, tá mé á thuiscint mar shampla den ghléas ornáideach *breacadh* (féach *BST* 223–4). I gcás an chuibhis bhreise i rainn 9, 12, 24, agus 40, áit nach bhfuil an focal céanna ann níos mó ná uair amháin laistigh den rann, tá mé á thuiscint mar locht mheadarachta.

Dúnadh
Bheifí ag súil le dúnadh an dáin ag deireadh rann 48, roimh an iargcomharc don Inghean Dubh, ach tá an dúnadh ag deireadh an dáin ar fad:

1*a*. **Gré**as dearbhtha Duan na Feirsde
52*d*. don bhladh is í is éanoi**ghre**.

Is díol suime é go ndeir an file i líne 46*d* nach bhfuil dúnadh daingean leis an dán, mar go bhfuil níos mó le baint amach ag an bpátrún anois dar leis agus, i rann 51, deir an file go bhfuil sé i gceist aige na rainn don Inghean Dubh a úsáid chun an dán a dhúnadh:

46*d*. do dhuan ní daingean dúnadh.
51. Ar-ís d'aithcheangal ar roinn,
bean d'uaislibh aicme Domhnoill,
slat réidh nach anbhfann alladh,
dar ndaghrann féin fuaramar.

Téacs

1. Gré[a]s dearbhtha Duan na Feirsde,
sgé[a]l oirdh*rei*c is aithrisde,
duan nach d*ea*rnadh gus a-nois,
is duan far de*ar*b[h]*adh* dīoghrais.

2. Lá do-chuadar clan*n*a Néill
sluagh ar shīol gConaill cra[i]n*n*réidh,
tar Fin*n* is tar F*ea*rtais Móir,
'man ghealtais nar thim dtionóil.

3. Aodh m*a*c Maghnais na dtr*ea*s dte,
an u*air*-se ar Ard an Gháire –
nuachar T*ea*mhra n*ar* tubhadh –
uathadh feadhna fīorchuradh.

4. Do braith*eadh ar* mbeith ar faill
dar dtineōl re dtea*cht* chugain*n*;
saoilt*ea*r dóigh dhín*n* do dh*ēa*na[i]mh,
nī[o]r chóir brīgh sna baoithsgēalaibh.

5. Tángadar orain*n* g*an* fhios
mar do bheath eadrain*n* oireas;
gēr th*ean*n a léim, dar linne
fa céim i gcean*n* cointinne.

Aistriúchán

1. The Poem of Farsetmore is a proven work of art, this is a famous story which should be told, a poem which was not composed until now, it is a poem which proves diligence.

2. One day, the O'Neills went spear-ready with a host against the descendants of Conall, across the Finn and Farsetmore, around the fair gentle one whose muster was not weak.

3. Aodh, son of Maghnas, of the heated combats – the unreproached spouse of Tara – was at this time at Ardingary with a small band of true champions.

4. Our muster was perceived to be off-guard before they came towards us; they think to make an easy target of us – it is not right to believe the foolish stories.

5. They came upon us without us knowing, as if there had been a prior arrangement between us to meet; though their bounding attack was strong, I believe it was a step into battle.

Malairtí

2*c*. mhóir; 2*d*. im an, tineóil; **5*b*.** bheith; 5*d*. coin*n*tin*n*e.

6. Do chuir-sean i gcoin*n*e an tsluaigh
buidh*ei*n mbig m*ea*nmn*aigh* m*ar*cshl*uaigh*;
tug dúin*n* anáil ōr n-uamhan,
níorbh fharáil an t-ionnuaradh.

7. Gluaismíd i ngoire ar ndaingin
g*ur* c*ru*inn*i*gheadh Conailligh;
gēr līonmhar slóigh slea*cht*a Néill,
dhóibh níorbh eachtra g*an* oilbhéim.

8. I dtús a [d]tionóil tromdha,
torchair mac Mhē[i]g Mhathghomhna,
sgé[a]l an mhanaigh n*ar* bh*ea*g bróg
b*ea*g nach samhail 's a[n] sluagh-ód.

9. Tar *é*is fillte dhōibh go d*ea*s,
a b[h]fu*air*siod orain*n* d'āitheas –
do-chōidh sé m*ar* do saoileadh –
nī hē is cóir do chraobhsgaoil*eadh*.

10. Fir nar tharbha cur 'na gcean*n*,
cruinnighis iad go haithghearr
a līon comhlain*n* san taobh thuaidh,
Aodh Ō Domhnaill, *ar* d*ea*ghuair.

11. Síol gConaill is clan*n* Suibhne
cin*n*id le cruas comhuirle
an g[h]leōghuin gēr ghnīomh doil*igh*,
ar shīol Eōghain d'ion*n*saig[h]*idh*.

6. He (i.e. Aodh Ó Domhnaill) sent a small courageous band of cavalry out against the host; it gave us breathing-space from our terror, the respite was needed.

7. We move close to our stronghold until the descendants of Conall were gathered; though the hosts of Niall's family were great in number, it was a humiliating venture for them.

8. At the front of their great assembly, the son of Mág Mathghamhna fell; the story of the monk whose shoe was not small (?) is almost comparable to that host of theirs.

9. After they had returned in good order, whatever little victory they gained over us is not fitting to boast about – it went as expected.

10. In good time, Aodh Ó Domhnaill quickly gathered his battle strength in the north, men whom going against would be fruitless.

11. Though [choosing] the wounding of battle was a difficult action, by valorous counsel the descendants of Conall and the Mac Suibhne family decided to attack the descendants of Eóghan.

6*a*. chuir Seaan; 6*d*. nirb furáil; **7*b*.** conallaigh; 7*d*. nir; **8*b*.** mhathghamhna; 8*c*. Mhanaidh; **10*b*.** c*ru*inn*i*gheas; **11*a*.** *tsuibhne*; 11*b*. comhairle.

12. A[i]n*n*-sēin do heagr*adh* ar slógh,
re a m[h]*ea*s, nī[o]r mhór ar dtionól
ar síneadh ar sról ndatha,
do chlódh míleadh mórMhacha.

13. Gan a*cht* áireamh cheithre gc*éa*d
fa rí Conaill dā choimh*éa*d,
laoich do fromhadh i ngort g[h]áidh,
dob omhan tocht ō a dt*ea*gmháil.

14. Fa Mhac Suibhne Maol Muire
tiad i dtús na hiorghoile –
gnīomh lánduil*igh* car 'na gcean*n* –
Bághuin*igh* fan damh dílean*n*.

15. Laochr*aidh* na dTuath teagoid s[a]in
timchioll Mhurch*aidh* m*ei*c Eōghain;
fir dhorrdha is c*ru*aidh i gcathaibh,
colbha sluaigh go samhthachaibh.

16. Ba gnáth tús aca i n-iorghail
na cur*aidh*, clan*n* Toirdhiolbhaigh;
fa buidheach an ton*n* dā dtroid,
an drong fhuil*each* ō Fhánoid.

17. Aodh m*a*c Aodha Ī Dhomhn*aill*,
fear iomchair gach anfhorlainn,
mairg sluagh le dtarla i dt*ea*n*n*ta
an sduagh amhra in*n*eallta.

12. Then our host was arranged for subduing the warriors of great [Eamhain] Mhacha – by estimation, our muster was not great in number with our colourful banners unfurled.

13. There were only four hundred men around the king of Cineál Chonaill protecting him, warriors who were tested (i.e. experienced) in the field of battle, fighting them was terrifying.

14. Around the great stag, Maol Muire Mac Suibhne, the men of Banagh go into the van of the fighting – going against them is a very difficult act.

15. The warriors of Doe then come around Murchadh, son of Eóghan; the fierce men, tough in battles, axe-wielding pillar of a host.

16. It was customary for the warriors of Toirdhealbhach's family to be in the van in battle, the wave [of warriors] was grateful for the fighting of the bloody band from Fanad.

17. Aodh, son of Aodh, Ó Domhnaill, a man who withstands every difficulty – woe to the opposing army – the wondrous, well-equipped hero.

12*a*. as; 12*b*. ttineól; **14*b*.** táid; 14*c*. cur; **15*a*.** t*ea*ghoid; **16*b*.** toirrdhealb*aigh*; **17*b*.** anbforlain*n*; 17*d*. stuagh.

18. Uí Bhaoighill, a bhrāithre féin
dā choimh*ēa*d ar chloin*n* saoirNéill –
ua *ar* nAodhai-ne, cran*n* ōs c[h]oill –
fa aoghoire clan*n* gConoill.

19. Clan*n* Ghallchobhair na ngreadh seang
i dtús ghliadh go gclú gcéimean*n* –
cóir obadh f*ea*dhma na b[h]fear –
'na mogal fheardha fhéin*n*eadh.

20. Gluaismíd tar éis ar n-eagair
chuca ar c*ea*n*n* a n-airleagaidh,
mar sgoith buin*n*e ag béim re haill,
mar léim tuin*n*e tar tórain*n*.

21. Fuaramar ag F*ea*rsaid Mhóir
mac m*ei*c Cuin*n* fa throm dtionōil –
a bhreath bhrada is buan pudhar
's a shluagh aga i n-ordugh*adh*.

22. Do thréigsiod na fir fraochdh*acht*,
tugsad m*ea*nma ar mhīolaochdha*cht*;
dā gclú g[h]aisgidh do-chōidh cion
dhōibh le faicsin ar b[h]féin*n*eadh.

23. Aghaidh ar mhuir nglais ngairgmhir,
cúl do chu[i]r re a n-*ea*sgcairdibh,
an drong fhuil*each* fa t*ea*nn troid;
níorbh fhearr fuir*each* re F*ea*rsoid.

18. The Ó Baoighill family, his own kinsmen, around the shepherd of Conall's families, the grandson of our Aodh, highest tree in a wood, protecting him from the family of noble Niall.

19. The Ó Gallchobhair family of the slender horses are a virile cluster of warriors, with heroic acts in the beginning of the battle; it is sensible to refuse fighting these men.

20. After we were arranged, we move towards them to get their [repayment of] debt, like a strong gush of water striking against a cliff, like the leap of a wave over a boundary.

21. We found at Farsetmore the grandson of Conn (i.e. Seaán) with a great muster and his host in order – his decision to pillage meant lasting harm.

22. The men abandoned ferocity, they exchanged their courage for cowardice; for them, when they saw our warriors, some of their fame for valour vanished.

23. The bloody band of intense fighting turned their backs to their enemies [and their] faces towards the rough, swift, green sea; it was not best to wait [before returning] to Farsetmore.

18*a*. O baoighill; 18*b*. tsaoirNéill; **19*b*.** gliaidh; 19*d* fhearrdha; **20*b*.** chuctha; 20*c*. bein; **21*c*.** bhroide; 21*d*. aige; **23a.** nghlais nghairgmhir; 23*d*. nirb f*eár*r.

24. Do shluagh M[h]acha fa mór bladh,
báit*ea*r an mhéid n*ar* m*ar*b[h]*adh*
beag don tslógh téarnó ōn troid,
fa bhrón ōn éanló anaid.

25. Ag sin bladh d'éa*cht*aibh an áir:
Brian m*ac* Ē[i]nrí, ua Seaáin,
is mac oile dā athair
slat a Doire dhlúthsgath*aigh*.

26. Do fágb[h]*adh* 's a dtaobh re tuin*n*
a mhuinntear fa Mhac Domhnuill,
na cur*aidh* dar chóir anmhain,
'na n-ul*aidh* mhōir mhīotharbhaigh.

27. Nī tugadh, d'éa*cht*aibh oile,
muinntear dhaoineach Dhon*n*ghaile,
a*cht* gidh mór fan trāigh torch*air*,
a lógh áir ar Eóg[h]anchaibh.

28. Míle fe*ar* do fágbhadh an*n*,
nī bhiú ag áireamh a n-anman*n* –
nī[o]r fé[a]dadh tuile g*an* trāigh –
féagadh g*ach* duine a dhīoghbháil.

29. Nī fhuigh*eadh* ēinneach ōn Fhinn
f*ea*dh na críche go Cairlin*n*
teach gan adhbhar gola ōn ghleó,
dob amhghar cora an c[h]oinsgleó.

24. Those of [Eamhain] Mhacha's famous host who were not slain were drowned; little of the host escaped from the fight; they remain sorrowful as a result of that single day.

25. These are some of those killed during the battle: Brian son of Éinrí, grandson of Seaán, and another son of his father's, a scion from the flower-abundant Derry.

26. Left beside the sea was Mac Domhnaill surrounded by his people in their great fruitless tomb, the warriors who should have stayed [behind].

27. Though many of the populous Ó Donnghaile family fell around the strand – among other deaths – the slaughter they deserved was not inflicted on the Tír Eóghain men.

28. A thousand men were left there, I will not be listing their names – a flood-tide is not possible without an ebb-tide; let all witness its harm.

29. No one could find a house from the Finn to Carlingford which did not have reason to weep because of the battle – engaging the battle brought about hardship.

24*c*. t*éa*rna; 24*d*. énlá; **26*b*.** mhuin*n*tir; **27*a*.** eile; 27*b*. muin*n*tir; **28*d*.** fegh*adh*; **29*a*.** bfin*n*; 29*d*. aghmh*ar*.

30. Áth nDoire do dīoghl*adh* an*n*
maidhm na Ras rug ō chothram
gleō naoidhe is teó 'ná g*ach* troid
gleō na hAoine 'gun Fhe*ar*said.

31. Guin Domhnaill Dīsirt dā Chrīoch,
doilghe é 'nā g*ach* ēindí[o]th;
iomdha é[a]cht uain*n* 'na ionadh,
san chrēacht do-chuaidh cúitiugh*adh*.

32. Mā fuairsead clan*n* n*ea*rtmh*ar* Néill
an t-áth orain*n* re himchéin,
nī rug*adh* dháibh breath le bruid
fan tráigh is-teach nach tánaig.

33. Tig dar ghabh do thuirse an táir
mac Cuin*n* na gcéimean*n* n*ea*mhnáir
nar shir sé slána orthaibh
gēr námha ē d'Albonchaibh.

34. Is ī ar mbreith gi-bē ler thuit
dhín*n* go ndleaghar a éaraic;
guin an rī[o]gh nī ráinig lin*n*
's is thrí[o]n*n* táinig a thuitim.

35. Le sīol gConaill maoidhfidh mē
tug*adh* timchioll na Feirsde,
fachain d*ēa*nta na duaine,
éachta *ar* chathaibh Craobhruaidhe.

30. The ford of Derry was avenged there, it rebalanced the defeat of the Rosses; the Friday battle at Farsetmore was a new battle more intense than any fight.

31. The slaying of Domhnall of Desertcreat was more difficult than any loss; we slayed many in return for him; that wound was avenged.

32. Though the powerful family of Niall may have beaten us long ago, no victory under duress was won for them that did not come home to roost on the strand.

33. Such was the sadness Conn's son [Seaán] 'the Proud' suffered from the disgrace, he did not seek securities from the Scotsmen, despite being their enemy.

34. It is our judgement that, regardless of who killed him, we are liable to pay his honour-price; though we did not kill the king, it was through us his downfall came.

35. I will boast that battalions of Craobhruadh were slaughtered around Farsetmore by the descendants of Conall – it is the reason for composing this poem.

30*a.* A t*rea*n doire (?); 30*b.* Rass; 30*c.* no; **32*a.*** fuairsiot; 32*c.* breith; 32*d.* ttáinic; **33*a.*** áir; 33*d.* námhe; **34*b.*** éiric; 34*c.* ráinic; 34*d.* tainic; **35*a.*** ccon*n*aill maoidhfe.

36. Cr*ēa*d nach díolfadh Ō Domhnaill
duan g[h]ré[a]sach do ghlanfhoghlaim,
nocha m[e]isde a luagh g*ach* laoi
Duan na Feirsde dā b[h]fēaghthaoi?

37. Dīolfaid cur*aidh* chlan*n* Suibhne
an duan g*an* c[h]uid comhuirle,
an duan is dóibh is moladh
cóir a luagh g*an* laghdughadh.

38. Dīolfaid sīol mBaoighill Balla
an duain m*ar* dhéis dioghlama;
ar an duain sao[i]r nā slonnaidh
don tao[i]bh thuaidh a*cht* t*ea*rmon*n*aigh.

39. Dīolfaid Dochart*aigh* an duain
cur*aidh* na gcēimean*n* rochruaidh
siad ō do saor*adh* sa[n] tr*ea*s
nī baoghal iad dā haighneas.

40. Sīol Gallchobhair na ngleō dte,
cuideōchaid dīol na duaine
an m[h]ēid dhīobh tarla sa[n] troid,
gan t*ar*bha a ngnīo*mh* nī ghabhoid.

41. An duan do dhīol dlig[h]*idh* ruin*n*
Somhairle mac Mheic Domhnuill;
dā mbeath sibh g*an* triall san t*ro*id
ō sin do bhiadh 'na bhrāghaid.

36. If the Poem of Farsetmore were examined, why would Ó Domhnaill not pay for an artistic poem of pure learning, whose value does not depreciate each day?

37. The warriors of the Mac Suibhne families will pay for the poem without need for counsel; a poem that is praising them should not diminish in value.

38. The Ó Baoighill family will pay for the poem as an ear of gleaning; let only protectors of the north be named in the noble poem.

39. The Ó Dochartaigh family will pay for the poem, the warriors of very difficult deeds, they are no danger to its testimony, since they were ennobled in the battle.

40. The Ó Gallchobhair family of intense fighting will share in paying for the poem; a great amount of them were in the fight, their actions are not without benefit.

41. It is right for Somhairle, son of Mac Domhnaill, to pay us for the poem; he would be a prisoner since then if you had not gone into the fight.

37*a*. tsuibhne; 37*c*. duain; **38*c*.** sloinn*idh*; **41*a*.** duain; 41*c*. mbeith.

42. Dīol na duaine is de*ar*bhtha ag sgoil
dligh*idh* Con*n*mh*a*c an Chalb[h]*aigh*
do bhí i nglas fa cheó gcumhadh
an gleó as 'gā fhuasgal*adh*.

43. Dlighid Gaoidhil *agus* Goill
dīol na duaine-se Uī Dhomhnoill;
dóibh i dtarbha 's i dtreise
do-chóidh damhna a deimhne-se.

44. Duan oirdh*ear*c an Eich Bhuidhe,
Duan C[h]roibhdh*eir*g *ar* gC*ru*achain-[n]e,
Duan na Feirsde is togha t[h]ro[i]m
gā meisde a cora i gconchloin*n*?

45. Ag sin duit, a Uī Dhomhnaill,
duain f*ar* fé[a]ch*adh* fí[o]rfhoghlaim,
méaraidh i ndeóidh do dhola
ag d*ēa*na[i]mh eōil th'*ea*ng[h]namha.

46. Cath Maisdean go muidhthear libh
nō go gcuirthear cath Sligigh,
nō cath Saingeal bhus buan bladh,
do dhuan nī daing*ea*n dún*adh*.

47. A sheabhaic ēacht*aigh* Fhin*n*e,
cóir dhuit d*ēa*namh oirchille
buaidh s[h]ealg *ar* sheabhcaibh Banbha;
b*ea*dhg fan ealtain allmhardha.

42. It is right for Conn, son of An Calbhach, to pay for the poem attested by a [poetic] school; he was locked up under a mist of grief from which the battle freed him.

43. It is right for both Gael and Gall to pay for this poem of Ó Domhnaill's; for them, the cause of its certitude (i.e. the battle) has benefited and strengthened them.

44. What harm is it to compare the Poem of Farsetmore – it is a strong choice – with the famous Poem of the Yellow Steed [and] the Poem of Redhand coming to Rathcroghan?

45. There you have it, Ó Domhnaill, a poem which exhibits true learning, it will remain after you are gone, making your prowess known.

46. Until you win the battle of Maisdin, or until the battle of Sligo is engaged, or the battle of Saingeal whose fame will be long-lasting, your poem is not securely closed.

47. O heroic hawk of the Finn, you should make preparations [for] hunting victories over the hawks of Ireland; set out against the foreign flock.

45*c*. bh*ea*ra; **46*a*.** Maist*ea*n, muighter; 46*b*. ccurth*ar*; 46*d*. dhuain; **47*d*.** allmharr*dha*

48. Druid i gcoin*n*e cloin*n*e Táil,
mith*igh* dhaoibh d*ēa*namh com[h]báidh,
ō a-tá Éire eadraibh féin –
freagr*aidh* a chēile coiscéim.

49. Clú d'Éirin*n* do thea*cht* t*ar* tuin*n*
a ingh*ea*n mhe[i]c Mh*ei*c D[h]omhnuill;
do ardaigh tú re treimhse
clú d'Albain san Éir[e]in*n*-se.

50. Aoibheal b[h]eó einigh Alban,
b*ea*n ris nach cóir comhardadh,
nī fhuil fa dhuais orra is f[h]*ea*rr,
d'f[h]uil Cholla Uais an aoibheal.

51. Ar-ís d'aithcheangal ar roin*n*,
b*ea*n d'uaislibh aicme Domhnoill,
slat rēidh nach anb[h]fan*n* all*adh*
d*ar* ndaghran*n* fēin fuaram*ar*.

52. Bé[a]s is f[h]*ea*rr 'gun Inghin Duibh –
toghthar b*ea*n ar a b*éa*saibh –
nī háil dī a cradh do choimhdhe,
don bhladh is í is é[a]noighre.

48. Move to meet the families of Tál, it is time to make an alliance, since Ireland is between you – one step answers the other.

49. Your coming across the sea brings fame to Ireland, o daughter of Mac Domhnaill's son; in recent times you have heightened the fame of Scotland in Ireland.

50. The living ember of Scotland's honour, a woman with whom no one can compare; the ember is from the bloodline of Colla Uais – there is no better leader for giving prizes.

51. Once again to conclude my verse, for my own good verse, I have a steady scion of no petty fame, a woman of the nobles of Domhnall's family.

52. The Inghean Dubh has the best manner – a wife is chosen based on her manners – it is not her will to hoard wealth; she is the only heir to fame.

49*c*. le treimsi; **50*c*.** urra.

Nótaí

1*a*. Is díol suime é go dtugann sé teideal ar leith é féin ar an dán, 'Duan na Feirsde', sa chéadlíne agus tugtar é arís i línte 36*cd* (*nocha meisde a luagh gach laoi* / *Duan na Feirsde dá bhféaghthaoi?*) agus 44*cd* (*Duan na Feirsde is togha throim* / *gá meisde a cora i gconchloinn?*). Ní raibh an nós ag filí teidil ar leith a thabhairt ar a gcuid dánta féin sa traidisiún Clasaiceach, cé go bhfaightear teidil ar leith ar dhánta áirithe (m.sh. 'Laoidh an Doirn' a thugtar ar an dán leis an gcéadlíne *Dorn idir dhán is dásacht* le Seaán Ó Clumháin (*DiD*, dán 84)).

De ghnáth, d'fheidhmíodh céadlíne an dáin mar theideal, mar an gcéanna le traidisiúin filíochta i dtíortha agus i dteangacha eile, ina measc traidisiún na soinéad, a bhí faoi bhláth i Sasana sa tréimhse chéanna seo (Brackett 2008: 361). Déanann an file tagairt do dhá dhán eile i rann 44, agus teidil ar leith orthu: 'Duan oirdhearc an Eich Bhuidhe' (.i. *Lorcán so Locha Deirgdheirc*; féach Ó Donnchadha 1940: 106–109), agus *Duan Chroibhdheirg ar gCruachain-ne* (.i. *Táinig an Croibhdhearg go Cruachain*; féach Quiggin 1912: 167–77).

1*d*. Ba litriúla 'it is a poem around which diligence is proven' mar aistriúchán ar an líne seo, agus is léir go bhfuil an file ag tagairt don obair a bhaineann le cumadh an dáin féin. Tá sampla eile de *far dearbhadh díograis* i línte 13*ab* den dán *Dlighidh liaigh leigheas a charad* (*Teacht an mheicsin ní mairg tárraidh* / *toisg* ***far dearbhadh díoghrais*** *bháidh* 'lucky are those who have experienced the visit of that son (of God), a visit **proving the excess** of His love'; féach McKenna 1949: 184, 187).

2*c*. Tugtar faoi deara go bhfuil dhá fhoirm den ainmfhocal céanna in úsáid sa dán seo; *fearsad* (*IGT* ii §54) agus *feartas* (*IGT* ii §12). Ní úsáidtear an focal seo sa dán ach amháin mar pháirt den logainm, agus aistrím é mar 'Farsetmore' síos tríd.

3*b*. Is cosúil nach n-úsáidtear an logainm Ard an Gháire (Ardingary) sa lá atá inniu ann, agus níl sé sa bhunachar logainmneacha logainm.ie. Tá Ard an Gháire ar an taobh thuaidh de Leitir Ceanainn, Co. Dhún na nGall.

4*c*. Foirm chéasta den bhriathar *saoilidh* san aimsir láithreach is ea *saoiltear*. Tá sé aistrithe agam mar 'they think' in áit an aistriúcháin ní ba litriúla 'one thinks' / 'it is thought', ag tabhairt le fios gurb é Seaán Ó Néill agus a arm atá ag déanamh an ghnímh.

5*b*. Tá *do bheith* na LSe athraithe agam go leagan cuí an 3 uatha foshuiteach caite (*do bheath*; féach *IGT* iii §7, agus *SnaG*: 416).

6*a*. Tá deacracht sa líne seo ó thaobh na meadarachta de agus ó thaobh brí de i leagan na LSe (*Do chuir Seaan i gcoinne an tsluaigh*). Tá siolla sa bhreis sa líne, agus níl uaim inti. Chomh maith leis sin, de réir *AFM* 1567, níorbh é Seaán Ó Néill a chuir marcshlua amach ach Aodh Ó Domhnaill:

> Ar na airiucchadh sin d'Ua Domhnaill ro chuir a brodlom b*ea*cc slóicch i n-inneall, *agus* i n-orducchadh fó chédóir, *agus* ro la diorma marcslóicch im mac Uí Dhomhnaill .i. A*e*dh mac A*e*dha do dheabhaidh fri tosach an tslóigh…
>
> 'When O'Donnell perceived this, he instantly drew up his little army in order and array, and dispatched a troop of cavalry, under the command of the son of O'Donnell (Hugh, the son of Hugh), to engage the van of the enemy…'

Tá *Do chuir Seaan* na LSe athraithe agam go *Do chuir-sean* (a thagraíonn d'Ó Domhnaill) a réitíonn na deacrachtaí sa mheadaracht agus sa bhrí. Ní deacair a shamhlú go dtuigfeadh scríobhaí *sean* ina eiseamláir mar an t-ainm

agus go bhforcheartódh sé go *Seaán* é. Seo an t-aon tuiscint a ritheann liom a thagann le brí an rainn ina iomlán.

6*d*. Tá *furáil* na LSe athraithe agam go *faráil* san eagrán chun comhardadh inmheánach a chur ar fáil (*anáil* : *faráil*); glactar leis an dá fhoirm in *IGT* ii §149.

7*b*. Tá *Conallaigh* na LSe athraithe agam go *Conailligh* san eagrán chun comhardadh deiridh a chur ar fáil (*ndaingin* : *Conailligh*); glactar leis an dá fhoirm in *IGT* ii §17.

7*c*. Níl séimhiú curtha ar fáil agam ar *sleachta* agus na riachtanais do shléagar arna gcomhlíonadh.

7*d*. Tá diúltach dúbailte sa líne seo (*dhóibh* ***níorbh*** *eachtra* ***gan*** *oilbhéim*, 'it was not a venture without humiliation for them') nach bhfuil léirithe agam san aistriúchán.

8*c*. Níl teacht agam ar an scéal a bhfuil an file ag tagairt dó sa líne seo. Ní chuirfeadh sé ionadh orm dá mbeadh *bród* in áit *bróg* in eiseamláir níos luaithe, agus manach sotalach i gceist seachas manach le bróg mhór. Thiocfadh sé sin leis an leasainm 'Seaán an Díomais' ar Sheaán Ó Néill (féach, mar shampla, Ó Donnchadha 1931: 54). Féach freisin go dtugtar *mac Cuinn na gcéimeann neamhnáir* air i líne 33*c*.

8*d*. Tá *sa* na LSe athraithe agam go *'s an*. Tá sé tugtha faoi deara ag McManus (2019: 162–7) go gcailleann an t-alt (*an*) an *-n* go minic tar éis an chónaisc *is* (*agus*) i LSí, agus déanann sé plé air sin le samplaí eile ó LSí éagsúla.

10*b*. Tá deireadh leathan ag an scríobhaí leis an mbriathar seo in áit an deiridh chaoil atá ag teastáil don bhriathar sa 3 uatha, aimsir chaite. Is earráid í seo a bhíonn ag an scríobhaí áirithe seo go minic. Tá samplaí eile agus plé gairid air seo sa nóta ar líne 9*ab* de Dhán 1 ag Mac a' Ghoill (2020: 81–2).

11*a*. Coinním an t-urú ar lorg *síol*, focal a bhí neodrach sa tSean-Ghaeilge, san ainmneach uatha mar atá sé sa LS.

12*b*. Tá séimhiú curtha ar fáil agam ar lorg an fhorainm shealbhaigh *a*, a thagraíonn don ainmfhocal firinscneach *tionól* (*IGT* ii §35) sa líne chéanna.

13*c*. Tá séimhiú curtha ar fáil agam tar éis *gort* mar ainmfhocal sa tuiseal tabharthach uatha. Is léir go raibh an riail seo ag an bhfile i bhfianaise línte 9*cd* den dán *Biaidh athroinn ar Inis Fáil* (*dob indéinimh go réidh rinn* / *do fhréimh f****h****innÉibhir d'Éirinn*). Tá séimhiú curtha ar fáil agam ar an gcúis chéanna sna línte 19*b* (*i dtús g****h****liadh*), 22*c* (*dá gclú g****h****aisgidh*) agus 24*a* (*Do shluagh M****h****acha*).

14*b*. Mar a mholtar in *ABM*, nóta 274, tá *táid* na LSe athraithe agam go *tiad* san eagrán.

14*d*. Tagraíonn *damh díleann* do Mhaol Muire Mac Suibhne, agus is téarma molta é atá le feiceáil i roinnt dánta eile. Féach, mar shampla, *DiD* 112, línte

11*cd* (*an cú glan seamfhaobhrach seang* / *ór ghearrshaoghlach* ***damh díleann***). Féach freisin go bhfuil sampla de in *DIL* s.v. 1 *dam* I, leis an aistriúchán 'a fabulous ox of antiquity'.

15*b*. Níl séimhiú curtha ar fáil agam ar *meic* agus na riachtanais do shléagar arna gcomhlíonadh.

16*c*. Tá *tonn* á úsáid go meafarach anseo (féach *DIL* s.v. 1 *tonn* (c)), ag tagairt don ionsaí ar airm Sheaáin Uí Néill. Tagann sé seo leis an íomháineachas i línte 20*cd* (*mar sgoith buinne ag béim re haill* / *mar léim tuinne tar tórainn* 'like a strong gush of water striking against a cliff, like the leap of a wave over a boundary').

16*d*. Tá an focal *fuileach* débhríoch, agus d'fhéadfaí é a aistriú mar 'noble' (.i. 'of noble blood') (*DIL* s.v. *fuilech* (d)), nó mar 'bloody'. Cé go bhfuil an t-ainmfhocal *drong* firinscneach sa tSean-Ghaeilge (*DIL* s.v. *drong*), tá sé baininscneach sa teanga Chlasaiceach, de bharr comhshamhlaithe leis an ainmfhocal *dream* (*DIL* s.v. *drem*(*m*)), is cosúil. Tá séimhiú ar a lorg anseo deimhnithe ag uaim (*an drong* ***fhu****ileach ó* ***Fhá****noid*).

17*a*. De réir na rialacha maidir le bá gutaí atá leagtha amach ag Ní Dhomhnaill (1975: 32–3), is iarméarla é *Í* nuair is páirt de shloinne é, cé is moite d'fhoirm an tuisil ghairmigh. Dá réir sin, tá an siolla seo báite agus fágtar siolla ar iarraidh sa líne. Ní ritheann aon réiteach liom. Tá sampla in *DiD*, dán 121, línte 35*ab* de *Í* a bheith báite agus líon ceart siollaí ann (*Mac éachtach Aodha Í Dhomhnaill* / *Ua Séamuis, tuir treasfhorlainn*).

17*d*. Tá an líne seo aistrithe agam mar 'the wondrous, well-equipped hero' (*DIL* s.vv. *stúag* II (b), *amrae* I, agus *indlid* (b)), ach d'fhéadfaí an focal *innealta* a aistriú mar 'gracious' chomh maith (féach *DIL* s.v. *innelda*).

18*a*. Tá *O baoighill* na LS athraithe agam go *Uí Bhaoighill* ar mhaithe le ciall an rainn.

19*b*. D'fhéadfaí *i dtús ghliadh* a léamh mar 'in the beginning of the battle' nó 'at the van of the battle'. Tá sé aistrithe agam mar 'in the beginning' de bharr an tagartha don mharcshlua i rann 6*b* a chuaigh i gcoinne na n-ionróirí i dtús an chatha. Maidir le hurú ar lorg *go n-* + ainmfhocal in *go gclú* ***gc****éimeann* (atá coinnithe mar sin agam san eagrán), féach 'in Bardic poetry an epithet after a noun governed by *go n-* constantly has its initial eclipsed' (*Magauran*, nóta 1010).

Maidir leis an séimhiú atá curtha ar fáil agam tar éis *i dtús*, féach nóta 13*c*.

19*c*. Ba litriúla an t-aistriúchán 'it is right to refuse' ar *cóir obadh*.

20*b*. De réir *BST* 194.6–7, ní ghlactar le *chuctha* mar fhoirm 3 iolra, agus tá sé seo athraithe agam go *chuca* san eagrán.

20*b*. De réir *DIL* s.v. *airlicud*, is é 'lending' / 'loaning' is brí le *airleagadh* (*airleagaidh* sa ghinideach uatha), agus tá sé aistrithe agam mar '[repayment of] debt'. Tagann sé seo leis an trácht ar dhíoltas agus ar chúiteamh i líne 31*d* (*san chréacht do-chuaidh cúitiughadh*).

21*b*. Tugtar faoi deara go bhfuil píosa fágtha ar lár san aistriúchán Béarla in *AFM* 1567 (lch 1611): '…lá hUa Néill (Seaan mac Cuinn, **mic Cuinn**, mic Enri, mic Eocchain)' *O'Neill* (*John, son of Con, who was son of Henry, who was son of Owen*). Tá an earráid chéanna ag McKenna sa chraobh ghinealaigh a thugann sé do mhuintir Uí Néill in *AiD*, 300, áit a ndeir sé gur gharmhac le hÉinrí Óg é Seaán Ó Néill, seachas garmhac le Conn Mór.

21*cd*. Tá comhardadh inmheánach ar iarraidh idir *bhroide* agus *aige* i leagan na LSe. Foirm eile den ainmfhocal *broid* (*IGT* ii §14) is ea *brad* (*IGT* ii §38), a dtéann a ghinideach uatha le *aga*, foirm inghlactha eile den fhorainm réamhfhoclach *aige* de réir *BST* 193.35.

22*c*. Maidir leis an séimhiú atá curtha ar fáil agam tar éis *dá gclú*, féach nóta 13*c*.

23*a*. Is é *agh**adh*** an t-ainmneach uatha a thugtar in *IGT* ii §4, agus gach seans gurb é sin a bhí ag an bhfile anseo. Ní féidir a bheith cinnte de, áfach, nach ón bhfile a tháinig an t- ainmneach *agh**aidh***, ó tá an t-ainmneach sin le fáil i ndánta ó thús ré an dána dhírigh (féach Mac Cárthaigh 2015: 64), agus tá *agh**aidh*** coinnithe agam san eagrán.

23*a*. Maidir le *nghlais nghairgmhir*, is cosúil gur scríobh an scríobhaí *g**h**lais g**h**airmhir* ar dtús agus nuair a thug sé a bhotún faoi deara, gur chuir sé urú roimh an dá thúslitir, chomh maith le *-g-* isteach i lár an dara focal, ach gur fhág sé an dá phonc shéimhithe os cionn na dtúslitreacha gan scriosadh.

24*a*. Maidir leis an séimhiú atá curtha ar fáil agam tar éis *do shluagh*, féach nóta 13*c*.

24*cd*. Tá *téarna* athraithe agam go *téarnó* (*IGT* iii §11) a théann le foirm cheart an tabharthaigh den ainmfhocal *éanlá* (.i. *éanló*; *IGT* ii §82), agus cuireann sé seo cuibheas inmheánach ar fáil sa leathrann (*téarnó* : *éanló*). Ní bháitear an t-iarméarla *ón* tar éis *téarnó* agus dhá ghuta fhada ag teacht le chéile (Ní Dhomhnaill 1975, 32).

25*b*. Tá *ua* aiceanta sa líne seo, ag glacadh páirte san uaim agus níl sé báite ar lorg *Éinrí*. Déantar tagairt do bhás Bhriain mhic Éinrí agus a dhearthár in *AFM* chomh maith, ach ní thugtar ainm an dearthár seo sa dán féin ná in *AFM* 1567: 'Báttar iad ba hair*ea*ghdha dibsidhe Brian mac Enri mic S*ea*ain I Neill co na dearbrathair' *the most distinguished of whom were: Brian, the son of Henry, son of John O'Neill, and his brother*.

26*b*. Glacaim leis gur earráid scríobhaí é *mhuinnt**ir*** a bheith sa LS in áit *mhuinnt**ear***. Tá an earráid chéanna sa chéad rann eile (27*b*) agus tá sé ceartaithe agam ar an gcaoi chéanna. Seans go dtagann an earráid seo ó scaoileadh an ghiorrúcháin *-ear*/*-ir* sa phróiseas cóipeála. Tá an focal *Mhac* aiceanta nuair is cuid de theideal taoisigh é (féach Ní Dhomhnaill 1975, 11), agus tá sé ag glacadh páirte in uaim anseo le *mhuinntear*.

27*a*. Maidir le *muinnt**ir*** a bheith sa LS in áit *muinnt**ear***, féach nóta 26*b* thuas.

27*ad.* Tá *a lógh áir* aistrithe agam mar 'the slaughter they deserved' ach ba litriúla 'their battle price'.

28*c.* Leagan is ea *níor féadadh tuile gan tráigh* de *Níl tuile ná trághann*, seanfhocal 104 in O'Rahilly (1922: 29).

28*d.* Glactar leis an dá leagan den fhocal *féaghadh* / *féagadh* (*IGT* iii §93), agus is é *féagadh* atá ag teastáil anseo do chuibheas inmheánach an leathrainn (*féadadh* : *féagadh*).

29*d.* Tá *aghmhar* (.i. *ághmhar* (?), 'warlike'; *DIL* s.v. *ágmar* (a)) na LSe athraithe agam go *amhghar* san eagrán ('distressful'; *DIL* s.v. *amgar*). Cuireann sé seo cuibheas inmheánach ar fáil sa leathrann (*adhbhar* : *amhghar*) agus tagann sé níos fearr le ciall an rainn.

30*a.* Is deacair a bheith cinnte céard a bhí i gceist ag an scríobhaí sa chéad dá fhocal den rann seo. Aontaím le heagarthóirí *ABM* (féach *ABM* nóta 274) gur botún seachadta é an *atn* le *i* os cionn an *-n* anseo in áit *áth n*, agus is é *Áth nDoire* a chuirim ar fáil san eagrán.

30*d.* Maíonn an file anseo gur tharla an cath ar an Aoine, ach de réir sheanfhéilire Iúil, a bhí in úsáid ag an am sin, Déardaoin ab ea 8 Bealtaine 1567. Is cinnte nár cumadh an dán seo go dtí seachtainí, nó míonna fiú, tar éis an chatha, agus seans go raibh dul amú ar an bhfile faoin lá nó faoin dáta. Ní fheadar an féidir le brí eile a bheith i gceist le 'Aoine' sa chomhthéacs seo, agus go mb'fhéidir gur léiriú ar thromchúis an chatha atá i gceist. Féach freisin an dán *Beag nár bháith Aodh oidhidh Chuinn* (McManus 2000: 80), rann 20 (*Dia hAoine torchair tuir Chál* / *folchaidh a ghuin guin na naomh* / *a dhaoine, acht guin Ríogh na ríogh* / ***ní fhuil gníomh Aoine mar Aodh***. 'The prince of Cál died on a Friday; his death surpasses the martyrdom of the saints. Apart from the death of the King of kings there is, O people, **no Friday-deed like** [**the killing of**] **Aodh**').

32*c.* Tá *breith* na LSe athraithe agam *breath* chun comhardadh inmheánach a chur ar fáil (: *is-teach*).

33*a.* Tá uaim ar iarraidh i leagan na LSe sa líne seo, agus tá *áir* na LSe athraithe agam go *táir* (***th****uirse an* ***t****áir*).

34*d.* De réir *BST* 194.24–5, ní ghlactar ach le *trínn*, *tromhuinn*, *treamhuinn* mar fhoirmeacha den 1 iolra den fhorainm réamhfhoclach seo. Faightear samplaí, áfach, de *tríonn* sa chorpas. Féach, mar shampla: *Dán Dé* dán 10, rann 9 (*Déanadh Muire máthair Íosa* / *aighneas liom an lá bhus* ***díor*** / *do bhí mar budh caor i gceardcha* / *Rí na naomh i dteannta* ***tríonn***; agus *AiD* dán 61 rann 19*cd*: *gé thochair* ***thríonn*** / *dorchaidh a* ***síon*** *a* [*soillsighir*]. Coinním an fhoirm *thríonn* san eagrán.

36*b*. *Duain* is ea foirm an áinsígh den ainmfhocal baininscneach *duan*, agus is léir go raibh an t-idirdhealú seo idir foirm an ainmnigh agus foirm an áinsígh ag an bhfile, i bhfianaise línte 37*cd* (litriú cuí an ainmnigh i gcuibheas: *an* ***duan*** *is dóibh is moladh* / *cóir a* ***luagh*** *gan laghdughadh*), agus línte 38*cd* (litriú cuí an

áinsígh i gcuibheas *ar an* ***duain*** *saoir ná slonnaidh* / *don taoibh* ***thuaidh*** *acht tearmonnaigh*). Déanaim foirm an ainmfhocail seo a choigeartú sna cásanna seo a leanas: 37*c duain* > *duan* 46*d duain* > *duan*. Níl *duan* athraithe agam go *duain* i líne 36*b* ná líne 37*b* toisc go bhfuil an cuspóir scartha ón mbriathar, agus cead ag an bhfile sa chás sin leagan an ainmnigh a úsáid in áit an áinsígh (féach *SnaG*, 362).

37*bc*. Maidir le foirm an fhocail *duan*, féach nóta 36*b*.

38*a*. Is cosúil gur cuid d'ainm an teaghlaigh í an mhír *Balla*, nó d'ainm a gceantair chónaithe. Níl teacht agam ar shampla eile di ach amháin sa dán níos deireanaí *As truagh cor chríche Banbha*, 18*ab* (*Teasdáil airsidh* ***fhóid Bhalla*** / *do mhúch ré agus réllanna* 'The death of the veteran of the **land of Balla** has extinguished the moon and the stars'; féach Mac Cárthaigh 2017: 120–1).

Coinním an t-urú ar lorg *síol*, focal a bhí neodrach sa tSean-Ghaeilge, san ainmneach uatha mar atá sé sa LS.

38*bc*. Maidir le foirm an fhocail *duan*, féach nóta 36*b*.

38*c*. An modh ordaitheach, 2 iolra, den bhriathar *slonnamhuin* (*IGT* iii §72) atá i gceist le *slonnaidh* sa líne seo. Ba litriúla 'name only protectors of the north' mar aistriúchán ar *ná slonnaidh* […] *acht tearmonnaigh*.

41. Seaán Ó Néill an namhaid ba mhó a bhí ag muintir Mhic Dhomhnaill ag an am seo agus bhí a gceannaire, Somhairle Buidhe Mac Domhnaill (†1590), ina phríosúnach ag Ó Néill sna blianta 1565–7 (Hill 1873: 134, 143). Lig Ó Néill saor é tar éis an chatha, nuair a bhí sé ag iarraidh a chabhrach chun díoltas a bhaint amach ar Chineál Chonaill tar éis an chatha. Deir an file gur chóir do Shomhairle Buidhe a bheith buíoch de na Conallaigh toisc go mbeadh sé fós ina phríosúnach murach a mbua sa chath.

41*b*. De réir na rialacha atá mínithe ag Ní Dhomhnaill (1975, 10–11), tá *mac* agus *Mheic* ina n-aiceantaigh anseo agus ag glacadh páirte in uaim.

41*c*. De réir mar a thuigim é, tagraíonn *sibh* do na teaghlaigh éagsúla a luann an file idir rann 37 agus rann 40.

42. Bhí coimhlint idir Conn mac an Chalbhaigh (†1583) agus a uncail, Aodh Ó Domhnaill, i gcomhair ceannasaíochta nuair a fuair athair Choinn, an Calbhach (mac Mhaghnais) Ó Domhnaill, bás sa bhliain 1566. Bhí conradh déanta idir Conn agus Seaán Ó Néill sa bhliain 1562, agus rinne Ó Néill príosúnach de tar éis do Chonn ionsaí a dhéanamh ar chaisleán Dhún na nGall sa bhliain 1564. Níor ligeadh Conn saor go dtí tar éis an chatha agus deir an file sa rann seo gur chóir do Chonn a bhuíochas a léiriú dóibh (*State Papers*: 205, 237, 334).

45*c*. Mar a mholtar in *ABM*, nóta 274, tá *bheara* na LSe athraithe agam go *méaraidh* san eagrán, rud a chuireann cuibheas inmheánach ar fáil (*méaraidh* : *déanaimh*).

46*d*. Maidir le foirm an fhocail *duan*, féach nóta 36*b*.

47*a*. Ní le foirm an ghairmigh ach le foirm an ainmnigh a bheifí ag súil anseo agus *seabhac* á úsáid go meafarach (féach *SnaG*, 369). D'fhágfadh an t-ainmneach (.i. *A sheabhac éachtach Finne*) an líne gan uaim, áfach, agus coinním leagan na LSe san eagrán.

47*c*. Tá séimhiú curtha ar fáil agam ar lorg *buaidh* mar ainmfhocal atá san iolra agus a chríochnaíonn ar chonsan caol. Is léir go raibh an riail seo ag an bhfile i bhfianaise línte 10*cd* den dán *Biaidh athroinn ar Inis Fáil* (*re Leith móir gcathardha gCuinn* / *na slóigh f**h**lathamhla ó Liatraim*).

50. Glactar leis an dá fhoirm *aoibhea**l*** (50*a*) agus *aoibhea**ll*** (50*d*) in *IGT* §54.

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SAGAS, STORYTELLING AND HUMANIST HISTORY IN GEOFFREY KEATING'S *FORAS FEASA AR ÉIRINN* (*c.* 1634)[1]

Abstract

Geoffrey Keating's use of mediaeval legendary narratives (*scéala*) as sources for his *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, or *History of Ireland*, is often seen as either an old-fashioned and uncritical aspect of his work, or as a sign that narrating a true history was not his primary intention. The present article explores Keating's treatment of these legendary sources, setting his work alongside contemporary humanist writings such as John Milton's *History of Britain* and alongside Keating's own devotional writings in order to gain a clearer understanding of how he conceptualized the veracity of legendary narratives. I argue that, despite his willingness to rely on many such sources, Keating's attitude towards *scéala* displays a critical approach that is consistent with the contemporary European humanist drive to expunge fables from history while also pushing back against colonial disparagement of Irish intellectual culture. In the process Keating redefined the narrative category *scéal*, distancing it from historical narrative in a manner which marks a turning-point in that term's semantic history.

Introduction

Geoffrey Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (1634), 'The basis of knowledge about Ireland' or *History of Ireland*, is widely recognized as a landmark in the development of modern Irish and Gaelic prose. A panoramic vernacular history of Ireland from the earliest times to the Anglo-Norman invasions, it gave a new lease of life to the longstanding Gaelic tradition of synthetic history exemplified by the mediaeval compilation *Lebor Gabála Érenn* ('The book of the taking of Ireland'). Keating recast that tradition in the mode of Renaissance humanism, writing primarily for a readership of Irish Catholic gentry who would have been familiar with some of the views held about Ireland by scholars across the British and Irish isles. In the process *Foras Feasa* forged a new Irish ethnic and political identity, powerfully vindicating Catholic Ireland's ownership of its own history against its colonial detractors.[2]

[1]I am very grateful to Ruairí Ó hUiginn, Feliks Levin, Michael Clarke, Pía Coira, Helen Lynch and the anonymous reviewer for their helpful feedback on earlier versions of this essay, and to Barbara Hillers for discussing specific points with me. All remaining errors are my responsibility.

[2]The fundamental overarching studies are Breandán Ó Buachalla, '*Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* is *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*: an comhthéacs comhaimseartha', *Studia Hibernica* 22–3 (1982–3), 59–105, and Bernadette Cunningham, *The World of Geoffrey Keating: History, Myth and Religion in*

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Keating's rhetorical gifts, rooted in Counter-Reformation polemic, Classical rhetoric and early modern preaching methods, combined with his verve as a storyteller to maintain his work's lasting hold on the attention of audiences at home and further afield, even if they disagreed with some of his views. To this day, extracts from *Foras Feasa* continue to be studied as exemplars of Early Modern Irish prose style.[3]

Part of Keating's aim in this work was to vindicate the value of mediaeval Gaelic source-material and underline the futility of passing judgement on Ireland's history without knowledge of the full range of these sources or the language in which they were written. These mediaeval sources included chronicles, historical poems, regnal lists, genealogies, lawtexts, saints' Lives and sagas. Keating presented them as a branching web of interrelated genres amounting to what he called *seanchus*, a word that usually denoted 'historical learning' in general terms (including oral lore) but was used by Keating specifically to refer to authoritative written texts about the past in any language.[4] Close attention to the sources (*ad fontes*) was a hallmark of humanist history-writing, and humanist historians across Europe prided themselves on their ability to treat such sources with greater critical acumen than their supposedly credulous mediaeval forebears. Part of Keating's point was to show that the range and value of mediaeval Gaelic sources went far beyond the superficial understandings of British and colonial scholars.[5]

Keating's anti-colonial project continues to resonate with his modern readers, but his attitude towards his mediaeval source-material is often seen as something to be apologized for or held up for disapproval. Besides the testimony of mediaeval Gaelic poems that Keating considered as valid historical sources, he also used numerous mediaeval Gaelic sagas, or *scéala*, about legendary figures such as Cú Chulainn and Cormac mac Airt as sources for Ireland's early history, as well as the saga-like narratives about Ireland's earliest settlers found in the prehistoric sections of *Lebor Gabála*. Keating took these narratives seriously as histories, reworking and carefully weaving them into the larger structure of *Foras Feasa*. Modern scholars, by contrast, tend to see these kinds of legendary narrative as imaginative compositions which tell us far more about the concerns of their authors' own times than about the remote events that they narrate.

Seventeenth-Century Ireland (Dublin, 2000). On identity-formation in *Foras Feasa* see also Brendan Bradshaw, 'Reading Seathrún Céitinn's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*', in Pádraig Ó Riain (ed.), *Geoffrey Keating's Foras Feasa ar Éirinn: Reassessments*, ITS Subsidiary Series 19 (London, 2008), 1–18.

[3]The standard text-book in this regard is Osborn Bergin (ed.), *Sgéalaigheacht Chéitinn: Stories from Keating's History of Ireland*, 3rd ed. (Dublin, 1930). On Keating's rhetorical agility, see Tadhg Ó Dúshláine, 'Medium and message: the rhetoric of *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*', in Ó Riain, *Geoffrey Keating's Foras Feasa*, 68–89. In this article I refer to the written language shared by mediaeval and early modern Gaels as 'Irish' and to their literatures and cultures as 'Gaelic'.

[4]On the breadth of genres encompassed by *seanchus*, see Francis John Byrne, '*Senchas*: the nature of Gaelic historical tradition', *Historical Studies* 9 (1974), 137–59. Feliks Levin points out to me (pers. comm.) that in his devotional writings, Keating also used the term *seanchus* to refer to authoritative ecclesiastical sources.

[5]On how Keating's political and confessional aims meshed with European humanist methodology, see Ó Buachalla, '*Annála Ríoghachta Éireann*'.

Keating's attitude looks naïve by comparison, and so he has often been dismissed as 'devoid of all historical criticism'.[6] Anne Cronin, in her painstaking study of Keating's use of *Lebor Gabála*, considered him to have had 'a rigid type of mind dominated by the accepted infallibility of the material'.[7] Donnchadh Ó Corráin went further, calling Keating's attitude that of a *símpleoir* ('simpleton') who accepted *gach rud* ('everything') that he found in his source-materials. Ó Corráin argued that *Foras Feasa* was both a step backward from his mediaeval predecessors and inferior to the work of his contemporaries.[8] Brian Ó Cuív has offered a similar appraisal in more measured tones.[9] Joep Leerssen, in an otherwise razor-sharp study of early modern Irish antiquaries, has declared that 'Keating wholly disregards any "modern" distinctions between mythical and historical, saga and record'. For Leerssen, Keating exemplifies the survival of mediaeval credulity about origin-legends in 'bardic-Gaelic learning', the product of a learned class whose colonial oppressors had succeeded in isolating them from 'the post-Renaissance, modern, scientifically minded climate of Europe'.[10]

Keating's scholarly credentials and his participation in the wider intellectual currents of humanism have been rehabilitated by more recent and more nuanced discussions, especially since the landmark studies by Breandan Ó Buachalla and Bernadette Cunningham.[11] Nonetheless, when it comes to the earlier parts of his history, Keating's source-criticism (or lack of it) is still often treated as something to be apologized for or got out of the way as quickly as possible in order to focus on aspects of his work that seem less vulnerable to negative critique.

I am not in the slightest degree suggesting that Keating's *Foras Feasa*, or the sagas that he used, represent accurate accounts of ancient Irish history. But it is important not to judge Keating by standards of historiography established much later, in the Enlightenment and Romantic eras, or to exaggerate his failings by that yardstick. Ó Corráin's indictment is based on the assumption that neither Keating's mediaeval predecessors nor his humanist contemporaries accepted the historicity of a great many accounts contained in sagas and other legendary narratives, and that he was out of line in taking these sources so literally.[12] On the first point, however, it is becoming increasingly clear

[6]Norman Moore, 'Keating, Geoffrey', in Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds), *Dictionary of National Biography*, 63 vols (London, 1885–1900), xxx, 274.

[7]Anne Cronin, 'Sources of Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* 2: manuscript sources, chapter I', *Éigse* 5 (1945–7), 122–35, at 124.

[8]Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Seathrún Céitinn (c. 1580 – c. 1644): an cúlra stairiúil', in Pádraig Ó Mathúna (ed.), *Dúchas 1983–1984–1985* (Dublin, 1986), 56–68, at 56 and 64–5.

[9]Brian Ó Cuív, 'Literary creation and Irish historical tradition', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 49 (1963), 233–62, at 235–8.

[10]Joseph Th. Leerssen, 'On the edge of Europe: Ireland in search of oriental roots', *Comparative Criticism* 8 (1986), 91–112, at 97–8.

[11]Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, 75–6. Equally essential for the wider antiquarian context is Clare O'Halloran, *Golden Ages and Barbarous Nations: Antiquarian Debate and Cultural Politics in Ireland, c. 1750–1800* (Cork, 2004), 13–40.

[12]This view of mediaeval legendary narratives is expressed in, for example, Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Legend as critic', in Tom Dunne (ed.), *The Writer as Witness: Literature as Historical*

from reception-oriented studies of mediaeval Gaelic literature that Keating's scholarly predecessors did indeed use sagas about remote times as historical sources, even if they disagreed on points of detail, and that (as Ó Corráin himself conceded) *Lebor Gabála* long retained its status as an authoritative history.[13] Chronicles, sagas and *Lebor Gabála* reinforced each other's testimony, and sagas were valued for filling out the bare accounts in chronicles or genealogical compendia with further details about some of the more memorable figures, even if they did so in ways which *also* (rather than *instead*) invited symbolic or allegorical interpretation beyond the literal sense.[14] Keating was writing for a highly educated readership that already knew many of his legendary sources. As Cunningham rightly emphasizes, his contribution was to pin the events of those stories down into a timeline where they made sense as part of his larger historical master-narrative.[15] In this respect he continued and extended the synthesizing work of mediaeval Gaelic chronicles and national history-writing.

As for Keating's contemporary historians, their participation in similar projects can be seen in the renewal of the Gaelic annalistic tradition in the *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* ('Annals of the kingdom of Ireland' or *Annals of the Four Masters*) and a new recension of *Lebor Gabála*, both of these produced by Keating's Franciscan contemporary Micheál Ó Cléirigh and his associates. As Cunningham puts it, 'Keating's approach to the traditional interpretation of the past was consistent with that of his contemporaries'.[16] That said, Keating was not writing an annalistic chronicle but a narrative history, a very different genre of historical writing that allowed for the inclusion of a wider range of material and rhetorical techniques than annalistic chronicles permitted.[17]

Evidence (Cork, 1985), 23–38, at 29–30; Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Irish origin legends and genealogy: recurrent aetiologies', in Tore Nyberg et al. (eds), *History and Heroic Tale: A Symposium* (Odense, 1985), 51–96, at 84–6.

[13]See, for example, Ó Corráin, 'Irish origin legends', 67–8.

[14]See, among many other studies, John Carey, *The Irish National Origin-Legend: Synthetic Pseudohistory*, Quiggin Pamphlets on the Sources of Medieval Gaelic History 1 (Cambridge, 1994), 22–4; Gregory Toner, 'The Ulster cycle: historiography or fiction?', *CMCS* 40 (Winter 2000), 1–20; Erich Poppe, 'Narrative history and cultural memory in medieval Ireland: some preliminary thoughts', in Jan Erik Rekdal and Erich Poppe (eds), *Medieval Irish Perspectives on Cultural Memory* (Münster, 2014), 135–76; Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Irish world annals and universal chronicling: medieval Irish scholars and their "global turn" ', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 40 (2021), 1–34; Ralph O'Connor, '*Scélšenchus* revisited: historical function and literary artistry in the Gaelic kings' sagas', in Kevin Murray (ed.), *Revisiting the Cycles of the Kings* (Cork, 2022), 1–24; Ralph O'Connor, 'The Ulster cycle: history, fiction or literature?' in Lára Ní Mhaoláin, David Stifter and Elizabeth Boyle (eds), *Ulidia 5: Papers from the Fifth International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales* (Hagen, 2024), 1–35.

[15]Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, 75–6.

[16]Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, 6.

[17]Ó Dúshláine, 'Medium and message', 71–4. However, annalistic chronicles themselves varied greatly in their inclusion or exclusion of figures and materials taken from sagas, as may be seen by comparing two seventeenth-century examples produced around the same time, the *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* or Annals of the Four Masters (which excludes many saga materials and figures even when mentioned by its own annalistic sources unless they have a specific bearing on the kingship of Ireland) and the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* (which strains visibly against the annalistic framework and includes much more narrative material). On the contrasting aims and

Looking further afield, the British equivalent to *Lebor Gabála* – namely, the Brut origin-legend with King Arthur at its centre and Geoffrey of Monmouth's highly creative *History of the Kings of Britain* as its main framework – continued to be taken seriously and reproduced in whole or in part by English, Welsh and Scottish historians long after Keating's own death, even by some who entertained doubts about the historicity of Arthur.[18] Meanwhile in Scandinavia, the no less imaginative Norse-Icelandic equivalents of the mediaeval Gaelic sagas continued to be used beyond the seventeenth century as source-material in constructing humanist histories to support the claims of early modern Danish and Swedish dynasties to regional supremacy.[19] Keating's use of sagas as source-material, as part of an authoritative body of *seanchus*, is thus in keeping with the procedures of many of his humanist contemporaries, as long as we take account of differences in genre.[20]

It is nonetheless true that the humanist historians whose names are best known to us today are famous for their sceptical approach to legendary storytelling. While many of them took (for example) much of Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Brut framework seriously, they were usually less willing to accept the Arthurian romances that had followed in Geoffrey's wake. Indeed, they often drew attention to the fabulous nature of such sources in order to underline their own critical credentials in expunging fables from history-writing. If Keating, by contrast, accepted everything he found in mediaeval sagas without any reservations and treated *Lebor Gabála* as infallible, as suggested by the critics cited above, would this not mark him out as uncritical by comparison? Pursuing this line of thought, if mediaeval Gaelic scholars

expectations of these different genres of historical writing, see Bernadette Cunningham, *The Annals of the Four Masters: Irish History, Kingship and Society in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Dublin, 2010), 74–101 (especially 99–101); also ibid., 22–3, on fundamental differences of training and milieu between Keating and the Four Masters' chief compiler Mícheál Ó Cléirigh. On the range of rhetorical approaches taken in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, see now Denis Casey, 'The *Annals of Clonmacnoise* (1627) as a translation and an early modern history', *Studia Hibernica* 49 (2023), 1–23.

[18]Roberta Florence Brinkley, *Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1932), 26–88; Ben Guy, 'The reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth in Wales', in Georgia Henley and Joshua Byron Smith (eds), *A Companion to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (Leiden, 2020), 494–7; Sarah Elizabeth Connell, ' "No room in history?" genre and identity in British and Irish national histories, 1541–1691', unpublished doctoral thesis, Northeastern University, 2014, 180–219.

[19]See Ralph O'Connor, 'Putrid fables and true histories: perceptions of authenticity and the management of scepticism in northern humanist *fornaldarsaga* scholarship', in Matthew Driscoll et al. (eds), *The Legendary Legacy: Transmission and Reception of the Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda* (Odense, 2018), 117–60.

[20]This is consistent with the contextualization of Keating's work within the humanist tradition of history-writing by such scholars as Bernadette Cunningham (*World of Geoffrey Keating*), Sarah Connell and Feliks Levin. See Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*; O'Halloran, *Golden Ages*, 18–19; Connell, ' "No room in history" '; Sarah Connell, 'The poetics and politics of legend: Geoffrey Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* and the invention of Irish history', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 14/3 (2014), 83–106; Feliks Levin, 'Representation of the tales of the Ulster cycle in *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*: sources and features of the retellings', *Studia Hibernica* 44 (2018), 1–33; Feliks Levin, 'Representation of the tales of the Ulster cycle in *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*: organisation of discourse and contexts', *Studia Hibernica* 46 (2020), 1–25, at 4–12. I am grateful to Feliks for sharing these two articles with me.

valued sagas and other legendary narratives as literally credible accounts of events in the remote past, it would be tempting to see *Foras Feasa* as a late survival of this attitude, a throwback to the Middle Ages. A different and more positive way of reading Keating's approach to source-criticism, advanced in some recent scholarship, has been to argue that narrating a true account of Ireland's past was not his primary concern in the first place.[21]

I will argue that both these interpretations seriously misrepresent Keating's work.[22] His attitude towards traditional *scéala* displays a critical approach that is entirely in keeping with other humanist projects in early modern Europe, even though it does not come close to the scepticism with which these sources were sometimes treated from the eighteenth century onwards. In this article I will consider how Keating's attitude towards, and presentation of, his mediaeval Gaelic narrative sources relate to his chosen strategies of truth-making.[23] I will devote the greater proportion of my attention to the innovative way in which Keating conceptualized the narrative category *scéal* itself, especially in places where he voices a humanist desire to prevent fables from polluting or adulterating historical discourse. This focus on the rhetorical balancing-act performed by Keating around *scéala* will reveal the complex cultural negotiations involved in the use of mediaeval stories as sources for a humanist history. On this basis I will argue that Keating's *Foras Feasa* marked a turning-point in the semantic history of the category *scéal* – a category which had previously enjoyed central and largely unquestioned status within the knowledge-system of mediaeval and early modern Gaelic elite culture.[24]

1. Rationalization of saga sources

The first point to emphasize is that Keating did not attempt to incorporate everything he found in his mediaeval sources into his own narrative. Certainly, he was very respectful of his mediaeval written sources. Part of his aim was to show that the *seanchus*, as embodied in texts written in the Irish language, was the true basis for knowledge about Ireland (*foras feasa ar Éirinn*).[25] For this reason he could not take too high-handed an approach to these written sources where he happened to disagree with them, unlike his combative ripostes to New English commentators. For example, his account of the earliest migrations to Ireland followed the main outlines of *Lebor Gabála*; so, too, did all attempts

[21] This interpretation is documented and examined in section 2 below.

[22] Such a view also overstates the sharpness of the break between mediaeval and early modern historiographical practice, an assumption robustly challenged by Connell (' "No room in history" ', 223–5). Nonetheless, the present study focuses more on what sets *Foras Feasa* apart from its mediaeval Gaelic predecessors than on the (equally real) continuities.

[23] On the concept of 'strategies of truth-making', see for example Catalin Taranu and Ralph O'Connor, 'Introduction', in Catalin Taranu and Michael J. Kelly (eds), *Vera Lex Historiae? Constructions of Truth in Medieval Historical Narrative* (Binghamton, 2022), 35–81, at 59–70.

[24] For an overview of this term's semantic history, see Ralph O'Connor, 'The semantics of *scél* and the truth of stories in medieval Gaelic culture', in Alice R. Taylor-Griffiths and Seosamh Mac Cárthaigh (eds), *Storytelling in Gaelic from AD 700 to the Present: Truth, Tradition, and Translation*, Studies in Celtic History 47 (Woodbridge, 2025), 20–44.

[25] Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, 116–18.

by Irish scholars to reconstruct Irish prehistory up to and beyond Keating's time. But it overstates Keating's slavishness to claim that he 'practically never alters anything' or that *Foras Feasa* displays 'little attempt at discussion or evaluation'.[26] On the contrary, plenty of space is taken up in the pre-Milesian portion of *Foras Feasa* by Keating's critical discussions of why one account of a given event is more likely to be accurate than another, whether on grounds of chronological coherence, genealogy, geographical plausibility or collation with non-Irish authorities (chiefly the Book of Genesis). He often summarizes competing accounts, but rarely offers these without indicating which account he judges more likely and why. I will return to this procedure of Keating's below.

For modern readers, the most obvious sticking-point in Keating's inclusion of material from *Lebor Gabála* and other legendary saga narratives concerns what we see, today, as the fantastic quality of some of those narratives. As Ray Cashman puts it, summarizing the views of Keating's detractors, 'What place in a factual account of the past have tales of a pagan sorcerer reviving the dead or of a magical harp revealing a king's secrets?'[27] The harp example actually appears in a story that Keating explicitly discredits, and this, too, will be discussed below. But the force of Cashman's question remains, since necromancy and other practices that strain our credulity do feature in several of Keating's accounts of 'true' history. All the same, the fact that some twenty-first-century Western academics do not believe necromancy existed (or worked) in pagan times is no reason to deny the status of (an intended) 'factual account of the past' to early modern histories that include accounts of necromancy in remote periods. If seventeenth-century scholars and rulers could believe that demons and witchcraft were real in their own time, we should not be surprised to find Keating repeating some of his sources' mentions of demonic agency in connection with pre-Christian events. Likewise, if the longevity of Biblical patriarchs was still matter for sober scholarly debate in this period (warranted, like necromancy, by biblical authority), it would be anachronistic to boggle at Keating or his Gaelic sources for crediting other humans in equally ancient times with lives several centuries long. Scepticism on such matters was not the only option in early modern intellectual culture.

Yet within this framework Keating also participates in the rationalizing approach common to his humanist contemporaries, and in this sense draws a line between his own attitude and the claims of some of his mediaeval sources. For instance, he repudiates both the notion that Fionntain mac Bóchra lived from before the Flood all the way up to the time of St. Patrick (pointing out that *go bhfuil an Scrioptúir 'na aghaidh*, 'Scripture is against it') and the suggestion that Fionntain was resuscitated magically after the Flood.[28] When

[26] Cronin, 'Sources', 123; Ó Cuív, 'Literary creation', 236.

[27] Ray Cashman, 'Ethnohistorical preservation and persuasion in *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*', *New Hibernia Review* 5 (2001), 147–52, 150.

[28] Geoffrey Keating, *The History of Ireland* / Seathrún Céitinn, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, ed. and trans. by David Comyn and Patrick S. Dinneen, 4 vols, ITS 4, 8, 9 and 15 (London, 1902–14, reprinted 1987), I, 146–52. Subsequent references to Keating's *Foras Feasa* are to this edition. My

he adjudicates between competing accounts of what prompted the Milesians in Spain to send Ioth son of Breoghan to Ireland to explore it, he rejects the romantic account in *Lebor Gabála* which held that Ioth had seen Ireland *i néallaibh nimhe oidhche gheimhridh … do mhullach thuir Breoghain* ('in the clouds of heaven one winter's night from the top of the tower of Breoghan') and substitutes the more prosaic explanation that there were already longstanding trade links between Spain and Ireland.[29]

This critical mindset surely lies behind some of Keating's choices concerning which mediaeval *scéala* to include and which to exclude from his grand narrative, as well as his selection of content from each *scéal* he included. Contrary to the notion that he included everything he found, he not only omitted various competing accounts of the same event mentioned in his sources, but he also made no use in his main historical narrative of various saga sources that were either available to him or that he knew about. Some ancient events that loom very large in the mediaeval Gaelic saga and chronicle traditions, such as the invasion of Cúailnge led by Medb and Ailill of the Connachta, are relegated in Keating's account to (at best) a bare cross-reference to the saga narrating it.[30] His omission of this central event from his narrative may reflect the possibility that he did not have access to a written text of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (unlikely, given the evidence that he had access to British Library Egerton 1782), or perhaps that he felt it did not support the message that he wished to inscribe into his account of the deeds of Irish rulers and warriors of this period. This part of *Foras Feasa* is, instead, based almost entirely on their death-tales, forming a sequence of tragic episodes that Feliks Levin argues is designed to illustrate the dire consequences of sin. It is also possible that (like the writer of the colophon in its Book of Leinster recension) Keating did not consider it to be as reliable as other sagas, a motivation I will illustrate more fully in what follows.

When Keating did incorporate saga narratives, he presented them as bare but elegant summaries much shorter than the equivalent saga texts familiar to Celticists today. In contrast with the sagas' frequent fondness for long passages of dramatic dialogue, monologue and detailed description, Keating's narratives of the exile of the sons of Uisneach (based on the saga *Longes mac nUislenn*, 'The exile of the sons of Uisliu') and Cú Chulainn's killing of his own son (based on the saga *Aided Óenfîr Aífe*, 'The death of Aífe's only son'), for instance, are boiled down to plot essentials, only occasionally broadening out to include direct speech (something that is used only sparingly in *Foras Feasa* more generally). The long, emotionally intense verse exchanges found in the oldest versions of both these sagas are absent from Keating's text, even though Keating very frequently quotes verse in other contexts where it serves

translations from Keating draw on that of Comyn and Dineen but depart from it where appropriate. When discussing characters in Keating's narrative I use Keating's Early Modern Irish spellings for their names, but when discussing characters as seen in his medieval sources I normalize to Old Irish.

[29] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 50.

[30] For this example see Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 220.

to document and authenticate a prose account rather than raise the emotional temperature.[31]

It must be acknowledged that the condensed nature of Keating's saga summaries in some cases reflects an already condensed source-text rather than a deliberate attempt by Keating himself to reduce his source-text, since divergent recensions of these sagas were in circulation and some were briefer than others. Clarity on the extent of his own adjustments is hindered by uncertainty regarding precisely which manuscripts containing sagas Keating had access to, but Cunningham has argued convincingly that he probably had access to the large sixteenth-century Ó Maolchonaire manuscript known today as British Library MS Egerton 1782 and to another manuscript (now lost) which was the exemplar or close relation of the extant Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, McClean MS 187, written *c.* 1640.[32] On this basis Levin has recently surveyed Keating's treatment of Ulster Cycle material in *Foras Feasa* and found that his treatment of *Aided Óenfir Aífe* (and many other Ulster sagas) reflects the brevity of his source, as seen in the closely related McClean manuscript, whereas the condensing treatment of *Longes mac nUislenn* in *Foras Feasa* is the result of Keating's own omission of dramatic verse dialogue and other matter included in this saga in his likely source, Egerton 1782.[33] And where the shortening was present in the source, this does not necessarily rule out agency by Keating himself. He may have known the widely circulating Early Modern Irish recension of *Aided Óenfir Aífe*,[34] with its much more elaborate use of dialogue and dramatic verse. But if so, he favoured the more condensed rendering for his purposes.

Keating's presentation of condensed versions of his saga sources is usually put down to his desire for a smooth and accessible narrative. He himself hints at this motivation when he says in the middle of his account of first-century Ireland that if he were to narrate everything in his sources, then *eachtra adhbhal* ('a long narrative') would be needed to do so. Instead, he here refers the reader who wants *a bhfios go forleathan* ('extensive knowledge of them', i.e. of Ulster and Connacht princes and champions) to the sagas themselves,

[31]These and other aspects of the style of Keating's saga retellings are discussed in Levin, 'Representation … organisation of discourse', 4–12.

[32]Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, 78–81.

[33]Feliks Levin, 'Representation … sources and features', 12–13 and 18–20. To gain a good sense of the contents of the text of the first recension of *Longes mac nUislenn* in Egerton 1782 (very similar to the Book of Leinster text of the same saga that forms the basis of most modern editions and translations), see the variant apparatus and textual notes in Ernst Windisch and Whitley Stokes (eds), *Irische Texte mit Übersetzungen und Wörterbuch*, 5 vols in 7 (Leipzig, 1880–1909), i, 59–92.

[34]The Early Modern recension itself bears the title *Oidheadh Chonlaoich* but is typically joined to *Oileamhain Chon Culainn* as a single narrative. An edition of this narrative is in preparation by Ruairí Ó hUiginn, who points out that some plot details in Keating's rendering of the story are much closer to the Early Modern Irish recension than to other versions of the story, even though Keating's rendering generally stays closest to a version resembling the Old Irish *Aided Óenfir Aífe* (I am grateful to Ruairí Ó hUiginn for sharing his findings with me). The possibility that Keating knew the Early Modern recension is also mentioned by Levin, 'Representation … sources and features', 20.

listing seven of these by title.[35] Similarly, he introduces his account of Deirdre and the sons of Uisneach as *go cumair éirim na heachtra* ('the content of the story in brief').[36]

But abbreviating means selecting and hence emphasizing some aspects of a source at the expense of other aspects. Keating's selective treatment of his mediaeval sources brought them more closely into line with what was expected of humanist historical narrative. This is consistent with stylistic analysis of Keating's work, for example with Levin's observation that Keating's narrative voice makes prominent use of direct appeals to the reader in a way that bears more resemblance to early modern English historiography than to the mediaeval Gaelic sources he summarizes.[37] His omission of long passages of dramatic dialogue and monologue – favouring a mode dominated by third-person narration, albeit varied by limited use of direct speech – can be seen in similar terms.[38] Keating was a gifted storyteller and his saga retellings have been celebrated for their narrative verve as well as their economy; but too overt a desire to entertain an audience or too wholehearted an indulgence in poetic devices were increasingly associated in humanist circles with untruth and seen as the opposite pole from the telling of credible history. Hence it is also in keeping with Keating's humanist credentials that he spends more time than most of his mediaeval sources do in debunking other mediaeval sources as poetical fictions, an aspect of his truth-making that I will analyse more fully below.

Keating's desire to present his mediaeval sources as credible links in an interconnected web of Gaelic *seanchus* manifests itself as much in his omissions as in what he includes. Even though magic, demons and witchcraft were real to scholarly audiences in Keating's day, his summaries of sagas tend to omit not only the parts with most poetic or dramatic elaboration but also the most fantastic occurrences, as if tacitly acknowledging the humanist dictum that truth is often mixed with fable in ancient narrative sources and that fable needs to be expunged to produce history. For instance, his discussion of one key witness to ancient history, the long-lived sage Tuan mac Cairill, makes no mention of the multiple shapeshifting reincarnations that punctuate the mediaeval *Scél Tuáin maic Cairill* ('The story of Tuán mac Cairill'). Keating also reduces Tuan's age by several centuries. Tuan is portrayed here simply as a very long-lived human, and Keating presents Tuan's testimony as deriving in part from his own ancient forebears rather than wholly on eyewitness testimony alone as in *Scél Tuáin*.[39]

Another example of this kind of omission concerns Keating's much more detailed retelling of the tragic story of Deirdre in his Ulster-saga sequence. The Egerton 1782 text of *Longes mac nUislenn* (Keating's probable source)

[35] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 220.

[36] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 188.

[37] For this point see Levin, 'Representation … organisation of discourse', 8.

[38] Ibid., 4–5. Levin here also briefly analyses the function of direct speech where it does occur in the first-century portion of *Foras Feasa*.

[39] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 150–2.

begins with a feast at which the pregnant mother of the heroine, Deirdre, is present. The foetus Deirdre cries out in her mother's womb so that everyone present starts up, alarmed.[40] This is not a mere detail but a crucial plot point: it prompts the druid's prophecy about the disasters that will befall Ulster as a result of Deirdre's beauty and the people's demand that she be killed *in utero*, and this in turn prompts Conchubhar's disastrous decision to have her raised away from the court and kept for himself. This is one part of the saga where Keating does choose to include some of his source's direct speech and dramatic verse – but he omits this episode of the pre-natal scream, instead moving the birth of Deirdre so that it takes place at the time of the same feast, and having the prophecy and Conchubhar's decision follow the baby Deirdre's birth.[41] This is not the only example of Keating significantly adjusting the chronology and content of his saga sources.[42]

Of course plausibility and the problem of perceived fantasy were not the only considerations shaping Keating's selection of and creativity with his sources. Keating was writing moralized history, crafting his narrative to underscore specific messages about governance, religion and society and using his skills as a preacher in order to do this.[43] This meaning-making aspect of Keating's retellings of saga sources about the first centuries of Gaelic rule up to the coming of Christianity has been examined by Sarah Connell and Levin. Both scholars argue that this part of Keating's history presents saga-based stories about individual kings and champions as exempla of royal and aristocratic behaviour, repeatedly dramatizing and underlining the consequences or correction of protagonists' transgressions or 'sins'.[44] His desire to emphasize this theme doubtless informed his selection of sagas to include or exclude, privileging those with tragic storylines.

Given this thematic emphasis, we may wonder why Keating did not include anything from the saga that explores the disastrous consequences of royal transgression more fully and emphatically than any other. This saga is *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* ('The destruction of Da Derga's hostel'), whose protagonist

[40]Windisch and Stokes, *Irische Texte*, i, 67.

[41]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 190. On the omission of the pre-natal scream see Alan Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-tales and Mediæval Romances* (Dublin, 1969), published as *Béaloideas* 34 (1966), 99–100. A number of other significant adjustments made by Keating in his retelling of the Deirdre saga – not least the centrality of Deirdre herself – have been analysed in Kate Louise Mathis, 'The evolution of Deirdriu in the Ulster cycle', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2010, 157–60.

[42]As Sarah Connell has shown, Keating made several changes to the Egerton 1782 account of Guaire mac Colmáin's reign when using this likely source in *Foras Feasa*, including adding details not found in that source but also moving Guaire's reign to a position one century earlier so that it coincided with the reign of the last pagan king of Tara. See Connell, 'Poetics and politics of legend', 92–9.

[43]On this aspect of *Foras Feasa* and Keating's other writings, see Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, 159–70; Ó Dúshláine, 'Medium and message'.

[44]Connell, 'Poetics and politics', 92–9; Connell, ' "No room in history" ', 155–77; Levin, 'Representation … organisation of discourse', 13–25. Further insights into the theological meanings built into Keating's saga-retellings are provided in Levin's contribution to the forthcoming volume, Abigail Burnyeat et al. (eds), *The Ulster and Finn Cycles: Studies in Gaelic Heroic Literature* (Woodbridge, forthcoming).

Conaire mac Eterscéle presides over a glorious reign that collapses around him when he fails to bring his renegade foster-brothers to book for plundering; the saga ends with Conaire's tragic death, not unlike the Ulster and Connacht death-sagas (*aideda*) of which Keating retold so many in this part of *Foras Feasa*. *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* circulated widely in mediaeval Ireland; a copy of it was extant in Egerton 1782, to which Keating probably had access.[45] Several lines in *Foras Feasa* are devoted to Conaire, but apart from the name of his (mortal) father and the location of his death, the information given either conflicts with, or is completely different from, what the saga narrates, instead being compiled from variant accounts in historical poetry, chronicles and *Lebor Gabála*. For instance, in Keating's account Conaire kills Nuadha Neacht and exacts tribute from the Laighin, neither of which is mentioned in the saga. The Conaire of the saga (at least in Egerton 1782) is directly descended from Eochaid Airem and the Túatha Dé Danann noblewoman Étaín, neither of whom figures in the variant genealogy included in Keating's account. The saga's main focus is Conaire's acquisition and loss of kingship, in which Otherworldly apparitions play a decisive role: an Otherworldly birdman fathers Conaire on the future bride of Eterscél (Conaire's mortal, and here adoptive, father) and other apparitions hasten his demise. The Egerton 1782 recension of the *Togail* amplifies this dimension by bringing parts of the independent saga *Tochmarc Étaíne* into the text of the *Togail* as a long genealogical prelude, so that the *Togail*'s already fantastic ambience is heightened with details about Otherworldly shapeshifting and trickery, lovesickness, the eventual disappearance of Étaín into the *síd* with Midir, and a feud between people of this world and the Otherworld.[46] All this, as well as the subsequent narrative about Conaire's rise and fall, is absent from *Foras Feasa*.

If Keating had access to Egerton 1782, he could hardly have missed this substantial saga about kingly conduct when scouring it for usable narrative. His choice to follow the chronicle tradition may be explained by his desire to avoid saga material that seemed to him too fanciful to qualify as serious history, or seemed likely to strike his target audience in this way. Other important sagas included in Egerton 1782 but omitted from *Foras Feasa* include *Aislinge Óengusso*, *Echtrae Chonnlai* (whose royal protagonist is killed in *Foras Feasa* rather than being spirited away to the Otherworld as in the saga), *Echtrae Nerai*, *Táin Bó Regamna*, *De Chophur in Dá Muccida* and *Compert Chon Culainn*.[47] All these sagas either focus on Otherworldly beings and apparitions, or explore dramatic encounters between Otherworldly phenomena and human

[45] On this saga, see Ralph O'Connor, *The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel: Kingship and Narrative Artistry in a Mediaeval Irish Saga* (Oxford, 2013). The complete Egerton 1782 recension has been edited by Máire West in 'An edition of *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*', unpublished doctoral thesis, National University of Ireland, 1986, 821–93. For Keating's account see Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 230–2.

[46] For the Egerton 1782 text of this part of the *Togail*, see the text entitled *Tochmarc Étaíne* in Windisch and Stokes, *Irische Texte*, i, 117–30.

[47] For the contents of this manuscript, see Standish Hayes O'Grady, Robin Flower and Myles Dillon, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Library*, new ed., 3 vols (Dublin, 1992), ii, 259–98.

protagonists. Egerton 1782's Early Modern Irish werewolf-romance *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil* is also, of course, not included in Keating's history. None of these texts is even deemed worthy of a mention in Keating's list of sagas, which readers may consult for more details about some of the people mentioned.[48] He did, after all, point the finger at several sagas about Fionn mac Cumhaill which he considered to have been written as romance-like entertainment rather than as history, excluding their testimony from his account of the 'historical' Fionn later in *Foras Feasa*.[49] These sagas are also rich in Otherworldly phenomena, so it is not surprising that he was similarly selective about sagas concerning Ulster warriors and other kings as well.

Keating clearly did not wish to include everything he found in his manuscript sources. By omitting the sagas I have just listed, adjusting other sagas' storylines to remove implausible content, and condensing his main saga sources to decrease the proportion of direct speech, he ensured that his account met humanist standards of rational and sober history-writing, even though he still included some content that would be considered fantastic by later historians.

2. The red line of historical fact and the purging of fables from history

Some recent scholars have sought to exonerate Keating from the charge of credulity or historiographic backwardness by arguing that *Foras Feasa* was not primarily intended as an account of what really happened in the past. For Cashman, Keating's conception of history-writing is a forerunner of modern 'salvage ethnography', compiling culturally valuable but not necessarily factual traditions from a society undergoing traumatic socio-political upheaval.[50] In his view, Keating's priority was to preserve cultural heritage in the form of narrative traditions, regardless of whether or not they were true stories about the past. From this viewpoint, modern scholars who cavil at Keating's inclusion of unlikely stories are missing the point: these were meant to be stories, not history.

Building on this perspective and analysing Keating's procedures in more depth, Connell has argued that the inclusion of multiple narrative genres within *Foras Feasa* exemplifies the multimodal breadth and capaciousness of early modern history-writing more generally; her wider analysis includes examples from England, Scotland and Wales as well as Ireland. In Connell's view, humanist history-writing was far more welcoming of 'fable' in practice than its standard rhetoric of truth-telling might suggest, incorporating legends (a term that Connell uses to denote untrue stories about the past) alongside true accounts of the past in order to point up recurring themes and patterns in a nation's history, underline core aspects of national identity, make the

[48] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 220.

[49] These sagas are *Cath Fionntrágha*, *Bruighean Chaorthainn* and *Imtheacht an Ghiolla Dheacair*, and Keating's comment on these is in his *Foras Feasa*, ii, 326. I discuss this point more fully below.

[50] Cashman, 'Ethnohistorical preservation', 150.

reading experience more pleasurable, and vindicate the wide range of sources (historical and legendary) over which the historian must show mastery.[51] For Cashman and Connell alike, Keating embodies 'the historian as collector and interpreter of a variety of texts, legendary and historical'.[52]

Cashman and Connell are right to identify multiple narrative modes and voices in *Foras Feasa*, as well as ideological motivations and cultural meanings beyond the mere establishment of chronology. By virtue of being narrative, all narrative history introduces layers of meaning that go beyond chronology: that is what gives it much of its significance for its target audience, and we cannot understand Keating's history without interpreting the ideological significance of the narratives he includes in it as well as their place in his chronology. Moreover, allowing the historian's sources to speak momentarily in (what is presented as) their own voice is an important aspect of maintaining that audience's attention by varying the mode of discourse. Yet it is also vital not to lose sight of Keating's overriding concern to establish and narrate what really happened, and – as with other humanists – to trace a clear red line of historical fact through the many genres of primary source-material over which he demonstrates his mastery and critical deliberation. This is what makes *Foras Feasa* (in Keating's view) a true history of his nation's past rather than a collection of parables or stories, even though he has subsequently come to be valued by literary scholars for his *scéalaigheacht*, 'storytelling'.

It is necessary, then, not to overstate the extent to which Keating welcomed untrue stories into his history. Cashman states that *Foras Feasa* 'includes a great deal of narrative that even he does not believe to be factual';[53] Connell, meanwhile, calls *Foras Feasa* 'a work of history liberally sprinkled with legends' that were not supposed to be interpreted 'as simple historical facts', and states that he made no attempt to 'quarantine legend from history'.[54] Yet almost all the legendary or non-factual narratives to which Keating gives voice turn out to be summaries of opinions which Keating then clearly states to be untrue or unlikely compared to his favoured explanation. I will give some examples to show this process at work in Keating's treatment of alternative accounts of the same event, before moving on in the next section to explore the rhetoric by which he robustly 'quarantined' dubious accounts of the past from his red line of historical fact.

Keating's respectful attitude towards alternative opinions (by writers in Irish at any rate) sometimes makes it look as if he cannot decide which source to follow. For instance, when discussing how long the descendants of Gaedheal resided in the island of Gothia, Keating first repeats the mediaeval poet Gilla Coemáin's view that they stayed for thirty years and then contradicts that view based on the testimony of mediaeval genealogies. His contradiction is done very discreetly:

[51] Connell, ' "No room in history" '; Connell, 'Poetics and politics'.
[52] Connell, ' "No room in history" ', 145–6.
[53] Cashman, 'Ethnohistorical preservation', 150.
[54] Connell, 'Poetics and politics', 101; Connell, ' "No room in history" ', 25.

agus do chomhnuigheadar sliocht Gaedhil san tír deich mbliadhna fichead is do anadar lucht díobh ann ó shoin i le; gonadh da dhearbhadh sin adeir Giolla Caomháin an rann-so:

> Fine Ghaoidhil ghasta dhíl,
> Triochad bliadhan san tír-sin;
> Anaid lucht díobh ann ó shain,
> Go dtí deireadh an domhain.

Measaid drong oile ré seanchus gurab caogad ar chéad bliadhan do chomhnuighsiod sliocht Gaedhil san Ghotia, agus is í sin céadfaidh is fírinnighe. Óir is follus gur chaitheadar aicme Ghaedhil ocht nglúine da ngeinealaigh san Ghotia mar atá ó Éibhear Ghlúinfhionn go Brátha. Ag so iomorro an geinealach ghlún sin .... agus do bhrígh nachar bh'éidir an oiread soin glún do theacht don leith istigh do thríochad bliadhan is dearbh liom gurab í an chéadfaidh dhéidheanach atá fírinneach.[55]

'and the line of Gaedheal dwelt in the land for thirty years, and their people have stayed there ever since. In proof of this Giolla Caomháin spoke the following verse:

> The progeny of skilful, beloved Gaedheal
> Thirty years in that land;
> Their people have stayed there ever since
> Until the end of the world.

Another group of historians consider that the line of Gaedheal dwelt in Gothia for a hundred and fifty years; and that opinion is the most trustworthy. For it is clear that the people of Gaedheal spent eight generations in Gothia, that is, from Éibhear Glúinfhionn to Brátha. And those generations are as follows: .... and since that number of generations would not be capable of coming over here within thirty years, it is evident to me that the latter opinion is the true one.'

At first glance this looks like a narration of two mutually incompatible accounts, but it becomes clear within a few lines of Keating's quotation from Gilla Coemáin that he is adjusting that poet's chronology quite significantly (and why). The passage ends by firmly discrediting the thirty-year interpretation.[56] To reinforce his chronology still further, Keating then goes on to mention a

[55] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 34–6.

[56] Keating's disagreement with Gilla Coemáin should not be misinterpreted as a sign that he distrusted poets' testimony in general, despite Keating's use of language associated with poetic licence to discredit some other narratives (section 3 below). *Foras Feasa* is full of narratives whose authenticity Keating demonstrates by quoting a poem in support of its testimony, as Pía Coira points out to me (pers. comm.). This is continuous with early mediaeval Gaelic practice: see Gregory Toner, 'Authority, verse and the transmission of *senchas*', *Ériu* 55 (2005), 59–84.

third opinion found in other *seanchus* that suggest a three-century stay in Gothia; he disposes of this view on the grounds of its incompatibility with the chronology set out in earlier chapters of *Foras Feasa*.[57] All in all, this passage gives the impression of a historian wishing to display his knowledge of and respect for competing accounts as well as his ability to discern which account is correct.

Admittedly, Keating does sometimes present two alternative accounts of the same event without hinting at his preference, as when he says that Conaire Mór reigned for thirty or seventy years.[58] But such hesitation does not equate to the inclusion of fable. Here Keating is simply reporting the divergence between his own chronicle-sources, reflecting a longstanding discrepancy in mediaeval Gaelic accounts of Conaire's reign.[59] Admitting uncertainty in this way and presenting the two alternatives had been part of normal historical practice since the Middle Ages.[60] Keating implicitly admits that both alternatives have equal claim to plausibility and accuracy. Equally importantly, this ambivalence does not affect the narrative content of Conaire's reign in *Foras Feasa*, since Keating does not provide year-numbers, only a regnal sequence. Nonetheless, in such cases Keating more frequently provides his readers with a clear signal as to which alternative he considers more accurate.

One of the most notorious inclusions of inauthentic or fabulous history in *Foras Feasa* is the account of antediluvian occupations of Ireland in Book I section 5, covering occupations by Ceasair and/or others and taking up four pages in a modern edition.[61] Here Keating summarizes three different accounts of antediluvian occupations of Ireland without appearing, on the surface, to judge between their merits: *Adeirid drong .... Adeirid drong eile .... Adeirthear, trá* ('Some say .... Others say .... It is said, however ....'). After these summaries, though, Keating declares that he has included these accounts only because they are in old books (*i sein-leabhraibh*) that he is using as source-material, but that he does not consider any of these accounts to be true history (*stair fhírinnigh*). Here he makes his stance unambiguous: he has been summarizing traditional, but untrue, accounts of antediluvian settlements before going on to tell the true history. Keating then goes on to discuss in some detail why these, and several other legendary narratives about early settlers, are implausible, before moving on in the next section to what he considers to be the more credible accounts of Ireland's settlement after the Flood.[62] And a careful reading of the end of the preceding section (section 4) shows that Keating has already primed his readers to take his antediluvian settlement-accounts with a very strong pinch of salt:

[57] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 36.

[58] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 230.

[59] On this discrepancy in medieval regnal sequences see Gisbert Hemprich, *Rí Érenn – 'König von Irland': Fiktion und Wirklichkeit*, 2 vols continuously paginated (Berlin, 2015), 289–90. Hemprich's book demonstrates how mediaeval regnal listing of this kind combined a claim to trace the backbone of Irish political history with a willingness to treat some of the details creatively.

[60] For mediaeval Gaelic examples, see Toner, 'The Ulster cycle'; Toner, 'Authority', 69–74.

[61] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 138–46.

[62] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 146–54.

> cuirfeam síos ann so ar dtús, do ghabhálaibh Éireann ria ndílinn, do réir droinge re seanchus, sul luaidhfeam na fíor-ghabhála do rinneadh uirre d'eis dílinne.[63]
>
> 'we shall first set down here something concerning the invasions of Ireland before the Flood, according to some historians, before we discuss the true invasions to which it was subjected after the Flood.'

Taken together, this whole antediluvian sequence shows Keating summarizing and then disposing of historical traditions that were well known to many among his scholarly target readership, but which he considers to be untrue or unlikely, moving on after that to narrate what he considers to be the true first settlement of Ireland. Both the summaries and the refutations were essential aspects of his rhetorical procedure for setting out clearly what he believed really happened and demonstrating his mastery of Gaelic source-material. He was not neutrally repeating information that he had found 'in old books' with no care as to whether or not it was true. Rather, he was intervening directly in controversies about the authenticity and chronology of individual episodes in Ireland's history, and about the legitimacy of Gaelic written sources for narrating that history. It was necessary for him to show that he was fully aware of the content of accounts of antediluvian settlements and other doubtful episodes of which his educated target audience would also have been aware, so that he could go on to plot a clear path for them through the labyrinth and reject the parts which he felt to be untrue (*neimhfhíor*).[64] Mentioning alternative accounts in order to set them aside is a rhetorical strategy found in much mediaeval and modern narrative history-writing.[65] It is no more an 'inclusion of fable within history' than a prosecuting lawyer's preliminary summary of the case for the defence (before dismantling it) can be taken as a sign that the prosecutor was herself defending the accused. True, Keating gives those competing accounts plenty of space to have their say (occasionally, one suspects, with his tongue in his cheek);[66] but this stance, displaying his scrupulousness in sifting sources, is part of how Keating constructs his own scholarly authority as he guides the reader through the true history of Ireland. The vocabulary of historical truth and untruth pervades the whole sequence, as with Keating's other discussions of doubtful episodes.

[63]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 138.

[64]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 148.

[65]For discussion of some seventeenth-century Irish examples of this strategy, see Cunningham, *Annals of the Four Masters*, 78–9 (on the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* and the Ó Cléirigh recension of *Lebor Gabála*); M. Pía Coira, *By Poetic Authority: The Rhetoric of Panegyric in Gaelic Poetry of Scotland to c. 1700* (Edinburgh, 2014), 117–18 (on Dubhaltach Mac Firbhisigh's genealogical compendium); Casey, 'The *Annals of Clonmacnoise*', 20–2.

[66]O'Halloran (*Golden Ages*, 18) has suggested that Keating's tone was ironic, rather than serious, when – in the same antediluvian sequence – he dismissed the possibility that knowledge about antediluvian settlers could have been transmitted to post-diluvian tradition-bearers by fairy lovers of the antediluvians. For other examples of dry humour in Keating's rhetoric, see Ó Dúshláine, 'Medium and message', 78 and 85.

Keating's approach to the past bridged the divide between mediaeval and modern methodologies rather than presenting a radical break. Connell uses the case of *Foras Feasa* to undermine overly rigid distinctions between mediaeval and early modern historical practices and to challenge the triumphalist claim that humanists introduced superior methods of sifting truth from fable compared to their mediaeval forebears.[67] She rightly emphasizes how several of the humanists' historical procedures maintained or drew substantially on mediaeval practices, and Keating's use of the *Lebor Gabála* framework is a case in point. Nonetheless, the humanists' rhetoric of expunging fable from history was typically accompanied by a more transparent signposting and weighing-up of the truth-value they claimed for specific episodes than one finds in some mediaeval national histories. Most of the allegedly fabulous narratives that Connell identifies in early modern British and Irish histories are there placed in a clear ontological hierarchy so that the reader is guided not to take them literally as part of the main historical narrative (as in Keating's account of antediluvian settlements just discussed).[68] In most cases, the episodes deemed by Connell as fabulous inclusions are argued by the historian in question to have really (or probably, or possibly) happened, and are hence included not as fables but as genuine or possible historical information, even though we might prefer to classify the same episodes as fabulous or legendary.[69]

Keating's scepticism about the antediluvian narratives in the *Lebor Gabála* tradition contrasts with the willingness of contemporary Irish historians to include at least some of this material as accredited fact.[70] Furthermore, as Clare O'Halloran has pointed out, Keating was more sceptical than some later Irish historians who similarly wrote to vindicate the dignity of their own history. The best-known of these was Roderic O'Flaherty, whose *Ogygia* (1685) seemed to mark a fuller embrace of international humanist currents by being written in Latin and published in London. While O'Flaherty, too, voiced scepticism about some narratives he found in his sources,[71] he gave more literal credit to the prehistoric invasion-narratives of *Lebor Gabála* than Keating had half a century earlier, even specifying the exact date and day of the week on which Partholón had arrived in Ireland.[72]

[67]For an important earlier example of this challenge to the 'historical revolution' model, see Andrew Hadfield, 'Sceptical history and the myth of the historical revolution', *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme* 19/1 (2005), 25–44. Connell's discussion is, however, innovative in placing Irish historians such as Keating within the context of this challenge.

[68]Fables included outwith the main historical narrative thread: Connell, ' "No room in history" ', 43, 58, 126.

[69]Apparent fables deemed true or possibly true (and therefore, if true, no longer fables): Connell, ' "No room in history" ', 39, 47, 57.

[70]Examples include the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* (albeit displaying scepticism about the long-lived Fionntain) and the *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland* by the Four Masters. See Cunningham, *Annals of the Four Masters*, 77–80; Casey, 'The *Annals of Clonmacnoise*', 21. Casey's article (ibid., 12–17) explores the varying positions between scepticism and credence regarding saintly miracles in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* as examples of its author-translator's engagement with humanist methods and with Tridentine caution regarding hagiographic 'fables'.

[71]For examples see Connell, ' "No room in history" ', 123–4 and 126–7.

[72]O'Halloran, *Golden Ages*, 18–19.

Foras Feasa also presents itself as even less inclusive of historically dubious or uncertain narrative than are several humanist histories by early modern English writers. The Brut narrative of British kings is a case in point. Some early modern historians treated most or all of that narrative as fabulous and therefore unworthy of inclusion within a history; but some even among the doubters still included it in their own main historical narrative on the grounds that some well-regarded scholars continued to uphold its partial veracity.[73] The most extreme example of this position, amounting to a wholesale incorporation of legends and fables in a historical narrative, was that advanced by John Milton in his *History of Britain*, composed mostly in the 1640s and published in 1670.[74] A brief contrast between Milton's and Keating's treatment of the earliest portions of their respective histories will help clarify Keating's purpose.

Milton's narrative begins, like Keating's, with a series of legends that Milton briefly summarizes in order to dispose of as fabulous; but when he reaches the Brut narrative, he admits that 'we cannot so easily be discharg'd' of this account that is 'defended by many, deny'd utterly by few'. For this reason Milton states that he has 'chos'n not to omitt' this sequence from his history,[75] even though he himself is one of the doubters (as he makes clear throughout his Brut sequence). This sequence takes up twenty-six pages of his *History of Britain* and amounts to a kind of fabulous, dreamlike prehistory leading up to the clearer light in which the history of Roman Britain is introduced in book 2.[76] The four-page sequence of self-declared fabulous material opening the main historical narrative in *Foras Feasa* seems very modest by comparison.

Earlier in the same work Milton equivocally defends his inclusion of doubtful or outright fabulous accounts by appealing to the common humanist trope of keeping an open mind, just in case 'Relations heretofore accounted Fabulous' might 'contain in them many foot-steps, and reliques of somthing true' – but then he immediately admits that these accounts may end up serving only 'our English Poets, and Rhetoricians, who by thir Art will know, how to use them judiciously'.[77] Later in the work, when discussing the supposed existence of King Arthur, Milton remarks that 'he who can accept of Legends for good story, may quickly swell a volume with trash'.[78] Milton here uses 'story' in the sense we know as 'history', but this remark also reflects oddly on his decision to swell book 1 of his own volume with matter that he himself declares doubtful or fabulous. This is a particularly glaring example of the tension that Connell identifies in much humanist history-writing between the

[73]Connell, ' "No room in history" ', 180–219.

[74]Connell, ' "No room in history" ', 30, 56–9 and 214–15. On the strategies, contexts and publication history of Milton's *History of Britain*, see Nicholas von Maltzahn, *Milton's History of Britain: Republican Historiography in the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1991).

[75]John Milton, *The History of Britain*, facsimile of 1677 edition, ed. by Graham Parry (Stamford, 1991), second run of pages, 10–11.

[76]Milton, *History of Britain*, second run of pages, 12–37.

[77]Milton, *History of Britain*, second run of pages, 7.

[78]Milton, *History of Britain*, second run of pages, 145. Milton's use of the word 'story', in the early modern sense synonymous with 'history', is also seen in John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Alastair Fowler, 2nd ed. (Harlow, 1971), 634 (xii.506).

rhetoric of 'purging fables from history' and the desire to include fables in history.

Some scholars have explained this tension in terms of a failure of critical nerve. In Graham Parry's view, for instance, the fabulous content of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* left Milton 'bewitched, against his better judgement', as if he just could not help but include it in his own history.[79] But Milton clearly *chose* to include it. He was following a custom, widespread among historians in early modern England, of including the Brut narrative even while also expressing doubts about its veracity, and was unusual mainly in including so much of this narrative. Milton displays his poor opinion of the reliability of Geoffrey's *History* at various points in book 1, interspersing his retelling of the Brut narrative with barbed asides about the 'grand Fable' or 'tedious Tale' and reminding the reader of its unreliability at its beginning and end, suggesting that he has included the whole sequence mainly to pour scorn on it.[80] Yet elsewhere in book 1 Milton leaves open the identification of his doubtful source as 'Story or Fable' (again using 'story' in the sense of 'history'), and even seems to support the veracity of a few of the events narrated by citing accredited historians in the margins, such as Matthew of Westminster and Henry of Huntingdon.[81] At other places Milton leaves the reader without overt authorial guidance. These features, combined with the sheer length of his Brut narrative, cause it to drift at times into a seemingly straightforward narration of historical events. By contrast, the much smaller scale of Keating's inclusions of self-declared spurious history makes it easier for the reader to distinguish the true from the false as Keating saw it.

To explain the much greater space given to putatively 'fabulous' history by Milton than by Keating, we must take into account the stylistic and generic spectrum of humanist history-writing, and the range of target audiences. These two works were not aimed at the same kinds of readers and used different literary modes. Early in his *History of Britain* Milton distances his procedure from the more deliberative and evidence-sifting style of humanist history-writing: 'I intend not with Controversies and Quotations to delay or interrupt the smooth course of History; much less to argue and debate long who were the first Inhabitants, with what Probabilities, what Authorities each Opinion hath bin upheld'. Instead he aims 'with plain, and lightsom brevity, to relate well and orderly things worth the Noting'.[82] Keating, too, strove to present a smooth narrative, but the early sections of *Foras Feasa* do give relatively more space than the early sections of Milton's *History of Britain* to debating the merits of rival accounts. After all, Milton could expect the more scholarly of his readers to look to his English humanist predecessors such as William Camden and John Speed for closely argued debates about different interpretations of the sources. His aim was to produce a more transparent, widely accessible narrative with

[79] Graham Parry, 'Introduction', in Milton, *History of Britain*, first run of pages, 7–48, at 14.

[80] Milton, *History of Britain*, second run of pages, 19 and 36. For discussion, see von Maltzahn, *Milton's History of Britain*, 103–16.

[81] Milton, *History of Britain*, second run of pages, 36, 35 and 37 respectively.

[82] Milton, *History of Britain*, second run of pages, 7–8.

a punchy moral message, and the Brut legends had obvious entertainment value as well as exemplary potential.[83] Keating, by contrast, seems to have had a well-educated audience in view from the outset, and as the first Irish humanist to produce a *longue durée* narrative history of Ireland he had to break the necessary ground for himself. Hence his account of prehistoric Ireland is interwoven with deliberations about the relative plausibility of competing accounts.

Today's historians might accuse Keating of treating fables as history, when he uses *Lebor Gabála* and various sagas to narrate the history of Ireland from the Deluge to the early Christian era; but Keating included those accounts because he held them to be true, not because he wished to swell his history with fables or legends. Unlike the proliferation of spurious history that Milton allows in book 1 of his *History of Britain*, I can find only two instances where Keating includes (in Cashman's words) a 'narrative that … he does not believe to be factual' in his history for purposes other than sifting historical evidence to tell his readers what really happened in Ireland's past. In both instances Keating summarizes a mediaeval story about a recognized pre-Christian Irish king that he states was never intended to be taken literally, doing so seemingly for light relief or to point up a moral lesson. At one point he includes a brief story about Lughaidh Laighdhe's sexual encounter with a woman of sovereignty who transforms from an ugly old woman to a beautiful young lady and grants the kingship to Lughaidh.[84] As Connell notes, Keating rationalizes this story by editing out some of its more obviously supernatural aspects; but he also insists that the story is not a truthful historical account, but rather an allegory about kingship.[85] Elsewhere Keating retells an anecdote about King Labhraidh Loingseach having horse's ears and the revelation of this peculiarity by a magic harp, and after narrating it Keating adds that he considers it untrue.[86]

Two untrue stories hardly counts as 'liberally sprinkled with legends': Keating's inclusion of these stories was atypical of his usual practice. However, they require a closer look if we are to understand Keating's attitude towards mediaeval Gaelic storytelling and its veracity, because – as I will argue – they make use of a discourse of fictionality that sets Keating's work apart from his mediaeval forebears.

3. Keating and 'poetical fictions' in early modern Irish thought

In both of the narrations of untrue stories just mentioned, Keating's denial of the story's veracity is accompanied by a kind of genre-designation: he refers to each story as *finnscéal filidheachta*, 'a poetical *finnscéal*'. So far as I am aware, Keating is only the second author attested in the mediaeval and early modern Gaelic corpus to use the word *finnscéal*, and his sole predecessor was a poet living some five centuries earlier whose usage of the term offers no clues as to

[83] See Parry, 'Introduction', 9–10.
[84] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 148.
[85] Connell, ' "No room in history" ', 160–1.
[86] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 172–4.

how (if at all) it meant anything different from *scéal*.[87] This means we must be careful about making assumptions about what Keating meant by *finnscéal*.

Connell translates *finnscéal* as 'legend', which is consistent with modern Irish folklorists' use of *finnscéal* as the technical term for a folk legend.[88] But 'legend' is itself a notoriously multivalent word. Folklorists typically use it (with German *Sage*) to denote a narrative whose supposed historical veracity is part of the point of telling it: a story about something noteworthy or strange that is held by the narrator (but not necessarily the folklorist) to have really taken place, as opposed to a *Märchen* or 'fairytale' which is a made-up story not intended to be taken as true. Connell, on the other hand, makes it clear in her discussion that she sees 'legend' in similar terms to the sense in which it is used in most of her early modern English sources, meaning a narrative that used to be credited as true but is now considered false or doubtful.[89]

Irish usage of *finnscéal* between Keating's time and today similarly hovers in the grey area between fact and fiction. In 1808 the Irish scholar Theophilus O'Flanagan explained the word *finnscéal* in 1808 as 'an ancient romantic story', and he went on to describe his main subject, the story of Deirdre (one of the Ulster sagas retold by Keating), in similar terms.[90] In his view, this was 'a *tale* poetically embellished, though founded on fact'.[91] O'Flanagan repeats this insistence on a kernel of truth, and the folly of rejecting the whole as a fable, throughout the notes to his edition of the Deirdre saga: 'A vast deal of poetic fiction is mixed by our old poets with their details of absolute historic facts .... From ancient documents of this nature, however, it is limited, if not ignorant fastidiousness to scorn all endeavour at enucleating truth'.[92] Keating would surely have said the same about the Deirdre saga, since he tried to 'enucleate' its truth by presenting a condensed and rationalized version of it as part of his history. But, as we shall see, Keating certainly did not view this saga, or the other sagas he retold as historical accounts, as examples of *finnscéal filidheachta*. On the contrary, it can be shown that Keating used the phrase *finnscéal filidheachta* to denote a completely untrue story or claim that was deliberately made up from the outset. As we shall see, for Keating this category did not hover in the grey area between fact and fiction, but was equivalent to fiction.

As will become clear below, in all but one attestation of *finnscéal filidheachta* in *Foras Feasa*, Keating places this category in direct and overt opposition

[87]For discussion of this mediaeval attestation and its meaning, see O'Connor, 'Semantics of *scél*', 37–40. The entry in *eDIL* ('story, legend') seems to conflate the meanings of the mediaeval and early modern attestations in a rather ambiguous way: *eDIL*, s.v. 1 *finn* II(b).

[88]I am grateful to Barbara Hillers for advice on this point.

[89]A clear opposition between 'history' and 'legend' emerges in Connell, 'Poetics and politics', 84: 'Keating occasionally informs his reader that certain episodes included in the *Foras Feasa* are not to be regarded as historical and should instead be considered legends'.

[90]Theophilus O'Flanagan, *Deirdri, or, The Lamentable Fate of the Sons of Usnach, an Ancient Dramatic Irish Tale* (Dublin, 1808), printed as the fourth run of pages in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Dublin* 1 (1808), 59–60n.

[91]O'Flanagan, *Deirdri*, 103–4n., emphasis original.

[92]O'Flanagan, *Deirdri*, 134n.

to the term *stair*, a longstanding Irish borrowing from *historia* in the sense of a true historical narrative (and in that one remaining attestation, the same opposition is clearly implicit). Every time he uses the phrase *finnscéal filidheachta*, it labels a narrative or a historical claim not merely as doubtful, but as fanciful, lying, fictitious. Here is more evidence that Keating was adopting the Renaissance habit of treating the creative imagination as something that existed in tension with (or opposition to) the narrating of historical truth, rather than something that was felt to reinforce or complement historical truth as in mediaeval epic or saga-writing. The root meaning of *scéal* was 'reported information', often by implication in narrative form but also connoting news more generally. To this root meaning, with its baseline connotations of true reporting, *finnscéal* adds an epithet connoting aesthetic adornment (*finn-* 'beautiful'), connotations that are then reinforced by the adjective *filidheachta* 'poetical'. The resulting phrase resembles the contemporary English phrase 'poeticall fiction'.

Indeed, the first time that Keating uses the phrase *finnscéal filidheachta*, he is referring to poetry: specifically, to the English poetry of Edmund Spenser. In his defensive introduction, after refuting various statements made in Spenser's *View of the State of Ireland* as *breugach* (false/lying), Keating wonders aloud why Spenser had chosen to write about things of which he was so ignorant. He suggests that, because Spenser was a poet himself,

> tug cead cumadóireachta dhó féin; mar fá gnáth leisean …, iomad finnsgeul filidheachta do chumadh agus do chórughadh le briathraibh blasda, do bhreugadh an léaghthóra.
>
> 'he allowed himself liberty of invention, as it was customary for him … to invent and arrange many poetical *finnscéala* with charming words, to deceive the reader.'[93]

This description sets up the category *finnscéal filidheachta* by associating it with invention in the fictive sense (*cumadóireacht*), deception and aesthetic beauty. There is also a note of disapproval: the category *finnscéal filidheachta* is invoked on its first attestation to explain why Spenser told so many lies about Ireland. The Classically educated reader would perhaps have recalled Cicero's speech *Pro Caelio* in which he had defended Marcus Caelius Rufus against an accusation of attempted murder made by his wife, the renowned poetess and playwright Clodia Metelli. Cicero dismissed the truthfulness of her account by calling it a *fabella* (a 'little *fabula*') made by a poetess who had composed *plurimae fabulae* ('many *fabulae*').[94]

This cluster of associations brings Keating's phrase *finnscéal filidheachta* into the orbit of *fabula* and *figmentum* in early modern scholarly discourse more generally. This context requires some illustration. Later in the seventeenth century the word *finnscéal* (with or without a further qualifier) was

[93]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 30.

[94]Cicero, *Orations: Pro Caelio, De provinciis consularibus, Pro Balbo*, ed. and trans. by R. Gardner (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958), 486 (section xvii).

used pejoratively to gloss the Latin word *figmentum*, especially in confessional and theological polemics. The first attestations of *finnscéal* without any further qualifier were in the 1660s and 1670s, in a context where its basic equivalence to *figmentum* and/or *fabula* seems clear.[95] The use of the Latin terminology of imaginative invention to dismiss the religious beliefs of others, current since Antiquity (not only among Christians), had reached a new pitch in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, with *figmentum* much used by Protestants to castigate certain doctrines as merely human imaginings.[96] In his catechism *Lucerna fidelium* (1676), the Franciscan theologian Francis Molloy adapted this terminology into Irish with the word *finnsgeul* in order to explain what Protestants believed about Catholic doctrines. At one point Molloy states that, to non-Catholics, *Nach bhfuil acht finnsgeul a n-iodhbairt an aifrinn* ('the sacrifice of the Mass is nothing but a *finnsgeul*'); he cites as his source *Confess[io] Angl[icana], art. 31*, the 'Thirty-nine articles' of the Church of England.[97] Molloy's Irish sentence is a condensed paraphrase of a sentence in Article 31 which emphasizes that propitiation of God's wrath took place on the Cross and does not take place during Mass, so the *missarum sacrificia* (sacrifices of Masses) performed by Catholic priests to propitiate God *blasphema figmenta sunt et pernitiosæ imposturæ* – or, as the English version of 1571 put it, 'were blasphemous fables, and daungerous deceites'.[98] Molloy's *finnsgeul* renders Latin *figmentum* or English 'fable' – or both. Later in the tract Molloy amplifies *finnsgeul* into a tautology by adding the adjective *fabhall* ('fabulous, made-up'). He dismisses the logic of one argument by saying that if it is true, then Christ's promises are lies and *ata 'na fhinnsgeul fhabhalta an sgrioptur fein ar fad* ('Scripture itself is altogether comprised of

[95]The first attestation of which I am aware (thanks to Ruairí Ó hUiginn) is Richard Plunkett's unpublished *Vocabularium latinum et hibernum* (1662), a manuscript Latin-Irish dictionary in which *finnscéal* (unqualified) is one of numerous glosses for the word *fabula*. Other glosses in this entry include *braissgéal* 'boastful tale', *sgéal bréige no bréagach* ('lying tale'), and terms connoting mockery or jokes, as well as the direct borrowing *fabhall*: Dublin, Marsh's Library, MS Z 4.2.5, fol. 169r, s.v. *fabula*, available online at www.isos.dias.ie (accessed 26 November 2025). Several Latin words relating to *fabula* are glossed here in similar terms, and on fol. iii Keating is named as one of Plunkett's sources.

[96]Reijo Työrinoja, 'Fact, fiction, and fantasy: Luther and the medieval *de anima* tradition of imagination', in Vesa Hirvonen et al. (eds), *Mind and Modality: Studies in the History of Philosophy in Honour of Simo Kuutila* (Leiden, 2006), 239–54, at 251–2.

[97]Francis Molloy, *Lucerna fidelium*, ed. by Pádraig Ó Súilleabháin (Dublin, 1962), 138 (part 3, chapter 6).

[98]The Latin text of 1571 is quoted here from Gerald Bray (ed.), *Documents of the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 1994), 303. The English text is quoted here from *Articles Agreed on by the Archbyshoppes and Byshoppes in the Yere 1562* (London, 1571), 20. A clear picture of successive revisions to the Latin as well as English versions is given by Charles Hardwick, *A History of the Articles of Religion*, new ed. (Cambridge, 1859), 314–17. The 1553 Latin versions had *figmenta* without *blasphema*, and the equivalent English wording for *figmenta* alone was 'forged fables'. In the 1553 texts this section constituted Article 30, not 31 as cited by Molloy. The equivalent passage in the more detailed 1615 'Irish Articles' uses quite different wording and is numbered as section 99 (Hardwick, *History*, 366). Therefore Molloy must have been using the 1571 Latin or English version – probably the Latin, because his own paraphrase is in the present tense, like the Latin but unlike the English.

made-up figments of the imagination').[99] This usage bears a close resemblance to Keating's phrase *finnscéal filidheachta* and is further evidence that *finnscéal*/*finnsgeul* was understood to mean an untrue story or account in early modern Irish culture.

The same cluster of negative connotations, implying lies and falsehood, hovers around another key phrase in Keating's discussion of Spenser's poetical activities, *cead cumadóireachta* ('liberty of invention, freedom to invent').[100] Other ecclesiastically authored Irish texts from the same century use the word *cumadóireacht* (from *cummaid*, 'forms, shapes, composes') to translate *fabula* and/or *figmentum* (from *fingere* 'to form, shape, make up'), again in contexts of disapproval. For example, in William Daniel's 1602 Irish translation of the New Testament, in the Pastoral Epistles to Timothy and Titus, St. Paul's warnings against being led astray by heathen or Jewish *mythoi* or *fabulae* are translated using the phrases *sgéulta fábhuill* ('fabulous stories', 1 Tim 4:7, 2 Tim 4:4 and Titus 1:14) and *chumadóireachd sgéul* ('making-up of stories', 1 Tim 1:4).[101] Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire's adaptation of *Desiderius* (1616) echoes these Pauline resonances in overtly Augustinian vein, with *cumadóireacht* used to denote pretence or deception, for instance in the recurring phrase *bréaga 7 cumadóireacht* ('lies and invention').[102] In one of these instances, *cumadóireacht* has been used to render *fingimiento* in the sixteenth-century Spanish source.[103] Later in the century, the Irish translator of a mediaeval Latin Life of St. Francis similarly rendered *figmenta*, described as emanating from the Devil and deceiving listeners, as *cumadóireacht*.[104] Finally, in his 1640 translation of a passage from Savonarola's *Triumphus crucis*, in which the author had said that if there were no hope of Heaven then the Christian faith would be *fabulosum ac commenticium* ('fabulous and made-up'), Bonaventure O'Conor rendered that phrase *fábhall agus comadóireacht* ('fable and invention').[105]

Keating's use of the phrase *cead cumadóireachta* ('liberty of invention') adds a further layer to this theologically weighted rhetoric of lying and deception, mirroring his use of the word *filidheacht* to qualify *finnscéal* in the same sentence. He treats Spenser's use of *cumadóireacht* as a natural aspect of

[99] Molloy, *Lucerna fidelium*, 164 (part 3, chapter 10).

[100] *Cumadóireacht* connotes invention in the sense of pretence or falsifying, a sense that Latin *inventio* also came to acquire in the early modern period. All the attestations of *cumadóireacht* in *eDIL* (s.v. *cummatóirecht*) are from the seventeenth century or later. The standard mediaeval Irish term approximating to *inventio* was *airec* (or *airec menman*), normally used to refer to the 'discovery' of something true rather than the 'making-up' of something fictive.

[101] Uilliam Ó Domhnaill (trans.), *Tiomna Nuadh ár dTighearna agus ár Slánuightheora Íosa Críost* (Dublin, 1602), viewed on Royal Irish Academy, 'Historical Irish corpus 1600–1926', https://corpas.ria.ie (accessed 16 November 2025).

[102] Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire, *Desiderius*, ed. by Thomas F. O'Rahilly, Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series 12 (Dublin, 1941), 68, 82, 131 and 309.

[103] Ó Maolchonaire, *Desiderius*, 309, s.v. *fimíneacht*, O'Rahilly's note to p. 82.

[104] Pádraig Ó Suilleabháin (ed.), *Beatha San Froinsias* (Dublin, 1957), 79, and *eDIL* s.v. *cummatóirecht*.

[105] For both source and translation, see [Girolamo Savonarola], *Triumphus crucis seu de veritate fidei* (Florence, 1497), book 2 chapter 6 (n.p.); Pádraig Ó Suilleabháin (ed.), *Buaidh na Naomhchroiche* (Dublin, 1972), 52.

his identity as a poet by adding the concept of *cead*, meaning permission or liberty. The resulting phrase looks rather like an Irish calque on the ancient rhetorical concept of a *licentia fingendi* ('licence to invent') associated with poets as makers of fiction. A key reference-point here is the ancient rhetorician Quintilian, who used this phrase to describe the actions of lying teachers who exercised *licentia fingendi* to invent *fabulae* and mislead their students.[106] In Europe generally, including the Insular world, this pejorative sense of poetic licence remained an important rhetorical resource throughout the Middle Ages (especially from Augustinian perspectives and in religious writings).[107] Admittedly, this pejorative usage was also balanced by more positive assessments of the possibilities of fiction, such as the Servian commentaries on Virgil's *Æneid* which identified epic poets' use of the same freedom, here termed *poetica licentia*: that perspective was applied much more widely from the twelfth century onwards.[108] But we can see in Keating's discussion of Spenser that he here takes the sterner line, like the early modern religious writers mentioned above, describing poets who use their freedom in order to deceive their audiences.

These closely overlapping clusters of connotations allow us to understand Keating's use of the phrase *finnscéal filidheachta* as an Irish equivalent to *figmentum poeticum* ('poetic invention', or 'poeticall fiction'). That Latin concept had been known to Gaelic scholars since at least the twelfth century, when it was used to refer to made-up material in a colophon to the saga *Táin Bó Cúailnge* ('The cattle-raid of Cooley') in the Book of Leinster, here reinforcing an opposition between the categories *historia* and *fabula*.[109] The point of the poetry-words *filidheacht* and *poetica* in Keating's phrase and the *Táin* colophon is certainly not 'poetry' in the metrical sense, nor is it *filidecht* in the very broad early mediaeval Gaelic sense combining compositional skill and performance with the utterance of reliable knowledge. Rather, the poetry referred to in Keating's *filidheacht* and the *Táin* colophon is something more recognizable from mediaeval and early modern *artes poetriae*: artful and pleasing literary invention in verse or prose, which is not to be mistaken for history.[110]

Keating's dismissal of Spenser thus positions his category *finnscéal filidheachta* as the fictional opposite of historical narrative, to be expunged from the kind of historical synthesis that he aimed to present. It is in this context that we must read his subsequent uses of the same category to label indigenous

[106] Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria: Books I–III*, ed. and trans. by H. E. Butler (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1920), 154 (I.viii.21).

[107] For some Gaelic examples, see Vivienne Margaret Bateman [= Meg Bateman], 'The themes and images of Classical Gaelic religious poetry', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1990, 7–9; Coira, *By Poetic Authority*, 123–4.

[108] On these developments, see Päivi Mehtonen, *Old Concepts and New Poetics: Historia, Argumentum, and Fabula in the Twelfth- and Early Thirteenth-Century Latin Poetics of Fiction* (Helsinki, 1996), especially 119–44; Nicolette Zeeman, 'The schools give a license to poets', in Rita Copeland (ed.), *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1996), 151–80.

[109] *TBC LL*, 136; Toner, 'The Ulster cycle' (with further references). However, as I argue in a forthcoming study, the Latin term *fabula* did not automatically connote untrue narrative in mediaeval Gaelic textual culture.

[110] On fictionality in the *artes poetriae*, see Mehtonen, *Old Concepts*.

Gaelic narratives too. Later in his introduction, correcting colonial historians on errors about Fionn mac Cumhaill and his *fían*, Keating argues that, like several other Fionn-tales, *Cath Fionntrágha* ('The battle of Ventry') was not *meas stáire fírinnighe* ('judged to be true history') by former historians, and that it is, instead, *finnsceul filidheachta do cumadh mar chaitheamh aimsire* ('a poetical *finnscéal* invented as a pastime').[111] The tone here is not disapproving, unlike the tone of Keating's discussion of Spenser. Spenser's lies are harmful because they pretend to be truth, whereas the fictions invented by Irish storytellers are harmless because they do not pretend to be anything more than entertainment. Keating's scorn is here reserved for Meredith Hanmer and other colonial historians who had cited the exaggerations of romance-sagas like *Cath Fionntrágha* as evidence of the unreliability of Irish *seanchus*. Those colonial critiques explain why it was especially important for Keating to cordon off the less plausible sagas as fictions.

This strategic exclusion of certain well-known Gaelic sagas as fictional entertainments rather than historical accounts is repeated and amplified in Keating's main narrative when he covers the period of history when Fionn lived, the reign of Cormac mac Airt. Here Keating asserts that narratives such as *Cath Fionntrágha*, *Bruighean Chaorthainn* and *Imtheacht an Ghiolla Dheacair* are examples of *iomad d'fhinnscéalaibh filidheachta ar Fhionn* ('many poetical *finnscéala* about Fionn') written *mar chaitheamh aimsire* ('as a pastime'). This should surprise no-one, Keating says, because there is no country in which *nach scríobhthaidhe ré linn na pagántachta sceoil da ngairthi fabulae* ('*scéala* which are called *fabulae* have not been written during the period of paganism'). To illustrate this point, Keating mentions some romances from other countries, probably referring to their English versions: *Féach Ridire na Gréine, Bevis of Hamton, Huon of Burdex, agus a samhail oile sin do scríobhadh lé linn an Chreidimh féin* ('such as the Knight of the Sun, Bevis of Hametoun, Huon of Bordeaux, and others like these, which were written even during the Christian period').[112]

This list of foreign romances may recall the English *finnscéala filidheachta* by Spenser to which Keating had initially attached the label *finnscéala filidheachta*. Perhaps Keating was thinking there of romances like *The Faerie Queene*. But here, again, Keating's allusion to foreign romances is less waspish than is his discussion of Spenser. Indeed, a generous reading of Keating's discussion of Spenser allows for the view that Keating considered Spenser's own romances as harmless in their own terms, but that Spenser had wrongfully brought the poet's inventive art into the domain of historical discourse. Keating was not attempting to condemn the enjoyment of romances as such; he would have known that many among his primary target audience of Catholic Irish

[111] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 50.

[112] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 326. On the identity of these texts and their likely English provenance in this context, see Aisling Byrne, 'Writing westwards: medieval English romances and their early modern Irish audiences', in Matthew Woodcock and Andrew King (eds), *Medieval into Renaissance: Essays for Helen Cooper* (Cambridge, 2016), 73–90, at 73–4.

gentry eagerly commissioned such texts in the form of translations, fresh compositions or new copies.[113]

We know from other sources that Keating himself happily employed fictional narrative in certain contexts. In his earlier homiletic work *Trí Bior-Ghaoithe an Bháis* ('Three shafts of death') he had repeatedly used the compound *fábhaill-sgéal* ('fabulous story') without any disapproval whatsoever to refer to Christ's parables in the New Testament. The relevant parables, some mentioned more than once, are those of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–7, cited twice), the man whose house is burgled (Matthew 24:43–4), the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32), the rich man and the beggar Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31, cited three times), the man who invited his friends to a feast (Luke 14:16–24), the steward facing redundancy (Luke 16:1–8), the man who asks his friend for bread (Luke 11:5–10), the vineyard-owner (Matthew 20:1–16) and the sower (Matthew 13:3–8).[114] These are not 'fables' or *fabulae* in the Classical, Ciceronian sense of an unnatural or improbable narrative. Most of these examples of *fábhaill-sgéal* are entirely realistic, the only exception being the cosmic artificiality of the conversation between the rich man in Hell and Lazarus in Heaven in Luke 16. *Fábhaill-sgéal* here means simply 'made-up story', whether realistic or not, and this is in keeping with mediaeval and early modern understandings of *figmentum*.

In *Foras Feasa*, Keating's point about *finnscéala filidheachta* and *fabulae* is simply that they represent a literature of entertainment which should not be mistaken for history, and which is found in all countries. His alignment of historically dubious Gaelic sagas with mediaeval romances anticipates the more overt use of 'romance' by Celtic scholars to label native Gaelic sagas almost three centuries later.[115] Reiterating the *finnscéal-stair* opposition, Keating then insists there are nevertheless many *staire fírinneacha inchreidthe* ('true and credible histories') about Fionn's people. He goes on to repeat some of the contents of other mediaeval Gaelic texts about Fionn in his own history. Elsewhere he names the mediaeval saga *Agallamh na Seanórach* ('The conversation of the ancients') as a reliable source of information about the distant past via its long-lived protagonist, Fionn's sometime companion Caoilte mac Rónáin,

> do mhair tuilleadh agus trí chéad bliadhan, agus do nocht mórán seanchusa do Phádraic, amhail is follus i n-Agallaimh na Seanórach ...[116]

[113]Byrne, 'Writing westwards'.

[114]Geoffrey Keating, *Trí Bior-Ghaoithe an Bháis: The Three Shafts of Death*, ed. by Osborn Bergin, 2nd ed. (Dublin, 1931), 48 and 330, 71–2, 108–9, 194 (and 248 and 263), 215, 236, 237, 278, 316–17 and 323 respectively.

[115]On Eleanor Hull's and Edmund Quiggin's uses of the label 'romance', primarily of sagas in the Ulster and Finn Cycles, see Erich Poppe, *Of Cycles and Other Critical Matters: Some Issues in Medieval Irish Literary History and Criticism*, E. C. Quiggin Memorial Lectures 9 (Cambridge, 2008), 1 and 6–13.

[116]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 326–34; i, 150–2.

> 'who lived for more than three hundred years, and who made known much historical information to [St.] Patrick, as is evident in *Agallamh na Seanórach* ...'

Further confirmation that *finnscéal filidheachta* denotes an entertaining narrative with no historical veracity is found elsewhere in *Foras Feasa*, at other points where Keating's saga-strewn narrative is momentarily interrupted by his denial of the truthfulness of certain episodes in his mediaeval Gaelic narrative sources. Despite his willingness to credit the *Acallam*'s witness to Caoilte's extremely long life, the well-known notion that the sage Fionntain had lived even longer and survived the Flood itself is too much for Keating, in part because it had provoked the scorn of English scholars. He declares

> nach fuil acht finnsceul filidheachta i san stáir d'fhaisnéidhfeadh Fionntain do mharthainn ria ndílinn, agus 'na diaidh ....[117]
>
> 'that there is nothing but a poetical *finnscéal* in the history that would recount [*or* explain] that Fionntain lived before and after the Deluge ....'

Here, as in the Book of Leinster colophon to the *Táin*, the phrasing implies that within a larger unit whose authenticity may be more robust, a passage that seems to be history (*stair*) can be identified as poetical fiction (*finnscéal filidheachta*), and that it is necessary to isolate these made-up passages from the historical record (*seanchus*) so as to leave that record unblemished in good humanist manner – and, by the same token, less vulnerable to the aspersions cast by colonial onlookers.

This is the context in which we must view Keating's inclusion of untrue stories about Lughaid Laighdhe and the hag-turned-beauty and Labhraidh Loingseach having horse's ears. As mentioned above, these are the only two instances where Keating repeats an untrue story for purposes other than immediately refuting it. Both stories are given the label *finnscéal filidheachta* and presented in explicit or implicit opposition to the category *stair*. The Lughaid story Keating calls an allegory of sovereignty: *go fáthach is í Éire an chailleach-so* ('symbolically, this hag is Ireland').[118] This is also, incidentally, the earliest unambiguous evidence that we possess for this *puella senilis* story or its analogues being treated allegorically. The Labhraidh story seems to have been included simply as an entertaining but factually untrue exemplum about kingship. Here again a direct opposition with *stair* is reiterated: *Is mó saoilim an chuid-se don scéal do bheith 'n-a fhinnscéal fhilidheachta ioná 'n-a stair* ('I consider this part of the *scéal* more [likely] to comprise poetical *finnscéal* than history').[119]

[117]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 150. On the contrast between Keating's assessment of this story and those offered by mediaeval Gaelic authors, see Emma Nic Cárthaigh, 'Surviving the Flood: revenants and antediluvian lore in medieval Irish texts', in Kathy Cawsey and Jason Harris (eds), *Transmission and Transformation in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 2007), 40–64, at 62–4.

[118]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 148.

[119]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 174.

This last comment implies that the other parts of the *scéal* or saga on which Keating drew when narrating the life of Labhraidh are, in Keating's view, history. He did, after all, consider both Lughaid and Labhraidh to be historical kings, and as we have seen, in practice he treated a great many *scéala* as respectable historical sources. It would be tempting, then, to infer that the longstanding, essentially historical connotations of the simplex term *scéal* remain implicit in Keating's usage even when he writes disparagingly about the veracity of the compound category *finnscéala filidheachta*. Compare, for example, the way in which the Old Irish glosses to the Psalm-commentary in Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 301 maintain the historical connotations of *scél* by qualifying untrue *scéla* with a negative adjective, such as *scéla togaitacha* ('deceptive *scéla*').[120] Keating may be seen as doing something similar with his compound *finnscéala filidheachta*, adding emphatic qualifying terms to the base term to invert its meaning and thus hiving off a particularly suspect group of aesthetically pleasing narratives from the rank and file of *scéala* which he considers trustworthy. Elsewhere in *Foras Feasa*, too, Keating uses negatively loaded terms in compounds with *seanchus* (*claoin-seanchus* and *saoibh-seanchus*, both meaning 'erroneous history') to set suspect histories apart from the genuine article.[121] In the paragraph of a 2019 conference paper from which the present article grew, I suggested that for Keating a *scéal* was normally expected to be a true story, as it had been for his forebears in Gaelic learned culture.[122]

However, when we look more closely at Keating's use of the word *scéal* in *Foras Feasa*, and also at contexts in which we might expect him to use this term but he does not, a very different profile of connotations emerges. This profile shows Keating, once again in humanist vein, pulling the term *scéal* away from its longstanding associations with historical narrative.[123] His usage thus reflects the wider practice, in early modern scholarship, of separating out the concepts of 'story' and 'history' more sharply (and removing the former), despite the fact that narrative remained central to much historical writing.[124]

[120]For this phrase see Whitley Strokes and John Strachan (eds and partial trans), *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1901–10), i, 84. For discussion of this passage see Harriet Thomsett, 'Meeting on whose terms? The equation of Latin and vernacular literary terminology in the Old Irish glosses', *Quaestio Insularis* 3 (2002), 107–20, at 117; O'Connor, 'Semantics of *scél*', 30–1.

[121]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 152 (describing Gerald of Wales's work).

[122]I presented this view in 'Entertainment and instruction in *scéla*: two ends of a Gaelic storytelling spectrum?', Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, University of Cambridge, April 2019.

[123]It has sometimes been suggested that a similar move was made in a scholastic note (thirteenth-century or later) surviving in the fifteenth-century Irish manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B. 512, in which *scél* is used to translate *fabula* in opposition to *stair* / *historia*: for the text see Brian Ó Cuív, '*Scél* : *arramainte* : *stair*', *Éigse* 11 (1964–6), 18. In a forthcoming article on the mediaeval Gaelic reception of Ciceronian literary theory, however (to appear in *CMCS* in Winter 2026), I have argued that story and history are not this note's primary concerns and that its key terms are to be understood in more specialized technical senses.

[124]Ó Buachalla ('*Annála*', 78) briefly noted the way in which Keating's preface made a point of separating *scéal* from *stair* as part of his adoption of humanist source-critical methods. Analysis of the wider context of shifting criteria for historical (and other) forms of plausibility in the early

4. Keating and the *scéal*

First, *Foras Feasa* makes much use of the widely attested non-narrative senses of *scéal*. Almost all attestations of the simplex *scéal* in *Foras Feasa* (i.e. without any qualifying prefix) use it to denote things other than narratives about former times. This is not at all unusual in mediaeval or modern literature in Irish, but it is worth noting here because it shows that Keating did not have anything against the word itself, despite using it so rarely to denote narrative as such. Sometimes its usage is part of a conventional greeting in which one speaker asks another what their news is, without anything hinging on this, or in other set phrases which do not necessarily imply the passing on of information and sometimes refer simply to an 'event'.[125] Especially in the sections dealing with eleventh- and twelfth-century events, it is often used in the sense of a message, 'sending word' to alert or summon another person, which may be considered as including information of a limited kind.[126] More frequently still, it is used in the sense of news or information, usually about events in the immediate past, sometimes (by implication) in narrative form.[127] It is occasionally used (in the plural) to denote information about a more distant past, not necessarily in narrative form: this sense overlaps with the strictly narrative sense of *scéal*, as when Keating wonders how *sceula* of the antediluvians could possibly have been transmitted to those living after the Deluge.[128] All these senses of *scéal* are absolutely conventional, and there is nothing unusual about Keating's usage of them.

What is unusual is that Keating very rarely uses singular *scéal* in the sense of a saga, tale or history about past events, a sense which is very widely attested elsewhere. This lack is striking in a work which draws so heavily on numerous sagas and other mediaeval Gaelic narrative compositions for which the standard mediaeval and early modern label was *scél*/*scéal*. Instead of this, Keating applies the labels *seanchas* or *stair* to his mediaeval narrative sources, and sometimes also the term *eachtra* in the sense of 'a narrative about great deeds': these alternative terms were normally treated as closely overlapping with *scéal*, but Keating held *scéal* at arm's length from them. When, in his

modern period has focused in particular on England, for example Barbara Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study of the Relationships between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law, and Literature* (Princeton, 1983); Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago, 1994).

[125] For examples, see Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 154, 206, 272; iii, 98. On the 'event' sense of *scél*/*scéal*, see Ralph O'Connor, *The Music of What Happens: Narrative Terminology and the Gaelic and Norse-Icelandic Saga*, E. C. Quiggin Memorial Lectures 23 (Cambridge, 2023), 46–59.

[126] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 144; ii, 40, 226, 402; iii, 120, 180, 250, 270, 272, 318, 324, 326.

[127] *Scéala* denotes information about occult matters, including the future, in Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 350. For *scéal(a)* as news or information about the immediate past, see ibid., i, 124; ii, 16, 154, 164, 192, 218, 226, 350, 362, 406, 410; iii, 60, 98, 226, 254, 332, 338, 344. Examples from the latter list where some kind of narrative is implied in the information delivered include the swineherds' reports (*sceul*) of their vision at Cashel (ibid., i, 124) and Aaron telling Niúl *scéala* about the deeds of the Israelites and Pharaoh (ibid., ii, 16).

[128] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 146 and 150; ii, 82. Some of Keating's usage of the word-form ending in *-a* may reflect instead the alternative singular form as seen in Old Irish *scélae*, but the meaning is the same.

defensive introduction, he describes the range of reliable vernacular sources on which he has drawn, he lists several individual sagas, mostly king-tales, but refers to them as *iomad do stáiribh eile* ('a great many other histories') which contain *mórán seanchusa* ('much historical learning'). Together with the other sources he mentions, these sagas collectively present *seanchus Éireann* ('the history of Ireland').[129]

Similarly, the detailed resumés of individual sagas presented as historical events in the main body of *Foras Feasa* are never introduced as *scéala*. When apologizing to his readers for not repeating every single Ulster story, he recommends that they read the various *tána* and *aideda* listed by title, and *a samhail oile so do stairibh* ('and other such histories'), in which they will find *a bhfios go foirleathan* ('extensive information about them', i.e. the Ulster warriors).[130] The death-tale of Conchubhar is referred to twice as *an stair* ('the history'), and both it and the story of Deirdre are introduced initially as *éirim na heachtra* – a 'course' or summary of the story – as if to highlight the content rather than the form. The full range of Ulster sagas are referred to in a similar content-oriented manner, as *cuid dá ndálaibh go cumair* ('some of their affairs in brief').[131] Sagas and poems about Níall Naoighiallach are referred to as *laoi nó leitir* ('lay or document'), and different versions of the mediaeval saga *Esnada Tige Buchet* are introduced in the phrase *do réir dhruinge ré seanchus* ('according to some investigators of *seanchus*').[132] Trustworthy narratives about Fionn mac Cumhaill, distinct from made-up *finnscéala filidheachta*, are referred to as *scríbhne* ('writings') or *staire* ('histories') and are said to have been sourced *a seinleabhraibh an tseanchusa* ('from the old books of the *seanchus*').[133] The notion that these narratives are, or were originally, *scéala* is comprehensively buried beneath the more emphatically veracious, and general, categories *stair* and *seanchus*.

On the few occasions in *Foras Feasa* when *scéal* is used in the sense of a narrative about the historical or legendary past, doubt is voiced concerning the narrative's veracity, and the story is usually rejected. The only instance I have found where *scéal* is used of an account whose veracity Keating seems willing to accept, and to include in his authorized account, is a reference to historical traditions about St. Patrick which appear in one Life but not another (*scéal nó míorbhál ar Phádraig*, 'a story or miracle of Patrick') but which should not be doubted for this reason.[134] The specific piece of information that Keating is trying to defend in this passage is not a story as such, but a claim about the chronology of his time in Ireland (i.e. it is news or information). And even this

[129]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 80.

[130]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 220.

[131]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 204, 198, 188 and 196 respectively.

[132]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 398 and 300. For early mediaeval parallels to the pairing *laoi nó leitir* as proofs of authenticity, see Toner, 'Authority', 61.

[133]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 324–6 and 330.

[134]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, iii, 30. There is one more exception, but this appears in a poem quoted by Keating rather than being Keating's own usage: ibid., ii, 344. Here *scéal* is translated by Comyn and Dinneen as 'gospels', which is probably too narrow (see O'Connor, 'Semantics of *scél*', 34 n. 76), but the context implies that these *scéala* are to be trusted and are of a devotional nature.

context, settling the reader's doubts about such diverse traditions, could be said to reinforce Keating's association of *scéal* with doubt.

This association of *scéal* with doubtful narrative applies even more strongly to the ambiguously narrative uses of *scéala* as applied to antediluvian history or information. Besides the passage quoted above on this subject, Keating also briefly mentions the possibility that antediluvian lore might have been carved on stones which remained visible after the floodwaters subsided, *dámadh fíor an sceul* ('if the *scéal* be true') – hardly a ringing endorsement.[135] As discussed above, Keating's treatment of these antediluvian *scéala* is highly sceptical, casting doubt on the possibility that any information about Irish antediluvians could have survived the Flood, so his emphasis is on questioning the veracity of accounts containing that alleged information and asserting that they do not contain *stáir fhírinnigh* ('trustworthy history').[136] As for Hanmer's claim that the Gaels gave credence *ar sceulaibh Fhionntain* ('to the *scéala* of Fionntain') that were later told to St. Patrick, Keating flatly denies that Fionntain ever passed on such lore. As Keating puts it, this is just another *do bhreughaibh Hanmer* ('of Hanmer's lies'), to be contrasted with the *iomad seanchusa* ('abundance of *seanchus*') which Caoilte mac Rónáin gave to Patrick concerning more recent Irish history.[137] So, leaving aside that one example about St. Patrick which is not a story as such, *scéala* are stories credited by other people but not by Keating, whereas stories credited and used as sources by Keating are referred to as *staire* or *seanchus*.

The same pattern, with its emphatic contrast between *scéal* on the one hand and *stair* or *seanchus* on the other, runs throughout Keating's other uses of *scéal* (unqualified) in an unambiguously narrative sense. Elsewhere in his defensive introduction he expresses the hope that his readers will trust his own *stair* (history) rather than the biased and lying *innisin sceul* ('storytelling') of foreign historians.[138] He rejects the tradition that Donnchadh mac Briain had children by a Roman emperor's daughter while on pilgrimage to Rome: *ní héidir an scéal-so do bheith fírinneach* ('it is not possible that this *scéal* [can] be true').[139] And in some of his identifications of doubtful narratives as *finnscéala filidheachta*, mentioned above, Keating brings in the word *scéal* in simplex form to reinforce the point. After denying that *Cath Fionntrágha* was *meas stáire firinnighe* ('considered to be a trustworthy history'), despite its having been mockingly cited as such by Hanmer, Keating says that the same applies *ar gach sceul eile d'á gcuireann síos ar an bhFéinn* ('to every other *scéal* that he writes down about the Fían').[140] The doubtful anecdote about Labhraidh with horse's ears is described as *an chuid-se don scéal* ('this part of the *scéal*') about Labhraidh: this allows the rest of that *scéal* to escape charges of falsehood by implication, but confirms Keating's association between the term *scéal* and

[135]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 146.
[136]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 146.
[137]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 152–4.
[138]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 76.
[139]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, iii, 292.
[140]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 50.

doubtful veracity.[141] Most strikingly, in his discussion of fictional Finn-tales as kin to English romances (contrasting these with *staire fírinneacha*, 'trustworthy histories'), he refers to fictional tales composed for entertainment as *sceoil da ngairthi fabulae* ('*scéala* which are called *fabulae*').[142] By itself this phrase could be read as implying that only a subset of *scéala* are called *fabulae*, but in the context of Keating's usage throughout *Foras Feasa* it comes close to a definition of *scéal* in Latin terminology.

The pattern is reinforced by the remaining attestations of *scéal*, qualified by prefixes or adjectives, in the sense of a narrative about the historical or legendary past. These share with the unqualified and simplex attestations a clear association with lies, unreliability, error and bad faith: the *bhréig-sgeulaibh* ('lie-*scéala*') and *innisin sceul ainteasdach* ('telling of *scéala* by false witnesses') spread by enemies of Ireland who knew nothing of its *seanchus*;[143] the *fuair-sceul fabhaill* ('fabulous idle *scéal*') about St. Peter knocking St. Patrick on the head at the gates of Heaven, told by Campion in order to show that the Irish were credulous, a device that Keating likens to a *cluithcheoir* ('comedian') recounting *sceul sgigeamhail* ('derisive *scéala*') on a stage instead of writing as *stáraidhe* ('a historian');[144] and of course the poetic fictions or *finnscéala filidheachta* whose connotations have been explained above. The welter of negative epithets around *scéal* in these instances cannot be taken as evidence that negative qualification was needed to imply that a *scéal* was untrue, because Keating treats the simplex *scéal* (in its narrative sense) in a similar way.

Consciously or not, the profile of connotations built up by Keating around *scéal* as a category of narrative composition is, then, one of clear contrast with *stair* and *seanchus*. The word *scéal* comes close to being defined as *fabula* in the sense of an untrue or dubious account. It would be hard for a reader to come away from Keating's *Foras Feasa* with a sense that *scéala* were considered by him to narrate reliable history. And, as we have seen, on the many occasions when Keating endorses and/or repeats the account of a mediaeval *scéal* as history, he studiously avoids using that term to label it.

The novelty of this move is underscored by the fact that Keating was elsewhere happy to use *scéal* in its traditional sense of a veracious narrative. In his two earlier major works, *Eochair-Sgiath an Aifrinn* ('An explanatory defence of the Mass') and *Trí Bior-Ghaoithe an Bháis*, he frequently uses the simplex term *scéal*/*sgeul* to refer to a wide range of exemplary narratives that are presented as if true, without attaching any negative connotations to the term.[145] Several of the miracle-narratives to which the term *sgeul* is applied in *Eochair-Sgiath* are clearly intended to be taken literally, since they are followed by a statement emphatically encouraging belief in the event: *Is inchreidthe*

[141] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 174.

[142] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, ii, 326.

[143] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 10 and 74.

[144] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 62.

[145] See, for example, Keating, *Trí Bior-Ghaoithe an Bháis*, 163–4, 193 and 286; Seathrún Céitinn/Geoffrey Keating, *Eochair Sgiath an Aifrinn/An Explanatory Defence of the Mass*, ed. by Patrick O'Brien (Dublin, 1898), 40, 61–3, 80–1, 88, 91, 101, 102, 113–14 and 115–16.

as an sgeul so go mbí Corp Chríost dá ríribh 'san abhluinn ar an altóir ('it is believable from this story that the body of Christ was actually present in the wafer on the altar').[146] It is only in *Foras Feasa* that Keating suddenly shies away from using *scéal* to refer to historical narratives or literally true stories.

I suspect that the reason is rooted in genre. *Foras Feasa* is, very self-consciously, a history, based on older narrative sources which are claimed to reveal what really happened in the past. The individual narratives from which *Foras Feasa* is constructed may *also* carry higher, non-literal levels of meaning (political, moral, ethnic or spiritual),[147] but their literal truth-value is the foundation of their testimony. The two earlier works, by contrast, are not primarily histories.[148] They use narratives primarily to illustrate doctrinal and devotional truths, and many of these narratives are drawn from earlier exemplum-collections such as *Sgáthán na Sompladh* ('The mirror of exempla').[149] As long as these narratives help to teach the point under discussion, their literal truth or falsehood is not at issue. Indeed, some of them are acknowledged to be made-up stories, for instance the parables of Christ which (as noted above) Keating sometimes introduces via the compound *fábhaill-sgéal*. This term, for Keating, clearly denotes a very different conceptualization of *fabula* from that which is enshrined in *Foras Feasa* in the analogous compound *finnscéala filidheachta*. Unlike the latter, which Keating sees as designed primarily to amuse, the *fábhaill-sgéala* so frequently cited in *Trí Bior-Ghaoithe* are held up as containing important ethical or spiritual truths, sometimes in allegorical guise. They are also given the additional term *fáithsgéala* ('allegorical narratives'), and as noted above, the contents of the parables which Keating cites as *fábhaill-sgéala* are much more verisimilar than the *finnscéala filidheachta* mentioned in *Foras Feasa*.[150] Where *Trí Bior-Ghaoithe* does include a story that Keating labels *finnscéal filidheachta*, it tends to be non-verisimilar, for instance an animal fable.[151] All in all, the argument of *Trí Bior-Ghaoithe* can be said to rely almost as heavily on made-up stories as *Foras Feasa* does on stories that Keating insists are true.

Why, then, did Keating shrink from using the term *scéal* to denote a true story in his historical writing, whereas he happily used *seanchus* or *stair* for this? His discomfort with *scéal* in this capacity is likely to relate to the marriage between entertainment and information conventionally enshrined in the

[146] Keating, *Eochair Sgiath*, 62. Some of the exemplary *sgeula* in this text are followed by a slightly different comment introducing the moral, *Is ionntuigthe as an sgeul so* ('it may be understood from this story', e.g. ibid., 90 and 91), which could be taken as suggesting that the literal veracity of the narrative is not as important in such cases.

[147] On these levels of meaning in *Foras Feasa*, see the studies cited in n. 44 above.

[148] Complicating this opposition, parts of *Eochair-Sgiath an Aifrinn* do present historical claims about the early church. Those parts of *Eochair-Sgiath* insist on the literal veracity of the sources, supporting Keating's claims by presenting eyewitness testimony from ecclesiastical authorities (whose writings he saw as *seanchus*). But *Eochair-Sgiath* is not, as a whole, a complete history of the church. I am grateful to Feliks Levin for discussion of this point.

[149] Cited many times in Keating, *Eochair Sgiath*, e.g. 112 and 115.

[150] For these *fábhaill-sgéala*, see above, p. 448 and n. 114.

[151] For example, Keating, *Trí Bior-Ghaoithe an Bháis*, 233–4.

mediaeval and early modern practice of *scélaigheacht*. As I have suggested elsewhere, in the Middle Ages and beyond, a *scéal* was understood to be a means of imparting – or rather, performing (virtually or in person) – true information about the past through artful and dramatic narrative. Its dramatic, aesthetic and entertaining aspects were not generally felt to compromise its veracity. Quite the reverse: the most important historical events and figures were thought to be worth commemorating in the most dramatic manner.[152] Even a figure that we would associate today with a purely entertaining function, the *scélaige*/*scéalaighe* ('storyteller'), was invoked by mediaeval and early modern Gaelic writers as a historical authority, sometimes in a near-synonymous alliterating pair with *senchaid*/*seanchaid* ('historian').[153] Humanist historiography, however, was often sceptical about the veracity of narratives that were so openly designed for entertainment as well as (purported) instruction, especially those that dealt with a past so remote that it was now increasingly termed 'the age of fable'.[154] It was natural to translate mainstream European humanist suspicion of mediaeval epics and romances about the remote past into suspicion of the narrative category that performed a similar function in Gaelic culture, namely the *scéal*.[155]

Keating was well aware that he was bringing traditional Gaelic *seanchus* into a new and modern scholarly tradition in which scepticism about the fabulous element in legendary history had to be tackled head-on, so he had to tread very carefully to ensure that his sources maintained their credibility in this new scholarly environment. The colonial and confessional contexts in which he was writing heightened these concerns. Keating's project was primarily to defend Ireland against her foreign critics, especially those from the island of Britain. Some of those critics, as Keating himself observes, had used the alleged exaggerations of mediaeval Gaelic sagas or *scéala* as rhetorical ammunition against the Irish and as a means of falsifying Irish claims about their own history.[156] In order to counter this colonial rhetoric effectively, Keating chose the strategy of accepting the general critical animus against exaggerated legendary narratives of the remote past (as was consistent with international humanist practice) and displayed this animus in his dismissal of certain mediaeval stories, yet at the same time retained the content of many

[152]For discussion, see references in nn. 14 and 24 above.

[153]See, for example, Alexander Bugge (ed. and trans.), *Caithréim Cellacháin Caisil: The Victorious Career of Cellachan of Cashel* (Christiania, 1905), 2, citing storytellers as authorities for a summary of the historical situation described: *do reir scriptra na scelaige* ('according to the writings of the storytellers/historians'). For other examples see *eDIL*, s.vv. *scélaige* and *scélaigecht*.

[154]A still-useful exploration of this concept and its literary ramifications is William Nelson, *Fact or Fiction: The Dilemma of the Renaissance Storyteller* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1977).

[155]*Scél*/*scéal* typically referred to sagas (prose or prosimetrum) but was also frequently used to refer to verse narratives. On this fluidity, and on medieval understandings of *scél* generally, see O'Connor, 'Semantics of *scél*', and O'Connor, *Music of What Happens*. On the comparable flexibility of cognate Welsh terminology, see Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1980), 31–2 and 132–41; Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Some functions of origin stories in early medieval Wales', in Nyberg et al., *History and Heroic Tale*, 97–31, at 98–102.

[156]Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 50 and 62–4.

saga narratives as sources by quietly repositioning them as something other than *scéala*.

Accordingly, on the many occasions when Keating's account draws on the rich tradition of Gaelic *scélaigheacht*, he ignores the more openly Otherworldly sagas, glosses over the more obviously performative and entertaining aspects of his selected sources (for instance, resorting to condensed synopses rather than narrating episodes in all their drama), downplays or removes what he feels to be the fabulous elements of some of these stories, and refers to the resulting repackaged *scéala* using a narrower historical terminology. Rather than *scéala*, in Keating's work these texts have become sources of historical information (*seanchus*) or *stáire* ('histories'). It is a measure of Keating's rhetorical skill in carrying out this subtle transformation that the ensuing reworkings nonetheless retain a narrative appeal and charm that is fully equal to that of Early Modern Irish saga-writing, albeit in a more self-consciously sober vein.

5. After Keating

Keating's *Foras Feasa* gave these narratives about the early history of Ireland a new lease of life and became the primary basis for subsequent historians' discussions of that remote period. The extent to which it became a standard historical reference-point is seen in the scale and rapidity of its circulation. It is the most popular long prose work in the Gaelic manuscript tradition. Some thirty manuscript copies survive from the seventeenth century alone; copies continued to be made in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Individual episodes were absorbed and retold in Irish by early modern bardic poets and modern storytellers, thus ensuring the continued oral as well as literary transmission of much of its content. Several printed and manuscript translations into English and Latin were also planned or made, as were various imitations of Keating's overall design.[157] Its authority is seen in its treatment by several Gaelic scribes as a relatively 'fixed text' by comparison with the much more fluid and creative scribal transmission practices seen in early modern Gaelic sagas.[158]

At the same time, Keating's artfully condensed retellings of his saga sources had a decisive impact on the ongoing manuscript tradition of some of those sagas, which continued to be copied and reworked into the nineteenth century. For example, over thirty late manuscript copies of the hugely popular Early Modern Irish saga *Oidheadh Chloinne hUisneach* ('The death of the offspring of Uisneach') incorporate long passages from Keating's retelling of the Deirdre

[157] On these various impacts see Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, 173–225; Meidhbhín Ní Urdáil, 'The literary legacy of *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*', in Ó Riain, *Geoffrey Keating's Foras Feasa*, 52–67, at 56–7; Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-tales*, 93–104.

[158] This point, which deserves a fuller study, is mentioned in Caoimhín Mac Giolla Léith (ed. and trans.), *Oidheadh Chloinne hUisneach: The Violent Death of the Children of Uisneach*, ITS 61 (London, 1993), 22, and with more specific indications of the relevant scribes by Diarmuid Ó Murchadha, 'Keating: traditionalist or innovator', in Ó Riain, *Geoffrey Keating's Foras Feasa*, 90–102, at 92–3. Variant redactions of *Foras Feasa* did, however, circulate: see Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, 178–81.

story. The authority of Keating's account is confirmed by the fact that, in these Keating-influenced copies, the saga is typically adjusted to accommodate his narrative rather than the other way around.[159] Fifty-two copies of the Early Modern Irish battle-saga *Cath Cluana Tarbh* ('The battle of Clontarf') preserve a version containing material derived directly from *Foras Feasa*.[160] And some newly composed Modern Irish Ulster sagas, such as the possibly eighteenth-century *Eachtra na gCuradh* ('The adventure of the warriors'), include in their introductory sections a passage about Ulster Cycle personnel that seems to have been paraphrased from *Foras Feasa*.[161] All in all, *Foras Feasa* was accorded much authority by Ireland's professional scribes and those for whom they worked.

The authority of Keating's history was not undisputed in these Irish scholarly communities. But the sharpest criticisms came from a different context, when English translations brought it to the attention of a wider anglophone readership on both sides of the Irish Sea. The existence of these translations indicates the strength of Keating's reputation as a historian well into the eighteenth century, but they also brought *Foras Feasa* into the contentious world of printed historiography in English. Here Keating's work was exposed to ongoing confessional and political conflicts. His advocacy of Catholic Ireland naturally brought down criticism of his whole project from Protestant commentators, dismissing it as a heap of fables just as he had similarly dismissed Protestant historical claims in his own work. *Foras Feasa* also became embroiled in the fierce early-Enlightenment controversy about the principles of historical practice between the so-called 'ancients and moderns' in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. For the 'moderns' in this debate, *Foras Feasa* (like many other humanist histories of the distant past) appeared overly deferential towards the authority of mediaeval narrative sources, with too little source-criticism or philological analysis, too much reliance on narrative as a medium of explanation, and too little attention to material 'monuments' such as coins and inscriptions. Keating had spoken out in favour of attending to mediaeval Gaelic manuscripts, but from the moderns' perspective he had lacked sufficient skill in weighing up their testimony. His own critical humanist principles were thus extended by historians of a later and different stamp.

In this context Keating was often seen as not having gone far enough in classing certain Gaelic narratives as fictions. The 'moderns' set much stricter criteria for using ancient and mediaeval sources as authorities, and in their view *Foras Feasa* was undermined by giving too much credence to mere sagas. For Irish adherents of the 'modern' position, his perceived credulity regarding

[159]Mac Giolla Léith, *Oidheadh Chloinne hUisneach*, 21–2 and 56–8; Mathis, 'Evolution of Deirdriu', 18.

[160]Ní Urdáil, 'Literary legacy'.

[161]I owe this point to Ruairí Ó hUiginn, pers. comm. See Meadhbh Ní Chléirigh (ed.), *Eachtra na gCuradh* (Dublin, 1941), 1–2, echoing Keating, *Foras Feasa*, II, 220–2 (lines 3430–8). On this saga's date, see Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Some late tales of the Ulster cycle', in Ailbhe Ó Corráin (ed.), *Celebrating Sixty Years of Celtic Studies at Uppsala University: Proceedings of the Eleventh Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Uppsala, 2013), 99–111, at 102–3.

the veracity of (for example) mediaeval accounts of prehistoric settlements in *Lebor Gabála Érenn* risked undermining the dignity and validity of Irish history and its sources.[162] This view echoed Keating's own sentiments regarding the inappropriate use of *finnscéala filidheachta* in summaries of Irish history, which now came back to bite him in his turn.

This position is exemplified by the lengthy preface that Thomas O'Sullevane contributed to a history of the Irish confederate wars of the 1640s and 1650s, the *Memoirs of the Marquis of Clanricarde* (printed 1722). O'Sullevane's 'Dissertation' illustrates the very different approach to history-writing seen in Enlightenment print culture. It requires specific comment here because his remarks on Keating have sometimes been used, uncritically, to hammer the final nail into the coffin regarding the claim of *Foras Feasa* to be history-writing at all. According to O'Sullevane, after having completed *Foras Feasa* Keating discussed it with 'judicious men' and realized that it was not worthy of the name of history:

> he found it would not stand the test of an History; not only for that the first Part of it, which preceded the *Milesian* Conquest, was without any Probability or Appearance of Truth; as having ever been exploded by all Criticks, … but because in the second, which reaches down from the said Conquest; … those [accounts] also were so blended and interwoven with Fables, that they would carry no greater Weight than the first.[163]

Keating then allegedly tried to suppress *Foras Feasa*. Since it was 'not in his Power' to claw back the copies already in circulation,

> he desir'd it should never be translated into any other Language, nor otherwise regarded, than as a Miscellany of indigested things, wherein judicious and discerning Natives might find something worth their perusal at Leisure Hours.[164]

Both Ó Cuív and Ó Corráin present this anecdote as if it mitigates their negative judgements of his historical acumen ('In fairness to Keating I must add …'):[165] he may have written bad history, but at least he eventually recognized it as such.

This anecdote is not supported by any external evidence. The same is admittedly true of much of the other biographical information about Keating provided in O'Sullevane's 'Dissertation'. This work is, unfortunately, our main primary source on Keating's life and career, and its importance in this regard may explain why several recent studies of Keating have been reluctant to question O'Sullevane's claims about *Foras Feasa* and have tended instead simply

[162] See, for example, O'Halloran, *Golden Ages*, 26–7.

[163] Thomas O'Sullevane, 'Dissertation', in [Ulick de Burgh], *Memoirs of the Right Honourable the Marquis of Clanricarde* (London, 1722), i–clxxxiv, at cxxx (emphasis original).

[164] O'Sullevane, 'Dissertation', cxxx–cxxxi.

[165] Ó Cuív, 'Literary creation', 237 n. 3; Ó Corráin, 'Seathrún Céitinn', 64.

to repeat them, allowing them to speak for themselves (unintentionally echoing a technique sometimes used by Keating himself).[166] Some critique is offered by Cunningham, who alludes delicately to the possibility that O'Sullevane may not be the most reliable witness on *Foras Feasa*. She calls his comments about Keating 'sometimes mischievous', questions his portrayal of Keating as a dilettante for being inconsistent with the high level of scholarship displayed in *Foras Feasa* itself, and states that O'Sullevane 'had his own reasons for seeking to underestimate if not discredit Keating's work', but she does not explain this last point further beyond mentioning that O'Sullevane was writing just before the publication of an English translation of *Foras Feasa*.[167]

It is worth setting out the grounds for scepticism more clearly. When O'Sullevane's discussion of Keating is read as a whole, it comes across not as underestimating his work, but as utterly damning of its historical value. Again and again O'Sullevane invokes the history-fable dichotomy, placing *Foras Feasa* on the wrong side as 'an heap of insipid, ill-digested Fables'.[168] Its earlier portions, he claims, consist of 'idle Stories, first vented by Druids or Bards' and subsequently used 'for Pastime and Diversion only', which were later mistaken (including by Keating) 'for Genuin and good History'. O'Sullevane's examples of these druidical fables are disingenuous, relying on one of the doubtful antediluvian anecdotes from Book I which Keating himself had labelled a *finnscéal filidheachta* in order to help readers to discern Ireland's true history.[169] But O'Sullevane tars all the postdiluvian invasion-accounts up to the Gaels or Milesians with the same brush. He also claims that Keating's entire narrative of pre-Milesian settlements rested on the authority of a supernaturally long-lived 'druid' who had been reincarnated in various animal forms before living into St Patrick's time as a human – in other words, that this history was 'gather'd from empty Notions of the *Metempsychosis*, or Shape-changing Doctrine of the Druids',[170] a doctrine that O'Sullevane spends much of his critique scorning or refuting. He is here alluding to the mediaeval story of Tuán mac Cairill (who is not, in fact, a druid, but does reincarnate in different animal forms), ignoring the fact that Keating had removed all reference to reincarnation in his allusions to this figure. Keating had presented 'Tuan' or 'Roanus' as a variant name-form of the long-lived Caoilte mac Rónáin: not a druid or shapeshifter, but a wise and unusually old man (albeit far less old than in the mediaeval story) who had passed on to Patrick historical information that his own ancestors had told him.[171]

[166] Besides the works of Ó Cuív and Ó Corráin already cited, see also Diarmaid Ó Catháin, 'Dermot O'Connor, translator of Keating', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 2 (1987), 67–87, at 67–8. A sharper critique of the reliability of O'Sullevane's biographical information about Keating is offered by Ó Murchadha, 'Keating: traditionalist or innovator', 91–2 (including allegations of fraud), but no reference is made here to O'Sullevane's comments on Keating's *Foras Feasa* itself.

[167] Cunningham, *World of Geoffrey Keating*, 59–60. More detail about the English translation is given in ibid., 220–2.

[168] O'Sullevane, 'Dissertation', cxviii. The same label is used in ibid., cxxx and cxxxi.

[169] O'Sullevane, 'Dissertation', cxix–cxx.

[170] O'Sullevane, 'Dissertation', cxix–cxxi and cxxx.

[171] Keating, *Foras Feasa*, i, 150–2. Similar scepticism about Tuán's transmigrations was expressed

Nonetheless, for O'Sullevane, the mere inclusion of pre-Milesian settlements in Keating's history laid it open to the charge of 'exploded' druidical superstitions.

O'Sullevane's local motivations for condemning *Foras Feasa* become clear from the way in which Keating's work first emerges in his 'Dissertation'. O'Sullevane defends his own production of a new historical account by highlighting the defects of previous histories. Keating's history is his prime exhibit because it is about to appear in the form of 'an *English* version'. Here we return to the translation alluded to by Cunningham. O'Sullevane's comments on Keating are framed, in their beginning and end, as an attack on that translation, which was being prepared by the unscrupulous scribe and con-artist Dermot O'Connor. The whole section on Keating ends: if 'another new Translation of the Fables above-mentioned be obtruded upon the World', every true Irishman will view it 'as an Injury done to their Country, and explode it accordingly'.[172]

Everyone who came into contact with O'Connor seems to have had something bad to say about his character and habits, so O'Sullevane's animosity fits into a wider picture, and his condemnation of Keating's original work can be seen as simply another level on which to undermine O'Connor's project in advance.[173] But O'Sullevane also claimed that some interpolated portions in O'Connor's translation were the unacknowledged work of an even more controversial figure, the freethinking philosopher John Toland, who had died in 1722 and was notorious for his attacks on revealed religion. Druids were central to Toland's works both as negative exemplars of 'priestcraft' (a veiled attack on established churches) and, just as worryingly for the establishment, as proponents of a conception of the soul's immortality that seemed to Toland far superior to the debased Christian versions of that principle.[174] The controversy surrounding Toland's writings helps to explain why anything smacking of 'druidry' required such a heavy put-down in the early eighteenth century, and this in itself may explain why druids take up so much space in O'Sullevane's critique. It is also possible that O'Sullevane was using that controversy, and the fears that it would awaken in church establishments, to tarnish O'Connor's work still further.

The fact that O'Connor, not Keating, was O'Sullevane's primary target, may explain why O'Sullevane included the anecdote about Keating having repudiated his own work later in life: Keating the man could be forgiven, but O'Connor could not. *Foras Feasa* itself emerges in O'Sullevane's account as 'far from being an History', and as suitable only for light entertainment. Thus O'Sullevane depicts a later, wiser Keating attempting to persuade his patrons

by O'Flaherty, as discussed by John Carey, 'Druids and Buddhists in *Ogygia*', *CMCS* 66 (Winter 2013), 79–84, at 79–80.

[172]O'Sullevane, 'Dissertation', cxvii–cxviii and cxxxi–cxxxii.

[173]The most detailed account of O'Connor and his work is Ó Catháin, 'Dermot O'Connor'.

[174]For O'Sullevane's comments on Toland see his 'Dissertation', cxxiv. The 'priestcraft' aspect of Toland's work is used to contextualize O'Sullevane's hostility towards Keating in Eamon Darcy, ' "The footsteps of that custom … still remaining": medieval memory culture and Thomas O'Sullevane's portrayal of the Irish bardic tradition', *PRIA* 122C (2022), 203–26, at 213–14. On connections (and non-connections) between Toland, *Foras Feasa* and O'Connor's translation, see O'Halloran, *Golden Ages*, 77–8.

that *Foras Feasa* should be used only as a 'Miscellany of indigested things' to amuse Irish readers 'at Leisure Hours', not as a history.[175] Keating is here anachronistically made to echo the moderns' treatment of the remote past as 'the age of fable' by definition, and the emphasis on leisure and amusement prefigures the emerging opposition between historical writing and what a still later age would call 'literature'. Local controversies aside, this rhetoric is in keeping with Eamon Darcy's view that the historical methodology used throughout O'Sullevane's 'Dissertation' aligns squarely with the 'moderns' in the wider international scholarly controversy about the study of the past.[176]

Similarly critical (if less vituperative) judgements of *Foras Feasa* recur in later eighteenth- and nineteenth-century printed histories and commentaries. From their perspective, and that of the emerging Enlightenment in print culture, Keating's work was bound to appear increasingly outdated, even though admirers and detractors alike continued to imitate his overarching structure when presenting new accounts of Ireland's ancient history.[177]

But this only applies to the elite context of print culture and Enlightenment scholarship. As mentioned above, Keating's stock as a historian remained high in the scribal culture. Not only that, but Keating's humanist attempt to define history against storytelling, or *scéala*, left many seventeenth-, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scribes and storytellers unmoved. In these circles, despite lively debates about the truthfulness of specific stories, it remained a broad working assumption – or at least, an ostensible stance – that *scéala* were supposed to narrate history. Richard Plunkett's Latin-Irish dictionary, completed in 1662, glossed *historia* as *stair* and *sgéal* without showing any sense of dissonance between these two Irish terms.[178] Many Gaelic scribes and compilers continued to use the term *scéal* as had been done in the Middle Ages; storytellers continued to maintain a stance (at least) of telling a true story well into the twentieth century.[179] Attestations of *scéal*, *sgeul* and related terms in the Royal Irish Academy's 'Historical Dictionary of Irish' database suggests that, for many of these writers, *scéal* continued to connote truthful narrative.[180]

Keating's attempt to demarcate entertaining stories from historical narrative was specific to the cultural context in which he was writing and the educated target audience for whom he wrote. It reflects humanist concerns which were subsequently amplified and made even more stringent in the dec-

[175]O'Sullevane, 'Dissertation', cxxx–cxxxi.

[176]Darcy, ' "The footsteps" '.

[177]O'Halloran, *Golden Ages*, 19–22, 26–7 and 39.

[178]Dublin, Marsh's Library, MS Z 4.2.5, fol. 196r, s.v. *historia* (accessed via www.isos.dias.ie).

[179]For continued scribal use of *scéal* in rubrics and colophons, see Meidhbhín Ní Urdail, *The Scribe in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Ireland: Motivations and Milieu* (Münster, 2000), 150–4. For the storyteller's stance, see James H. Delargy, *The Gaelic Story-Teller: With Some Notes on Gaelic Folk-Tales* (n.p., 1969), 8 and 20 (reprinted from *PBA* 31 (1945), 177–221), and (for a more nuanced account that also documents twentieth-century challenges to such attitudes) George Denis Zimmermann, *The Irish Storyteller* (Dublin, 2001), 430, 448–9 and 558–73.

[180]Royal Irish Academy, 'Historical Irish corpus 1600–1926', https://corpas.ria.ie (accessed 16 November 2025); O'Connor, 'Semantics of *scél*', 42–3.

ades that followed *Foras Feasa*, especially when ancient Irish history moved into the polarizing hothouse of print culture on both sides of the Irish Sea. The Enlightenment intensified the process by which storytelling and information were held at arm's length from each other in the scholarly mind. With hindsight, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* can be seen as laying the foundations for the long, slow reconceptualization of mediaeval Gaelic sagas from histories to imaginative literature in Celtic studies. By the end of the nineteenth century, sagas about Ulster warriors could be labelled 'romances' without any hint of a pejorative meaning. On that basis they were successfully marketed in translation to wider anglophone audiences in and beyond Ireland.

The reputation of *Foras Feasa* moved in a similar direction as its narrative art flowed into new renderings of old sagas. Perhaps this was only to be expected. It embodies a radical tension between theory and practice: it preached the separateness of narrative entertainment from serious history, yet it presented Irish history in graceful, compelling and sometimes dryly humorous narrative prose which was surely designed, in Horatian terms, to delight as much as to instruct. Keating could hardly have foreseen that the first extract from *Foras Feasa* read by most twentieth- and twenty-first-century students would be the *finnscéal filidheachta* about Labhraid Loingseach and the horse's ears which he called fiction rather than history, presented in an anthology of narrative lollipops whose title now declared *scéalaigheacht*, storytelling, to be Keating's chief claim to fame.[181] With his keen sense of the ironies of history, Keating would surely have smiled.

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[181] Bergin, *Sgéalaigheacht Chéitinn.*

POEMS ON MURCHADH Ó BRIAIN, SIXTH BARON AND FIRST EARL OF INCHIQUIN[1]

Abstract

Edited here are three seventeenth-century poems in accentual metre concerning the nobleman and soldier Murchadh Ó Briain, sixth Baron and first Earl of Inchiquin (1614–73). The Maynooth manuscript M 107 is the only source for these poems. The first is a short anonymous piece welcoming the Earl home from abroad around the year 1665. The second poem composed by Brian Ó Briain is a formal elegy on the death of Inchiquin in 1673. It recounts many of Murchadh's exploits during the Confederate wars in Ireland from 1642 onwards and some of his adventures abroad. The third poem composed by Seaghán Mac Riagáin in 1648 is one of counsel for Inchiquin at an important juncture in his political and military career as he was about to change his allegiance from the Parliamentarians to Royalists. The poems are an important native Irish source for the wars of the 1640s. Of significance is the fact that the hostile portrayal of Inchiquin in later sources as Murchadh na dTóiteán 'Murchadh of the Burnings' is not found in this verse. From a literary point of view, the poems demonstrate how vigorous and incisive an instrument the accentual verse form was for discussing contemporary military and political affairs.

Poems and source

The three poems in accentual metre edited in this article deal for the most part with the martial and political career and death of Murrough O'Brien or Murchadh Ó Briain, the sixth Baron and first Earl of Inchiquin (1616–73). They have been extracted from a series of accentual poems contained in manuscript M 107 in the Russell Library, Maynooth. This manuscript, designated *Duanaire Uí Bhriain* by its cataloguer,[2] was compiled in 1712 by the distinguished poet,

[1]This article is dedicated to the memory of Professor John A. Murphy (1927–2022). I am heavily indebted to the following for their help in preparing it: Seán Ó Coileáin, Neil Buttimer, Seán Ua Súilleabháin, Marian Ó Murchú, Ciarán Ó Gealbháin, Síle Ní Mhurchú, Tomás L. Ó Murchú and Tadhg Ó Dúshláine. I have benefited greatly from the work of the external reader, appointed by the editors of *Celtica*, who read this article thoroughly and offered many valuable suggestions and corrections. I also am deeply grateful to the editors for their many incisive suggestions for its improvement.

[2]Ó Fiannachta (1967: 23–7). Section A, pp. iii–227, the cataloguer correctly ascribes to Aodh Buidhe Mac Cruitín on the evidence of the handwriting. Sections B and C were written by anonymous scribes.

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historian, scribe and man of letters, Aodh Buidhe Mac Cruitín.[3] Mac Cruitín dedicated the compilation to Sir Donnchadh Ó Briain (Sir Donat O'Brien) of Léim an Eich, a Member of Parliament and well regarded by the Protestant Asendancy of the day.[4] Some twenty items from *Iomarbhágh na bhFileadh* to which Thomond poets contributed heavily are included by Mac Cruitín in the first hundred pages of the manuscript; then ten items on the noble O'Brien ancestors of the dedicatee. Much of this material has appeared in various editions from the nineteenth century to modern times.[5]

The next sixteen items contained in the manuscript (pp. 176–226) are important material for the study of seventeenth-century Irish poetry, especially accentual verse. These are for the most part unique to M 107.[6] The poets, Brian Ó Briain and Seaghán Mac Riagáin, who composed two of the poems on the Earl of Inchiquin which are edited here have respectively in the manuscript a 96-line elegy on *Máire inghean Mhic Mhathghamhna Tuadhmhumhan ré a héag*[7] and an accentual elegy on the fourth Earl of Thomond, Donnchadh Ó Briain (*obit* 1624)[8] which complements the elegy in syllabic verse made for him by Tadhg Mac Dáire Mac Bruaideadha.[9] There follows in the manuscript a sequence of five remarkable elegies composed by the woman poet Caitilín Dubh for members of the O'Brien families of Thomond and for the MacMahon sept of Clonderlaw in south-west Clare.[10] This passage also contains a highly unusual poem of 126 lines attributed to Toirdhealbhach mac Murchaidh (Ó Briain) which mourns the going down of a ship under the captaincy of a 'Caiptín Stíbhin'.[11]

The similarity of compositional approach and the high linguistic register confer on these accentual poems a sense of unity. This reflects no doubt the aristocratic status of the subjects addressed in life and death. It is not improbable that the poets of this section of our manuscript were acquainted with each other. Some similarities in diction between Brian Ó Briain's elegy for Inchiquin and two of Caitilín Dubh's elegies would indicate he was familiar with her compositions (see notes on poem **2**, ll. 26, 51). These poems also demonstrate that accentual verse was acceptable in this period in south-west

[3]A comprehensive monograph on Mac Cruitín's career and literary output is available in Morley (1995).

[4]For Donat O'Brien and his times, see O'Brien (1986: 119–38).

[5]For two modern editions, see Nic Cárthaigh (2013) and Nic Cárthaigh (2016).

[6]NLI G 135 contains a copy of *A Mhurchaidh Ui Bhriain tá fiadhach ar Ghaodhaluibh*, but it is derived from the M 107 copy.

[7]M 107, pp. 201–3; Ó Fiannachta (1967: 26). This Máire Nic Mhathghamhna was also known as Máire Rua. The elegy is printed and translated in Mac Neill (1990: 93–7).

[8]M 107 pp. 221–5; Ó Fiannachta (1967: 26).

[9]Ó Cuív (1984). The fourth Earl's name is not cited in the heading over the accentual elegy in M 107, p. 221, but the name Donnchadh Ó Briain is cited internally and many other references to his martial career confirm that the earl was the subject of this piece.

[10]For the five elegies of Caitilín Dubh, see L. P. Ó Murchú (2026) and for two of them, see Ó Murchú (2002). A separate elegy by Caitilín Dubh for one of the Ó Lochlainn sept of the Burren in north county Clare is edited in Breatnach (2003: 55–7).

[11]A résumé of M 107 is given in Morley (1995: 28–9). For a transcript of the poem see Ó Murchú (2025: 427–31).

Clare and throughout Thomond and beyond, as a vehicle for poems of praise and memorialisation. The M 107 poems contrast to some extent with some of our seventeenth-century political poems also in accentual metre, but both types also share some similar features. As Cecile O'Rahilly, the editor of the latter poems has stated: 'The five (political) poems were written by men of the people and not by professional poets, and written for the people, not for the chosen few. Hence the language of the poems is the speech of the people, simple, vigorous, full of dialect forms and borrowed English words already current in that speech.'[12]

Murchadh Ó Briain

Murchadh Ó Briain, sixth Baron and first Earl of Inchiquin, could trace his ancestry back through the O'Brien nobility of Thomond to Brian Bóramha, High King of Ireland, who perished at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014. He played a prominent part in the mid-seventeenth-century wars in Ireland. These wars began with the rising in Ulster on 23 October 1641 and finished with the end of the Cromellian conquest in 1653.[13]

Murrough O'Brien was the son of Dermod O'Brien, the fifth Baron of Inchiquin. The latter died a young man in 1624, and this event brought about profound changes in the life of the young Murrough, who would later inherit his father's title. The boy had been brought up in a devout Catholic household, but under the prevailing English common law he was made a ward of court, which entailed his being compelled to adopt the Reformed Protestant religion. This forced tergiversation and its concomitant changes in attitude to his former childhood religious culture must be referred to in assessing O'Brien's implacable hostility to all things Catholic for the greater part his adult life.

In 1632, Sir William St Leger was given a lease on Murrough O'Brien's entire estates until the young man should come of age. At that time St Leger was President of Munster and had been assembling and training an army for the service of King Charles I. He recruited the young Baron elect as his assistant. At this time, in October 1635, St Leger arranged the marriage of his daughter, Elizabeth, to Murrough O'Brien. The following year St Leger sent O'Brien to Lombardy that he might receive military training there in the Spanish army. He spent three years there during the middle years of that fierce conflagration we call the Thirty Years War (1618–48) and witnessed terrible military onslaughts and bloodletting. He returned to Ireland in 1639 and took his seat in the Irish House of Lords.

His first serious act of participation in the Confederate Wars was his relief of the City of Cork in 1642 and his subsequent skirmishes and encounters along

[12]O'Rahilly (1952: viii). A comprehensive interpretational study of the seventeenth-century political poems is found in O Riordan (2021).

[13]For biographical material in this article, I have drawn on Ivar O'Brien (1991) and on J. A. Murphy's series of articles (1964, 1965, 1967, 1971) and on Murphy's article in *DIB* s.n. *O'Brien, Murrough*. Ivar O'Brien (op. cit.) gives 1614 as Inchiquin's year of birth, J. A. Murphy in *DIB* cites 1616. O'Brien would seem to be right as Inchiquin in October 1636 received the livery of his lands from the Court of Wards and Liveries, having reached the age of twenty-one years; see O'Brien (1991: 4).

the valley of the River Bandon towards the south-west. He won outstanding victories at Liscarroll in September 1642 and at Knocknanuss in the autumn of 1647 and later sacked Cashel. He fought under the Royal standard in the beginning, changed to the Parliamentary side in 1644 and reverted to the King in 1648.

In 1650, when it was clear that Cromwell would soon gain complete control over Ireland, Inchiquin with many others departed for France and joined the Royal entourage there. In France he engaged in much intrigue; he commanded an army in Portugal fighting against Spanish dominion of that country; he was captured by Algerian pirates and had to be rescued through the offices of the Royal Court in London. In the Catholic atmosphere of France, he reverted to his ancestral religion. He returned to Ireland 1665 and gained full title to his ancestral lands and estates. He died in 1673.

The poems

The three poems edited here are found in the Russell Library Maynooth MS M 107, pp. 176–191.[14] The scribe was Aodh Buidhe Mac Cruitín who compiled this anthology of poems in 1712 on the Ó Briain dynasty and dedicated it to 'An Ridire Donnchadh Ó Briain' (pp. v–xii) or Sir Donough O'Brien (1642–1717). Poems one and two are unique to M 107. Another copy of poem 3, *A Mhurchaidh Uí Bhriain, tá fiadhach ar Ghaedhlaibh*, is found in the National Library MS G 135, p. 13.[15] The scribe of this MS was Tadhg Ó Neachtain, who compiled it in the years 1739–52. This copy of our poem on Inchiquin seems to have been taken directly from Aodh Buide's MS M 107. An edition and translation of this poem are given in a recent anthology.[16]

Poem 1: Triath na hInnse ag triall tar taoide

This poem of six verses or twenty-four lines is one of welcome (*fáilte*) composed around 1665. It is found on p. 176 of the manuscript and is not attributed to any poet. We know that Inchiquin returned from abroad at least four times: firstly, in 1639, having spent three years learning the trade of warfare in the Spanish army in Lombardy;[17] secondly, in March 1642, when he came from England with some supplies in order to assist St Leger, the President of Munster, who was besieged in Cork by Confederate forces;[18] thirdly, after a visit to the Royal Court at Oxford in 1644 during which time he met with disappointment in not being nominated by Charles I to the Presidency of Munster;[19] fourthly, in 1665 when, after many years of exile in France and Portugal and many more military exploits, he returned to settle in his hereditary lands and estates in Munster.[20] It could be argued that these lines were composed for

[14] Ó Fiannachta (1967: 23–7).
[15] Ní Shéaghdha (1977: 71).
[16] Fisher and Ó Conchúir (2022: 359–67).
[17] O'Brien (1991: 4–5).
[18] Warner (1768: 187).
[19] O'Brien (1991: 8–9).
[20] O'Brien (1991: 47).

Inchiquin on his return from Oxford in 1644, but *Cnoc Árd na Laighléiseach* in l. 16 would seem to be a reference to Lawlesstown, a townland in county Louth,[21] and would thus refer to some engagement in the vicinity of Drogheda where Inchiquin was campaigning in June 1649.[22] It is also significant that in the heading of the piece Inchiquin is called *Iarla Innse Uí Chuinn*. He was not granted the earldom by Charles II until October 1654.[23]

Poem 2: Ar bheith dhósan breoidhte cnaoidhte
This is a poem of 184 lines[24] and is found on pp. 177–86 of the manuscript. It is an elegy for Inchiquin, whose death occurred in 1673, the date being set down in the final lines:[25]

> Seacht ndeich, sé chéad, trí ar mhíle,
> aois ar dtiagharna i mbliadhantaibh suídhte
> go bás Mhurchaidh, cuirim i gcuímhne,
> an naomhadh lá do mhí September. (ll. 175–8)

The poet records in the exordium of his composition the intimations he got of his hero's death from the elements and from otherworld visitations and signs. He then records Murchadh's personal qualities, his martial prowess, his noble ancestry, and his military exploits. The latter is a valuable contemporary source for the wars of the 1640s and especially for the part played in them by Inchiquin.[26]

The poet Brian Ó Briain to whom this poem is attributed has, as noted above (p. 465), another poem in the manuscript for 'Máire inghean Mhic Mhathghamhna Tuadhmhumhan ré a héag'. There is a quatrain for a Brian Ó Briain in the seventeenth-century MS RIA A iv 3 (743) 633 *m.*[27] There is little other information on this poet.

Poem 3: A Mhurchaidh Uí Bhriain, tá fiadhach ar Ghaedhlaibh
The first line of this poem as it is in the manuscript – *A Mhurchaidh uí Bhriain tá fiadhach air Ghaodhaluibh* – is open to two interpretations: 1. *A Mhurchaidh Uí Bhriain (a)tá (ag) fiadhach* 'Murrough O'Brien, (you) who are hunting the Gaels'; 2. *A Mhurchaidh Uí Bhriain, tá fiadhach* 'Murrough O'Brien, the Gaels have been hunted'. The former, while historically correct, is accusatory and does not accord with the general tenor of the poem throughout which the poet, Seaghán Mac Riagáin, dispenses counsel to Inchiquin in a careful and sympathetic fashion. I elect for the second interpretation in the edition.

[21] *Logainm.ie* s.n. Lawlesstown/Mullach an Laighléisigh, (viewed 26 June 2024).
[22] Bagwell (1909: 183).
[23] O'Brien (1991: 35–6).
[24] The catalogue (Ó Fiannachta 1967: 25) incorrectly states that there are 284 lines in this poem.
[25] O'Brien (1991: 47) incorrectly gives 1674 as the Earl's year of death.
[26] A seventy-line loose translation of this elegy into English, attributed to Michael Comyn, is found in Maynooth MS C 113 (j). I am grateful to the staff of the Russell Library in Maynooth University for providing me with a copy of this translation; see Ó Fiannachta (1969: 76, 81 (24)).
[27] Murphy and Wulff (1935: 2259).

The 'eight years' mentioned in the phrase *le hocht mbliadhna i ndiaidh a chéile*, if counted inclusive of the year 1641, would suggest that 1648 was the year of composition, but as Inchiquin did not take to the field until 1642,[28] the 'eight years' could point to 1650 as the point of address on the part of the poet. However, he unequivocally urges Inchiquin to support his king and warns him about 'falling between two stools' (l. 15) if he vacillates in his support between Parliament and King. By 1647 Inchiquin's political relations with the Parliamentary side were deteriorating, and he went over to the Royalists in April 1648.[29] In lauding Inchiquin's military exploits the poet, as he dispenses his political counsel, refers to the slaying of Alasdair Mac Colla Mac Domhnaill in the Battle of Knocknanus (Cnoc na nOs) in November 1647. Thus, it seems the poem was composed in the early months of 1648 when Inchiquin was contemplating his political and military options for the future.[30]

The poet Seaghán Mac Riagáin, to whom the poem is ascribed in the title, has another poem referred to above (p. 465) on p. 221 of the manuscript. He is to be identified with the *máighistir móreolach*, Seaghán Mac Criagáin, for whom Dáibhí Ó Bruadair wrote a poem of praise and gratitude in 1675 and an elegy soon afterwards.[31] Mac Criagáin had replied to Tadhg Rua Ó Conchubhair's poem on the vicissitudes of that poet's life in post-Cromwellian Ireland, the first line of which is *'S do chleasaibh an tsaoghail tslim.*[32] Ó Conchubhair was said to have lived near Castleisland in Kerry and as our poet hopes that Inchiquin might visit his people near *bruach na Féile* (ll. 93–6), it is probable that the two poets lived for some periods in their lives in geographical proximity to each other.[33]

Edition of poems

The MS as compiled by the careful and accomplished scribe, Aodh Buidhe Mac Cruitín, was to be regarded as a prestigious literary gift to his patron Donnchadh Ó Briain or Sir Donough O'Brien, and as such was and is a valuable literary and bibliographic artifact of contemporary Gaelic culture. In view of this, any editorial approach should not distort what the scribe intended the manuscript to look like. The approach of this edition was to adhere to the manuscript forms as much as possible. However, in consideration of younger readers of Irish and especially those unfamiliar with the phonology of Munster Irish the following features have been applied editorially: Silent changes: *tt* > *dt*; *a* > *adh* in verbal nouns; verbal ending 3 pl. *-uid* > *-aid*; *io* > *ea*, *ui* > *ai* in unstressed syllables; *-igh* > historical *-idh*; *a* > *i* (simple preposition). Much of the vocalic phonology is illustrated by internal and endline assonance in this type of verse, and it reflects the pronunciation of Thomond Irish in the seventeenth century. Where vowel lengthening arises in certain syllables due

[28] Bagwell (1909: 4).

[29] O'Brien (1991: 22).

[30] *DIB* s.n. O'Brien, Murrough.

[31] MacErlean (1913: 100–7).

[32] Ó Rathile (1927: 44–7, 81–2); de Brún et al (1971: 56–7, 122, 180).

[33] The present writer has posited a triangular literary connection between Ó Bruadair, Ó Conchubhair and Mac Criagáin (Ó Murchú 2001: 56).

to phonological change in Modern Irish, I have followed the scribe (1) in his use of the length mark e.g. *buídhneach* (< *buidhneach*) **1**, 2; *guídhe* (< *guidhe*) **3**, 103; *coímseacht* (< *coimseacht*) **2**, 153; *ceathrúmhadh* (< *ceathramhadh*) **3**, 95, and (2) when he writes the historical short form even when the need for assonance affirms the status of the vowel e.g. *innsin* : *bíodhga* : *chroídhe-se* **2**, 1–3; *Deirdre* : *Béarra* : *t'éagmais* **3**, 82–4; *binn leat* : *síneadh* **2**, 65–6.

The length mark in the digraph *-eó-* is retained and supplied when missing though the scribe is not consistent in this practice.

The apostrophe between words is used to indicate the scribe's omission of the preposition *a* < *do* before the verbal noun e.g. *meargánta ' dhéanamh* **2**, 97 or of the relative particle *a* < *do* e.g. *thu ' riaghlaidh* **2**, 114

The four-line verse division of poems **2** and **3** in the manuscript is retained in the edition, though it is likely that they were originally composed in a consecutive linear arrangement. It would seem that the scribes of accentual verse of the type in hand imitated the quatrain structure of syllabic verse in making their copies.[34]

Ordinary abbreviations have been silently expanded. Manuscript readings have been given but it should be noted that a thorough examination of the manuscript can be made through the Irish Script On Screen facility in the DIAS School of Celtic Studies (www.isos.dias.ie).

The language of the poems is mostly straightforward and reads like modern spoken Irish. However, some lines and passages are somewhat opaque and their translation must remain tentative.

1

Fáilte do Mhurchadh .i. Iarla Innse Uí Chuinn

Triath na hInnse ag triall tar taoide
go biadhmhar, buídhneach, bróichéadach;
gairm an Brianach flaitheamhail, fialmhar,
eachamhail, sriantach, móirshéadach. 4

TRANSLATION

A Welcome for Murchadh, Earl of Inchiquin

1 The Lord of Inchiquin comes over the sea, laden down with victuals, leading forces, clothed in brocade; hail the princely O'Brien, munificent, with his horses, bridles and valuable treasure.

MANUSCRIPT READINGS

2 biaghmhar; 3 flaitheamhal

[34] I have referred in an edition of another accentual poem to the four-line arrangement of accentual verse in Ó Murchú (1993: 74).

Mar Mhurchadh Bhóromha, thrupaitheach, hóstamhail,
ursgarach, reóltamhail, ró-aodharach;
mo thiagharna láidir, Dia in gach n-árd leis,
go dtriallaidh slán go fód Éibhir. 8

Cinnbheirt chogaidh, cú le cosnamh,
seabhac na fola is mór daonnacht;
fiach na feóla ag triall tar bóchna
ag iarraidh comhrac mbaillsgéithe. 12

Seabhac na síorghrádh, leóghan gan díoghbháil,
ar ngeall le síocháin fhóiréigneach;
's gur i gCionn tSáile do rinne tú an t-áitheas
nó i gCnoc Árd na Laighléiseach. 16

Do chuir tú an sgannradh siar chois Bhannda,
annsna gleannta ag bóighéimne;
buailfídhear trompa i nDún Dúrlais
ag tiacht don trúpsa ar aontaobh leis. 20

Tóigfídhear cíos duit chois na Laoi amuith
sa gcara chíordhuibh thóin Éireann;
measfuídhear foghail ort san Chúige Ollta,
do bhí do bhogha dá mbróntaosgadh. 24

2 He is like unto Murchadh Bóramha, with troops and hosts, bejewelled, radiant, lively; my powerful lord, may God be with him in every place, until he return to the land of Ireland.

3 A helmet for warfare, a hound of defence, blood-hunting hawk, he of great liberality; a flesh-hunting raven from over the sea, seeking out limb-spewing encounters.

4 The hero of the ever exalted, a lion though harmless, our guarantee of peace by force achieved; and it was in Kinsale that you enjoyed success and at the high mountain near Lawlesstown.

5 You have spread terror with the bellowing of cows in the glens west along the Bandon River; a trumpet will be sounded in Thurles as this body of troops draws up alongside it.

6 Rent will be collected for you down by the River Lee in that dark palisade in the bottom of Ireland; in the province of Ulster injury will be planned for you, because your bow was wont to cast them down.

5 murch*adh*; thrup*adh*each; 7 an*n* sgach nárd *punctum above* s, *light stroke between* s *and* g *indicating, perhaps, deletion of* s; 8 Éb*h*ir; 11 fiaghach; 12 comhraic; 15 agcin*n*tsáile, do rin*eadh*; 19 trómpa; 22 gcarr*adh*; 23 oll*tadh*

2

Brian Ó Briain cecinit iar n-éag Mhurchaidh Uí Bhriain eadhón Iarla Innse Uí Chuinn

Ar bheith dhó-san breóidhte cnaoidhte
níor shámh mo chodladh 's dob fhogus dom bíodhga;
táinig uch ó uch im chroídhe-se
is dubhart go mbobann an obair dhamh innsin,

go bhféachfainn im chéill is im chuimhne,
créad an tásg do chráidh an croídhe agam.
Do rádh an bhean dar leat gur Suibhne
nó Meadhbh Cruachan, a tuairisg innsim:

ag tarrang a gruaige 's ag luadh a díoghrais:
'éirgheó Tuadhmhain, tá an buaireamh suídhte,
d'éag Murchadh, urradh na críche,
d'éag an tIarla Brianach daoineach,

d'éag an Barún, flathamhail tíorthach.
Féach an fhairrge ag agairt an ghnímhse:
muca mara dá dtrasgairt is míolta,
raobadh cabhlach is foghail dá déanamh,

gáir na dtonn go lom fá líogaibh,
mullachaibh bánta ag trághadh 's ag líonadh,
mullachaibh cnoc 'na lochaibh linntreach
i meadhán an fhoghmhair 's an foghmhar 'na gheimhreadh.

Brian Ó Briain *cecinit* after the death of Murchadh Ó Briain, that is the Earl of Inchiquin

1 When he was sick and wasted away, my sleep wasn't peaceful and sudden starts assailed me; a fierce groan lodged in my heart; and I said that these matters move me to relate –

2 that I would look into my mind and my memory, what were these tidings that had vexed my heart. A woman declared – you would think she was Sweeney or Meadhbh of Cruachain, her description I tell:

3 (she was) tearing her hair and declaiming her zeal – 'Thomond will arise, perturbation is definite, Murchadh, the leader of the land, has died, the great-hosted O'Brien Earl has died,

4 the princely, land-ruling Baron has died. Behold the sea avenging this deed: porpoises and whales upturned, fleets are torn apart, destruction is rife;

5 the roar of waves hitting bare rocks, the surface of lea fields ebbing and filling, mountain tops have become lakes and pools of water in mid-autumn, and autumn itself has turned into winter.

Title eadhóin; Iarl*adh*; 2 fog*us*; dam; 3 tain (n *with lenited suspension stroke*); uch *repeated after* ó *with deleting subscript puncta*; 5 cheill; 9 ag*h bis*; 10 Tuadhm (*with suspension stroke*); 14 fh*air*ghe; ag*arc*; 16 cabhl (*with lenited suspension stroke*); déan (*with lenited suspension stroke*); 17 lóm; 18 agh *bis*; 20 meádhan; fhogh*air*; fogh*ar*; gheimhre

Do mheath an toradh 's níl sosadh ag na síonta,
sneachta agus tóirneach do ló is d'oídhche,
gaoth is fearthainn gan lagadh dá síorchur,
meas na gcrann gan planda thríotha. 24

Táinig tuile na tubuisde timcheall,
táid na spéarthaibh aordha ar aoinchrith,
níl deór 'na mballaibh nach fearfaid don taoisg-se;
sgreadach is gártha ag mnáibh na síodhbhrugh: 28

Úna, Gráinne, Sadhbha agus Síle,
Máire ar Chnoc Meádhbha na bhfaoileann,
Áine ar an gcnoc gnáthach aoibhinn,
níl bárr ar bioth sláinte ag Aoibheall 32

acht í 'na gealt ar feadh na bruídhne
ag caoineadh Uí Bhriain is triath na hInnse,
ag caoineadh Murchaidh an urra nár chinnte,
go rug an bás gan spás 'na gheimheal air. 36

Uch, monuar, 's mo thruagh le n-innsin
lionnán stóir na Fódla ' chlaoidheadh dho,
i Luimneach Luirc go grod fá aoinlic
crann pailme do ceapadh ó ríogha.' 40

6 Crops have failed, storms never cease, snow and thunder prevail day and night, wind (a-blowing), rain falling without respite, the acorns of the (oak)tree have no kernels breaking through.

7 The tide of disaster has come around, the aerial skies have become a quaking mass, they hold not a droplet that they will not shed in this downpour, screaming and shouts from the women of the fairy mounds:

8 Úna, Gráinne, Sadhbha and Síle, Máire on Cnoc Meádhbha of the fair women, Áine on her wonted hill, Aoibheall is poorly,

9 but like a mad woman within the fort crying for O'Brien, the lord of Inse Uí Chuinn, keening Murchadh the unstinting leader, (saying) that death took him as a prisoner without delay.

10 Oh, alas! It is a pity for me to tell that death should bring down the darling of Ireland, hastily interred under a tombstone in Limerick, the scion derived from royalty.'

24 thriotha; 25 Tain (*followed by lenited suspension stroke*); timchioll; 29 gr*á*ine; sadhbha *inserted in heavy ink and in another hand over line between* gr*á*ine *and contraction for* agus; 33 geilt; bruíghne; 34 caoine; 35 caoine; Murch*adh*; urr*adh*; 36 ghemhiol; 38 Fódhla

Crann tagartha eagailse do dhídean,
crann balsaim a parrathas Íosa;
gaisgeadhach Banba ' sheasamh dá phrionnsa,
lann do lannadh chum machaire ' shníomh thú,

lann chum sgathaimh badh tapaidh is badh díopa,
buinne borb chum cogaidh do shuídheadh thu,
buinne cúmhra i gcúirt an dlíghe thú,
a liagh lóghmhair na córa ' dhídean.

A choím an mhisnigh bhein urraim do laochraidh,
a leóghain chatha lér cailleadh na mílte;
a gheinearáil na harmála badh díopa,
is leat nár sheasaimh fear th'anma ar maoilinn

ná i gcorp airm, dá ngealladh go ndéanfadh.
An Barrach is Táf do dháil 'na maidhm ort
i Lios Cearbhúill do bhreathnúghadh na tíre;
is ann do cailleadh leat Oilibhéar Stíbhinn,

is do rinne tú greallach dá n-eachraidh 's dá ndaoine.
Geinearál Barrach chum reatha do dhíbris,
Íbh Coirín, ní cheilmíd ' innsin,
tiagharna Mhóta Gairéad 's a Bhíocont;

11 Powerful advocate for the protection of church buildings, tree of balm from the paradise of Jesus; the warrior of Banba to stand fast by his Prince, you were a sword fashioned to shape the battlefield,

12 a sword to cut swiftly and severely, you were a tough scion to settle warfare, you were a pure champion in the court of law, a jewel for the protection of justice.

13 Heart of courage who won the respect of warriors, lion in battle through whom thousands fell, unyielding army general, the man who would take your life did not face you on a mountain slope,

14 or in the midst of an army, were he to promise that. Barry and Taaffe burst forth upon you at Liscarroll, to decide the fate of the country. It was there that Oliver Stephenson was slain by you;

15 and you pulverized their horses and their people. You set General Barry to flight, (similarly) Ikerrin, we do not neglect to tell, Lord Mountgarret and the Viscount;

43 gaisgh*adh*ach; 48 dhidean; 50 ler; 57 is] s; do rinne] do *rineadh*; neachradh; 58 genearál; ratha; 60 Mhúta

is an tan do bhein tú Eilís bhuídhe amach,
’s a raibh aca don arm badh líomhtha;
i gCnoc na nDos cidh bocht le n-innsin
méad an áir ’s an láthair líonta.

Marbhadh Alasdrainn measaim nár bhinn leat
Connachtaigh is Olltaigh ar a bhonn do síneadh,
Albanaigh cidh gur dheacair a n-ísbeirt
is fearbóga ag buain bhlasbóg thríotha.

Do bhrisis do Tháf lá na bruídhne;
i gCill Bhuláin do choimeádais an oídhche;
’s i mBaile an Rosbhaird do ro-chrádhais Muímhnigh,
do thuit Caiptín Súgán ’s a bhuídhean leat.

Sruth an Bhaile Aeird do raobais thríotha;
’s i Ráith Gogáin ar cheartlár na tíre;
do rúsgais Donnchadh an Chúil gan aimhris
i Múscraíghe ’s níor chúrsaídhe grinn do.

I nDún Garbháin níorbh fhuarlán do thionnsgain
bualadh cladaigh do thabhairt ar naimhdibh,
tan do bhí Eóchaill ar scór bheith claoidhte,
síge go docht le a doirsibh suídhte.

16 and when you gained sallow-skinned Elizabeth and all they had of the sharpest armaments; at Knocknanuss, though painful to recount, the battle-site was full with the amount of slaughter.

17 The killing of Alexander (MacDonnell) was not pleasing to you, Connaughtmen and Ulstermen alongside him were stretched, and Scotsmen, hard though their killing was; there were fawns chomping at mouthfuls of grass around them (the dead bodies).

18 You defeated Taaffe on the day of the fight; you kept watch by night in Kilbolaine; at Rochfordstown you tormented Munstermen, Caiptín Súgán and his company fell by your hand.

19 At Hightown stream you tore through them; and at Goggan’s castle from the centre of the countryside; without doubt you rent Donnchadh an Chúil in Muskerry, it was no matter of mirth for him.

20 In Dungarvan your approach was not half-hearted in giving the enemy a beating on the shore. When Youghal was almost beaten down, there was a tough siege against its tested doors

61 Elís; 73 Sruith; aérd; 76 a Múscroídhe; 77 In dún; níor bhfu*ar*lán; 78 clad- *with lenited suspension stroke*; 79 bhi; 80 suíghte

Baile Uí Ghormáin do ghabháil 'na timcheall,
Cuan an Chaisleáin do choimeád fá dhaorbhruid,
do chuiris do scóid i gcóir na taoide,
na chúig longa tug sucar is díon dóibh.

D'aimhdheóin gliocais is cumais na saoithe
do chuiris an Mhumhain ó út go fínit
fád chúmhachta agus umhal chum cíosa;
do choingbhis Gaill i meadhair 's i ndíomus.

Is in Áth an Choite badh gorthach saoithe,
tugais an ruaig fá Thuamhain led sgíomhaltaibh;
is ag tiaghacht do Gheinearál Néill aníos ort,
do chuiris do hóst i gcóir bheith fíochmhar,

do dhrumaídhe ag sgreadaigh is caismearta ag píobaibh
do bhratachaibh sróill ag góil na gaoithe,
do ghunnaídhibh machaire i gcartachaibh taoibh riot
ag trúip is coisighthe i gcopaibh dá ngríosadh

chum teagmhála meargánta ' dhéanamh,
láimh le Beannchair th'fhearg do dhíoghailt air;
níor ghabh mac Airt a chead san oídhche,
ag dol tar ' ais do mheas nár bhaois do

21 Lord Gormanstown (you kept) simply surrounding it (Youghal) and (you) keeping Lord Castlehaven in distress; you set your sails on the tide and the five ships gave them (in Youghal) succour and protection.

22 Despite the wiliness and capacity of all the pre-eminent leaders you brought Munster from one end to the other under your power and made it willing to render you rent; you maintained the English joyous and proud.

23 In Annacotty you brought blushes to the leadership; with skirmishing parties you attacked the land of Thomond; and when General O'Neill approached you from the north you prepared your force to be ferocious,

24 your drums were sounding with the din of the pipes, your satin standards flying in the wind, your field-guns in carts near you (maintained) by troops of men, while foot-soldiers wearing poleyns were urging them on

25 to quick and fearless engagement, near Banagher, in order to vent your anger on him; Art's son did not take his leave of you, and going back by night he thought it wasn't foolish of him to

84 long *with lenited suspension stroke*; 85 *comma after* gliocais; 87 chúmha*cht*a; 89 gort*adh*ach; 90 thuain *m contraction over* u *and* a; sgíoltaibh *m contraction over* o; 91 is ag] sag; ghene*ar*ál; 92 *between* hóst *and* i gcóir ip *with deletion marks*; 94 góil *m contraction over* ó; 95 igcartaibh c (*with lenited stroke over* t); 97 meardhánta; dhéanā (*with lenited stroke*)

madradh ruadh gan bualadh id líonta;
maith do fuair tan fuarais sgríob air:
i nDún Dealgan do ghearrais a dhaoine
's do chuiris retréat na hÉirne síos air.

Féachtar an mhéad so do laoidheadh leat
gidh bé éin-neach fuair céim claoidhte ort,
a réalthan dob éifeachtach gníomhartha
dob fhéinix i d'aonar dot rígh thu.

A phéarla don tréanfhuil dob aoirde,
a Ghréagaigh is a Éibhir mhic Míleadh,
do phréimhsmior na Haustriá do ghaolta,
ó Ghaedhal Ghlas go teacht i ríghe dhuit;

ón Easpáin go ceannárd do shíolrais,
's as Brianach thu ' riaghlaidh a dlíghe amach,
do cheap sloinntibh 's do roinn tíortha,
do rinne chúig cúige ar dtús don ríoghacht so,

tug bailtibh, forus is socracht dá dtaoisigh,
do sgrios Lochlannaigh fá dhochma dá gcríochaibh.
Bíodh gur ghearras go hachamair slíghe leat
's gan do reacht ' thabhairt i gceart ód dhísle,

26 throw a fox into your nets; he paid for that when you made a swoop on him: in Dundalk you cut his men to pieces and forced him to retreat towards the River Erne.

27 Consider this greatness that has been narrated concerning you: whosoever enjoyed a victory over you, you, o star so effective in your actions, have been one-handedly, a paragon for your king.

28 You pearl of the highest blue blood, you, a Greek and an Éibhear son of Míleadh, your kinsmen are of the root-marrow of Austria, from Gaedhal Glas you are up to your coming into authority;

29 you are proudly descended from Spain, and you are from Brian (Bóroimhe) who promulgated the law, who composed surnames and who distributed territories and who first made five provinces for this kingdom,

30 who gave towns, legal enforcement and stability for their lords; who expelled Norsemen downcast from their lands. Though I have delineated but briefly your career, without deriving your authority from what was (legally) your due,

102 fu*air* ~~n~~ tan; 106 énneach; 107 raolthan*n*; éfe*acht*ach; 108 fhénix *punctum over* f *weak*; ríogh; 110 Ébhir; mc; 112 Ghaodhal; a ríghe; 114 thu riagl*adh* a dlíg*h*e; 120 ra*cht*

fágthar soin le cur id laoidhibh
san tseanchus ó fearadh an díle
do réir mur d'fhág Mac Dáire suídheadh air.
A phreabaire na n-arrad-bheart nárbh íseall,

a ghuais-tseabhaic na seabhac do stríocadh,
a charbuncail na Teamhra ríoghdha,
do rugais an bárr ó chlár na sinnsear
abhus is thall in am na gcoímheasgar

i mbeódhacht, i gcródhacht, i líomhthacht,
i ngasdacht, i gcalmacht, 's i gcríonnacht,
in uaisle gan uabhar, gan iongnadh
acht buadh ' bhreith ar chruaidh-leathaibh Cuinn duit.

Rígh Saxan do cailleadh badh sgím leat,
Rígh na Spáinne do bhráthair gaolmhar,
An tÍmpire Almáinneach gan aimhreas,
na prionnsuídhe Gearmáineacha id thimcheall;

biaidh An Poirtingéalach go léanmhar tríotsa,
beag mur iongnadh, dob é a rann gaoil tu;
an tan do bhí an Spáinneach táidhte in inntreast
badh gádh in am ruaige do chuaird don ríoghacht soin

31 let that be put in your elegies (as it is) in the history from the time of the Deluge, as Mac Dáire has set it down. O hearty fellow of high deeds, never low-born,

32 you danger-loving hawk who made hawk-like warriors submit, o precious jewel of royal Tara, you excelled in the land of the ancestors, here and there when conflicts arose

33 in liveliness, in valour, in sharpness, in smartness, in bravery, and in wisdom, in nobility without haughtiness, that is no wonder, but that you would triumph over the harsh northern regions of Ireland.

34 Tragic for you was the death of the King of England; the King of Spain was a fraternal relation; the Holy Roman Emperor, of course, and the German princes were in your company.

35 The Portuguese Sovereign will be sad after you, that is no surprise, you were his blood-related adherent. When the Spaniard was inextricably involved, your visit to that kingdom (of Portugal) in the time of hostilities was needed

124 narrdbheart d *is a superscript over* rr; ísioll; 126 Teamhr*adh* ríoghadh; 128 ám; 139 in*n*treast

id gheinearál ar armáil do phrionnsa,
fuarais fossadh chum socracht ód naímhdibh,
ar feadh do bhóit níor dhóigh grinn tu
ag Liosbóin is trioblóid do thionnsgna.

Ó rígh Franc níor ghann do phinnsean,
badh tú a bhráthair, sás a thuillte,
i ngleódh na n-arm níor mheatacht dob fheidhm dhuit
acht gearradh cnámh i lár na madhmann;

is ag teacht chum baile fá mhaise is fá mheadhair dhuit
badh leat an machaire is ceangal na mbraighdeadh,
gan dál 's a libh-ghárda i radharc ort,
gnaoi do phearsan ní facas ar aoin-neach,

cáil do ghaisce badh deacair do choímseacht,
ar feadh na hEórpa go lór gníomh ort,
annsa Turca go hurrdhairc sgríobhthar,
is annsa Róimh i gclódh 's i bprionnta.

Níor lúgha th'éifeacht san rann íochtair,
annsa Néigipt do léaghadh go maoidhteach
gurb ó Niúl do shiubhail an Brianach,
gan dath bréige i réim ná i ngníomh air.

36 as a general leading the army of your prince; you got a comfortable abode from your enemies; as your desire went you gave no pleasure to anyone at Lisbon, initiating trouble there.

37 From the King of France your pension was not paltry, you deserved that being his kinsman; in armed conflict cowardice wasn't your aim, but cutting through bone in the thick of the engagements;

38 and on returning home successfully and joyously, the whole field and the fettering of the prisoners belonged to you, unaccompanied the uniformed guard was in your vision, the delight on your person was seen on no one else.

39 It would be difficult to enumerate the fame of your feats of arms, around Europe many deeds concerning you are cited, in Turkey you are celebrated in writing, and in Rome in printed books.

40 Your effect in the southern hemisphere was no less: in Egypt it was read with pride that from Niúl the O'Brien is sprung, with no trace of dissimulation in his career or deeds.

141 ghenearál; 142 fos*adh*; 144 tionsgn*adh*; 145 Fránc; 146 thuillt*eadh*; 151 libh=ghárda; 152 aoineach; 153 choím*seacht*; 154 heorp*adh*; 155 Turc *with lenited suspension stroke*; horrdc *suspension stroke above* dc; 157 héfea*cht*

Munab dhe theasda do theastas ghlan díreach
id reacórd 's id ghriantsómpla ag ríoghaibh
gur shiocais an cluimhthe d'fhuirinn tar tíghthibh
thall 's abhus a ghuin le haoinfhear. 164

An tan táinig grása ó Íosa ort
chum teacht tar th'ais 's do leas gur smaoinis,
a mhic na ndeór 's na hóird ag guídhe leat
an saoghal do mheallais 's do mharbhnadh déanta: 168

aithríghe fhoilightheach chumais id chroídhe istigh
na peacuídhibh marbhtha d'fheartadh 's do dhiansgrios;
mur bhárr grása a ghrádha ina ndéanadh
feóil is fuil do chuirp dhil d'íodhbairt, 172

le neart psalm, Aifreann is fíorghuil
is Flaitheas d'fhagháil do t'anam mur chríochnadh.
Seacht ndeich, sé chéad, trí ar mhíle,
aois ar dtiagharna i mbliadhantaibh suídhte 176

go bás Mhurchaidh, cuirim i gcuímhne,
an naomhadh lá do mhí September.
A lóchrainn ghlain gan snas ó dhíomus
do rugais an chraobh ón saoghal le t'inntleacht, 180

41 If it were that something was wanting from a clear, direct attestation in your record, in your shining example that kings have (of you), (we can state) that you hardened the game for a fighting band over the drawn-up lines, here and abroad, the battle being won by a single man.

42 When grace from Jesus came to you to revise your course and when you considered your (spiritual) good, o tear-filled son, even as the orders of churchmen prayed for you, after your meditations, you confounded the world (thus):

43 within your heart a hidden, powerful repentance to bury and extirpate your mortal sins; there was a crowning grace of His love in all that the flesh and blood of your priceless body would offer up (in repentance),

44 with copious psalms, masses and true contrition of heart attaining as an end heaven for your soul. One thousand six hundred and seventy-three years, the established age of the Lord,

45 to the death of Murchadh, I commit to memory, the ninth day of the month of September. O bright beacon of light without stain of pride, you surpassed all with your intellect,

161 theast*adh*; 162 ghriantsómpl*adh*; 163 cluimhthe *comma between* cluimhthe *and* dfuirin; 165 ^tan^; 166 hais; 168 déant*adh*; 171 a ghrádh *bracketed*; iona; 173 Aithfrion*n*; 174 tan*m*; 176 imbliaghantaibh; 177 cuir*m*; 179 dhíomas

ag triall go Cathair na nApstal 's na Naomh dhuit,
ag feitheamh glóire ógh agus aoibhnis
do bhias dá caitheamh gan lagadh go fínit,
cuirim mo bheannacht gcéin mhairfead 's mo ghuidhe leat. 184

Ar mbeith dó san breóidhte cnaoidhte

46 as you go the City of the Apostles and Saints, awaiting the glory of virgins and of joy, that will last until the end of time, I'll send my blessing and prayer with you for as long as I live.

181 Napstol; 184 gen

3

Seaghán Mac Riagáin cct

A Mhurchaidh Uí Bhriain, tá fiadhach ar Ghaedhlaibh
le hocht mbliadhna i ndiaidh a chéile;
is mithid duit stad is teacht chum réightigh
is léigheadh id chairt do cheart ar Éirinn. 4

A láin beóil, a leóghain léidmhigh,
a ghríbh bhuirb, a churaidh chum éachta,
a chrainn bagair na Saxan le chéile,
is teann an seasamh so agad ghá dhéanamh. 8

Féach id dheóigh is romhat in éinfheacht
is déana an chomhairle is cóir do dhéanamh,
lean do rígh ann gach slíghe 'na ngéabha
is tréig an aicme nach tabhair dho géilleadh. 12

1 Murrough O'Brien, the Gaels have been hunted for eight years in succession; it is time for you to stop and come to an agreement, and to read in your charter your right to Ireland.

2 Spoken about by everyone, you are an eager lion, an abrasive fighter, a champion of mighty deeds, protector of all the English, this is a firm stand you are taking now.

3 Look back and forward and take the advice that is proper; follow your king whatever his course and avoid that band that does not yield to him.

1 tá fiadhach; ar ghaodhaluibh; 3 réight *with lenited suspension stroke*; 4 léigh *with lenited suspension stroke*; Erin*n*; 5 beoil; leoghain; 6 éachtadh; 7 cheile; 9 romhatt; néinfe*acht*; 10 déana] déan*adh*; 11 ríogh; ngéabh*adh*; 12 geille

Ná bí meallta, th'am ná tréig-se,
ná creid feasda do mhalairt an tsaoghail,
idear dhá stól do thón dá léigir,
d'éis do leagtha badh deacair dhuit éirghe.

Do chuiris brothall ó Chorcaigh i d'aonar,
do chuaidh go Lonndain chúm soin sgéal ort
go nach bia an Stát id láimh ná Séarlus
's biair mur Ghóidriosg sa chlódh chéadna.

Ba mór an tubaist is tusa don taobhsoin
thall 's abhus do bhuin in éinfheacht;
léd bhíodhbha ar eacht do cheart dá léigir
uch, alas, *you are far dereived.*

Is féach an madara i gcroiceann na caorach:
tá grádh ag Gallaibh dá n-eagala féin duit,
tar ' éis súd ní thiubhraid taobh riot,
they will make use of you this season.

Is tar éis an sgathaimh más agad bhias géilleadh
do cheann chum cláir go bráth ní léigfid
do réir mur d'imthigh go meinic ar shaoraibh
tar éis a n-oibire uile do dhéanamh.

4 Don't be deceived, don't miss your chance, don't be caught by the fickleness of the world; if you place yourself between two stools, after being knocked down it might be difficult for you to get up.

5 You dispersed a rabble from Cork on your own, (tidings) that reached London and made you known, so that neither the Parliament nor the King will help you and you'll appear to be just like Góidriosg.

6 It would be a disaster if you, while on that side, were defeated simultaneously by both sides; if you were to allow your enemy but once to have what is your due, alas! I'm afraid that you are much confused.

7 And behold the wolf in sheep's clothing, fearing for themselves the English show you love, but even so they will not trust you, *they will make use of you this season.*

8 After a while, even if you are the one yielded to, they won't allow you to visit their table, as often has happened to tradesmen having done all their work for them.

13 meállta; hám; 15 id*er*; 18 do ch *with lenited suspension stroke*; 22 néinfea*cht*; 23 léad; bhíodhb*adh*; 24 dereived *the third letter is unclear*; *the three examples of the letter* ɐ *are upturned and resemble the symbol used for the unclear schwa-vowel* ə; 27 tar éis; 29 géille; 31 dim *with unlenited suspension stroke*

Ní beag súd 's a ndubhart riot d'fhéachain,
amhairc id thimcheall, moill ná déan-sa,
in aghaidh do ríogh má bhír i gcéideal,
all your deeds believe are treason.

Badh dual sleachta dhuit ceannus na hÉireann
do bheith agad is Teamhair in éinfheacht;
' fhiadhain súd ar Lúghaidh Ó Chléirigh
is ar Thadhg Mac Dáire bláth na héigse.

Fágbhaim sin mur sin re féachain
is fiafraíghim dhaoibh, a dhaoine aosta,
an gcualabhair riamh in iath na hÉireann
fear mar Mhurchadh in iorghail éachtaigh?

Dar bríogh mo mhionn, dar liom níorbh fhéidir
do dhuine dár geineadh, dá rugadh, dá mbéarthar
ar feadh an domhain ón gcúl go chéile
bárr an Bharúin ar dheagh-chlú féile,

ó d'éag Eochaidh, Corc is Féidhlim,
ó d'éag Niall 's an Fhian badh tréine,
ó d'éag Brian do stiall gach daorchath
is Murchadh a mhac rug neart tar laochaibh,

9 This is sufficient and all of what I have told you to watch out for; be circumspect and don't delay; if you are in conflict against your King, *all your deeds believe are treason.*

10 By right of descent, you should have the leadership of Ireland and Tara together; evidence for this is with Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh and Tadhg Mac Dáire, the flower of poets.

11 I leave the matter thus to be examined, and older men, I ask you whether you have ever heard of a man like Murchadh for heroic conflict in the land of Ireland?

12 By my oath, the man has not been conceived or born or ever will be born in the whole world from end to end who could outdo the Baron in great fame for munificence,

13 since Eochaidh, Corc and Féidhlim died, since Niall died and that Fian band so strong, since Brian who lacerated every low-based battalion died, and his son Murchadh who showed strength over warriors,

33 dféachuin*n*; 37 hÉrion*n*; 38 néinfea*cht*; 39 Chléire; 40 bláith; 42 fiadhfruídhim; 43 hérin*n*; 45 lióm; níor bhfeidir; 46 dhuine] *stroke over* dhe; 50 an fhian*n*

ó d'éag Eóghan Mór na mbéimeann
is Lughaidh Lágha tug ár ar chéadaibh,
Cú na gCleas nár stad ó éirleach
's an laoch toghtha rinne codladh i mBinn Éadair.

Mar do rug *Achilles* barra na nGréagach,
mar do rug *Hector* breis ón dTrae leis
mar do rug Osgur mír borra na Féinne,
do rug Murchadh an urruim ó Ghaedhlaibh;

ó iathaibh Breatan, ó Ghallaibh an Bhéarla,
ó iath Alban, Alastrunn féachaidh
's a raibh farrais gur mharbh in éinfheacht
ní leis féin fós nár mhór an sgéal-soin.

Atá Lios Cearbhúill ag dearbhúdh an sgéil-sin
maitheamh a gclódh i ló an chéadail
ar feadh na Mumhan i gcúirt 's a gcléirceacht
's an lá crosda bhí ag Corcaigh le féachain.

Níor eól ceann baile ná cathrach ná aoiltigh
ó Phort Láirge slán go Béarra
is ó Shionainn na mbárc go tráigh Chinn Chléire
nach tabhair íoc dho cíos is géilleadh.

14 since Eoghan Mór who inflicted blows died and Lughaidh Lágha who slaughtered hundreds, Cú Chulainn of the feats, who never ceased from carnage, and the outstanding warrior who slept in Beann Éadair.

15 As Achilles outdid the Greeks, as Hector won yet more (glory) from Troy, as Oscar won the champion's portion of the Fianna, thus did Murchadh win respect from the Irish;

16 from the regions of Britain, from the English-speaking foreigners, from the land of Scotland – see how he slew Alasdair and all who were with him – he wasn't alone in thinking that this matter was not of great importance,

17 for Lios Cearbhaill confirms it, (snatching) respite from defeat on the day of conflict, in manor and in monastery throughout Munster; and it was a wicked day that Cork had to behold.

18 There is not known a town leader, or city governor, or head of limestone house from Waterford all the way to Beare Island or from the bark-filled Shannon to the strand at Cape Clare who does not yield to him rent and obeyance.

54 lúghadh lághadh; 57 barr*adh*; 58 ttraodh; 59 borr*adh*; fein*ne*; 60 Ghaodhaluibh; 61 bhéarl*adh*; 62 Alban *punctum on* n; 63 néinfea*cht*; 67 ccúirt *with punctum over* t; gcléirc*each*; 68 crosd*adh*; féachuin *stroke over* n; 69 Niól *with superscript for* er/ir *compendium over* ío; 71 cléir*igh*; 72 géille

Is gach aon acu nár admhaigh bheith réidh leis
do rinne a gcreachadh is táid marbh tar a éis-sion,
a fhiadhain súd ar Chúirt Mhic Séafraigh
's a bhfuil 'na sheasamh do Halla na nDéiseach. 76

An lá bhí campa teann san Léithchloich
ní raibh Murchadh in ionad a saortha,
bhí a shliocht orra, bhí an donas le chéile
ar gach nduine dár chruinnigh Sir Séarlus. 80

Ní hiongnadh dhaoibh – gach ní dá ndéinir,
bídh dod dhíon an tsídhbhean Béarra,
bídh Clíodhna an ríghbhean is Deirdre,
's ní bhí Aoibhioll dá oídhche id t'éagmais. 84

Do fuair sé arm dob fhearra dá mb'fhéidir
do rinne le foghluim gabha na nDée,
do fuair sgiath do sgiathuibh Shéasair
's do fuair clogad nach tolgann aongha. 88

Do fuair colg 'na dhorn ó *Venus*,
do bhronn Mars dho each is éideadh
dob fhearr gaisgeadh dár shealbhaigh éinfhear
's do thug sé srian is diallait fao dhó. 92

19 And as for those who did not show him conciliation, he destroyed them, and they are dead in his wake; evidence for this is Courtmacsherry and what's left standing of the Hall of the Déise.

20 On that day when a stout camp had been set up at Cloghleagh Castle, Murchadh was not present to save them; as a result, affliction was the lot of all those that Sir Charles had assembled.

21 This is no surprise for you – in everything you do the fairy woman from Beare Island protects you as does the royal fairy woman, Clíodhna, and Deirdre, and Aoibheall is never two nights away from you.

22 He got the best possible armoury that the smith of the gods had made with skill; he got one of the shields of Caesar and he got a helmet that no spear can pierce.

23 Venus placed a sword in his fist, Mars bestowed on him a steed and and body armour, the best for valorous deeds that any man ever got and he gave him a set of reins and a saddle.

73 aca *with punctum over initial* a; 74 rin (*stroke with punctum over* n); agcreacha; tar éis; 77 cámpa; 78 saorth*aigh*; 79 bhí shliocht; orr*adh*; 82 bí; dot; béarr*adh*; 83 bí; 85 do bfeárr; dá mféidir; 86 rin (*with lenited suspension stroke*); ndéé; 87 sgeathibh *changed to* sgiathibh *in later hand?*; 89 *after* colg *is* co *and the upper part of the letter* l *as if the scribe halted from repeating* colg; dhorn*n*; 90 éidigh; 91 gaisge; 92 diallaitt; faoi

Dá dtí an Barún deaghchlúdhach déarcach
chugainn ar cuairt go bruach na Féile,
do-gheabhainn ceathrúmhadh admhúim féin sin
dá mbí agam san mbaile le chéile.

A Mhurchaidh, a mhílidh, guídhim Mac Dé leat,
cuirim do dhíon ar Rígh na Gréine,
míle bean 's a gcneas gan éadach
fágbhaim agud gion mhairfead do tsaoradh.

Bíodh go dtiobhraim súil ina éiric
cuirim an Phaidear, an tPsailm 's a' Chréidh leat,
guídhe na nApstal 's na nAithreach Naomhtha
dot dhíon ar Ghalluibh 's a maireann do Ghaedhlaibh.

24 If the munificent Baron came to visit us on the banks of the River Feale, I might get a lease of land from him I declare, for all those I have here at home.

25 Murchadh, my warrior, I pray the Son of God be with you, I place your protection on the King of the Sun, I bestow on you a thousand blessings to save you as long as I live (though I may not live to save you).

26 Even though I shall give an eye in return for it, I send a *pater*, a psalm and the creed with you, the prayer of the apostles and of the holy patriarchs to protect you from the English and all that survive of the Gaels.

93 ttígh; 101 ina] an; 102 chrédh; 104 ghaodhaluibh

NOTES

1

Metre. The accentual metre is of the *Ochtfhoclach* type. In each couple of lines three half lines have the same assonantal pattern, the fourth differing e.g. ll. 1–2: [(_)ia _í_] × 3, [ó é _] × 1; ll. 3–4: [a _ _ ia _] × 3, [ó é _] × 1. All the four half-lines are not fully consistent.

2. *bróichéadach*: from English *brocade*. The lenited *c* does not occur in similar loan-words, e.g. *coicéad*, *piocóid*, *píce*, *póca*, *seiceadúir*.

5–6. *Bhóromha hóstamhail reóltamhail*: The assonantal pattern here is either óəə / óəə / óəə or óú / óú / óú; *hóstamhail*: derived from *hósta* (*Corpas*), an English borrowing; *trupaitheach* 'having troops'. The noun *trúp* (*eDIL*) has long -ú-. *Corpas* gives a form with a short vowel.

6. *usgarach reóltamhail ró-aodharach*: 'bejewelled, radiant, lively'. *Reóltamhail* corresponds to an earlier *rétlannach* < *rétlu* and more modern *réaltach*. The vowel *-eó-* may have been influenced by the doublet *néal*/*neól*.

8. *go Fód Éibhir*: 'to Ireland' in general or in particular 'to Thomond', the O'Briens were considered traditionally to have descended from Éibhear, son of Mílidh Easpáinne.

9. *cinnbheart, cú, seabhac*: *cinn* may stand for the dative case *cionn*, pronounced with long *-ú-* or diphthong *-au-*. The assonance need not be phonetically precise; *-ú-* and *-au-* can interchange.

11. *fiach*: (fiaghach MS) 'raven' here used metaphorically echoing *seabhac* 'hawk' above.

12. *Ag iarraidh comhrac mbaillsgéithe*: From *ball* + genitive of vn. *sceith* < *sceïd* (*eDIL* s.v.) 'seeking limb-spewing combats/encounters'. In Munster Irish the vowel is normally long, cf. *scéig*, *scéachtaint* etc. The MS form has been emended: *comhraic* > *comhrac*, a genitive plural, to accord with the eclipsis of *mbaillsgéithe*. The diphthong /ai/ in *mbaill-* provides the assonance for the first syllable in *Laighléiseach* l. 16.

13. *leóghan*: The diphthong /au/ is required here. The forms of the words for 'lion' and 'moth' (*eDIL* s.v. *lémann* and *léo*) are sometimes confused.

16. *Cnoc Árd na Laighléiseach*: Perhaps in the vicinity of Lawlesstown, Co. Louth; see n. 21 above.

18. *bóighéimne*: from *bó* + *géimneach* (f.). 'You spread terror with the bellowing of cows in the glens west along the River Bandon.' The capture and driving-off of cattle for victuals was a feature of the skirmishing warfare of the period; see Lenihan (2001: 61–2). The historical ending in the dative case of *géimneach* (i.e. *géimnigh*) is omitted by the scribe reflecting a dialect pronunciation.

19. *Dún Dúrlais*: The two castles and towns of Cahir (Cathair Dhún Iascaigh) and Thurles (Durlas) may be conflated here. But the form *Dún Dúrlais* is not found referring to either of them; see *Logainm.ie* s.nn. *Durlas* and *An Chathair*. Since the word *dún* is in lower case in the MS could a more general meaning be intended – 'the fort near Thurles'?

Caher Castle, which was of highly strategic importance, was taken by Inchiquin in the autumn of 1647 along with some ten or eleven other castles possibly including Thurles; see Warner (1768: 124) and Bagwell (1909: 152); *trómpa* in the MS has long *-ú-* to assonate with *Dúrlais*.

20. *cara* (carr*adh* MS): This is a form of *cora*/*cara*; see *eDIL* s.v. *cora*. 'Palisade' here could signify the fortified city of Cork.

23. *Cúige Ollta*: This clearly refers to the province of Ulster. Ó Bruadair uses this designation: *Do ghní ró fhoghla san gcóige Olltaigh* in Mac Erlean (1917: 150–1) and see the description of an Ulster harpist – *ollamh le ceól ón ccúige Olltaig* in Ó Rathile (1927: 65). For some of Inchiquin's involvement with the fighting in Ulster, see poem **2** n. 98–104.

24. *do bhogha dá mbróntaosgadh*: From *bró* (genitive case *brón*) and *taosgadh* 'your bow was casting them out in the fashion of crushed corn from a quern

stone', that is 'your bow was mowing them down in droves'. *Bró* and *bogha* seem to be associated, cf. 'bró do bhoghaibh' from the Book of Magauran; see *eDIL* s.v. *boga*. The phrase here is meant to convey the idea of Inchiquin annihilating the enemy on the field of battle, but the phraseology may be anachronistic or partly fossilised in that the use of the bow was well obsolete by the time of the wars of the 1640s; see Hayes-McCoy (1990: 94): 'The traditional English weapons which were still in use at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, bills and bows, soon disappeared; bows were no longer used in in O'Neill's time'.

2

Metre. In poems **2** and **3** the metre is accentual and generally known as *caoine*/*caoineadh*. It is used widely in the political poetry of the seventeenth century. For illustrative purposes and description of metre, see O'Rahilly (1952: viii).

While we speak of two internal assonances it should be noted that the first of the pair is often found at the beginning of the line, e.g.

Féachtar an mhéad so do laoidheadh leat l. 105.
gidh bé éin-neach fuair céim claoidhte ort l. 106.

2. *bíodhga*: pl. of *bíodhg* 'sudden starts were not far from me'.

3. *uch ó uch*: these exclamations echo the actual ululations of keening women.

4. *go mbobann an obair*: 'the events move me to tell'. I have no other instance of *bob* as a verb. It is possible to derive the form from the verb *as-boind*, *-opaind* 'refuses'; see *eDIL* s.v. *as-boind*, but semantically *ad-boind* 'proclaims, gives notice' suits better; see *eDIL* s.v. *ad-boind*. The verbs are often confused, according to *eDIL*.

7. *do rádh*: this form as preterite, is found in earlier sources. See *eDIL* s.v. *ráidid*.

9. *díoghrais*: the genitive ending is avoided *metri gratia* 'showing her fervour'.

10. *éirgheó*: the form reflects the future of *éirghidh* i.e. *éireóchaidh* and a doublet *éireóghaidh* with the final *-idh* silent (see O'Rahilly 1932 [1972]: 220). The length mark over and to the right of the digraph *éi* may indicate the historical long vowel *é* or the modern diphthongal pronunciation /*ai*/.

12–13. Murchadh was sixth Baron and first Earl of Inchiquin; *flathamhail*: pronounced *flahúil* to assonate with *Barún*.

14. *agairt*: the final *c* of the MS form *agarc* seems to be a slip of the pen for *agart*, a later form of the verbal noun *acra(e)* < *ad-gair*, modelled, probably, on *bagairt*: 'Behold the sea avenging the deed'.

16. *cabhlach*: 'the destruction of fleets'. The MS form *cabhla* (with lenited suspension stroke) could stand for the genitive singular *cabhlaigh*.

déanamh: the MS form *déanā* (with lenited suspension stroke) is an example of the modern Co. Clare pronunciation of this verbal noun with the final *-mh*

silent (Holmer 1962: 141); (Mac Clúin 1940 (1973): s.v. *déanadh*). The form *déanadh*, reflecting this pronunciation, is common in Robert Kane's version of the New Testament in 'Munster', that is Thomond, Irish (Kane 1858: *Matha VI 24*).

In this poem the final foot is [í-] e.g. *cnaoidhte*, *síonta*, *linntreach*. In certain lines (16, 97, 168, 171), however, forms of the verb *do-ním*/*déinim* are written with long *é* as if the poet or scribe were satisfied that this was an acceptable assonantal rhyme with the majority of the final feet in [í-]. See also de Brún et al. (1971: foclóir, s.v. *ríteach*, *tríonas*). See also textual note on ll. 147–51.

17. *fá líogaibh*: the preposition *fá* has here the force of *imm*, meaning 'around, over boulders'; see *eDIL* s.v. *fo, fa, fá* 1 (f) and cf. modern usage *chuireadar cóta péinte fén dtigh.*

20. The MS forms *fhoghair* and *foghar* may point to a diphthongal pronuciation /au/ here.

24. The idea here is that the oak acorns or mast have become desiccated as part of the general collapse of natural fecundity; *planda* refers to the kernel from which a new plant would grow.

26. Compare this line to *táid spéarthaibh an aedhair ar aoinchrith* in Caitilín Dubh's *Seal dá rabhas gan fhonn gan aoibhneas*, her elegy for Diarmuid Ó Briain, An Barún (Ó Murchú 2026: 32, l. 60).

28 ff. The appearance of the *sídhmhná* as keening women is common in accentual lament poetry. While Aoibheall, Áine and Úna are well-documented otherworld *sídhmhná*, associated respectively with Craig Liath, or Craiglea, near Killaloe in Co. Clare, with Cnoc Áine, or Knockainey, in Co. Limerick and with Ormond (for Úna, see O'Rahilly 1952: 125, n. 142). In an elegy for Seaghán Óg Mac Gearailt, Lord of the Decies, Séathrún Céitinn has the *sídhbhean* Clíodhna visit the sídh at Cnoc Meádhbha (Knockmaa) near Tuam, Co. Galway; see Mac Giolla Eáin (1900: 39, 205). The poet, in citing such commonplace names as Gráinne, Sadhbha, Síle and Máire, may wish to indicate that many ordinary keening women also wept for Inchiquin (Ó Murchú 2025: 413–33).

29. *Sadhbha*: the first vowel here is long -á- assonating with *Gráinne*.

33. The MS reading *geilt* has been emended to *gealt* (: *feadh*) as the -a- vowel supplies the requisite internal assonance.

35. *urra* (MS urr*adh*), see *eDIL* s.v. *aurrae/aurrad*: the masculine noun can be taken here as a genitive in apposition.

38. 'that he (death) should conquer the darling of Ireland'. The form *lionnán* reflects the modern Munster pronunciation of *leannán* with the accent on the second syllable and the vowel of the first obscured.

40. 'the palm tree shaped out of kings'. A dative plural *ríghthibh* or *ríoghaibh* could be expected here; but the abstract *ríghe* may have been intended – 'shaped from, derived from kingship, sovereignty'.

The passage from l. 10 to l. 40, understood as uttered by the un-named otherworld woman, ends here and henceforth the poet addresses the deceased directly.

41. *crann tagartha eagailse do dhídean*: 'one to appeal to for the protection of a church commumity'. The exact meaning of *eaglais* is here difficult to determine. *eDIL* s.v. *eclais, eclas* suggests (1) 'the Christian Church as an institution whether regarded as a visible organization or a spiritual community of believers' (in the context of seventeenth century Ireland the dichotomy between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Ireland must be borne in mind); (2) 'a local church or community of believers; a unit of ecclesiastic organization'; (3) 'clergy'; (4) 'a cleric'; (5) 'a church, a building for worship'. The introduction to this edition discusses Inchiquin's changes of denominational allegiance during the course of his life. The second meaning the preferred interpretation here as throughout his military campaigns, especially in Munster, he showed an unfailing determination to protect the Protestant communities of English origin in that province.

The form of the genitive singular *eagailse* is heard in the West Kerry placename *Bail(e) Eagailse* and in *pears(a) eagailse* 'a churchman'.

43. 'the warrior of Banba to make a stand for his Prince'. The Prince is King Charles I to whom Inchiquin was loyal until 1644 when he defected to the Parliament, but he returned to the royal fold in the spring of 1648.

44. '(you were) a sword fashioned to bring (the men of) the battlefield together'. This would seem to refer to Inchiquin's widely acknowledged acumen on the field of battle. It may refer to keeping the ranks together when soldiers were inclined, in the face of enemy cannon and horse, to break up and flee. Something of this nature seems to have taken place in the Battle of Liscarrol 3 September 1642, when the Royalist cause seemed lost, but Inchiquin succeeded in rallying his foot-soldiers who at first had fled and he won the day.

45. 'a sword to cut swiftly and severely'. *Sgathamh* is a variant of *sgothadh* (see *eDIL* s.v. *scothad*) 'act of cutting off, lopping'. *Díopa* or *díobtha/díobaithe* (also l. 51) can be added to T. F. O'Rahilly's examples (1942: 205–6) where he translates it as 'very great', 'unyielding, harsh, severe' and derives the word from **dí-obadh* 'non-refusing'.

46. *shuígheadh* from historical *suidhiughadh*. For this verbal noun in *CMO* (1780) Merriman writes *shuígheamh*/*shuídheamh*. (Ó Murchú 1982: ll. 116, 421, 822).

thu (MS): The shortened form of the personal pronoun, in contrast to the historical long form (ll. 44, 47) may indicate some instability in the usage of the scribe (1712) and point to the modern distinction of (1) *tú*, subject pronoun and (2) *tu*/*thu* object pronoun and in copula sentences.

49. *bhein*: this form corresponds to modern *bhuin*/*bhain* and functions as preterite of *bongaid*/*benaid*, retaining the older vocalism of the latter. *Bhein*

does not take the stress here, but the first syllables of *mhisnigh* and *urraim* do; the assonance of the line is: - *í* – *i* - - *u* - - *í* -.

51. This line recalls a line from Caitilín Dubh's elegy for Donnchadh Ó Briain, fourth Earl of Thomond: *geinearál na harmála badh tréine*; see Ó Murchú (2026: 26, l. 11).

52. *fear th'anma*: *anam* here means 'life' as in Modern *ná téir i gcontúirt t'anma* 'don't endanger your life'; see *eDIL* s.v. *ainim(m)* and *Ó Dónaill* s.v. *anam*: *beidh d'anam agam* – 'I'll have your life'. The phrase *fear th'anma* means 'the man of (who would take) your life'.

54. Ll. 54–104 comprise a *caithréim* of sorts of Inchiquin's military exploits with references to various events that took place during the war years. The chronology and some details are not precise.

An Barrach refers to Garrett Barry a professional soldier who, having left Ireland at the time of Kinsale, had gained wide military experience on the Continent. In Ireland at the time of the 1641 insurrection, he was appointed general of the confederate supporters in Munster by the Supreme Council in Kilkenny, but he was heavily defeated by Inchiquin in the Battle of Liscarroll, County Cork, in September 1642; see *DIB* s.n. Barry, Garret (Gerat).

Táf refers to Theobald Taaffe, (*c.* 1603–1677), first Earl of Carlingford. He played a central role in Irish affairs in the middle decades of the seventeenth century. He was appointed commander of the Confederate army in Munster in 1647. Inchiquin won a stunning victory over him and his forces at Knocknanuss near Mallow County Cork 13 November 1647; see ll. 63–70.

55. *Lios Cearbhúill do bhreathnúghadh*: the MS forms with long *ú* indicate that the assonance here is [a ú] – [a ú].

do bhreathnughadh na tíre: 'considering the country'. The idea here is that Garret Barry, in making a move against Inchiquin at Liscarroll, was thinking that the outcome would have consequences for the whole of Ireland. It does not appear that Taaffe was present at the Battle of Liscarroll.

56. *Oilibhéar Stíbhinn*: In the battle Oliver Stephenson was the leader of the Confederate cavalry. The phrase *do cailleadh leat* would seem to attribute agency to Inchiquin. Bagwell states that Inchiquin 'killed Oliver Stephenson, the Irish cavalry leader, with his own hand, and had himself more than one narrow escape, being wounded in the head and hand' (Bagwell 1909: 23). In the *Aphorismical Discovery of Treasonable Faction* (*c.* 1652) as printed in Gilbert (1879: vol. i, Part I, 38), it is stated that Stephenson and Inchiquin were related, the latter being a nephew of Stephenson's mother. She had implored her son before the battle to spare Inchiquin's life 'in case he had the upper hand on him'. The *Discovery* narrates that Stephenson, in an encounter during the battle, had captured Inchiquin, but the latter's foster-brother who was his bodyguard placed his pistol to Stephenson's eyelight and shot him in the head. James Buckley (1898: 83–100) reprints from the *Discovery* this account

of the slaying of Stephenson. Pádraig Lenihan states that the bodyguard was Inchiquin's brother (Lenihan 2001: 63).

59. *Íbh Coirín*: Ikerrin (Uí Chairín), Co. Tipperary. The reference is to Piers Butler, first Viscount Ikerron; see *DIB* s.n. Butler, Piers. Bagwell (1909: 23) in relation to the Battle of Liscarroll cites ('by an eye-witness') a London-printed 1642 publication, *A Journal of the most memorable passage in Ireland*, in which it is noted that 'almost all the Lords of Munster were present' – Roche, Muskerry, Ikerrin, Dunboyne, Brittas, Castleconnell, and one of Ormande's brothers'; *cheilmíd*: *-e-* is the assonating vowel here, the first syllable in *Coirín* being fronted to *-e-*; cf. *obair*, gen. *oibre* pronounced 'eibire'.

60. *tiagharna Mhóta Gairéad*: Richard Butler, third Viscount Mountgarret. He was a loyalist when the rebellion broke out in Ulster, but he went over to the Confederate side because of the anti-Catholic violence of Willian St Leger. He was elected President of the Confederation in Kilkenny. His most grievous military defeat was in the Battle of Kilrush, Co. Kilkenny, in April 1642.

An Bhíocont: General Thomas Preston, second son of fourth Viscount Gormanstown, later Viscount Tara. A professional soldier, on his arrival from the Continent in 1642 he was appointed general of the Leinster Confederate forces. He was successful in many encounters in Leinster but suffered serious defeats in March 1643 by the Royalist commander James Butler, twelfth Earl of Ormond at Ross, Co. Wexford and by the Parliamentarian commander, General Michael Jones at Dungan's Hill, near Trim Co. Meath 8 August 1647. It does not appear that Inchiquin clashed with either Richard Butler or Thomas Preston in any military encounter; see ll. 79–84.

The non-final assonance is irregular here. *Tiagharna* and *Gairéad* may be intended to assonate roughly. A similar type of irregularity is met with in l. 91.

61. *Eilís bhuidhe*: Elizabeth St Leger whom Inchiquin had married in 1635. She was the daughter of Sir William St Leger, President of Munster, who had taken the young Baron Inchiquin as his protégé; see Ivar O'Brien (1991: 4). It seems that the poet regards Inchiquin's marriage to the daughter of the Lord President of Munster with its concomitant acquisition of military equipment (*an t-arm badh líomhtha*) as another of his achievements. The epithet *buidhe* was intended to disparage her complexion.

65. *Alasdrann*: At the Battle of Knocknanoss, fought 13 November 1647, Alasdair Mac Colla Mac Donald, a distinguished soldier in the Scottish wars, had initial success on the confederate right wing, but Inchiquin still scored a stunning victory, scattering the Confederate forces (Hayes McCoy 1969: 204). Alasdair Mac Colla was slain in this encounter.

68. *fearbóga*: 'fawns chomping at mouthfuls of grass around them' (the dead bodies); *blasbóg*: this word which I have not seen elsewhere may be some imitative word, a distorted form of *bloscóg* or some such for the chomping noise of the young deer.

70. *i gCill Bhuláin do choimeádais an oídhche*: After the Battle of Liscarroll, Bagwell (1909: 23), drawing on Bellings, Carte, Smith and others, writes 'the Irish were routed and recovered Sir William Pore's bog near Kilbolaine, where they were out of reach. Inchiquin then fell back to Mallow'. It can be inferred from this line of our poem that Inchiquin on the night after the battle kept the Confederate army under observation.

71–2. *Baile an Rosbhaird*: Rochfordstown, near present-day Ballincollig, Co. Cork. The official version in Irish is given as Baile an Rosfortaigh in *Logainm.ie* where historical forms Ballirosdiwardie/Ballirosdiwardig (1586), reflecting those of our text, are cited.

These lines refer to Inchiquin's first exploits in the war in Co. Cork in 1642. The English loyalists had been besieged in Cork by Lord Muskerry assisted by Colonel Garrett Barry and others. Bagwell writes: 'On April 13 … Inchiquin who was married to St Leger's daughter … persuaded his father-in-law to let him make a sally. With only 300 foot and two troops of horse he surprised the Irish camp at Rochfordstown, routed the ill-disciplined host completely, and pursued them for some miles towards Ballincollig and Kilcrea … The only serious fighting was in the attack of a small enclosure desperately defended by Florence McDonnell, called Captain Sougane. Inchiquin's loss was little or nothing, and he was soon able to ship guns and take castles which obstructed the navigation of Cork Harbour' (Bagwell 1909: 3–4).

Caiptín Súgán: Finghín Mac Domhnaill Mhic Cárthaigh known as 'Seabhac na Ruachtaighe' (O'Rahilly 1952: 154, n. 412–13); see n. on l. 74.

73. *Sruth an Bhaile Aeird*: possibly Hightown in the barony of Barrymore, some miles northeast of Cork City; see *Logainm.ie* s.n. *Hightown/An Baile Ard*. It can be assumed that Inchiquin reconnoitred this area as part of his relief of the siege of the city.

74. In Smith's *The Ancient and Present State of the County and City of Cork* (1893 edn, vol. ii, 313) is printed a letter from the Earl of Cork, Richard Boyle (1566–1643) about events in Cork in 1642. It is worthwhile to quote it at length as it contains some interesting parallels with these lines of our poem:

> A letter of the Earl of Cork to the State, at Dublin, &c., wherein is showed the barbarous cruelty the Rebels have lately used to twenty of the Lord Barrimore's men at Coole, killing all the English there, and how Lord B. burned their country; also, the taking of Rochford's castle, and Barnehely. London, 1642: —
>
> 'The Earl of Barrymore, making a visit here to me to see his lady and children, had ten horse and foot, all English, surprised in the night-time at Coole by the Condons, who set Mr. Baynard's house on fire, which they defended till it began to fall down. The rebels offered quarter, but when they came forth, disarmed and stripped them. The principal leaders were Richard and John Condon, sons of David, who is now in custody in Dublin. The news being brought

to the Earl of Barrymore, he presently posted home and burned their whole country.

Sir Robert Travers, his castles of Rochfordstown, near Cork, was the rendezvous of the Lord Muskerry, and for all the prime gentlemen that were rebels in the western parts, which they termed the Catholic Camp, and fortified it by the direction of old Colonel Garret Barry, who, with the Lord of Muskerry, was a little before retired to Kinsale, which unhappy town is revolted, and given up to them. So we have no town in Munster holds good for the crown, but Cork, Youghal, and Bandonbridge.

The eleventh of the month Muskerry employed a strong party of men to take the prey that was under the walls of Cork whereof they being possessed, the lord pres[ident] being sick within the walls. The Lord of Inchiquin and Sir Charles Vavasour, the one with the horse the other with the foot, sallied out, but the nimble foot kerns got such a start of them, as our foot were not able to overtake them, whereupon the horse galloped after them and set upon them, recovered the prey; and on their return resolved to attempt their best upon the fortification and castle of Rochfordstown, where upon they gave a fierce assault, and Captain Seagrave, Master Finunis [= Caiptín Súgán, i.e. Finghín (Florence) mac (Domhnaill)], bothe having chief command there, made a strong defence as long as his powder lasted, (for thanks be to God with that commodity they are sparingly furnished). In the end our courage overcame all opposition, so as they entered they gave them Condons quarter at Coole, for they killed their captain and all the rest that were in it, being about 400, except their pipers, whom they caused to play before their captain's head, which they brought on a pole to Cork, and there they were put out of tune and their music ended, for they were hanged up. They found in the castle very good booty of provisions, and among the rest choice armour of the Lord of Muskerry, McCarthy Reagh, and Swallivant [Sullivan].

The day following, my castle of Rathgoggan, wherein Sir Pierce Smith's father-in law, Mr. Robert Mead, is my constable, being besieged and distressed for want of fuel, only was relieved by Capt. Will[iam] Jephson and Lieut. Downing, etc. Goggin's castle of Barnahely, which stands upon the sea in the barony of Kerry-wherry [= Kerrycurrihy/Ciarraí Cuirche], was the magazine of store for the Rebels in that barony. On Friday last Sir Chas. Vavasour boated from Cork two pieces of ordnance, with a party of Musqueteers and sailed thither, and landed one of his pieces of ordnance; the Lord Inchiquin with his horse went by land and met him there; and, upon discharging the first piece, they now desired quarter, which was given to depart with their swords and skeins only. In the castle was 1,000 barrels of wheat, wherein they placed a ward of 40 men

and returned to Cork. (Signed), Cork.'

Ráith Gogáin: Rathgoggan, the area around Charleville, Co. Cork. I cannot pinpoint any engagement here in which Inchiquin was involved. Ó Murchadha (1985: 80–1 s.n. (*de*) *Cogan*) writes: '… another William (de Cogan) was fated to be the last Cogan owner of Barnahely. It was in the year 1642 …' and quotes from the letter of the Earl of Cork as above.

75. *Donnchadh an Chúil*: Donogh MacCarthy (1594–1665), second Viscount Muskerry, first Earl of Clancarty (1658). Ó Murchadha (1985: 60) states: 'Donogh became one of the principal leaders of the Confederate cause in Munster and a member of the Council of the Confederation of Kilkenny. His castle at Blarney was captured in 1646 and the other castles in Muskerry in 1650. Finally, Lord Muskerry surrendered himself at Ross castle, Killarney, in 1652'. The idea of his being stripped of his properties may be conveyed by the verb *rúscaim*/*rúiscim* here. It seems that it was only at Liscarroll that Inchiquin and Muskerry met in battle; see also *DIB* s.n. MacCarthy, Donogh (contributed by Micheál Ó Siochrú) and Ó Donnchadha (1916: 1–10). The soubriquet 'Donnchadh an Chúil' was based on his long ringleted hair, other references to which are found in a poem by Aodhagán Ó Rathaille *is tighearna Mhúscraighe an chúil bhuidhe phéarlaigh* ('and the lord of Muskerry of the yellow plaited locks') (Dinneen and O'Donoghue 1911: 218–9; Ó Buachalla 2007: 18–9) and in an elegy by Diarmuid Óg Ó Murchadha (Gerard Murphy 1933: 488 (124*m*)). Cecile O'Rahilly (1952: 149) prints an interpolated passage from *Tuireamh na hÉireann* calling it 'what seems to be a defence of Donnchadh Mac Cárthaigh, Lord Muskerry, against the charge of treachery or conspiracy'.

aimhris: with long vowel -*í*-, current *aimhreas* and *amhras* 'doubt'.

77. *Dún Garbháin*: Dungarvan was taken by Inchiquin in April 1647 (Lenihan 2001: 104; Bagwell II 1909: 150).

80. *síge*: If taken as an Irish word the pronunciation would have to be [sʲiːgʲɪ] but this cannot be derived from early modern English or French *siege*/*siège*. It is possible that one of those latter forms was written in the first MS copy of our poems, that the first letter *e* was subsequently dropped and that it was copied as an Irish word with long *í*. T. F. O'Rahilly (1912–13: 292) regards *siege* as a late borrowing.

doirsibh: short -*o*- gives assonance with -*o*- in *docht*.

79–84. These lines treat of how Murchadh helped in raising the siege at Youghal in 1645. The town was relieved in September when Lord Broghill, that is Roger Boyle, arrived with ships from England. Inchiquin sent supplies by sea from Cork and Kinsale, *na chúig longa* no doubt referring to this succour (Bagwell 1909: 90–94).

81–2. *Baile Uí Ghormáin* and *Cuan an Chaisleáin* refer after the English fashion to the men who held these titles. The former was General Thomas Preston; see note on l. 60 above. The latter was James Touchet, the third Earl of Castlehaven;

see also **3**, note on ll. 77–80. Both men participated in the siege of Youghal but relations between them were uneasy.

84. *Sucar*: the form given in *eDIL* for this borrowing is *succara*.

86. *út go fínit*: 'from first to last'; see *SOED* s.v. *ut*: 'In medieval music, the first note in Guido d'Arezzo's hexachords. Now = doh'. The phrase 'ó úd go fínit' occurs in *Stair Éamuinn Uí Chléire* composed in 1700. See *Corpas* s.v. *fínit*.

89–90. In August 1647, Inchiquin 'with an army of 6,000 men invaded east Limerick, brushed aside a Munster army, by now reduced to less than 2,000 men, crossed into Clare, and threatened Limerick before withdrawing to Cork' (Lenihan 2001: 105). Áth an Choite/Annacotty lies roughly seven kilometres to the northeast of Limerick City.

gorthach saoithe: (*gort*adh*ach* MS). I posit *gortha*, as a participial form of the verb *guiridh* with the adjectival ending *-ach* suffixed; for the verbal noun, see *eDIL* s.v. *gorad* 'blushing, causing to blush', thus 'wise ones i.e. experienced soldiers, were blushing'.

*sgío*mh*altaibh*: see *eDIL* s.v. 2 *sceimled* (b) 'skirmishing party'. The word *sceimhle* with long -í- in first syllable as in this instance is common in West Munster meaning 'a terrible fright, a trauma', this meaning derived no doubt from the terror caused by bloody raids in former times.

91. The internal assonance here is irregular. There may be an attempt at assonance between *tiaghacht* with diphthong /iə/ and *Néill*; cf. l. 60.

93. *caismearta ag píobaibh*: 'notes of battle/signals emitted from war-pipes'.

94. *ag góil na gaoithe*: this may be a traditional phrase in Thomond Irish for 'fluttering in the wind'; cf. *is ciarsúir póca ag góil na gaoithe ort* (*CMO*: 29 l. 388).

96. *i gcopaibh*: the word *cop* is a variant of the second element in *kneecap* 'a cap or protective covering for the knee; *spec.* a flexible piece of armour covering the knee' (*SOED* s.v. *kneecap*).

98–104. General Eóghan Ruadh Ó Néill, the son of Art Ó Néill, had advanced from the north by July 1648 and was in the vicinity of Offaly and Tipperary. Banagher was held by the Confederates but was besieged by the Royalists under Inchiquin, Clanricarde and Lord Taaffe. Ó Néill failed to raise the siege and retreated north to Cavan. This passage refers to the Banagher episode. It seems that the throwing of a fox into Murchadh's net on the part of Eoghan Ruadh would indicate that he took some cattle for victuals and killed animals from the herds that Murchadh had captured. The metaphor is that of the fox raiding the hen-coop and indiscriminately killing all the fowl it finds there. Inchiquin in the following year exacts revenge in Dundalk; see Bagwell (1909: 169, 183) and Coffey (1914: 207, 212).

100. *tar ais* for *tar a ais* 'on his way back'.

101. *gan*: 'he thought it would not be stupid of him to avoid throwing a fox into your net'. This is an idiomatic use of *gan*; see *eDIL* s.v. *cen* II (f): 'the prep. merely reinforces the meaning of the main verb'. Cf. Modern Irish: *ná dearúd gan an solas a mhúchadh.*

104. *retréat*: *eDIL* s.v. *ratrét.*

107. *gníomhartha*: the pronunciation is disyllabic – *gníortha* – as in present day West Munster Irish.

111. Internal assonance seems to be lacking in this line.

112. *go teacht i* (*a* MS) *righe dhuit*: 'until your coming into power/authority'.

114–18. *Brianach*: 'you are an O'Brien, (like Brian (Bóramha)) who promulgated the law; who composed surnames and divided out territories; who first arranged five provinces for this kingdom'. The achievements of Brian Bóramha here enumerated may derive from Céitinn's *Forus Feasa* or may be based on some seventeenth-century Thomond written or oral sources. The giving of surnames by Brian to the men of Ireland is alluded to by Céitinn (*FFÉ* III, 262), but the attribution to Brian of the division of the five provinces is fanciful.

114. *a dlíghe* (MS *a dlíghe*): the article is always written *an* before consonants in the MS; *a* here is the feminine possessive pronoun, its force being proleptic referring to *ríoghdhacht* l. 116.

116. *chúig cúige*: the lenited form of the numeral is the norm in spoken Modern Irish. See *eDIL* s.v. *cóic. Cúige* here stands for *cúigidh*/*cóigidh* the plural of *cúigeadh*/*cóigeadh.* See *eDIL* s.v. *cóiced* II. Lenition is the rule after *cúig*/*chúig*, but is prevented here due to the conjunction of homorganic consonants.

119–123. The reference may be to Inchiquin's nobility and its concomitant political and military power. Tadhg mac Dáire Mac Bruaideadha of *Iomarbhágh* fame would seem to be the one referred to here, though Maoilín Óg Mac Bruaideadha composed a long poem on the ancestry of the O'Briens (O'Grady 1926: 393–4) and a now lost book of annals that The Four Masters used; see *DIB* s.n. *Mac Bruaideadha, Maoilín Óg* and s.n. *Mac Bruaideadha, Tadhg mac Dáire*; and McKenna (1918: vii–xiii).

For *recht,* see *eDIL* s.vv. *recht* (e) and *dílse* (a) and (d).

The phrase *gearraim slighe go hachamair* means that the poet took a short cut in enumerating Inchiquin's achievements.

123. The MS form *suígh*eadh of the verbal noun might stand for a colloquial pronunciation *suíomh.* Cf. *suidem* = *suidiugad eDIL.*

124. *arrad*: this disyllabic form of *ard* is occasionally found *metri gratia*; see *eDIL* s.v. *ard.* Cf. *cearad* to be read for *ceard* (MacErlean 1913: 42 v. i). A similar phonetic development is seen in modern doublets such as *barr*/*barra* and *gearr*/*gearra.*

125. *guais-tseabhac*: *eDIL* s.v. *guas*: *secht nguaisshebhaic in ghlenna* 'the glen's seven danger-loving falcons' from a poem by Fearghal mac Luighdeach mhic Eochadha (O'Grady 1926: 502; Mac Airt 1944: 116, l. 3047). Tadhg Dall Ó Huiginn wrote of *guais-sheabhaic Bheann Moghaine* 'danger-braving hawks'; see Knott (1922: 34, l. 170).

126. *carbuncail*: 'precious stone of royal Tara'.

128. *coímheasgar*: disyllabic /ki:sgər/.

131. *gan iongnadh*: 'without wonder, unsurprisingly'

133. *ba sgím leat*: the word *scim*/*scím* is ambiguous having a positive or negative emotional force; see T. L. Ó Murchú (forthcoming: **4**, l. 15): *creill, fóraoir, tug scím na Quakers* 'a death-knell, alas, which brought delight to the Quakers'; and Ní Ógáin (1921: 87, l. 8) *gur fhulaing sé – mo scíos! géar-bhás fé phéin fé scím, ar chrann na croise aoird ar ár son* 'a terrible death under pain and anxiety'. Thus, this line could be taken as 'the King of England who died was dear to you' or 'the King of England who was killed was a cause of distress to you'. In an act of regicide, Charles I was executed by the Parliamentary government of England in January 1649. While Inchiquin was at heart a Royalist, he fought under the Parliamentary flag from 1644 to 1648 when he reverted to the Royalist side.

135. The Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand III (1608–57) is meant by *An tÍmpire Almáinneach*, the epitaph being used to contrast with the many German princes (*Gearmáineacha*) who were practically independent of the Emperor. There is no internal assonance in this line.

139. *inntreast*: this is a variant with long *í* in the initial syllable of *eDIL* s.v. *ionntrust* from Ó Bruadair with long *ú* in assonance with *rúin* (MacErlean 1913: 32, st. xxi and de Brún, Ó Buachalla, Ó Concheanainn (1971: 52, l. 84 / 153). It is a borrowing from English *interest* (*SOED*) 'a right to something esp. by law; participation in doing or causing something m(id) 17–m(id)18 century'. The reference is to the Portuguese Restoration War 1640–1668 when Portugal under João II of Braganza was fighting to re-establish its independence from Spain. *Inntreast* conveys the King of Spain's involvement. Inchiquin at this time was in the employ of the King of France who was assisting the Portuguese in their struggle. As he approached Lisbon in November 1659, Inchiquin's ship was attacked by Algerian corsairs who took him and his party as prisoners. The captives, being men of standing and therefore seen as being valuable, were not badly treated (*fuarais fossadh chum socracht ód naimhdibh*). Charles II, having been restored as king in May 1660, arranged that a ransom be paid and the triumphant return of Inchiquin alone (*gan dál*), as he was the first of his company to be released, is here alluded to (O'Brien 1991: 44–7).

142. *fossadh*: 'a halting place, an abode'.

143. *do bhóit*: 'your desire' from English *vote*; see *eDIL* s.v. *bóit*, where an equation with *móit*, modern *móid* is suggested.

147–51. The assonance in the end-line foot in this sequence seems to be [əi – ə]: *fheidhm duit* etc … *radharc ort* with diphthong /əi/. In l. 54 the assonating vowel in *maidhm* is *-í-*.

151. *libh-ghárda*: 'the uniformed guard in your vision'. I take *libh-* as a shortened form of *libhré* 'livery, uniform' (*eDIL* s.v. *libré*).

153. *choimse*acht (MS): = *eDIL* s.v. *coimsiugad* < *coimsigid* 'estimates', 'the fame of your heroic deeds cannot be estimated'.

155. *prionnta*: *-í-* is the requisite vowel here.

159. *Niúl*: an early ancestor of the Gaedhail, much associated with Egypt in ancient times; see *FFÉ* IV s.v. *Niúl*.

161–4. *cluimhthe*: = *cluiche*. The use of this word along with *fuirinn*, *tíghthibh*, *guin* (*Ó Dónaill* s.v. *goin*[4] *'guint'* 'to win the game outright', here 'to clear the field of battle') reflects an extended metaphor based on a bord game for Inchiquin's military exploits; see *eDIL* s.v. *guin*: 'of taking pieces in a game'.

tíghthibh: *eDIL* s.v. 2 *tí* (a): 'of the lines on a chess-board'.

If the comma in the MS between *cluimhthe* and *d'fhuirinn* is heeded, the sense might be 'you hardened the game, your team/battalion of men over-running the (enemy) lines'.

168. *marbhnadh*: the meanings 'contemplation,' 'reflection,' 'thinking' given in *Ó Dónaill* s.v. *marana* and 'reflection', 'meditating' in *Dinneen* s.v. *marbhna* accord better with the context here, rather than 'elegy, lament'.

169. *chumais*: 'of power'.

foilightheach: see *eDIL* s.v. *folaigthech* 'hidden, secret'; cf. *CMO*: *Is fáthaibh foilitheach uireaspach éigin/d'fhág an doirfeach foirfe in aonta* (Ó Murchú 1982: 979–80.)

170. *dhiansgrios*, *ndéanadh*: the assonance here is imperfect.

175. Internal assonance is lacking in this line.

178. *September*: the second vowel here is long *-í-*. Cf. the second syllable in *December* in l. 212 of the devotional verses of Murchadh Riabhach Mac Namara, a Thomond poet, composed in 1688 (Ó Murchú 2005: 128, 144.)

3

1–2. For discussion of these lines, see Introduction pp. 468–9.

4. *do cheart ar Éirinn*: Inchiquin's *ceart ar Éirinn* is more explicitly expressed in ll. 37–40.

5. *lán beóil*: 'a much talked about person'; see *eDIL* s.v. *bél* I (d) and *Corpas* s.v. *lán beoil*. This phrase is also found in our MS M 107, p. 199, 'lán beoil do

chuir brón ar dhaoine', in an elegy by Caitilín Dubh on Diarmuid Ó Briain, fifth Baron Inchiquin (*obit* 1624), our subject's father; see Ó Murchú (2002: 403–5) and Ó Murchú (2026: 25–43).

13. *ná bí meallta*: 'do not be deceived'. This usage corresponds to the more traditional 'ná mealltar thú'.

15. Since the proverb 'tháinig a tón chun talamh eadar dhá sdól' may inform this line the bathetic note in the use of *tón* is tempered to some extent. The use of what may be perceived in our day as a vulgar usage may also reflect that type of familiarity between poet and patron that we see, for instance in the poems of Caitilín Dubh; see Ó Murchú (2026: 25); Mac Adam (1858: item 45).

17. *brothall*: 'the rabble (of rebels)' The reference is to Inchiquin's sally forth against the Confederate armies that were besieging Cork in April 1642; see poem **2**, note on l. 71–2.

18. *do chuaidh*: *(do* chuadh MS*)*: this is a relative clause, the antecedent being the phrase *do chuiris brothall …* with an implied subject such as 'rud do chuaidh go Londain'.

19–20. *Góidrisc*: 'so that you'll be helped by neither State nor King and be in the same position as Góidriosc'. In the first half of the seventeenth century a travelling friar or *bráthair bocht* designates a fruitless journey he undertook seeking succour as *turas Ghóidrisc*; see de Brún et al. (1971: 8, l. 32, 95, 168 s.v. *Góidrisc*); Góidriosc is a legendary figure in literary and folk tradition who was cut off from society after vainly crossing St Patrick. See O'Rahilly (1912: 172–6, 303); MacNeill (1962: 691 s.v. *Deódruisg*).

The poet warns Inchiquin not to end up like Góidrisc, rejected by all. After the Cork engagement in April 1642 (n. 2, above) Inchiquin won a decisive battle over the Confederate Army in September at Liscarroll (see poem **2** n. 52) but subsequently he showed much equivocation regarding his loyalties up to the point when he declared for Parliament in the summer of 1644.

sa chlódh chéadna: *clódh* could refer to the 'print (of a book)' *eDIL* s.v. *cló* (c) meaning that Inchiquin could be portrayed in pamphlet form as an equivocator in his loyalties. The production of polemical pamphlets on the wars was a feature of seventeenth-century life in London.

21–4. The import of these lines is that if Inchiquin were to suffer a defeat while on the side of the Parliament, he would undermine his credibility in the eyes of the Royal party and find it hard to bring about a rapprochement with them.

22. *do bhuin*: = *do bhuain* 'that you be brought down in one go'.

24. The use of English phrases here and in ll. 28, 36 reflect no doubt contemporary discussion in English of Inchiquin's political situation. Short passages in English are seen in some of the seventeenth-century political poems; see O'Rahilly (1952: 49, 90).

The form in the MS *dereived* (pronounced with long *-é-* in second syllable) is puzzling and it seems that the scribe Aodh Buidhe Mac Cruitín or the scribe of his exemplar had difficulties with it. In the context it is clearly meant to be taken as an English word although it is written in a quasi-Gaelic script. The letter *-e-* is written thrice in the upturned form resembling the modern phonetic schwa-vowel ə. The final *-ed* indicates a past participle passive. I surmise that the archaic verb *deray* (see *OED* s.v. *deray* v.) was intended in a passive sense meaning 'having been thrown into confusion' or 'confused'. The original participial form *derayed* could easily have been changed to *deraved*/*dereived* in manuscript transmission and semantically confused with *deceived*. The phrase in English means 'you are much confused'.

27. *tar éis*: (MS): possessive *a* to be understood as in *' fhiadhain* l. 39.

30. *chum cláir*: 'they will never allow you to be at the table, i.e. to take part in negotiations, discussions etc.'.

35. *i gcéideal*: see *eDIL* s.v. *céidiol* 'strife', 'war-strife', 'battle', all examples taken from Ó Bruadair; *Corpas* s.v. *céadal* from Eoghan an Mhéirín Mac Carrthaigh (1756) with meaning 'strife'.

40. *Lughaidh Ó Cléire, Tadhg Mac Dáire*: Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh and Tadhg mac Dáire Mac Bruaideadha contributed poems to *Iomarbhágh na bhFileadh* (McKenna 1918: vii–xiii) and the former was author of *Beatha Aodha Ruaidh Uí Dhomhnaill* (Walsh 1957: 1–4). It may be of some significance that the poet cites a Northern man of learning along with one from Thomond to establish Inchiquin's nobility.

That the poet should put forward Inchiquin's right to *ceannas na hÉireann* 'the leadership of Ireland' or *do cheart ar Éirinn* 'your right to Ireland' (l. 4) is not as bizarre as it may seem: 'In the late 1640s it was widely rumoured that the Pope intended sending the "crown" (of Ireland) to the Ulster leader Owen Rua Ó Néill' (Ó Buachalla 2006: 51 n. 17); see also Bagwell (1909: 167–8).

45. *mhionn* and *liom* have long *-ú-* for assonance.

47. *domhain*: the vowel *-ú-* is intended here and provides assonance with *gcúl*.

54. *Lughaidh Laighdhe* (lúghadh lághadh MS): 'Lugaid Lágae is remembered in literature as having been one of the great warriors of his time' (O'Daly 1975: 11–12); see also *FFÉ* IV s.n. *Lughaidh Laighdhe* or *Lughaidh Lamha* and Ó hÓgáin (2006: 315).

56. The *laoch toghtha* is Conall Gulban the hero of the sixteenth-century romantic tale who, while sleeping on Binn Éadair or the Hill of Howth, lost his beloved Eithne to the marauding Macaomh Mór (Ó hÓgáin 2006: s.n. *Conall Gulban*).

59. *mír borra* (borr*adh* MS): *borra* seems to be a doublet of *murra*, possibly a genitive singular form of *muire*; see *eDIL* s.v. 1 *muire* and *DuanF* III, 300 s.v. *? murra*. The phrase corresponds to the well-known *mír churaidh* 'champion's portion'.

62–4. Alasdrunn is Alasdair (Alexander) Mac Colla Mac Domhnaill, who fell in the Battle of Knocknanoss, November 1647; see poem **2**, l. 65, where the elegist states that Inchiquin took no joy in Mac Colla's demise. The basic construction of l. 64 *is níor mhór leis an scéal-soin* meaning 'he (Murchadh) did not consider that matter (Mac Colla's death) a thing of importance, and even others (ní leis féin fós) shared his opinion'. The statement is made in the context of all the bloody events that occurred during the course of the wars, some of which the poet goes on to refer to.

The fortuitousness of the outcome in some of Inchiquin's victories, in the Battles of Liscarroll (1642) and of Knocknanoss (1647), for instance, may be implied in this passage which anticipates the supernatural help which the poet believes (ll. 81ff) protected the hero in his endeavours.

65. *Lios Cearbhúill*: the Battle of Liscarroll took place 3 September, 1642; see poem **2**, note on ll. 44ff.

66. *maitheamh i gclódh i ló an chéaduil*: 'respite from defeat on the day of conflict'.

77–80. *Léithchloich*: Bagwell states: 'In March 1642/3 he (Inchiquin) sent … another (part of his force) under Sir Charles Vavasour to the borders of Tipperary, while he himself sat down before Kilmallock … Vavasour took Cloghleagh Castle, near Mitchelstown, and after the surrender some of his followers slaughtered the defenders, and apparently some women and chin with them'. Vavasour subsequently suffered a defeat at the hands of Lord Castlehaven and was taken prisoner. Bagwell goes on: 'Cox, with all his prejudices, says it was a just judgement on Vavasour and his followers for suffering some inferior officers to violate the quarter they had given to the garrison of Cloghleagh,' and he cites as sources here a letter dated 25 May 1643 from Inchiquin to Lord Cork (Bagwell 1909: 48).

81–2. Brian Ó Briain also alludes to the *sídhmhná* in poem **2**, 8ff, 28ff. *Sídhbhean Béarra* may refer to An Chailleach Bhéarra traditions of whom survived into the twentieth century; see Verling (2010: 213–4; 388).

85. *do b'fhearra*: this form with medial short *-a-* is preferrable to that of the MS *bfeárr* to assonate with *arm*.

86. *gabha na nDée*: 'he received the best possible battle-equipment which was fashioned by the smith (i.e. Vulcan) of the Gods'. Doubtless *Dée* (*ndéé* MS) was pronounced *déithe* several examples of which are found in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources (*Corpas*).

92. *fao dhó* (*faoi* MS): The last foot here must be /é -/. The pronunciation of this prepositional pronoun was fao **[fe:]** with broad *-f-* in the Irish of Co. Clare up to our own time (Holmer 1962: 155–6).

95. *do-gheabhainn*: a short vowel in the future and conditional of *do-gheibh* is allowed in classical verse; see McKenna (1940: 289) s.v. *do-ghabhaim*.

95. *ceathramhadh*: see *eDIL* s.v. *cethramthu*. Based on *eDIL*, we can assign the meanings (1) a four-quarter/hind quarter of beef; (2) a division of land one fourth of a baile biataigh (480 Irish acres) to the word *ceathramhadh*. A third sense, that of a promise to go free from a conflict without injury and that promise being reneged on is seen in Éamonn an Dúna's poem *Mo lá leóin go deó go n-éagad* 'do gheibhid ceathrú 's an cheathrú séantar'. See O'Rahilly (1952: 87, l. 38; 163). The poet, Seaghán Mac Riagáin, seems, at this time, to have been residing somewhere along the banks of the River Feale ('go bruach na Féile') which runs from Ballybunion in north-west Kerry eastwards through Abbeyfeale in Co. Limerick. As the poet mentions the munificence of Inchiquin the second meaning may be the best interpretation but in times of scarcity in a war-torn country the first suggested meaning should not be discounted. Thus 'I would receive a hindquarter (or fore-quarter) (of beef)'.

admhúim: 'I declare'. An unusual form of *admhaim*, but if the pronunciation was [adu:m'] assonating with *ceathrúmhadh* it can be derived from a form with epenthesis *adamhaim* as in *dathamhail* > *dahúil*.

99. *míle bean … gan éadach*: this stands for *bean nocht* = *beannacht*. This wordplay is found in other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century poems.

100. *gion mhairfead* (MS): this clearly means 'though I will not live'. The well-known phrase *gcéin mhairfead* 'for as long as I'll live' makes better sense. A contraction such as *g¯n* in the original manuscript of the poem could have been misinterpreted; see also Poem **2** l. 184 where the scribe wrote *gen* (= *(g)céin*) in his MS.

101. *go dtiobhraim* (MS *ttióbhraim*): the form corresponds to the classical *do-bhéar*, dep. *-tiobhar* with the more modern 1st singular ending *-aim* attached (McKenna 1940: 287 s.v. *do-bheirim*). The assonating vowel is clearly *-ú-* : *súil*. The import of 'giving an eye' is that the poet would make any sacrifice to obtain the benefit of the prayers he offers up for Inchiquin.

Abbreviations

CMO	Liam P. Ó Murchú (eag.), *Cúirt an Mheon-Oíche le Brian Merríman* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1982).
Corpas	*Corpas Stairiúil na Gaeilge 1600–1926* (https://corpas.ria.ie/. Royal Irish Academy).
DIB	*Dictionary of Irish Biography* (https://www.dib.ie/).
DuanF	Gerard Murphy, *Duanaire Finn: The Book of the Lays of Fionn*, Part III, ITS 43 (London, 1953).
Duinnín	*Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla: An Irish-English Dictionary* (Dublin 1927).
eDIL	*Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language* (www.dil.ie)
FFÉ	David Comyn and Patrick S. Dinneen (eds), *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn le Seathrún Céitinn*, vols i–iv, ITS 4, 8, 9, 15 (London, 1902–14).

Ó Dónaill Niall Ó Dónaill (eag.), *Foclóir Gaeilge–Béarla* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1977).
OED *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford 1971).
SOED *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 5th ed. (Oxford, 2002).

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DIA BHEATHA AR AR LOS, A LEINBH: DÁN AR BHREITH OIGHRE DHOMHNAILL MHIC DHOMHNAILL (†1686)*

Achoimre

This article presents a critical edition and English translation of *Dia bheatha ar ar los, a leinbh*, a poem that was composed on the birth of an heir of Domhnall Mac Domhnaill (†1686), 13th of Clann Raghnaill, who lived in Mùideart, in Scotland. The poem was composed by Niall Mac Mhuirich (†1726) in the seventeenth century. The poet celebrates the heir's birth and praises his noble lineage, wishing him a long and prosperous life. This edition is based on the only surviving copy, which is found in MS 72.1.48, in the National Library of Scotland, and is accompanied by a discussion on the language and metre of the poem.

Réamhrá

Chuir Damian McManus agus Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh an dán seo i gcló cheana le heagarthóireacht éadrom ón LS chéanna mar dhán 163 in *ABM*. Thras-scríobh mé an dán as an lámhscríbhinn an athuair agus is liomsa an leagan thíos, ach tá mé faoi chomaoin acu as a gcuid moltaí, a chuaigh i gcion orm agus mé i mbun oibre ar an dán. Tá roinnt mhaith fadhbanna meadarachta agus brí leis an dán seo nár réitíodh go fóill ach is dán breá é agus measaim fós gur fiú é a chur ar fáil.

An file

Leagtar ar a laghad ocht ndán a cumadh sa tréimhse chéanna ar fhile darbh ainm Niall Mac Mhuirich (†1726).[1] Tá ceithre cinn acu seo le fáil i LS 72.1.48 i Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hAlban (a phléifear thíos): (i) ár ndán-na, (ii) *Fuaras cara ar sgáth na sgoile*,[2] (iii) *Mór an léan-sa ar aicme Íle*,[3] agus (iv) *T'aire riut, a Ghiolla Easbaig*.[4] Is léir gur cumadh an dara ceann acu seo, *Fuaras cara ar sgáth na sgoile*, ar fhear darbh ainm Séamas Mac Domhnaill, agus is dócha

*Ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil le hEoin Mac Cárthaigh as na leasúcháin éagsúla a mhol sé ar dhréachtaí den eagrán seo. Táim an-bhuíoch freisin d'eagarthóirí *Celtica* agus den léitheoir anaithnid as ceartúcháin agus moltaí iomadúla. Mé féin faoi deara gach botún is dearmad.

[1] Leagtar suas le trí dhán déag ar Niall. Féach Thomson (1971: 281–307 agus 1977: 245–6).

[2] Tá an dán seo i gcló ag Macbain agus Kennedy (1892: 132–3).

[3] Tá an dan seo i glcó ag Macbain agus Kennedy (1892: 134–5).

[4] Fágadh an dán seo ar lár in eagrán Macbain agus Kennedy (1892).

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gurb é Séamas, taoiseach Chlann Raghnaill i Slèite, a fuair bás in 1678, atá i gceist (Black: 2011), ach nílim go hiomlán cinnte. Is léir gur chum Niall an tríú ceann, *Mór an léan-sa ar aicme Íle*, ar na Domhnallaigh a chaill a gcuid talún in Ìle sa seachtú haois déag. De réir dealraimh, chum Niall an ceathrú ceann, *T'aire riut, a Ghiolla Easbaig*, d'fhile eile.

Chum Niall dhá dhán ar a laghad ar Ailean (†1715), mac Dhomhnaill Mhic Dhomhnaill (†1686) (féach thíos): (v) *Maith an sgéal do sgaoil 'nar measg*,[5] a cumadh nuair a d'fhill Ailean ar ais go hAlbain (féach thíos) agus atá le fáil i LS 72.2.2 i Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hAlban; [6] agus (vi) *Do thuirling seasamh síol gCuinn*, marbhna ar bhás Ailein in 1715, atá le fáil i Leabhar Dearg Chlann Raghnaill agus atá in eagar ag Macbain agus Kennedy ina n-eagrán den LS sin (1894: 248–59).[7]

Tá dhá dhán eile i Leabhar Dearg Chlann Raghnaill a leagtar ar Niall agus ar freagraí iad ar dhánta a chum filí eile: (vii) *Nar leam chosnas tú clú Chuinn*, a cumadh mar fhreagra ar dhán le file darbh ainm Eóghan Ó Donnghaile; agus (viii) *Labhradh Trian Conghail go ciúin*, a cumadh d'fhile darbh ainm Diarmaid Mac an Bhaird.[8]

Is é seo an cuntas atá ag Macbain agus Kennedy ar Niall Mac Mhuirich:

> The early history of the Macdonalds down to about the year 1600 was probably composed by different and successive members of the family, but the history of the Montrose wars and of the events thereafter is clearly the work of Niall Mac Vurich, who lived till a great age, his youthful recollections being, as he himself says, of the reign of Charles I, while his latest efforts were elegies on the death of the brave Allan of Clanranald, who fell at Sheriffmuir in 1715. The Montrose history seems to have been written before the year 1700, and the avowed object of its author is to vindicate the part which the Gael played in the brilliant escapades of Montrose's campaigns. The hero in Mac Vurich's page is Alaster Macdonald, not Montrose, and, undoubtedly, Alaster did contribute, to an extent much underestimated, to Montrose's success.
>
> (Macbain agus Kennedy 1892: 139–40)

Más fíor gur bhreac an file féin an dán seo sa LS, is díol spéise é go bhfuil roinnt nithe sa dán nach leanann rialacha meadarachta, teanga, agus ortagrafaíochta a mbeifí ag súil leo san fhilíocht chlasaiceach (féach thíos). Féach tuilleadh plé ar fhilí ag breacadh dánta a chum siad féin in Ó Macháin (1991: 279–87).

[5] Tá sé ar intinn agam eagrán criticiúil den dán seo a chur ar fáil i mo thráchtas PhD.

[6] Féach Mckinnon (1912: 127–8) agus Mackechnie (1873: 209–14) do chur síos ar an LS seo.

[7] Féach Macbain agus Kennedy (1894: 138–47) do chur síos ar Leabhar Dearg Chlann Raghnaill agus ar chóipeanna LSe de.

[8] Tá an dá dhán seo i gcló in eagrán Macbain agus Kennedy (1894: 295–99).

An pátrún

Cumadh an dán seo nuair a rugadh mac de chuid Dhomhnaill Mhic Dhomhnaill,[9] duine de Chlann Raghnaill,[10] a bhí ina cheannaire ar an gcraobh seo de na Domhnallaigh agus a ghlac ról lárnach i gCogadh na dTrí Ríocht in Albain lena athair, Eóin Mac Domhnaill († 1670), Dara Taoiseach Déag Chlann Raghnaill, agus ansin in Éirinn in 1648 (Macdonald 2008: 317). Ba í Mór, iníon le Ruaidhrí Mór Mac Leòid, Tríú Taoiseach Déag Chlann Mhic Leòid, máthair Dhomhnaill (Macdonald 2008: 317). Phós Domhnall 'Janet' ar dtús, iníon Dhomhnaill Ghoirm, Céad Bhairnéad Shlèite, duine de Chlann Domhnaill, ach is léir nach raibh aon chlann acu (Macdonald 2008: 317–18). Ansin phós sé Mór, iníon Iain Mhic Leòid, Ceathrú Taoiseach Déag Chlann Mhic Leòid, agus bhí seisear páistí acu (Macdonald 2008: 318). Nílim go hiomlán cinnte cén mac de mhic Dhomhnaill ar ar cumadh an dán seo thíos. Bhí triúr mac ag an lánúin, agus tháinig beirt díobh i gcomharbas ar Dhomhnall mar cheannairí ar Chlann Raghnaill. B'fhéidir gur cumadh an dán d'Eóin 'Mhùideirt' († 1660idí), an mac ba shine a bhí ag Domhnall. Níl mórán ar eolas againn faoi Eóin, ach is léir nár phós sé riamh agus go bhfuair sé bás nuair a bhí sé bliain is fiche (Macdonald 2008: 318; Mosley 2003: 2471).

Seans gur cumadh an dán don dara mac ab óige, Ailean († 1715), a rugadh thart ar 1673. Tháinig Ailean i gcomharbas ar a athair nuair nach raibh sé ach trí bliana déag d'aois, agus thosaigh sé a shaol míleata nuair a bhí sé sé bliana déag d'aois nuair a ghlac sé páirt in éirí amach na Seacaibíteach ag Cath Choille Chnagaidh faoi cheannas Céad Bhíocunta Dhún Dé in 1689 (Mosley 2003: 2471; Macdonald 2008: 318; Massue 1904: 31). Chuaigh sé go dtí an Fhrainc ina dhiaidh sin agus é ar deoraíocht nuair a theip ar an gcúis Sheacaibíteach agus throid sé in arm na Fraince faoi Dhiúc Berwick ar feadh tréimhse ach tháinig sé ar ais go hAlbain in 1696 le cúnamh ó Sheòras MacCoinnich, Céad Iarla Chrombaigh (Macdonald 2008: 318). Bhí cónaí air i gCaisleán Ormacleit in Uibhist a Deas ansin lena bhean, an Banbharún Penelope NicCoinnich, iníon an Choirnéil Alasdair MacCoinnich, ar bhuail sé léi agus a phós sé nuair a bhí sé sa Fhrainc (Massue 1904: 31). In 1715, thacaigh sé leis na fórsaí Seacaibíteacha i gcoinne fhórsaí na Breataine agus ar an tríú lá de mhí na Samhna, throid Ailean agus a fhir ag Cath Shliabh an tSiorraim agus fuair sé goin a bháis sa chath (Macdonald 2008: 318; Massue 1904: 32).

D'fhéadfadh sé a bheith gur cumadh an dán seo do Raghnall († 1725), an mac ab óige, ach, má cumadh, caithfidh gur scríobhadh an chóip seo de go gairid tar éis na breithe óir rugadh eisean thart ar 1677 (Massue 1904: 32) agus, de réir dealraimh, scríobhadh an lámhscríbhinn ina bhfuil an dán seo roimh 1678 ar a fhíordhéanaí (féach an plé ar an LS, thíos). Nuair a fuair a dheartháir Ailean bás in 1715, tháinig Raghnall i gcomharbacht air mar cheann fine. Chaith sé a sheal ar fad mar cheannaire ar deoraíocht sa Fhrainc mar

[9] Tá eagrán de dhán a cumadh do Dhomhnall féin le foilsiú agam amach anseo.

[10] Tá ginealach Chlann Raghnaill ar fáil i Leabhar Chlann Raghnaill (*BoC* 307) agus i Leabhar Uí Chléirigh (Pender 1951: §1698). Bhí na Domhnallaigh seo lonnaithe in Albain agus bhí cónaí orthu i gCaisleán Tioram, i Mùideart.

gheall ar an bpáirt a ghlac sé in éirí amach na Seacaibíteach in 1715. Níor phós sé riamh, agus fuair sé bás in Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1725 gan oidhre (Mosley 2003: 2471; Macdonald 1978: 320; Massue 1904: 32).

Níl aon fhianaise sa dán féin a dheimhneodh cén mac ar ar cumadh an dán seo, seachas go gcuireann an file fáilte roimh an mac mar oidhre ar Dhomhnall (4a), agus seans go dtugann sé sin le fios gur cumadh é don mhac ba shine, Eóin, toisc gurbh eisean an chéad mhac a bhí aige ach nílim cinnte faoi seo.

Lámhscríbhinn

Chuir mé an dán seo in eagar ó LS 72.1.48 i Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hAlban, ina bhfuil an t-aon chóip amháin den dán seo, chomh fada agus is eol dom. Tá an dán ar fhóiliónna 9v, 10r, agus 10v. Deir Mackinnon (1912: 98) ina chatalóg:

> [The manuscript] evidently formed at one time part of the library of the *Mac Mhuirichs*, the hereditary bards of Clanranald of South Uist, several of the pieces being composed by one or other of this family.

Ní heol dom cé a scríobh an chuid is mó den LS, ach deir Black (2011) gur dócha gur scríobhadh í tar éis 1660 agus gur cumadh an dán is déanaí ar féidir dáta a chur leis roimh 1678.[11] Is léir nach é príomhscríobhaí na LSe a bhreac an dán seo agus dán eile a thosaíonn ar fol. 10v sa LS, agus déanann Black (2011) amach gurbh é an file féin, Niall Mac Mhuirich, a bhreac iad. Féach tuilleadh plé ar an bhfile seo, thuas.

Tá cuid mhaith den LS seo i gcló ag Macbain agus Kennedy (1892), ach níl ár ndán-na, ná sé dhán eile, san áireamh.

Modh eagarthóireachta

Is liomsa an phoncaíocht, na ceannlitreacha, suíomh síntí fada taobh istigh de shiollaí agus scaradh na bhfocal. Léirigh mé na háiteanna ina bhfuil noda sa lámhscríbhinn, seachas an ponc séimhithe, le cló iodálach. Scaoil mé 'e' ard i gcló iodálach mar *ei* nó mar *ea* ag brath ar an gcomhthéacs. D'úsáid mé macrain le síneadh fada nach bhfuil sa LS a chur ar fáil. Bhain mé síntí fada nach bhfuil gá leo san eagrán de ghutaí agus de dhéfhoghair, seachas *eó*, agus thug mé léamh LSe i ngach cás. Thug mé léamh LSe aon uair a mhalartaigh mé ó leagan neamhstairiúil go leagan stairiúil i gcás *-mh-* agus *-bh-*, agus *-dh-* agus *-gh-*. D'athraigh mé an réamhfhocal simplí *a* síos tríd go *i* le léamh. D'úsáid mé lúibíní cearnógacha le léiriú go bhfuil litir curtha isteach agam, seachas nuair atá léamh LSe ag bun an leathanaigh. Gheofar léamh LSe ag bun an leathanaigh i gcás athruithe eile.

[11] *Fuaras cara ar sgáth na sgoile*. Féach an plé ar an bhfile, thuas.

Meadaracht

Is i ndeibhí, dán díreach, a cumadh an dán seo.

- Níl comhardadh slán ann in *leinbh* : *rīfhrēi*m[*h*] (1ab) ná in *neamharsuidh* : *deaghcosmhuil* (3cd) agus níl aon réiteach agam orthu sin. Níl comhardadh slán in *crobhuing* : *orraim* (4cd, LS *urrui*m) ach oiread, agus féach tuilleadh plé air seo, thíos.
- Tá *dhian* na LSe (11d) athraithe agam go *dhíon* ar mhaithe le comhardadh slán le *ríogh* (11c).
- Leasaigh mé easpa uama sa lámhscríbhinn in 2d agus in 6a. Féach tuilleadh faoi seo faoin bplé ar na hathruithe tosaigh, thíos.
- Tá *soc*air agus *anshoc*air (11ab) ró-ghar dá chéile ó thaobh foirme de chun rinn agus ardrinn a dhéanamh de réir *IGT* V §111 (féach Ó Riain 2025: 136) ach glactar lena leithéid in *BST* 217. Tá dhá shampla eile ar m'eolas de *socair* agus *anshocair* (féach *ABM* 92.43ab agus Ní Úrdail 2022: líne 16ab).
- Ní locht meadarachta é an comhardadh idir *dīol* : *dīol* (7cd) óir tá brí dhifriúil ag an dá fhocal (féach na nótaí, thíos).
- Níl rinn agus ardrinn ceart idir *chur-sa* agus *macn*us*a* in 3ab agus níl aon réiteach agam air sin.
- Níl aon réiteach agam ar an méid atá in easnamh i línte 10c agus 11a.
- Ní dhéanann *ndeighbheatha* in 11d ag deireadh an dáin dúnadh ceart lena thús, *Dia bheatha* (1a), toisc go bhfuil *Dia* aiceanta in 1a. Dá mbeadh *Do bheatha* ag tús an dáin ina áit (féach nóta 1a, thíos, le haghaidh tuilleadh plé ar an bhfrása seo), bheadh dúnadh ceart ann, óir d'fhéadfaí iarméarla a chur san áireamh nó a fhágáil ar lár i ndúnadh (Ní Dhomhnaill 1981: 50).

Teanga

Ainmfhocail

- D'athraigh mé *uath* na LSe go *ua* 'descendant' ar mhaithe le brí na línte in 2a, 5a, agus 6a. Níl aon sampla eile ar m'eolas de *uath* mar litriú leis an gciall chéanna. Scríobhtaí *h* mar nod i lamhscríbhinní chun *ua* nó aon fhoirm eile den fhocal a léiriú (Ó Corráin 2015: 306). Mar sin, seans go raibh *h* mar nod do na samplaí seo i gcóip eile den dán ar chóipeáil an scríobhaí uaithi agus gur scaoil sé *h* mar *uath* (an litir) in áit *ua* de thaisme, toisc go bhfuil an dá fhocal an-chosúil lena chéile. Má tá an ceart agam, is spéisiúil an botún é óir, de réir dealraimh, is é an file féin a bhreac an dán seo sa LS (féach thuas).
- D'athraigh mé *conn*bhaill na LSe i líne 2c chuig an bhfoirm stairiúil, *cong-bháil* (*IGT* III §68).
- D'athraigh mé *urrui*m na LSe go *orraim* in 4d le go dtiocfadh na gutaí san fhocal seo leis na gutaí in *crobhuing* (4c). Tugtar *oirrim* agus *uirrim* mar fhoirmeacha clasaiceacha sna tráchtais ghramadaí (*IGT* II §§13 agus 42) agus *urraim* (*IGT* II §42), ach ní luaitear *orraim*. Toisc go gceadaítí *oirrim* agus *uirrim*, seans maith gur shíl an file gur cheadmhach *orraim*

agus *urraim* freisin. Bíodh sin mar atá, níl comhardadh slán eatarthu fós óir, mar a deir Mac Cárthaigh (2007: 61–6), ní dhéanann consan teann aonair agus consan éadrom aonair comhardadh slán lena chéile tar éis guta gearr. Fiú dá nglacfaí lena mhalairt – go ndéanann an dá chineál consain seo comhardadh slán lena chéile tar éis guta gearr – níorbh iontach an sampla é seo óir, mar a chonacthas thuas, tá dhá shampla eile sa dán de chomhfhreagairt easnamhach (1ab, 3cd).

- Ar mhaithe le ciall na líne, choigeartaigh mé *uainn*e ('from us' (?)) na LSe i líne 2d go *uaidne* (*IGT* II §2, 'pillar'). Cé nach raibh *-dn-* inmhalartaithe le *-nn-* sa teanga chlasaiceach, is minic a litrítear *-dn-* mar *-nn-* i lámhscríbhinní (*SnaG* 354), agus seans go raibh *uainne* ag an bhfile sa teanga labhartha.
- Is díol spéise é an comhfhocal *Collfhuil* (< *Colla* + *fuil*) in 1c toisc go bhfuil easaontas ann sna tráchtais faoin gcineál seo comhfhocail (nuair a bháitear an guta deiridh den chéad fhocal i gcomhfhocal). Tugtar *comfocal lochtach* air in *IGT* V §137 (féach Ó Riain 2025: 158) ach in *IGT* I §94 agus in *BST* 207.5, tugtar *comhfhocal canamhna* air. Féach tuilleadh plé air seo in *ABP* 77 nóta agus in McManus (1996: 170).
- Deirtear in *IGT* I §46 gur chóir *g*(*h*) + *g*(*h*) i gcomhfhocal rialta a scríobh mar *g*. In *RGH* línte 176–9, áfach, molann an t-údar gur chóir an dá chonsan a fhágail mar atá sa scríbhneoireacht ionas go dtuigfear an focal. Ag dul leis an méid a luaitear in *RGH*, agus toisc nach bhfuil na consain in *d*[*h*]e*ar*g*gh*r*uadh* (3d) deimhnithe ag an meadaracht (: *nuadh*), níor athraigh mé a bhfuil sa LS go *dheargruadh*.
- Ar mhaithe le ciall na líne, d'athraigh mé *chruasghloin* '[of] pure deeds' na LSe go *chnuasghloin* '[of] pure pedigree' in 1c. Seans maith go raibh an *cn-* á rá mar *cr-* ag an scríobhaí.
- Ar mhaithe le ciall an rainn (féach an nóta ar an téacs), molaim gurbh é *ar nuaidhEóin* 'our new Eóin' a bhí ar intinn ag an bhfile in 8b in áit *ar n-uath Eóin* ('our descendant of Eoin' (?)) na LSe. Féach go bhfuil sampla de fhrása mar seo in 'The Book of Magauran' (McKenna 1947: XI.45d), *canta dhamh nuaidhBhrian a-nois* 'I call him another Brian'. Seans gur faoi thionchar na samplaí den litriú *uath* sa LS (i línte 2a, 5a agus 6a) a scríobhadh *nuath* anseo; chomh maith leis sin, ar ndóigh, féach gur minic a bhí *dh* agus *th* inmhalairte ag deireadh focal agus idir gutaí sa teanga chlasaiceach (*SnaG* 354).

Athrú tosaigh ar lorg ainmfhocal

- Níl aon sampla agam sa dán de shéimhiú le deimhniú meadarachta ar lorg tabharthach uatha den chineál a shéimhíonn sa teanga chlasaiceach; tá dhá shampla gan deimhniú meadarachta in *don treibh dhuasmhu*ir *D*[*h*]*omhnalluigh* (1d) agus *a crobhuing chraoi Chu*inn (4c), ach comhlíonann an dara sampla na coinníollacha do shléagar. Ní féidir a bheith cinnte de go bhfaighfí séimhiú ar lorg tabharthach uatha sa dara leath den seachtú haois déag, ach d'fhéadfaí séimhiú a chur ar fáil in *'gar leanbh sochr*aidh *sophāirte* (10b), gan cur isteach ar an meadaracht. Chun séimhiú a chur ar

fáil ar lorg tabharthach uatha in *i* [*d*]*trāth feadhma* ar *féin*n*eadhuibh* (8d), níor mhór séimhiú a chur ar fáil ar lorg an réamhfhocail shimplí *ar*, freisin. De cheal tuilleadh fianaise, níor chuir mé séimhiú ar fáil san eagrán.

- Chuir mé séimhiú ar fáil ar lorg ginideach uatha den chineál a chuireann séimhiú ina dhiaidh sa teanga chlasaiceach in *dā uaidne fhon*n*bhāin f*[*h*]*ion*n*Ghall* (2d) agus in *Ionua Aonghais f*[*h*]*ui*nn *Íligh* (6a).
- Is féidir an séimhiú ar *fhon*n*bhāin* in 2d a mhíniú mar shléagar nó mar shéimhiú ar fhocal ar lorg ainmfhocal déach. D'fhéadfaí an easpa séimhithe ar *foraoisi* in 7d a thuiscint mar shléagar.

Briathra

- Nílim cinnte faoi fhoirmeacha an bhriathair *a-tá* in *go mbaoi fa orraim eadrui*nn (4d), *go mbaoi saidhbhir seanf*[*h*]*oirbh*[*th*]*e* (10d), agus […]*d rē go rabha soc*air (11a). Tá *mbaoi* deimhnithe ag an meadaracht in 4d (: *chraoi*) agus 10d (: *c*[*h*]*laoi*). Shílfí ar an gcéad amharc gur foirmeacha iad *mbaoi* agus *rabha* den 3 uatha caite spleách (*SnaG* 416), ach ní thiocfadh sé sin le ciall na línte, agus is leis an modh foshuiteach láithreach nó an aimsir fháistineach a bheadh súil anseo. Maidir le *mbaoi*, an tuiscint a bhainim as ná gur dócha go raibh an aimsir fháistineach spleách sa tríú pearsa ar intinn ag an bhfile, cf. an fhoirm spléach i nGàidhlig an lae inniu *-bi* (*SnaG* 691), óir sílim go dtéann sé sin le ciall na línte. Mura bhfuil an ceart agam, míniú eile a d'fhéadfaí a thabhairt, b'fhéidir, ná gur shíl an file gur cheadmhach *-baoi* chomh maith le *-ra*(*i*)*bh*/*-ro*(*i*)*bh* sa modh foshuiteach láithreach, trí analach le *-baoi* agus *-raibhe*/*-roibhe*/*-robha*/*-rabha* (agus an fhoirm iarchlasaiceach *-raibh* (*SnaG* 412)) na haimsire caite, ach ba dheacair é seo a chreidiúint óir féach go bhfuil úsáid chlasaiceach den fhoshuiteach in 9a. Chomh maith leis sin, tá an file ag labhairt leis an bpátrún in 4cd, *a leinbh a crobhuing chraoi Chui*nn / *go mbaoi fa orraim eadrui*nn, agus de réir *IGT* I §2, tá úsáid an tríú uatha mícheart anseo, óir ní raibh cead ag file labhairt le duine agus faoi dhuine sa rann céanna. Maidir le *rabha* (11a), bheifí ag súil leis an dara pearsa uatha den mhodh foshuiteach anseo, ag brath ar chiall na líne, agus níl aon réiteach agam air seo, seachas, b'fhéidir *rabha* a athrú go *rabhais* (*SnaG* 416), athrú nach millfeadh an mheadaracht. Níor athraigh mé a bhfuil sa LS.

Réamhfhocail

- Níl ach sampla amháin sa dán de shéimhiú ar lorg an réamhfhocail *ar*, i líne 9d, agus tá sampla amháin gan séimhiú ar a lorg, i líne 8d. Mar a dúradh thuas sa phlé ar athruithe tosaigh ar lorg ainmfhocal, dá gcuirfí séimhiú ar fáil in 8d i ndiaidh *ar*, níor mhór séimhiú a chur ar fáil ar lorg an tabharthaigh uatha sa líne sin chun uaim a sholáthar.
- Chuir mé séimhiú ar lorg *ga*n i líne 10c.
- D'athraigh mé an forainm réamhfhoclach *romhad* in 2a go *ród* (*SnaG* 436) chun líon na siollaí a leasú tar éis dom an mhír ghairmeach *a* a chur ar fáil ar mhaithe le brí na líne in [*a*] *ua na nEō*[*i*]*n*. Chomh maith leis sin, bheifí ag siúl le *ua* aiceantach sa suíomh seo (féach Ní Dhomhnaill 1975: 11) agus

tá sé ag teastáil chun uaim a dheimhniú (sa chaoi is nach bhféadfaidh bá gutaí a bheith ann idir [*a*] agus *ua*). Ba dheacair a chreidiúint go bhfágfadh Niall an mhír ghairmeach ar lár roimh ghuta, an gnáthnós inniu in Albain.

Eile

- Is mar fhorainm sealbhach 2 iolra (seachas 1 iolra) a thuigim *ar* i líne 1a ar mhaithe le ciall na líne. Féach go bhfuil *ur* agus *ar* (roimh ghutaí) i nGàidhlig an lae inniu sa 2 iolra (*SnaG* 684) agus gur minic 1 iolra agus 2 iolra á bhfuaimniú mar an gcéanna (Lamb 2024: 113–14).

Téacs

Niall M*ac* Mhui*r*ich c*ec*i*nit*

1. Dia bheatha ar *ar* los, a leinbh,
   Dia leat is rath ōd' rīfhrēi*m*[h],
   a gh[e]in chnuasghloin don Chollfhuil
   don treibh dhuasmhu*ir* D[h]o*mh*nalluigh.

2. Fāilte ród, [a] ua na nEō[i]n,
   Eō[i]n Mac Leóid, Eōin *ar* n-āirseōir,
   dā chuaille ag congbháil a gclann,
   dā uaidne fhon*n*bhāin f[h]ion*n*Ghall.

3. Do th*eacht* chugui*nn* do*n* chur-sa
   adhb[h]u*r* muirne is macn*us*a;
   a leinbh go neamharsuidh nuadh,
   deaghcosmhuil deilbh do d[h]e*ar*ggh*r*uadh.

Aistriúchán

1. A welcome on your account, child; may God be with you and prosperity from your kingly root, O child of pure pedigree of the bloodline of Colla, of the generous Mac Domhnaill dynasty.

2. Welcome to you, O descendant of the Eóins – Eóin Mac Leóid [and] Eóin our archer, two posts upholding their families, two pillars of the [Hebrides], land of the fair-haired foreigners.

3. Your coming to us now is a cause for high spirits and pleasure; O young and youthful child, the form of your red cheeks is very fitting.

Léamha lámhscríbhinne

1c. chruasghloin, chollfhuil₭; 2a. romhad, uath; 2b. mach; 2c. con*n*bhaill, gclain*n*; 2d. uain*n*e; 3c. nea*mhar*suigh núagh

4. Bh*eith ar* [t]h'ath*air* mu*r* oighre
ris an T*r*íonóid taobha[i]m-ne;
a leinbh a crobhuing chraoi Chui*nn*
go mbaoi fa orraim eadrui*nn*.

5. Le hua *agus* le m*a*c Mōire
guidhim Dia na deaghghlōire,
um ne*ar*t is mō nō minbhe,
go t*eacht* dó go deighinbhe.

6. Ionua Aonghais f[h]ui*nn* Íligh,
i*ar*mhō Ruaidhrí rírímhigh
dā gcuain-si*n* an tí tim-si;
nī dā n-uaislibh áirmhim-si.

7. Minic leo i n-am óla
cosna*mh* chādhuis onóra
is dīol roghaoisi na ran*n*
ag dīol foraoisi fion*n*Ghall.

8. A th*eacht* orui*nn* don fhuil rīogh,
ar nuaidhEóin – Dia dá d[h]eighdhīo*n* ! –
fā[th] d*ar* meanma 's d*ar* meadhair
i [d]t*r*āth feadhma *ar* féin*n*eadhuibh.

4. Let us trust in the Trinity that [you will] be your father's heir; O child from the cluster of the land of Conn, may [you] live to be esteemed among us (?).

5. I pray [to] the God of great glory on behalf of the grandson and son of Mór, who is greater in power than [he is] in [his] smallness, until he comes of age.

6. The great-great-grandson of Aonghas of the land of Islay, the great grandson of regal and handsome Ruaidhrí; this tender one is of their family; one of their nobles is the one I count.

7. In a time of drinking, they are wont to defend honour and pay for the great wisdom of quatrains [while] entertaining (?) the [men of the Hebrides], land of the fair-haired foreigners.

8. Our new Eóin – may God protect him! – coming to us from the royal bloodline is the reason for our high morale and high spirits in a time when warriors face battle.

4d. urrui*m*; 5a. huath; 6a. Ionuath; Il(?)igh(?); 6b. Ruaghri riri(?)mhigh; 6d. airbhimsi; 7a. a *in áit* i, ná*mh*; 8b. nuath Eoin, da ɡ(?); 8c. mheagh*air*; 8d. a *in áit* i

9. Go rabh Ath*air* na n-uile
g*a*c[h] aonu*air* dā ionghuire,
n*a*c[h] dīosg i n-am na hairce;
ban*n ar* Chrīosd fa [a] chomairce.

10. Guidhim saog[h]al is sláinte
'g*ar* leanbh sochr*aidh* sophāirte;
ráidhim ga*n* c[h]laoi c[hoidhch]e
go mbaoi saidhbhir seanf[h]oirbh[th]e.

11. [...]d rē go rabha soc*air*,
ga*n* orchra ga*n* anshoc*air*;
a leinbh ríogh le mbia breatha,
Dia dod' dhíon i ndeighbheatha.

Dia bheatha

9. May the God of all, who is not found wanting in times of need, watch over him at all times; may Christ undertake to protect him.

10. I pray for life and salvation for our dignified child of good fellowship; I say that, never defeated, he will [live to be] be (?) rich and a ripe old age.

11. As long as you live (?), may you be comfortable, without want or discomfort; O regal child who will be judged favourably, may God protect you in a good life.

9c. a *in áit* i, ná*m*; 9d. co*mhair*ce; 10c. r<aig>im (?); 11c. mbía; 11d. dhian a ndheighbeatha

Nótaí

1a. Is díol spéise é úsáid *Dia bheatha* anseo in áit na foirme a mbeifí ag súil léi, *Dia do bheatha.* Ní dócha gur fágadh an *do* ar lár de thimpiste óir bheadh an iomarca siollaí sa líne dá mbeadh sé ann. B'fhéidir go raibh *Do bheatha* ag an bhfile (frása atá ann fós sa Ghàidhlig), agur gur shíl an file gur leagan é sin de *Dia bheatha*, seachas de *Dia do bheatha.* Níl aon sampla eile agam de *Dia bheatha.* B'fhéidir, freisin, go dtagann sé ó *Dia a bheatha*, agus gur cailleadh an aidiacht shealbhach fhirinscneach mar gheall ar bhá. Féach an plé ar an bhfrása seo in Breatnach (1965) agus in Ó Cuív (1981). Féach freisin an plé thuas ar dhúnadh an dáin.

2d. Tuigim *bhāin* in *fhonnbhāin* mar ainmfhocal (aidiacht shubstaintithe) sa tuiseal ginideach. Is é sin, ginideach an fhocail *bán* 'untilled land, lea' (féach *eDIL* s.v. *bán* agus s.v. *bánta*). Féach an t-ainmfhocal *bán* 'lea, grassland' i nGaeilge an lae inniu (Ó Dónaill 1977: 83). Ba litriúla an t-aistriúchán 'untilled land of the fair-haired foreigners'.

4b. Tá m-fhleasc tríd an *b* in *taobha*[*i*]*m-ne* sa LS ach is léir gur scriosadh é.

5a. '… the grandson and son of Mór'. Ba é Mór ainm sheanmháthair agus mháthair an linbh. Féach an réamhrá.

5c. Níl aon sampla eile ar m'eolas i gcorpas na scol de *minbhe* ach táim buíoch den léitheoir anaithnid a chur *meinbhe* ar m'eolas. Tuigim *meinbhe* mar ainmfhocal teibí a chiallaíonn 'smallness'. Féach *meinbhe*, foirm bhreiscéime mhalartach den fhocal *meanbh* 'delicate, minute, tiny' sa Ghàidhlig (Wentworth 2003: 708). Féach *eDIL* s.v. *menb*. Féach an focal *mine* 'smallness, minuteness' i nGaeilge an lae inniu (Ó Dónaill 1977: 861).

6a. Is dócha gur ag tagairt atáthar anseo d'Aonghas Mac Domhnaill (†1614), Ochtú Taoiseach Dhùn Naomhaig, sin-sin-seanathair an linbh ar thaobh a athar (Macdonald 2008: 311). Tá deireadh na líne seo doiléir sa LS agus táim anbhuíoch den léitheoir anaithid a chur an léamh *Íligh* 'of Islay' ar mo shúile dom mar réiteach ar an doiléireacht seo. Ba é Ìle an áit a raibh Aonghas lonnaithe.

6b. Is dócha gur tagairt é seo do Ruaidhrí Mac Leòid (†1626), Tríu Taoiseach Déag Chlann Mhic Leòid, sin-seanathair an linbh ar thaobh a mháthar agus a athar (MacLeod 1927: 141, 152; Macdonald 2008: 318). Táim buíoch den léitheoir anaithnid a mhol an léamh *rírímhigh* 'regal and handsome'. Féach *rìmheach* = *rìomhach* 'elegant, handsome, stately, etc' sa Ghàidhlig (Dwelly 1911: 761–2).

7cd. Ba litriúla an t-aistriúchán 'forest of the fair-haired foreigners'. Déanaim amach go bhfuil an chiall 'paying' le *dīol* in 7c ach go bhfuil an chiall 'entertaining' le *dīol* in 7d. Féach *eDIL* s.v. *díl* agus féach na nótaí ar an meadaracht, thuas.

8b. Má tá an ceart agam gurbh é *ar nuaidhEóin* a bhí i gceist ag an bhfile, is dócha gur tagairt é seo do sheanathair an linbh, Eóin, Dara Taoiseach Déag Chlann Raghnaill.

11a. Tá tús na líne doléite sa LS ach b'fhéidir gur féidir [*le*]*d ré* nó [*re*]*d ré* a thuiscint leis an gciall 'as you long as you live'.

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Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

RUG CABHAIR AR CHLOINN GCOILÉIN: DÁN DO THADHG MAC CON MARA (†1678)*

Achoimre

This article presents an edition and translation of the seventeenth-century poem *Rug cabhair ar Chloinn gCoiléin*, composed by Maol Muire Ó Móirín in praise of Tadhg Mac Con Mara. Tadhg was the son of Domhnall Riabhach Mac Con Mara and Áine Ní Bhriain. His family held lands in east County Clare. Tadhg was active during the war in Ireland which began in 1641. In this poem, he is praised for coming to the aid of Clann Chuiléin, and an apologue likens him to Cú Chulainn defending Ulster. Two poems which were composed for Tadhg survive: the poem edited here, and *Buaine ioná a aois iomrádh Taidhg*, composed by Somhairle Mac an Bhaird. Diplomatic editions of both poems have been published in *ABM* (poems 75 and 405). I have published a critical edition and translation of *Buaine ioná a aois iomrádh Taidhg* in *Celtica* 37 (Ní Mhurchú 2025). *Rug cabhair ar Chloinn gCoiléin* is edited here from Maynooth manuscript CF 23 with readings from the Royal Irish Academy manuscript 23 H 25 (710).

An pátrún

Chum Maol Muire Ó Móirín an dán seo do Thadhg (†1678) mac Domhnaill Riabhaigh [Óig] (†1607) mhic Dhomhnaill Riabhaigh (†1592) Mhic Con Mara agus Áine Ní Bhriain (†1665/6). Bhí tailte ag teaghlach Thaidhg i mbarúntacht na Tulaí Uachtaraí, in oirthear Chontae an Chláir. Rugadh Tadhg sa mbliain 1601 de réir fhógra báis a athar.[1] Duine gníomhach ab ea é le linn an chogaidh a mhair ón mbliain 1641 go 1653, agus fuair sé bás i mí an Mheithimh 1678.[2] Gheofar cur síos cuimsitheach ar shaol an phátrúin seo in Ní Mhurchú (2025: 276–81). Maireann dhá dhán a cumadh dó: *Buaine ioná a aois iomrádh*

*Tá mé an-bhuíoch d'Eoin Mac Cárthaigh, Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh, eagarthóirí agus léitheoir anaithnid *Celtica* as ceartúcháin agus moltaí iomadúla. Mé féin faoi deara gach botún agus dearmad.

[1] ARÉ OS EI/09/32 / ARÉ OS EI/9/18/8, 'Inquisitions, County Clare, Vol. I (James I): Inquisition Post Mortem, Donal Reagh Oge McNemara, taken at Quin Abbey on 19 April 1608', ar líne: Maoinchiste Annála Samhalta na hÉireann <https://virtualtreasury.ie/item/RIA-OS-EI-9-18-8> PID: https://arks.org/ark:/75929/i109028, lch 12 (ceadaíodh 30 Meitheamh 2026). Dar le Robert William Twigge (†1915), a bhailigh eolas faoin teaghlach seo, rugadh Tadhg sa tréimhse 1602–3: LS LB Add. 39270, ginealach XVI.

[2] Luaitear an dáta báis seo i dtras-scríbhinn (Leabharlann na Breataine, LS Add. 39264, fóilió 321) a rinne Robert William Twigge (†1915) ar Phléadálacha na Seansaireachta ón mbliain 1679.

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Taidhg le Somhairle Mac an Bhaird, agus an dán atá faoi chaibidil anseo, *Rug cabhair ar Chloinn gCoiléin*.

Deir Katharine Simms gur dócha gur dán ceiliúrtha oirnithe é dán an ailt seo, toisc go bhfaightear móitífeanna áirithe ann a fheictear go minic i ndánta den chineál sin, mar a fheicfear thíos (Simms 2025: *passim*, agus aguisín I, dán 23).

Sa dán seo, moltar Tadhg as teacht i gcabhair ar chríoch Chlann Chuiléin, a áit dúchais. Maítear go bhfuil Clann Chuiléin ar a suaimhneas anois, a bhuí le Tadhg; nach bhfuil sí faoi scamall bróin a thuilleadh anois (rainn 2–4); agus go bhfuil trioblóidí na laethanta atá thart dearmadta aici mar gheall air (rainn 5–6). Deirtear linn gurb é Tadhg doirseoir an anfhorlainn agus go mbíonn sé ag déanamh síochána (rainn 9–10). Deirtear gur 'seabhac' agus 'draig' é agus go bhfuil aghaidh leoin aige (rann 12). Moltar é as a thréithe pearsanta, as a uaisle, as a shéimhe agus as a chineáltas (rann 13, srl.). Luaitear ainm a athar (rann 16), a sheanathar (rann 17) agus a mháthar (rann 27).

Cuirtear Tadhg i gcomparáid le Cú Chulainn in apalóg (rainn 18–23). Leagan de scéal ón *Táin* atá i gceist: mar a chosain Cú Chulainn Cúige Uladh nuair a bhí na hUltaigh faoi thinneas an cheasa naoidhean. Deirtear linn go gcosnóidh Tadhg a cheantar ar dheacrachtaí i gcónaí, sa gcaoi chéanna ar chosain Cú Chulainn muintir Uladh (rann 24–5).

I dtreo dheireadh an dáin, moltar Tadhg as a tharraingteacht (30), a chrógacht (31), agus a thuiscint ar chairdeas (31). Luaitear neart logainmneacha agus daoine stairiúla agus pearsana finscéalaíochta a bhaineann le ceantar Thaidhg sa dán, agus leagtar an-bhéim ar a shinsearacht agus ar na tréithe atá faighte aige óna shinsir (33–6).

An file

Maol Muire Ó Móirín ab ainm d'údar an dáin seo. Níl mórán eolais againn faoin bhfile seo. Ní mhaireann aon dán iomlán eile ón seachtú haois déag a leagtar air. Maireann leathrann a leagtar ar 'Ó Móirín' i LS Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann 11 (E iv 3, lch 172*i*), in éineacht le leathrann a leagtar ar 'Ó Maolchaoine'.[3] Scríobh Aindrias Mac Cruitín an LS seo i Maigh Ghlas i gContae an Chláir sa mbliain 1727. Ba le *Seamuis Ó Morán* an LS am éicint agus scríobh sé a ainm ar leathanach 1 (*RIA Cat.* 51–2). Cóipeáladh cuid den LS ó LS a scríobhadh do Dhonnchadh mac Toirdhealbhaigh Uí Lochlainn. Seo a leanas an dá leathrann a mhaireann sa LS seo:

Ó Móirín c*ecinit*

Iongn*adh* liom is é gan ghlas,
nách fosgl*ann* mu*r* do iadhas

Léamha: fosgl-

[3]Féach go raibh fear darbh ainm 'Gorthy O'Mulqueen of Ballymulqueeny' páirteach san ionsaí ar Chaisleán Bhaile Uí Áille (ar Loch Bhaile Uí Áille i mbarúntacht Bhun Raite Uachtarach) i mí na Nollag 1641, mar aon le pátrún an dáin seo (Frost 1893: 353). Tá Baile Uí Mhaolchaoine i bparóiste Theampall Uí Mháille, i mbarúntacht Bhun Raite Uachtaraigh, i gContae an Chláir.

'It is a surprise to me that it does not open as I closed it, despite it being unlocked.'

Ó Maolchaoine c*ecinit*

Múin*idh* Ó Móirín dá thoigh
nós an nōinín nu*air* nón*us*.

'Ó Móirín teaches his house the daisy's custom when evening comes'.[4]

Maireann dhá rann eile, ceann i ndeibhí agus ceann i meadaracht aiceanta, le 'Ua Móirín' i LS Choláiste na Tríonóide 1361 (H 4. 20, lch 30). Scríobh Tadhg Ó Neachtain an lámhscríbhinn seo sa tréimhse 1725–9. Cumadh an rann d'Ó Maoilriain. Seo a leanas téacs na rann:

Ua Mōirín d'Ō Maoilriain c*ecinit*

An ceann*n*-soin do chaith a sheal
a-muigh a m*ea*sg na dtais*ea*dh
's ní do chur fheirge oruibh,
c[h]a cladh reilge ō rugabh*air*:

Léan ar an éad: is g*éa*r an galar é,
moch 's as déighionach, *ēa*drom, gealtach é,
d'imigh gach s*éa*n ón té dā mbain*ea*n*n* sé,
is bīon*n* lu*cht* pléide 'sīrdh*ēa*nadh magadh fé.[5]

Léamh: 2d. f<éa(?)>dh

'It is not from a graveyard you got that one that did its time out among the phantoms – and I am not saying this to anger you.

Woe to jealousy: it is a bitter affliction, it is [there] early and late, trifling, crazy, wellbeing has deserted whoever it touches and teasers are always making fun of him.'

Maireann dán ón gcúigiú haois déag a leagtar ar fhile darbh ainm Maol Muire Ó Móirín, dar tús *Alim mo Dhia*. Tá cóip den dán sin ar marthain i lámhscríbhinn ón gcúigiú haois déag agus ón séú haois déag, LS Leabharlann na Breataine Add. 30512 (fol. 43). Deir an LS gur chum Ó Móirín an dán ag am a bháis (*in uair rena eibilt*).

Tugadh pardún do 'Moragh O Morren' as Cruachán, Contae Uíbh Fhailí in 1601 (*Fiants* 6500), agus tugadh pardún do 'Murrough O Murryn, of Rathcoffie, cottier' i mí an Mhárta 1602/3 (*Fiants* 6775).

Níl an dán seo clasaiceach amach is amach, mar a fheicfear sna nótaí thíos, ach ní haon ionadh é sin ó fhile a bhí ag cumadh chomh déanach leis seo i ré an dáin dhírigh.

[4]Is é sin, go ndúnann peitil an nóinín um thráthnóna: an t-oíche-iamh.

[5]Scaoilim noda na LSe i gcló iodálach, cuirim síneadh fada ar fáil le macrain, cuirim litreacha nach bhfuil sa LS ar fáil i lúibíní cearnacha agus is liomsa an phoncaíocht agus na ceannlitreacha. D'fhéadfadh an dá rann seo a bheith mar chuid deiridh de dhéantús sa bhfoirm trí rann agus amhrán.

Lámhscríbhinní

Go bhfios dom, maireann cúig chóip den dán seo – 36 rann i gceithre cinn acu agus 37 rann sa gceann eile.

C: Má Nuad CF 23, lgh 218–19: Seán Ó Laochadh a scríobh an LS seo i mBaile Átha Cliath sa tréimhse 1745–7 (Ó Fiannachta 1978: 101–5). Tá 36 rann den dán sa LS seo. Bhí an LS i seilbh Choláiste Cholmáin i Mainistir Fhear Maí go dtí an bhliain 2013 nuair a aistríodh cnuasach LSí an Choláiste go hOllscoil Mhá Nuad. Tá cóip den dán eile a cumadh do Thadhg, *Buaine ioná a aois iomrádh Taidhg*, sa LS seo chomh maith, ar leathanaigh 224–5.

H: ARÉ 23 H 25 (710), fóilió 18r–v: Ní heol dúinn cé a scríobh an LS seo. Breacadh barántas Béarla inti a bhaineann le Contae Chiarraí, agus luaitear an bhliain 1783 inti (*RIA Cat.* 2150). Tá 37 rann sa dán sa LS seo; tá rann inti nach maireann in aon chóip eile, is é sin rann 32 san eagrán. Tagann cóip na LSe seo den dán díreach roimh chóip den dán eile a cumadh do Thadhg, *Buaine ioná a aois iomrádh Taidhg*. Is deacair cuid de línte na ndánta seo a dhéanamh amach sa LS seo toisc gur stróiceadh imeall inmheánach na bhfóiliónna cuí, mar a fheicfear sna léamha thíos. Chomh maith leis sin, is léir go ndearnadh mioncheartúcháin agus gur breacadh roinnt nótaí sa LS seo in áiteanna níos déanaí. Tá na heagráin dhioplómaitiúla den dá dhán in *ABM* bunaithe ar an LS seo.

G: ARÉ 23 G 24 (257), lgh 334, 336 agus 338: Scríobh Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin an LS seo ag amanna éagsúla agus in áiteanna éagsúla sa tréimhse 1796–1833 (*RIA Cat.* 687–8). Cnuasach de bhileoga fáin atá inti. Níl ach 36 rann dár ndánna sa LS seo. Seans gur scríobh Mícheál Óg na leathanaigh a bhaineann le hábhar nuair a scríobh sé cóip den dán eile a cumadh do Thadhg, *Buaine ioná a aois iomrádh Taidhg*, atá anois ar marthain i LS 23 G 25 (710) (lgh 281–2 agus 327) san Acadamh. Cnuasach de bhileoga fáin is ea 23 G 25 chomh maith. Déanaim amach gur shíolraigh cóipeanna Mhíchíl Óig ó LS Mhá Nuad CF 23; féach tuilleadh plé air sin thíos.

M1: Má Nuad M1, lgh 320–4: Scríobh Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin an LS seo i gCorcaigh d'Easpag Chorcaí, Seán Ó Murchú, sa mbliain 1818 (*MNCat.*, fasc. 1, 1). Tá 36 rann den dán sa LS seo.

M8: Má Nuad M8, lgh 353–6: Scríobh Seán Ó Muláin (†1826) an chuid seo den LS seo agus cuireadh an LS le chéile sa mbliain 1818 don easpag Ó Murchú (*MNCat.*, fasc. 1, 74). Tá 36 rann den dán anseo.

An gaol idir na lámhscríbhinní

Níl mórán difríochtaí téacsúla idir na LSí, ach aontaíonn an téacs i LSí C, G, M1 agus M8 le chéile i gcoinne leagan H in áiteanna. An difríocht is suntasaí ná go bhfuil rann 32 in easnamh ar LSí C, G, M1 agus M8. Is i LS H amháin a mhaireann an rann seo. Tagann sé seo leis an tuiscint atá agam ar an scéal gur shíolraigh G, M1 agus M8 ó LS C agus nár shíolraigh aon cheann acu ó LS

H.[6] Seachas sin, níl mórán difríochtaí idir na LSí. Féach na samplaí a leanas de dhifríochtaí téacsúla:

> 4d *tuathghaire* (C) = *tuathgh*áir*e* (G, M1) = *tuathgháire* (M8) = *tnúthgháire* (H); 8d *sgrios* (C) = *sg*r*ios* (G, M1, M8) = *scrois* (H); 12c *ríghleomhuin* (C, G) = *ríghleó*mh*uin* (M1) = *ríghleómhuin*n (M8) = *ríleomhuin* (H); 21b *chlaochluidh* (C, M8) = *chlaochl*uidh (G, M1) = *chlaoluidh* (H); 27a *loind*ea*rga* (C, M8) = *loind*ea*rga* (G, M1) = *loind*ea*rdha* (H); 27c *dá ndídhion* (C) = *dá ndídhe*a*n* (G) = *dá ndídh*eadhn (M1) = *dá ndídhion*n (M8) = *dá ndíon* (H).

Modh eagarthóireachta

Bunaíodh an t-eagrán seo ar leagan LS C ós rud é gurb í an LS is sine í. Tugaim léamha ó C agus H. Ní thugaim léamha ó na LSí eile toisc gur dóigh liom go bhfuil siad síolraithe ó C agus toisc nach bhfuil ach fíorbheagán difríochtaí idir iad agus C.

- Tá noda na lámhscríbhinne scaoilte agam i gcló iodálach. Tá *e* ard sa lámhscríbhinn scaoilte agam mar *ea* nó *e* de réir mar is cuí.
- Cuirim litreacha breise ar fáil idir lúibíní cearnacha.
- Soláthraím sintí fada nach bhfuil sa LS le macrain.
- Is liomsa an phoncaíocht ar fad, scaradh na bhfocal agus suíomh sintí fada laistigh de shiollaí.
- Níl gutaí gearra/meánacha neamhaiceanta athraithe agam chun gutaí comhfhreagracha i rinn agus airdrinn a chur in ionannas, mar shampla 5cd *Chuirc* : *d'fhobhair*[*t*]; 9cd *soin* : *dochuir*.
- Tá *n* dúbailte in áit *n* amháin sa LS ar mhaithe le síneadh meánach a thaispeáint in *inn**bh**ear Innsi* (10a, léamh) agus *bann**trachta* (20b, léamh). Tá siad seo athraithe agam go *n* amháin san eagrán agus tugaim léamh.
- Tá siad seo a leanas athraithe agam os íseal agus níl siad san áireamh sna léamha LSe: bainim sintí fada ó na défhoghair *ao, aoi, ua, ia* srl, seachas *eó*; déanaim normalú ar *cc-* > *gc-* agus ar *tt-* > *dt-*; athraím *gh* go *dh* sna háiteanna a raibh *gh* in áit *dh* stairiúil, mura raibh aon rud eile le hathrú. Nuair atá focal athraithe ar aon chúis eile nach luaitear thuas, gheofar léamh ó LS C ag bun an leathanaigh.
- I gcás léamha H, ní sholáthraím léamh muna bhfuil de dhifríocht idir H agus C ach ceann acu seo a leanas: rud éigin a luaitear thuas a bheadh athraithe os íseal dá mbeadh sé i LS C; sleamhnóg a bheith ann nó in easnamh; difríocht le gutaí neamhaiceanta nach bhfuil fada i gcás *a*(*i*)/ *o*(*i*)/ *u*(*i*)/ *ea*/*io*, nó *-i*/*-e*; *is* na copaile in áit *as*, nó *i* in áit an réamhfhocail *a*. Gheofar léamh ag bun an leathanaigh i gcás aon difríochta eile. Scaoilim

[6] Féach go maireann an dán eile a cumadh do Thadhg, *Buaine ioná a aois iomrádh Taidhg*, i LSí C (lgh 224–5), H (fóilió 19r) agus M8 (lgh 356–60) freisin, agus go dtagann na difríochtaí téacsúla sa dán sin sna LSí a bhaineann le hábhar leis an anailís thuas chomh maith (Ní Mhurchú 2025: 283).

noda sna léamha i gcló iodálach. Ní thugtar léamh ó H más ionann é agus an t-eagrán.

Meadaracht

Is i ndeibhí, dán díreach, a cumadh an dán seo.

- Féach nach mbáitear guta fada iarméarla a thagann i ndiaidh guta fada i línte 5c (*a-tá ó*) agus 23c (*milioschnó ón*; LS *mhil*e*aschná*). Ba cheadmhach an easpa bá i gcásanna mar seo (Ní Dhomhnaill 1975: §59).
- Tá uaim curtha ar fáil agam i líne 2b, agus i líne 17b le sléagar (féach thíos).
- Tá samplaí de chéilí cuibhis gan ionannas gutaí i gcomhardadh agus i rinn agus airdrinn idir siollaí le síneadh meánach. D'fhéadfaí ionannas gutaí a chur ar fáil iontu ar fad trí [*e*]*achtron*n*shluaigh* (6b) a athrú go *eachtrannshluaigh* (: *amhluaidh*); *n-anfhorloinn* (17b) a athrú go *n-anfhorlainn* (: *D*[*h*]*omhnaill*) agus an rud céanna a dhéanamh i líne 25b; agus *n-iomarbhais* (30b) a athrú go *iomorbhais* (: [*Fh*]*org*[*h*]*ais*).
- Tá *ríghleomhuin* (12c, léamh LS C) athraithe agam go *ríleómhuin* (mar atá ag LS H) chun comhardadh slán a sholáthar le *d'fhírfheólfhuil* (12d). Is féidir ginideach iolra nó ainmneach uatha a úsáid mar an chéad mhír de chomhfhocal.
- Níl comhardadh slán ann idir na comhfhocail *lúthghāire* (4c) agus *tuathghaire* (4d, léamh LS C). Glacaim le léamh H anseo, *tnúthgháire*, agus bhainfinn an chiall chéanna as *tnúthgháire* is a bhainfinn as *tuathgháire* sa líne seo. Shamhlóinn go bhféadfaí *n* a léamh mar *u* mura raibh na minimí ceangailte go soiléir ag an mbarr, agus go bhféadfaí *ú* a léamh mar *a* go héasca dá mbeadh an síneadh fada an-ghar don *u* agus/nó dá léifí *u* mar *a* oscailte. Réiteach eile ná go bhféadfaí *lúthgháire* a athrú go *luathgháire*, ós rud é gur tháinig *lúthgháire* faoi thionchar *luath-* sa teanga (féach *eDIL* s.v. *lúthgáir(e)*), ach nílim cinnte gur glacadh le *luathgháire* sa teanga chlasaiceach agus ní fheicim aon sampla de sa gcorpas atá deimhnithe ag an meadaracht.
- Níl comhardadh slán idir an rinn agus airdrinn *gCoiléin* (27a) agus *saorshoirbhréidh* (27b). Ní fheicim aon réiteach air seo.
- Tá an focal *fear* ag déanamh comhardaidh leis féin i línte 37cd. Tagann sé seo salach ar an bprionsabal sna tráchtais nár chóir d'fhocal comhardadh a dhéanamh leis féin (féach *BST* 217.1 nóta; Ó Riain 2025: §8 agus nóta).
- Seans gur sampla é an comhardadh breise i línte 23ab den ghléas ornáideach *breacadh*: *luibh… d'f*[*h*]*uil* : *luibh*, ach tá na focail ar fad sa leathrann tosaigh, áit nach n-ordaíonn na rialacha meadarachta aon chomhardadh. Is cosúil gur sampla de chomhardadh iomarcach é an cuibheas breise i rann 36: *Mhāil* : *fhion*n*Mháigh … Tāil* : *táin* (féach nótaí ar *breacadh* agus ar *rúrach*, Ní Dhomhnaill 1975: 45–61 agus 66–8; Ó Riain 2025: §8 agus §10 agus nótaí).
- Tá samplaí sa dán seo den fhocal *Con* sa sloinne *Mac Con Mara* a bheith neamhaiceanta (i línte 16a agus 37a). Tá sé seo deimhnithe ag

an meadaracht toisc nach bhfuil *Con* ag glacadh páirte san uaim. Tá samplaí eile de seo sa gcorpas. Tá *Con* neamhaiceanta nach nglacann páirt san uaim le feiceáil sa sloinne céanna sa dán eile do Thadhg (Ní Mhurchú 2025: líne 8b), agus mar chuid den sloinne *Mac Con Midhe* i ndán le hEochaidh Ó hEóghusa (*DMU* 23.9a agus 19a). Is dócha go bhfuil an file ag géilleadh don ghnáthfhoghraíocht anseo: leagtar an bhéim ar *Mara* agus fágtar *Con* neamhaiceanta. Féach tuilleadh plé air seo sna nótaí meadarachta in Ní Mhurchú (2025: lch 285).

Teanga

Cumadh an dán seo sa Nua-Ghaeilge Chlasaiceach, ach tá cuma iarchlasaiceach ar an teanga i gcúpla áit. Pléifear gnéithe neamhchlasaiceacha agus pointí teanga suntasacha eile sna nótaí thíos.

Ainmfhocail

- Litrítear an logainm *Eachtghe* le *-e* i líne 5a ach is é is dóichí go bhfuaimnítear mar *Eachtgha* í, le teacht le *coinbhleachta* (5b). Is minic a scríobhtar *Eachtghe* le *-e* sna LSí ach is léir go ndéantar cuibhis leis ar nós gur *Eachtgha* a bhí ann (féach *ABP* 221–2, nóta; *HDGP* fasc. 9, 7–9).
- Tá séimhiú ar an aidiacht *shoilbhir* tar éis an ainmfhocail *aigneadh* (15a, ainmneach uatha) i LS C, a bhí firinscneach sa teanga chlasaiceach (*IGT* ii §49 agus §159). Níl an séimhiú deimhnithe ag an meadaracht ach níl sé bainte agam toisc go bhfuil *aigne* baininscneach sa lá atá inniu ann agus go bhfuil seans ann, mar sin, gur ón bhfile a tháinig an séimhiú. Féach chomh maith gur mar *suilbhir* a litrítear é seo sna tráchtais (*an tsuilbhire, an tsuilbhirecht*, *IGT* iv 122) ach go bhfaightear *soilbhir* le *-o-* go forleathan sna lámhscríbhinní. Féach sampla déanach atá deimhnithe ag an meadaracht, *soilbhir* (: *roighnibh*) in *ABM* 200.29cd.
- Is mar dhá fhocal a fhaightear *ceas naoidhean* de ghnáth; níl aon sampla eile feicthe agam de *ceasnaoidhean* (18d) mar chomhfhocal, atá deimhnithe ag an meadaracht sa dán seo.
- Níl *feas* (21d) clasaiceach mar thuiseal ainmneach uatha den ainmfhocal *fios* de réir na dtráchtas. Tá *feasa* ceart mar ainmneach iolra agus ginideach uatha, *feasaibh* mar thabharthach iolra agus *feas* mar ghinideach iolra (*IGT* ii §70). Mar sin, d'fhéadfaí a shamhlú go mbeadh *feas* mar thuiseal ainmneach ag file. Faightear *feas* mar mhalairt ar *fios* i nGaeilge an lae inniu féin (*FGB* s.v. *feas*). Tá éiginnteacht áirithe faoin téacs anseo, áfach, agus déanfar tuilleadh plé air sin sna nótaí téacsúla.
- Níl *d'fheidhmibh* (6a) clasaiceach mar fhoirm thabharthach iolra de réir na dtráchtas, bheifí ag súil le *feadhmaibh* (*IGT* ii §41, ainmneach uatha *feidhm*). D'fhéadfaí é a athrú go dtí an fhoirm a mbeifí ag súil léi sa teanga chlasaiceach, gan cur isteach ar an meadaracht, ach nílim cinnte nach é *feidhmibh* an fhoirm a bheadh ag ár bhfile-ne.
- Tá foirm an ainmnigh *eang* in áit an áinsígh *eing* i líne 1b: *fhōirfeas an eang ghrianshoiléir*. Tá séimhiú an ainmnigh (gan deimhniú meadarachta)

ar *ghrianshoiléir* ina dhiaidh. Tá sé seo fágtha agam mar atá sé, ach níl sé deimhnithe ag an meadaracht agus seans gur *e* ard a bhí san eiseamláir.
- Déanaim amach gurb é an comhfhocal *linn* + *te* atá i gceist i líne 2c; ní bheadh *linnte* clasaiceach mar ghinideach iolra de *linn* de réir na dtráchtas: *linn* nó *linnteadh* a bheadh ceart (*IGT* ii §96 agus §191).

Briathra
- Bheifí ag súil le *giodh* (*gé* + an chopail) in áit *gē* i líne 6a (*ABP* línte 279–81), ach feictear seo go minic sa bhfilíocht i LSí agus níl sé athraithe agam mar sin.
- Níl mórán samplaí den fhocal *dínsighthe* (9b) feicthe agam. Féach samplaí atá deimhnithe ag an meadaracht in *IBP* 48.3 (*dínsighthe* : *híslighthi*) agus in *ABM* 282.19 (: *íslighthe*), agus dhá shampla eile ag *eDIL* s.v. *dínsigid*.
- *do chlaochluidh* (21b): De réir mar a thuigim *IGT* iii §64, bheifí ag súil le *do chlaochlúidh* anseo (nó *do chlaochláidh* nó *do chlaochlóidh*). Féach, mar shampla, an sampla le guta fada atá deimhnithe ag an meadaracht in *DiD* 68.15c. D'fhéadfaí síneadh fada a chur ar fáil le macran anseo, mar sin. Tá cúpla sampla de *do chlaochluigh* sa gcorpas, áfach, ach tá siad ar fad déanach: *ABM* 62.10a (nach bhfuil deimhnithe ag an meadaracht), agus *do chlaochluigh* (: *gaothmhuigh*) in *ABM* 358.53cd.
- D'fhéadfaí *claoidhf*ı*dh* (25a) a athrú go *claoifidh* (féach *IGT* iii §42). Níl aon sampla feicthe agam sa gcorpas de *claoidh-* le *dh* atá deimhnithe ag an meadaracht.

Athruithe tosaigh ar lorg ainmfhocal
- **Ar lorg ainmneach uatha baininscneach:** Tá séimhiú ar lorg ainmneach uatha baininscneach i línte 28d, 29a (deimhnithe ag an uaim), 33a, agus 37b.
- **Sléagar:** Tá séimhiú curtha ar fáil agam i líne 17b atá deimhnithe ag an uaim agus a chomhlíonann na rialacha do shléagar: *clōdh tnútha f*[*h*]*ear n-anfhorloinn*. Féach sampla eile de shléagar i líne 29c, mar a bhfuil séimhiú ar *ghuaisb*[*h*]*eithre* agus ar *threibhi* atá neamhghramadúil ach a chomhlíonann na rialacha do shléagar: *éan ghuaisb*[*h*]*eithre threibhi Tāil*. Maidir le sléagar, féach Mac Cárthaigh (2015).
- **Ar lorg áinsíoch uatha:** Tá samplaí d'urú (1a, 11b, agus 13b, mar shampla) agus d'easpa uraithe (23d, ina bhfuil séimhiú deimhnithe ag an meadaracht ach ina bhfuil éiginnteacht áirithe faoin téacs, 26d, agus 37c, mar shampla) i ndiaidh ainmfhocail atá i suíomh áinsíoch uatha sa dán seo. Glacaim leis an dá rud.
  Tá séimhiú an tabharthaigh i ndiaidh focail atá faoi réir ag an réamhfhocal *gan* bainte agam in *gan mhóid mhir* (léamha 22c), ina bhfuil úsáid chlaontuisil marcáilte ag infhilleadh na hiadiachta (*mir*, tuiseal ainmneach *mear*). Tá sé seo athraithe agam i bhfianaise an uraithe in *gan mhéin dtnūith* (14b) agus *gan ūid*[*h*] *n-iomarbhais* (30b). Féach an rannóg thíos maidir le séimhiú neamhchlasaiceach ar ainmneacha dílse i ndiaidh ainmfhocal atá i suíomh áinsíoch uatha.

- **Ar lorg tabharthach uatha:** Tá séimhiú ar lorg ainmfhocail i suíomh tabharthach sna línte seo a leanas: 7c, 11c, 12a (deimhnithe ag an uaim), 15b, 22d (deimhnithe ag an uaim), 23c, 25c (deimhnithe ag an uaim), 29a, 34a, 34b, 34d, agus 36a. Tá an séimhiú sna samplaí le deimhniú meadarachta gramadúil, ach comhlíonann siad na riachtanais do shléagar freisin. Tá ceithre shampla d'easpa séimhithe ar lorg tabharthach uatha sa LS. Tugaim sochar an amhrais don fhile agus tá séimhiú curtha ar fáil agam i línte 18d (*a gceasnaoidhean c*[*h*]*uibhrigh*) agus 35d (*ag breith b*[*h*]*isigh*). Ní chuirim séimhiú ar fáil i gcás línte 5c ná 37a toisc go bhféadfaí an easpa séimhithe sna línte sin a mhíniú le sléagar.
  Glacaim le hurú an áinsígh i ndiaidh an réamhfhocail *go n-* 'with' (a rialaíonn an tabharthach ó cheart) in *go ngé ngil* (15c) toisc go bhfuil sé seo an-choitianta i bhfilíocht na scol (féach *Magauran* nóta 1010).
- **Ar lorg ginideach uatha:** Tá séimhiú ar lorg ginideach uatha firinscneach den chineál a shéimhíonn sa teanga chlasaiceach in *craoi Chuirc* (5c), *Chais chéibhf*[*h*]*in*n (12d), *lubhghoirt bhruach* (16b, a chomhlíonann na riachtanais do shléagar), *chlāir Chais* (16c), *chraoi Chais* (24c), *chosnaimh chirt* (28a, a chomhlíonann na riachtanais do shléagar), *tathoimh bhrais* (28c), *bhruaich Shionna* (34a), *Chearbhuill chianaisdrigh* (35b), *Chathaoir Mhóir* (36a) agus *Ēibhir Fhinn* (36c). Mar sin, tá séimhiú curtha ar fáil agam in *Domhnaill M*[*h*]eic (16a) agus in *mh*[*e*]*ic D*[*h*]*omhnaill* (17a).
  Níl an *t* ar *tSionna* (léamha 12a) ar lorg ginideach uatha firinscneach clasaiceach gan an t-alt. Féach chomh maith an *t* ar *tséimh* agus *tsuilbhir* (léamha 31d). Seans maith go raibh míthuiscint ann anseo agus gur cheap scríobhaí go raibh *séimh* sa tuiseal ginideach; mar sin, tá an dá *t-* sa líne sin bainte agam. Tá an *t-* bainte agam ó *Sionna* (12a) chomh maith.
- **Ar lorg ginideach iolra:** Tá urú ar lorg ginideach iolra i línte 1c, 7a, 8c, 17b, 21c, agus 27a. Tá dhá shéimhiú neamhchlasaiceach i ndiaidh ginideach iolra (i línte 11c agus 16b) nach bhfuil coigeartaithe agam; féach an rannóg thíos ar ainmneacha dílse.
- **Séimhiú ar ghinideach uatha ainmneacha dílse:** Tá séimhiú neamhchlasaiceach ar roinnt ainmneacha dílse atá sa nginideach uatha sa dán, ar nós Ghaeilge an lae inniu: *inioschró Fheidhlim* (23d, deimhnithe ag an bhfíoruaim ach tá éiginnteacht áirithe faoin téacs), ar lorg ainmfhocail i suíomh áinsíoch uatha; *tréidhe Thaid*[*h*]*g* (14a) ar lorg ainmfhocail i suíomh áinsíoch iolra; *ghlainphréimhe Ghearailt* (34d), ar lorg ginideach uatha baininscneach; *chlann Chuirc* (11c) agus *bhruach Bhōramha* (16b), i ndiaidh ginideach iolra. Níl aon cheann acu seo athraithe agam.

Aidiachtaí

- Tá *taireach* (7a) athraithe agam go *tair*[*th*]e*ach* agus *comhaigheach* (7b) go *comhaigh*[*th*]e*ach* chun rinn agus airdrinn a chur ar fáil arís. Ní fheicim aon réiteach eile air seo. Féach an comhardadh slán idir *comhaightheach* agus *fhoghailchreach*, mar shampla, in *LBranach* ll. 5492–3, agus an rinn agus airdrinn idir *chomhaightheach* agus *caithmheach* in *LBranach* ll. 2943–4. Tá

samplaí de chéilí cuibhis le comhardadh slán le *tairtheach* in *DMU* 14.30, Williams (1980: 1.28).
- Nílim cinnte go bhfuil *goirid* (22a) in áit *gairid* clasaiceach. Is é *gairid* an fhoirm atá in *IGT* ii §142 (agus féach Mac Cárthaigh 2020: 139).
- Seans go mbeifí ag súil le *folach* in áit *fuileach* i líne 29a, toisc go mbunaítear aidiacht in *-ach* ar an tabharthach iolra, ach glactar le *fuileach* sa teanga chlasaiceach, féach *SnaG* IV §5.1.
- Ní bheadh súil leis an bhfoirm *naoi* (18c) mar thuiseal ainmneach de *nua* sa teanga chlasaiceach. Tá *naoi* ceart sa tuiseal tabharthach agus sa nginideach uatha de réir *IGT* ii §206. Faightear sampla de *naoi* sa tuiseal ainmneach atá deimhnithe ag an meadaracht, áfach, in *DiD* 100.10.
- D'fhéadfaí síneadh fada a chur ar *te* (33c) agus dhéanfadh *té* rinn agus airdrinn le *n-uaisle* (33d) chomh maith, ach bheartaigh mé cloí le léamha na lámhscríbhinní. Féach Hoyne (2016: 190–1).

Réamhfhocail
- Mar a luadh thuas, bheifí ag súil leis an tabharthach tar éis an réamhfhocail *go n-* (15c), ach tá áinsíoch anseo. Tá sé seo coitianta i bhfilíocht na scol tar éis *go n-*, áfach (*Magauran* 1010).
- Tá samplaí de shéimhiú ar lorg an réamhfhocail *ar* agus samplaí gan séimhiú agus glacaim leis an dá rud. Tá sampla amháin ann ina bhfuil an séimhiú deimhnithe ag an uaim: *ar f*[*h*]*eadh óil* (15a). Tá séimhiú curtha ar fáil agam i gcás *ar mheardhucht* (13a, LS: *me**ir**dhucht*) agus *ar chumoinnfhios* (31b, LS: *cumoinn**fh**íos*) ar mhaithe le leanúnachas sna rainn áirithe sin toisc go bhfuil séimhiú ar na hainmfhocail ar fad eile iontu tar éis *ar*.
- Tá séimhiú ar lorg *gan* in *gan mhéin* (14b) agus *gan mhóid* (22c) agus tá séimhiú curtha ar fáil agam in *gan f*[*h*]*ear* (37c).
- Sa teanga chlasaiceach, bheifí ag súil le séimhiú i ndiaidh *ón* (réamhfhocal + an t-alt uatha), mar atá in *ón Bhōin*n (23c), agus *ón fhion*n*Mháigh* (36b), seachas urú mar atá in *ón gCraobhrua*[*i*]*dh* (17d, LS *cc-*). Níl sé seo athraithe agam, áfach, toisc go bhfuil sé seo coitianta sa bprós agus i ndánta déanacha.

Eile
- Féach go bhfuil sampla de *mo-chean* le foirm choibhneasta i líne 14a. Glacaim leis go bhfuil sé seo clasaiceach, cé gur beag sampla atá le fáil.
- Glacaim le *ró* in ionad *ro* i líne 22c toisc go bhfuil sé deimhnithe ag an meadaracht. Is léir go raibh úsáid *ró-* ag éirí níos coitianta sa bhfilíocht ón dara leath den séú haois déag (Mac Cárthaigh 2002: 105).

Téacs

Maol Muire Ó Mōirín c*ec*i*n*it

1. Rug cabhair ar Chloin*n* gCoiléin
fhōirfeas an eang ghrianshoiléir,
posd ilghnímhchleas na ndál ndo*cht*,
lámh a himshnímhcheas d'f[h]urto*cht*.

2. Rug uirre d'éis a hanshōidh,
rō suaimhnis is sōdhanóir,
an chríoch réidh bhailbhlin*n*te bhinn,
ó phréim[h] airmrin*n*te Oilill.

3. Tug a maoith ar mhéid m*ea*nman,
tug a tuirse ar shibheannradh,
fan bhflaithchéile dá dtug t*ea*s
tug a haithmhéile *ar* aoibhn*ea*s.

4. Do dhearmuid sí a cuing ceasa,
do sgar re a sging doilgh*ea*sa,
brait*ea*r lí a lúthghāire soin,
ag tnúthgháire ón tí tárroidh.

Aistriúchán

1. Help that will succour the bright sunny land has come to Clann Chuiléin; a pillar of many skilful deeds in difficult situations, a hand to relieve her of her worrying afflictions.

2. After her discomfort, great restfulness and comforting honour have taken hold of the smooth sweet territory of the still waters because of Oilill's stock of the hot-pointed spears.

3. She has exchanged her sorrow for high spirits, she has exchanged her despondency for merriment, over the noble spouse to whom she has given fervour she has exchanged her grief for joy.

4. She has forgotten her yoke of despond, she has taken off her cloak of woe, the radiance of her joy is perceived, [she is] laughing in expectation of the one she has found.

Léamha

1c. ndáil C, ndáil *athraithe níos déanaí go* ndál H; 1d. hímshnimhch*ea*s CH; 2a. uire H; 2b. shuaimhnish C, shuaimhnis H, sódhánóir H; 2c. bhind CH; 2d. phréimh H, Oilioll CH; 3b. shibh*ea*ndradh C, ~~s~~^~~th~~^ibh*ea*ndradh H, *~~tibheandradh .i. <...>~~ (?) let sibheandradh stand (*níos déanaí, ar an gciumhais dheas*) H; 3c. fán CH; da H; 4a. chuing CH, ch*ea*sa H; 4b. ré *in áit* re H; 4d. tuathghaire C; tí a tárroidh C

5. Suan na heilte ar fhiadh Eachtghe,
nach feas cuimhne a coinbhl*ea*chta,
a-tá, ó thaibhgh*e*ōir craoi Chuirc,
gan aimhdh*e*ōin, ar aoi, d'fhobhair[t].

6. Gē mór fu*air* d'f[h]eidhmibh amhluaidh,
d'imshnīomh uilc is [e]achtron*n*shluaigh,
be[a]g seadh a ndocra*cht*a dhi
fear a fortachta ó fuair-si.

7. Clan*n* Choiléin na dtrágh dtair[th]*ea*ch,
di ní céile comhaigh[th]*ea*ch,
gruaidh doigh*ea*rnāir go méin mhir
do réim oir*ea*rbhāin Ēibhir.

8. Tadhg m*ac* Domhnaill, cn*ea*s cruithgheal,
don chrích-si is é orduighthear,
eang na lios dtirmlíonm[h]u*r* dte,
re sgrios imshnīomhghomh aisde.

9. Doirs*e*ōir dhoras a héigin,
lámh dhīnsighthe a doirbhchéidil,
craobh cheōil a soirbhighthe soin,
doirbhdhrithle a ndeóidh a dochuir.

5. Thanks to the exactor of Corc's enclosure, the land of Eachtgha willingly enjoys a doe's sleep, like a salve, so that she does not remember past conflict she suffered.

6. Although she suffered many troubling battles [and] anxiety brought on by harm and a foreign army, the difficulty they caused matters little to her, now that she has secured her saviour.

7. No strange companion for Clann Chuiléin of the fruitful shores is this [man of] modest lively cheek with a spirited disposition of Éibhear's bloodline of the fair region.

8. Tadhg son of Domhnall, [with his] purely shaped body is the one prescribed to banish troubling pains from this territory of the cosy and abundant warm ramparts.

9. Doorkeeper of the doors of her troubles, hand who hates her to suffer hard battle, musical branch who restores her, a harsh spark after her hardship.

5c. chraoi H; 5d. dfobhairt H; 6a. dfeidmibh H; 6b. eachtron*n*shluagh H; 6c. s*ea*ch CH; 6d. ~~fear~~ fear H, sí C; 7a. clan*n* choiléin na ~~ttairtheach~~ ttrágh ttair*ea*ch H, ttrath C; 7b. dí H; 7c. mir H; 7d. réimh H, éibhir H; 8a. tadg C, taidhg H, cruaidhgheal C, cruaidgeal H; 8b. chrícsi ise H, órduighth*ear* C; 8d. ré H, scrois H; 9a. <.>oirs*e*óir dhorais H, théigin C; 9b. dhínsighthe H; 9c. craobhcheóil H; 9d. ndeoigh CH, dochoir H

10. Ēigne ó inbhear Inse an Laoigh,
gnūis dil nach taidhlean*n* tathaoir,
clódh ainbhfine toighe Tāil,
croidhe is ainmhire a n-*ea*dráin.

11. Na tréidhe as nach tuairthior béim,
bhus dáil c[h]abhra *ar* Chloin*n* gCoiléin
a-táid ó shaoidh*eacht* chlann Chuirc
a n-aoinea*cht* an*n* ag adhuint.

12. Seabhac d'f[h]oraois fhóid Sionna,
draig lon*n* d'aicme Oiliolla,
gnūis ríleómhuin tais na[ch] tim,
d'fhírfheólfhuil í Chais chéibhf[h]in*n*.

13. Ar uaisle, *ar* mhíne, *ar* mheardhucht,
ar theisd gcean*n*sa, *ar* chroidh*ea*mhla*cht*,
deacoir breith iomaithbhir *a*[i]*r*,
nō ar dhreich fhion*n*daithghil fhosaidh.

14. Mo-chean iomchras tréidhe Thaid[h]g,
gan mhéin dtnūith, gan toil d'iom*air*g
gruaidh thaobhshoirbhréidh nar chlaon ceart
nar aomh aonoilbhēi*m* d'éist*eacht*.

10. A salmon from the estuary of Inis an Laoigh, a dear face which reproach does not reach, defeater of outlanders in Tál's home, a heart most steady in peace-making.

11. The characteristics which do not deserve reproach, which will bring help to Clann Chuiléin, born of the wisdom of Corc's descendants, are kindling together in him.

12. A hawk from the hunting ground of the Shannon region, a fierce dragon of Oilill's stock, [with the] face of a kind strong royal lion, of the pure flesh and blood of the descendant of fair-haired Cas.

13. He cannot be criticised in respect of nobility, gentleness, liveliness, reputation for kindness, heartiness, or [his] fair bright steadfast face.

14. Fortunate is he who bears the characteristics of Tadhg without an envious outlook [or] warmongering, a handsome-faced [man] who has never perverted justice [and] has never agreed to listen to any scandal.

10a. <.>igne ó in*n*bh<…> in*n*si an laoigh H, in*n*bh*ea*r In*n*si C; 10c. <…>fine toighe táil H; 10d. ainmire H; 11a. tréithe C, <.>a tre<..>e as H; 11b. chabhra H; 11c. <ataid?> <..> hsaoidh*eacht* H, chlain*n* CH; 12a. seabhach C, <.>eabac H, df<..>aois H, tsion*n*a CH; 12b. oill*il*a H; 12c. g<…>s ríl*e*omhuin H, ríghl*e*omhuin C; 12d. dfíorfheoifhuil C, dfíorfheóifhuil H, Cais chéibhfhin*n* H; 13a. ar ua<…> *ar* H, m*ei*rdhucht C, mh*ei*rdhucht H; 13b. air theist CH, chróidh*ea*mhla*cht* H; 13c. d*ea*c<.>r H, iomaithfir CH, air H; 13d. nó H; 14a. mo ch*ea*n*n* C, mo <.>*ea*n H, tréithe CH; 14b. tóil H

15. Aigneadh shoilbhir ar f[h]eadh óil
guala theann a dtráth thi[o]nóil
dreach l*ea*thluisn*ea*ch go ngné ngil,
n*ea*mhthuirs*ea*ch é isna haircibh.

16. Mac Domhnaill M[h]*eic* Con Mara,
bláth lubhghoirt bhruach Bhōramha
dlighidh deighion[n]ramh chlāir Chais
neimhiongnadh dáil a ndúthchais.

17. Dlighidh fós mac mh[e]ic D[h]omhnaill,
clōdh tnútha f[h]ear n-anfhorloinn
draig nar fhuloing goin a ghrua[i]dh
mar Choin gCuloin*n* ón gCraobhrua[i]dh.

18. Mar soin do fhóir an taobh thua[i]dh,
Cú Chuloin*n*, triath an tromshlua[i]gh,
clár leasnaoigheal go lí sein
do bhí a gceasnaoidh*ea*n c[h]uibhrigh.

19. A gcrích Ul*adh*, ceann a gcean*n*,
do leathnuigh ciachbhrat coitch*eann*
nō gu*r* chin*n* ortha uile
'na sging orchra is eólchuire.

15. A pleasant temperament when drinking, a firm shoulder at the time of mustering [for war], a gently glowing face with a bright appearance, he is tireless in difficult situations.

16. The son of Domhnall Mac Con Mara, a flower from the herbal garden of the banks of Bóraimhe, deserves the good attention of Cas's land; the apportionment of their heredity [to him] is no wonder.

17. The son of Domhnall's son, a dragon whose cheek has never been wounded, like Cú Chulainn from the Craobhruadh, also deserves to overcome the jealousy of oppressors.

18. This is the way Cú Chulainn, chief of the mighty army, relieved the North, the land of bright and fresh enclosures with ancient beauty, which was restrained by the debility of childbirth.

19. Bit by bit, a gloomy, harmful and lamentable cloak extended all around the land of Ulster, until it overcame them all.

15a. soilbhir f *ar* H, feadh an óil C, f*ea*dh an óil H; 15b. theand CH, ttraith CH, tinóil H; 15c. ngae C, nge H; 15d. háirgibh C, hairgibh H; 16a. conmhara C; 16b. blaith C, bhorama H; 16c. dlíghidh C, chláir cháis H; 16d. néimhiongnadh H; 17a. dlíghidh C; 17b. clódh H, nanfhórloin*n* C, nanfhorlóin H; 17c. fhuloingh C; 17d. mair CH, cculóin H, ccraoibhruadh H; 18b. choloin*n* H, tomshluaigh H; 18c. séin CH; 19a. chrích CH

20. Níor bhin*n* leō laoidh[d]r*ēacht* molta,
ge*ō*in laoch, bion*n*g[h]lōr bantrachta,
nā nuall fon*n*mhar crithr*ea*ch ciúil
go slighth*ea*ch tromghlan taidhiúir.

21. Tugsad ar maoith a m*ea*dhoir,
do chlaochluidh a gcreideamhoin,
clár na n-eas mbratshoilseach mbin*n*
feas ba hat[h]toirs*ea*ch d'in*n*tin*n*.

22. Goirid dóibh ina dhiaidh soin
nō gur éirigh Cú an chleasra[i]dh,
an róibheithir gan mhóid mir,
ag fóirithin fhóid Oiligh.

23. Luibh íocshláinte d'f[h]uil a chnis
do dháil uaidh 'na luibh leighis
ar milioschnó ón Bhōin*n* bhin*n*
go[r] fhōir inioschró Fheidhlim.

24. Mar do fhóir*ea*dh Cú an chleitín
an uair sin d'f[h]uil oirdhreicÍr
fóirfidh flaithchéile chraoi Chais
gach laoi ar aithmhēile a othrais.

20. [Neither the reciting of] a praise poem, [nor] the clamour of heroes, [nor] the sweet voice of women, nor the melodic quivering cry of music [playing] flowingly, intensely, purely and sweetly, were sweet to them.

21. [The men of] the land of the splendid waterfalls draped in light exchanged their merriment for sorrow, their faith deteriorated: knowledge that wearies the mind.

22. Shortly after that, athletic Cú [Chulainn], a successful hero who was not impetuous, came forth to relieve the land of Oileach.

23. Our sweet nut from the melodious Boyne dispensed the restorative herb of his body's blood as a medicinal herb, and it relieved Feidhlim's islanded enclosure.

24. [Just] as Cú [Chulainn] of the javelin used to help Íor's famous bloodline that time, the princely spouse of Cas's enclosure will relieve it every day from the grief of its sickness.

20a. bhín*n* H; 20b. bion*n*ghlor H, ban*n*trachta CH; 21a. tugsat CH, maoidh CH; 21b. chlaoluidh H, ccread*ea*mhoin CH; 21c. nd*ea*s CH, mbrtsoills*ea*ch C, mbrt shoills*ea*ch *arna athrú níos déanaí go* mbrat shoills*ea*ch H; 21d. bhf*ea*s C, ~~bh~~f*ea*s H; 22a. na dhiaigh C, na dhiaig H; 22b. chleasraidh H; 22c. ar *in áit* an C, mhir CH; 22d. fóireithin CH; 23a. lúibh H; 23c. mhil*ea*schná CH; 23d. gor fhóir H, inéischrá CH; 24b. oirdreicír H; 24c. fhóirf*ea*dh CH, chroidhe *in áit* chraoi CH; 24d. aithmhéile H

25. Claoidhfidh trá Tadhg m*a*c Domhnaill
gach teidhm bh*us* túr anfhorloin*n*
dā mbia a moigh fhódbhāin ó nAirt
mar an gCoin n-ógnā[i]r n-ordh*air*c.

26. Cosmhail a méin, muin ar muin,
m*a*c Domhnaill is Cú an chleasraidh,
dā phosd go n-ilgh*ea*soibh áigh
re cosg imreasoin d'ēanláimh.

27. Grāin loinneardha clan*n* gCoiléin
mac Áine, an s*ea*ng saorshoirbhréidh,
cur deargruath*uir* dá ndíon sin,
grīobh do leargbhruach*aibh* Luimnigh.

28. Lámh chosnaimh chirt a thíre
ar aobhdhacht nō ar ainmhíne,
brat tēagairthe a tathoimh bhrais,
fachoin mhéaduighthe a macnais.

29. Gríobh fhuil*ea*ch don fhuil Bhrianaigh,
séad aithleagtha óirmhianoigh,
éan ghuaisb[h]eithre threibhi Tāil,
bleidhe uaislei[gh]the a hiomráidh.

25. Indeed, like celebrated young and modest Cú [Chulainn], Tadhg son of Domhnall will vanquish every ill-boding affliction in the virgin land of Art's descendants.

26. Domhnall's son and athletic Cú [Chulainn], two pillars with all the powers of battle to stop conflict by concerted effort, are the same in outlook, one after the other.

27. Fierce terror of the descendants of Cuiléan, Áine's son, the slim noble smooth pleasant one, one who launches a fierce onslaught to protect them, a fierce warrior from the sloping banks of Limerick.

28. Hand that defends justice in his country, against pleasantness or roughness, the warm cloak that protects her great sleep, the reason her ease has increased.

29. Fierce warrior of Brian's bloodline, refined jewel of golden quality, dangerous bird of prey of the household of Tál, drinking cup that ennobles her fame.

25a. claoidhf*ea*dh CH, taidg CH; 25b. teidim C, teidm H, anfhorloín H; 25c. mbiadh CH; 25d. nógn*air* H; 26a. *air* mhuin H; 26c. phost CH; 26d. ré H, deanlaimh H; 27a. loind*ea*rga C, loind*ea*rdha H; 27b. saorshoirbhréagh C, saorshoirbhréigh H; 27c. cuir C, ndídhion C; 27d. gríobh H; 28c. téagairthe H, táthiomh CH; 28d. mhéndúighthe C, mhénduighthe H; 29a. fhúil H, bhriainaigh CH; 29b. aithl*ea*ghtha CH; 29c. guaisbheithre H, táil H; 29d. bleithe C, bleithe *arna athrú go* bleidhe H

30. F*ea*r f*air*e fhuinn an [Fh]org[h]ais,
glór soirbh gan ūid[h] n-iomarbhais,
dreach leathghoirthe neamhdhubh nár,
d*ea*lradh b*rea*thnoighthe an bhannál.

31. Neimhiongnadh dō an teisd thuillios
ar chrōdhacht nō *ar* chumoinnfhios,
ar chaithmhighe nō ar mhéin mhir
nō ar mhaithmhighe, an séimh suilbhir.

32. Na hairdheana is adhbhor tnúidh
frīoth iad a-niogh ó nā[dúir]
fán gcrích réidh sliomacroigh saoir
d'f[h]ion*n*achtoin 'na mhēin ma[caoimh].

33. Ríoghfhuil chródha chin*n* an Chlāir,
fuil āirmh*ea*ch iarl*a* Gabhrāin
frīoth 'na ghnūis ti[o]rmnaoighil te,
cūis ionmhaoidhimh a n-uaisle.

34. Géag do Bhrianfhuil bhruaich Shion*n*a,
d'f[h]uil Chais is chrú Oiliolla,
iarsma daighmhēine d'f[h]uil Airt
is d'f[h]uil ghlainphréimhe Gh*ea*railt.

30. Watchman of the land of the River Fergus, pleasant voice who does not care for transgression, rosy-cheeked innocent modest face, bright turner of women's heads.

31. The reputation that he is earning for bravery or for knowledge of friendship, for lavishness or for impetuous nature, or for forgiveness, is no surprise for this pleasant gentleman.

32. The characteristics which inspire envy around the level, smooth-acred, noble territory have been found today as a natural part of his youthful spirit.

33. The brave royal blood of the leader of Clare [and] the renowned blood of the earl of Gabhrán have been found in his dry young bright warm face; their nobility is something to celebrate.

34. A branch of the O'Brien's bloodline from Shannonside, from the blood of Cas and the stock of Oilill, a goodwilled survivor of the bloodline of Art, and of the pure bloodline of the Fitzgeralds.

30a. fhuind CH; 30b. uidh H; 30d. ~~ar chródhacht~~ *ag tús na líne* C, ~~d~~br*ea*thnoighthe H, bhandál C, bhandal H; 31a. dho H; 31b. chródhacht H, cumoin*n*fhíos C, cumoin*n*fhios H; 31c. caithmhithe C, caithmhithe H, nó *air* H, mhír CH; 31d. nó H, mhaithmhighthe CH, an tséimh tsuilbhir C, an ts<…> ts<..>lbhir H; 32. *Níl an rann seo in C agus tugaim é ó H amháin.* 32a. hairrgh*ea*na H; 32c. réigh H; 33a. chláir H; 33c. fríoth H; 33d. ionmaoidhimh H; 34b. cais H, oill*iol*la CH

35. Síol Aodha, gríobha an ghaisgidh,
is crú Chearbhuill chianaisdrigh
fillte a n-aoin[fhe]a*cht* 'na dhreich ndil
is saoidheacht ag breith b[h]isigh.

36. Ua Chathaoir Mhóir ó Mhoigh Mháil
's ua na n-iarl*adh* ón fhion*n*Mháigh,
deaghua Tāil is Ēibhir Fhin*n*,
táin le n-éirigh a in*n*tin*n*.

37. Biaidh, ó Thadhg M*a*c Con Mara,
an chríoch bheinnréidh bhraontana
gan f[h]ear formuid *ar* a fud
nā fear comhruig re gcomhrug.

35. The descendants of Aodh, valorous warriors, and Cearbhall's well-travelled bloodline, along with ever-progressing wisdom, are [all] blended together in his beloved face.

36. Descendant of Cathaoir Mór from Magh Máil, and descendant of the earls from the clear [River] Maigue, great descendant of Tál and of Éibhear Fionn, great people who raise his spirits.

37. Because of Tadhg Mac Con Mara, the land of smooth peaks and shallow waters will have neither an envious man anywhere in her, nor a man of battle preparing for battle.

35a. siol H, na gaisge C, an ghaisge H; 35d. shaoidh*eacht* C; 36a. máil H; 36c. táil is éibhir H; 36d. le anéirigh C, le néiridh H; 37a. thaidgh C, thaidhg H, conmhara CH; 37b. bhéinréigh C, bheinréigh H; 37d. comhruic CH, re ccomrug C

Nótaí

1d. Tugann an chéad líne den dán seo roinnt dánta eile chun cuimhne: *Rug cobhair ar chóir Gaoidheal* (a cumadh sa séú haois déag, *ABM* 406); *Rug cabhair ar chlár mBanbha* (seachtú haois déag, *ABM* 404); *Rug cobhair ar Chonallchaibh* (seachtú haois déag, *ABM* 407; Knott 1928: 70–7; agus luaite ag Simms (2025: 24) ina liosta dánta ar dócha gur dánta oirnithe iad in éineacht leis an dán atá faoi chaibidil agam anseo); agus *Rug cosnamh ar chrích Midhe* (seachtú haois déag, *ABM* 408). Féach samplaí eile de línte tosaigh gaolmhara ag Breatnach (1997: 28–44).

2d. *Oilill*: Athair Chormaic Chais ab ea Oilill Ólom.

4d. *tí tárroidh*: D'fhéadfaí aistriúcháin éagsúla a thabhairt air seo: 'the one she catches' (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *tárr(th)aigid*), mar shampla, nó 'the one she finds' (*eDIL* s.v. *do-airret, do-áirret* I (d)).

5a. *suan na heilte*: Codlaíonn eilití in áiteanna atá sábháilte dóibh. Glacaim leis gurb é atá i gceist ag an bhfile ná go gcodlaíonn Eachtgha anois agus í in áit shábháilte agus nach gá di a bheith buartha faoina hanbhuain toisc go gcosnóidh Tadhg í.

É sin ráite, tuiscint eile ar fhianna ná go gcodlaíonn siad in eatraimh ghearra. Uaireanta ní chodlaíonn siad ach ar feadh cúpla nóiméad ag an am, agus bíonn siad airdeallach fós agus iad ina gcodladh. Is dócha gur ag tarraingt ar an íomhá seo a bhí Cormac Ruadh Ó hUiginn sa dán cáinte *Iomdha teachtaire i dtigh Dé*:

> Cridhe san aird-sin níor fhéagh
> tairgsin a thighe do thúr
> suan an fhiadha is é bhar suan
> gan luadh riara Dé na ndúl.
>
> 'No heart in that Order thought of striving to win God's House – not to mention serving Him; but Thy sleep is as the sleep of the deer!' (*Dán Dé* 23.29 agus nóta)

5c. *craoi Chuirc*: Conall Corc, nó Corc mac Luigthigh, sinsear Eóghanacht. Luaitear é i líne 11c chomh maith.

5d. *d'fhobhair*[*t*]: Níl mórán samplaí de *fobhairt* sa gciall 'salve' feicthe agam. Féach cúpla sampla de ag *eDIL* s.v. *fobairt* II.

7a. Glacaim le léamh H anseo, *na dtrágh dtair*[*th*]*each* in ionad *ttrath* (= na dtráth, is dócha; léamh C) toisc gur íomhá choitianta í an trá thorthúil i bhfilíocht na scol (féach trácht ar an *tráigh tharaidh* sa dán *Le dís cuirthear clú Laighean* ón séú haois déag in Ó Raghallaigh 2006: 2c agus nóta, mar shampla). Féach gur féidir *oirear* (líne d) a thuiscint mar 'coast' nó 'shore' freisin (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *airer* (a)). Níl aon cheantar farraige ag críoch Chlann Chuiléin, ach d'fhéadfadh tránna na n-aibhneacha agus na lochanna a bheith i gceist. Dá nglacfaí le *tráth* (léamh C), d'fhéadfaí 'Clann Chuiléin of the fertile times' a thabhairt mar aistriúchán ar an líne.

7d. *Éibhear*: Éibhear Fionn, mac Mhíle Easpáine, ar tugadh an taobh theas den tír dó. Luaitear é i líne 36c den dán seo chomh maith.

8a. Tá léamha na LSí lochtach anseo toisc nach bhfuil comhardadh slán ann idir an rinn agus airdrinn *cruaidhgheal* : *orduighthe*ar. Tá *cruaidhgheal* athraithe agam go *cruithgheal*, mar a mholann eagarthóirí *ABM* (dán 405, nótaí lch 709). Ní féidir a bheith cinnte faoi seo ach ní fheicim aon réiteach eile air.

9c. *craobh cheōil*: Is dócha gur tagairt í seo d'uirlis cheoil ar leith (féach *eDIL* s.v. *cráeb* (c)). Féach, mar shampla, an líne *Ní raibh ó sheinm na gcraobh gciúil go … nár libh uaimse an ealodhna* 'There is no art, from playing the musical branches to …, that thou didst not get from me' (*TD* 14.7, agus nóta). Tuairimíonn Knott go bhfuil seans ann gurb ionann an chraobh cheoil seo agus an chraobh a luaitear sna seanscéalta. Féach tagairt eile sa rann seo:

Ná déin dearmod don chraoibh chiuil
deargchláruidh thirim thaighiuir
uallanach bhogghothach bhinn
is suanán codalta dh'intinn.

'Forget not the musical branch, red-timbered, dry, tuneful, wailing,
soft-voiced, sweet, a slumberous lullaby to the heart.' (*IBP* 46.8)

9d. *doirbhdhrithle*: Is minic a luaitear drithle nó crithir le pátrún sa bhfilíocht. Féach, mar shampla, na línte seo ón dán *Beannacht uaim-se go hAilín*, ina molann an file bean an phátrúin, Doireann iníon Chathail Uí Chonchubhair: *drithle dan dú grádh is gean,* / *smál ar a clú ní cluintear* 'spark whom it is proper to grow fond of and love, no one hears of her fame besmirched' (Ó Muireadhaigh 1970: 31cd); agus na línte a leanas ina moltar Eoghan Óg Mac Suibhne: *sás fighthe chogaidh ó gCuinn,* / *drithle i gcogail ó gConuill* 'one fit to wage war for Conn's descendants, a spark in the embers for Conall's race' (*TD* 26.24cd); féach chomh maith an nóta ag Ó Raghallaigh (2010: rainn 1–13, nóta).

10a. *Inis an Laoigh*: Is seanainm é seo ar Chluain Rámhfhada, an áit a bhfuil Inis inniu (*Onom.* s.n. *inis an laoicc*, §18124; Ní Úrdail 2004: 9a, nóta).

10c. *Tál*: Tál Cas mac Chonaill Eachluaith, rí Thuamhan.

12d. *Cas*: Glacaim leis gur tagairt é seo do Chormac Cas mac Oilealla Óloim, a luaitear i línte 2d agus 12b.

14c. 'A smooth, pleasant-sided cheek' an t-aistriúchán litriúil a thabharfainn ar *gruaidh thaobhshoirbhréidh*.

15d. Tá *áirgibh* (léamha) athraithe agam go *aircibh* anseo ar mhaithe le ciall an rainn.

16b. *An Bóraimhe*: Tá an áit seo lonnaithe i mbaile fearainn Bhaile Uí Mhothla, i bparóiste Chill Dalua, i mbarúntacht na Tulaí Íochtaraí. Baintear úsáid aisti uaireanta mar thagairt do chríoch Uí Bhriain i gcoitinne. Féach *HDGP* fasc. 5, 162; agus *Onom.* s.n. *bóraime*, §4570.

17c. 'Never suffered the wounding of his cheek' an t-aistriúchán litriúil a dhéanfainn ar *nar fhuloing goin a ghrua*[*i*]*dh*, is é sin 'never satirised' nó 'never embarrassed'.

17d. *Craobhruadh*: teach rí Uladh, Conchubhar mac Neasa.

18–23. San apalóg seo, insítear leagan den scéal Rúraíochta ina bhfuil na hUltaigh faoi chois an cheasa naoidhean fad is a bhíonn Cú Chulainn ag cosaint Chúige Uladh leis féin. Faightear leaganacha den scéal seo i roinnt dánta i bhfilíocht na scol. Féach, mar shampla, na dánta *Maith bhur bhfíor gcatha, a chlann Róigh* (*ABM* 316) agus *Ursa an choguidh críoch Laighean* (*LBranach* dán 51).

21cd. Nílim cinnte faoi *nd*e*a*s agus *f*e*a*s na lámhscríbhinní sna línte seo (féach an nóta ar *feas* sa réamhrá teanga). Tá *nd*e*a*s athraithe agam go *n-eas* toisc

nach bhfuil aon sampla eile de *deas* mar seo feicthe agam agus nach féidir liom ciall a bhaint as. Feictear [*áit*] *na n-eas mbinn* mar chur síos ar cheantar go coitianta i bhfilíocht na scol. Glacaim le *feas* san eagrán, ach bheadh ciall le *béas* freisin, féach go raibh *bhfeas* sa dá LS ó thús. Ní bheadh comhardadh slán idir *béas* agus *n-eas* ach d'fhéadfadh *ndéas* a bheith i gceist i líne c chomh maith, agus d'fhéadfaí aistriúchán ar nós 'land of the splendid light-covered ears of corn, a custom which was weary on the mind' (*eDIL* s.v. 1 *días* I), nó 'land of the splendid spear points with bright flags, a custom which was weary on the mind' (*DIL* s.v. 1 *días* II) a thabhairt ar an leathrann.

22c. *gan mhóid mir*: Is é 'without rash protest' nó 'without quick objection' an t-aistriúchán litriúil a thabharfainn air seo (*eDIL* s.v. *móit* (c)).

22d. *Oileach*: Suíomh ríoga Ó Néill: féach *Onom.* s.n. *ailech*, §638; Tierney 2003; agus 'Grianán Ailigh', logainm #111188 ar líne:
https://www.logainm.ie/111188.aspx (ceadaíodh 26 Meitheamh 2025).

23. Go bhfios dom, ní gnáthchuid de scéal na *Tána* é seo: cé gur minic a luaitear fuil Chú Chulainn sa *Táin* (féach, mar shampla, *TBC LL* ll. 3338–4 agus ll. 4787–93), ní luaitear go ndáileann sé a fhuil mar leigheas sa gcaoi seo. Is dócha go bhfuil an íomhá seo ag eascairt as allagóire Críostaí. Tugann sé seo an scéal faoin bpeileacán, a sheasann d'íobairt Chríost, chun cuimhne. Is siombail de chuid na Críostaíochta é an peileacán a fhaightear go forleathan i mbrúdlanna agus in ealaín Chríostaí. Sa scéal seo, gortaíonn an peileacán é féin agus cothaíonn sé a ghearrcaigh lena chuid fola féin. Féach go n-insítear an scéal seo in apalóg sa dán *Fada re hurchóid Éire* le hEochaidh Ó hEódhasa (*ABM* 229; Ó Caithnia 1984: 203). Seans go bhfuil an file ag cuimhneamh ar leagan den scéal sin.

23cd. Ní thuigim *mhil*e*aschná* ná *inéischrá* na LSí, agus níl comhardadh slán eatarthu. Tá siad athraithe agam go *milioschnó* agus *inioschró* ar mhaithe leis an meadaracht agus le ciall an rainn (féach an réamhrá teanga).

23d. *Feidhlim*: Feidhlimidh Reachtmhar, athair Choinn Chéadchathaigh, b'fhéidir. Féach go n-aistrítear *fiadh Féilimidh* mar Éire nó mar Chúige Uladh uaireanta (Hoyne 2018: nóta ar 4.3cd). Is mar *Ireland* a aistríonn Hoyne é seo. Féach *Fonn Féilim* agus *Clár Féilim* 'Ireland' in *TD* 10.33 agus 15.9 agus *fuil Fheidhlim* 'the men of Ireland' in *TD* 10.4.

24ab. B'fhéidir go bhféadfaí *fóir do* sa rann seo a thuiscint mar 'help with/by means of' agus an t-aistriúchán 'Cú Chulainn of the javelin used to help by spilling Íor's famous blood' a thabhairt ar na línte seo chomh maith.

24b. *fuil oirdhreicÍr*: Is é sin, muintir Uladh. Lonnaigh sliocht Ír i gCúige Uladh.

27b. *mac Áine*: Is tagairt í seo do mháthair Thaidhg, Áine Ní Bhriain, iníon le Toirdhealbhach Carrach Ó Briain Ára.

28c. *téagairthe*: Glacaim leis gur comhfhocal é seo (*téagar*, *eDIL* s.v. *técar* + *te*), féach sampla eile den chomhfhocal seo in *a threabh théagairthe* (*DiD* 97.1d).

29–30. Is coitianta sa bhfilíocht an cineál codarsnachta a fhaightear sna rainn seo: Bíonn Tadhg dian agus dainséarach i leith cogaidh nó namhad, ach lách agus caomh i leith ban. Féach trácht ar áilleacht an phátrúin agus ar a mhealltacht i meon na mban i bhfilíocht na scol ag McManus (2009: 77–81, go háirithe 81; 85–100).

30c. *dreach leathghoirthe*: 'half-heated face' an t-aistriúchán litriúil a thabharfainn air seo. Is dócha gurb é 'rosy-cheeked' nó 'healthy-looking' atá i gceist ag an bhfile, bua a shamhlaítear le pátrúin go minic sa bhfilíocht.

31b. *cumoinnfhios*: Maidir le téama an chairdis i bhfilíocht na scol, an fhealsúnacht a bhaineann leis, cúlra agus comhthéacs na smaointeoireachta seo, agus tionchar an Renaissance, féach Ó Corráin (2014).

33b. *iarla Gabhráin*: Is dócha gur tagairt é seo do na Buitléaraigh, a raibh Tadhg gaolta leo trína shin-seanmháthair ar thaobh a athar. Mór Ní Bhriain ab ainm dá sheanmháthair ar an taobh sin, iníon le Helena Buitléir (†1597), iníon le Piaras Buitléir (†1539), ochtú hIarla Urumhan, an fear dár cumadh an dán *Mó sa chách clú Buitlérach* (*PB* dán 2). Féach go dtugtar *iarla Gabhráin* ar Thomás de Buitléir (†1614) sa dán *Eólach mé ar mheirge an iarla* (*PB* 15.47).

33c. *gnúis tiormnaoighil*: Tá *gnúis thirim* neamhghnách mar mholadh ach glacaim leis gurb é atá i gceist ag an bhfile ná nach mbíonn Tadhg ag cur allais.

34a. Bhí Tadhg gaolta le muintir Bhriain trína mháthair, Áine Ní Bhriain, agus trí mháthair a athar, Mór Ní Bhriain.

34d. *Gearalt*: Ba Ghearaltach (duine de theaghlach Iarlaí Dheasumhan) í sin-sin-seanmháthair Thaidhg, Mairghréag Nic Gearailt (†1542), a phós Piaras Buitléir, ochtú hIarla Urumhan (féach thuas).

35a. *Síol Aodha*: Is dócha gur tagairt é seo d'Aodh Aghar mac Éanna, sinsear de chuid mhuintir Mhic Chon Mara (Ó Muraíle 2003: 1343.6; 1343.1, 3).

35b. *crú Chearbhuill*: Seans go raibh Tadhg gaolta le muintir Chearbhaill ar thaobh a mháthar. Ba é Toirdhealbhach Carrach mac Toirdhealbhaigh Uí Bhriain Ára (as Contae Thiobraid Árann) a sheanathair ar an taobh sin. Bhí tailte ag fréamh de na Cearbhallaigh i ngar don fhréamh Bhrianach seo. Maidir le tagairtí do shinsearacht mháthair an phátrúin i bhfilíocht na scol, féach McManus (2015: passim).

35. Féach sampla eile den íomhá seo de dhá theaghlach a bheith ag teacht le chéile sa bpátrún sa dán *Mairidh teine i dteallach Ghaoidheal* do Rudhraighe Caoch Ó Mórdha (tiarna Laoise, 1542–7): *Cuisle uaibhreach d'fhíonfhuil Chearbhaill / tre chrú gConaill chosnas bladh* 'A proud stream of the noble blood of Cearbhall mingles with the blood of Conall [Cearnach] which upholds fame' (Ó Raghallaigh 2010: 46ab agus nóta).

36a. *Cathaoir Mór*: Ard-rí na hÉireann.

36a. *Magh Máil*: Tá an mhá seo idir an Bhearú agus an Fheoir, thart ar bharúntacht Ghabhráin i gContae Chill Chainnigh (*TD* 17.39, nóta; *Onom.* s.n. *mag mail*, §20896).

36c. *Tál*: Tál Cas. Luaitear é i líne 10c chomh maith.

36c. *Éibhear Fionn*: Éibhear Fionn mac Mhíle Easpáine; féach líne 7d.

37d. *re gcomhrug*: Tá *re* na líne seo á thuiscint agam mar *ré/ ria* (*eDIL* s.v. 6 *ré, ria*) de dheasca an uraithe a bheith ar *comhrug* sna lámhscríbhinní, agus tá sé aistrithe agam mar 'preparing for (.i. before) battle', mar sin. Dá mbeadh *re* sa gciall *le* i gceist, d'fheadfaí 'engaged in battle' a thabhairt mar aistriúchán air seo.

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RIA Cat.	T. F. O'Rahilly, K. Mulchrone, et al., *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin and London, 1926–70).
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Ciara Ní Mhurchú

Léann na Gaeilge, Ollscoil Luimnigh

IRISH *CAITHNE* 'ARBUTUS' AND THE PLACE-NAME *DERRYNACAHNEY*

Abstract

There has been recent discussion as to whether the arbutus (Latin *Arbutus unedo*, Irish *caithne*) is native to Ireland or an early introduction from Iberia. In this article, I summarise the linguistic and literary evidence. I suggest that the existence of the place-name Derrynacahney – which I take to be an anglicisation of *Doire na caithne* 'the oak-wood of the arbutus' – on the slopes of Slieve Aughty, Co. Clare, can be viewed as evidence in favour of the native status of this tree.[1]

In recent times there has been a growth of interest in the planting of native Irish trees for the sake of their beauty, their uses and their contribution to the health of the environment. This has helped to focus attention on references to trees in Irish-language sources. In the early language the most important source is the OIr law-text *Bretha Comaithcheso* 'judgements on neighbourhood', recently edited by Thomas Charles-Edwards.[2] It contains a list of twenty-eight species of tree and shrub, arranged in four groups in accordance with their economic importance: the seven 'nobles of the wood' (*airig fedo*), the seven 'commoners of the wood' (*aithig fedo*), the seven 'lower classes of the wood' (*fodlai fedo*) and the seven 'shrubs of the wood' (*losae fedo*). The text provides information on the fines which are imposed for the total or partial destruction of these trees or shrubs.[3]

In the earlier versions of the text, the *caithne* 'arbutus, strawberry tree' (botanical name *Arbutus unedo*) is included among the 'lower classes of the wood'.[4] The other trees in this category are blackthorn (*draigen*), elder (*trom*), spindle (*féorus*), whitebeam (*findcholl*), aspen (*crithach*), and juniper(?) (*crann*

[1]I wish to thank Daniel L. Kelly (Botany, Trinity College Dublin), and Michael O'Connell (Department of Botany, National University of Ireland Galway) for providing me with crucial botanical advice during the preparation of this article. I am indebted to Pádraig Ó Macháin (Department of Modern Irish, University College Cork) for help in elucidating the manuscript tradition of the EModIr poem *Sgéul ar dhiamhair na suirghe* 'a tale about the mystery of courtship'. I am also grateful to an external reader, and to the editors of *Celtica* for their valuable input. I am alone responsible for any errors or misjudgements.

[2]Thomas Charles-Edwards (ed. and trans.), *Bretha Comaithcheso: An Old-Irish Law Tract on Neighbouring Farms*, Early Irish Law Series 9 (Dublin, 2022).

[3]Charles-Edwards, *Bretha Comaithcheso*, 154–7 §§34–37; cf. Fergus Kelly, 'The Old Irish tree-list', *Celtica* 11 (1976), 107–24.

[4]The arbutus is included in the versions at *CIH* i 79.6 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS B 487, fol. 67r), *CIH* i 203.9 (Dublin, TCD MS E 3.5, p. 5b), *CIH* v 1857.38 (Dublin, TCD MS H 3. 17, col. 309).

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https://doi.org/10.58480/SCS-dprwn-dptmp

fir).[5] The appearance of the arbutus in this tree-list is of interest for many reasons. The available evidence suggests that *Bretha Comaithcheso* was composed in the late seventh century in the Armagh area as part of the ambitious legal compilation known as the *Senchas Már* 'great tradition'.[6] Botanical studies have indicated that the arbutus is unlikely ever to have grown naturally in central or eastern Ireland. In their account of this tree, J. R. Sealy and D. A. Webb note that 'the northern limit of the Mediterranean and the eastern limit of its Atlantic distribution are determined apparently by winter temperature: the regions in which it can flourish and regenerate are almost entirely those in which the mean January temperature is above 40°F (4.5°C)'.[7] It is consequently remarkable that the author of *Bretha Comaithcheso* – most likely based in the north-east of the country – was aware of a tree which the pollen evidence shows to have been largely confined to the south-west. The inclusion of the arbutus in this text can be regarded as evidence for the country-wide application of Irish law in the Early Christian period.[8]

Whether the arbutus is indigenous or introduced has long been a subject of debate. In her study of the woodlands of Ireland, Eileen McCracken expressed the opinion that 'the arbutus or strawberry tree is probably a medieval importation by monks'.[9] In his *Irish Names of Places* Patrick Joyce took an opposing view: 'Some think that it was brought to Ireland from the continent by monks in the early stages of Christianity; but it is more generally believed to be indigenous; and it appears to me to be a strong argument in favour of this opinion, that we have a native name for it'.[10] It is certainly true that the OIr fem. *iā*-stem *caithne* is a native word with no known etymology,[11] and that it bears no relation to the words for 'arbutus' in other European languages.[12] The native status of arbutus has been accepted by many botanists. Pauline Van Rign carried out a study of arbutus charcoal at Ross Island, Killarney, and concluded that this charcoal can be dated broadly to between 2400 and 1900 BC. She notes that 'this provides the earliest secure evidence for the native character of the species'.[13] In their survey, 'Vegetation history in the Killarney

[5]For a discussion of the identification of *crann fir* as 'juniper', see Kelly, 'The Old Irish tree-list', 119–20.

[6]Liam Breatnach, *The Early Irish Law Text* Senchas Már *and the Question of its Date*, E. C. Quiggin Memorial Lecture 13 (Cambridge, 2011).

[7]J. R. Sealy and David Webb, 'Arbutus Unedo L.', *Journal of Ecology* 38 (1950) 223–36, at 226.

[8]Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, Early Irish Law Series 3 (Dublin, 1988; repr. with revised bibliography 2009), 242–3.

[9]Eileen McCracken, 'The woodlands of Ireland circa 1600', *Irish Historical Studies* 11/44 (September 1959), 271–96, at 280.

[10]Patrick W. Joyce, *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places*, 3 vols (Dublin and London, 1869, 1875, 1913), ii, 358–9.

[11]There is no entry for this word in Joseph Vendryes's OIr etymological dictionary (*LEIA*) nor in Julius Pokorny's *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (*IEW*).

[12]Greek *ἀνδράχνη*, Latin *arbutus*, Ital. *corbezzolo*, Fr. *arbousier*, Breton *gwez*(*enn*) *sivi*, Span. *alborto, madroño*, Port. *medronho*, Basque *gurbitza*, Arabic *quṭlub*.

[13]P. Van Rijn, 'Analysis of charcoal from Ross Island', in W. O'Brien (ed.), *Mining, Metal and Society in Early Ireland*, Bronze Age Studies 6 (Galway, 2004), 386–401, at 398.

valley', Fraser Mitchell and Tom Cooney accept Van Rijn's findings, which they state 'would appear to confirm the native status of this tree in Killarney'.[14]

However, botanists Micheline Sheehy Skeffington and Nick Scott have recently suggested that the arbutus in fact *was* introduced from the continent – but at a much earlier period than the coming of Christianity to this island. Before discussing their views, it is necessary to provide a brief summary of the present distribution of the arbutus in continental Europe and in Ireland. Its main range is in the Mediterranean area – particularly Spain, Portugal, and north-west Africa. It is present in Brittany, but is thought by some botanists to have been introduced to that region.[15] In Ireland, the arbutus is quite common in the area around the Killarney Lakes, Co. Kerry, and occurs sporadically in the Beara and Mizen peninsulas in West Cork. It is also to be found at a few locations by Lough Gill, Co. Sligo.[16] The general view among botanists has been that the arbutus belongs to the 'Lusitanian' flora of Ireland, i.e. a group of plants whose main habitat is in the Iberian peninsula, but which are also native to the west of Ireland.[17]

The theory put forward by Sheehy Skeffington and Scott is that copper miners from Spain introduced the arbutus to the Killarney area of Co. Kerry *c.* 2000 BC, and that it subsequently spread – or was brought – to other parts of the south-west.[18] They suggest that 'it could have been brought as a food source or even because the tree or fruit were important to their mining culture and/or tradition'.[19] The tree may have been coppiced for use in supplying charcoal for smelting copper ore. As the berries are eaten by a wide variety of birds, bird-distribution of the seeds of the arbutus could also have been a factor in its spread.[20] Sheehy Skeffington and Scott further note that fermentation naturally occurs in mature arbutus berries and that they are used as a source of alcohol in Mediterranean countries.[21] Writing in twelfth-century Seville,

[14]F. J. G. Mitchell and T. Cooney, 'Vegetation history in the Killarney valley', in W. O'Brien (ed.), *Mining, Metal and Society in Early Ireland*, Bronze Age Studies 6 (Galway, 2004), 481–93, at 490.

[15]Simone De Santis, Francesco Spada and Donatella Magri, 'Geographic range vs. occurrence records in plant distribution mapping: the case of *Arbutus* in the Old World', *Forests* 14/5 (2023), article no. 1010, pp. 1–17. https://doi.org/10.3390/f14051010 (accessed 22 April 2026).

[16]J. Parnell and T. Curtis, *Webb's Irish Flora*, 8th ed. (Cork, 2012) has the entry (p. 309): 'Wood margins and rocky lake-shores and islands; frequent near Killarney; very locally in a few other places in the south-west and, perhaps not native, by Lough Gill (County Sligo)'.

[17]Other examples include: Saint Patrick's Cabbage (*Saxifraga spathularis*) which grows in hilly regions of the west of Ireland, as well as in the mountains of northern Spain and Portugal; the Kerry Lily (*Simethis mattiazzii*), which grows in south-west Ireland, as well as in western France, Spain and Portugal, and in north-west Africa; Saint Dabeoc's Heath (*Daboecia cantabrica*) which grows in western Galway and western Mayo, as well as in western France, northern Spain and north-west Portugal.

[18]Micheline Sheehy Skeffington and Nick Scott, 'Is the Strawberry Tree, *Arbutus unedo* (Ericaceae), native to Ireland, or was it brought by the first copper miners?', *British and Irish Botany* 3/4 (2021), 385–418; Micheline Sheehy Skeffington and Nick Scott, 'The strawberry tree in Ireland: could botanical research help explain how Bronze Age culture came to Ireland?', *Archaeology Ireland* 36 (Summer 2022), 24–9.

[19]Sheehy Skeffington and Scott, 'Is the Strawberry Tree native to Ireland?', 406.

[20]Sheehy Skeffington and Scott, 'Is the Strawberry Tree native to Ireland?', 390.

[21]A spirit called 'Aguardente de Medronho' is distilled from arbutus berries in Portugal.

the Arab agronomist Ibn Al-'Awwâm provides evidence of the importance of the arbutus by devoting a chapter in his *Book of Agriculture* to the methods of its cultivation.[22]

Other botanists have expressed reservations about Sheehy Skeffington and Scott's explanation for the presence of the arbutus in Ireland. For example, Michael O'Connell and Anette Overland concede that 'phylogeographic studies of *Arbutus* and other Lusitanian species indicate close genetic relationships between the Iberian and Irish populations', but they hold that 'these fall far short of providing evidence for introductions by people at specific times and locations'. In spite of the long time-gap, the Irish place-name evidence is of some relevance to this debate. In his *Irish Names of Places*, Joyce records *caithne* 'arbutus' as an element in a number of place-names in southwestern Ireland, e.g. *Eisc na gCaithne* (angl. Iskanagahiny) 'the lake of the arbutuses' (Co. Kerry), *Abhainn na Caithne* (angl. Owenacahina), 'the river of the arbutus' (Co. Cork). With the diminutive suffix *-án*, it is to be found in *Caithneachán* (angl. *Cahnicaun*), lit. 'the little place of arbutuses', the name of a wood near Killarney, Co. Kerry. He remarks that in the neighbourhood of the Killarney lakes, 'even the English-speaking people call the berries of the arbutus *cain*-apples, though few or none of them suspect how this name took its rise'.[23]

Joyce also notes the place-name *Ard na Caithne* at Smerwick, Dingle Peninsula, Co. Kerry. This is in an area where the arbutus is not to be found at the present time. The earliest record of this name – in the spelling *Ardnecanny* – is in the Desmond Survey of 1584. In the Ordnance Survey Name Books (section 14, Dunurlin, Kerry, 1841) John O'Donovan takes the meaning to be 'the height of arbutus'. This explanation has been accepted by An Seabhac (Pádraig Ó Siochfhradha)[24] and by the editors of the *Historical Dictionary of Gaelic Placenames*.[25] A recent discovery by Michael O'Connell and Steffen Wolters is also of relevance: they have identified evidence for the presence of this tree at another location in the Dingle Peninsula. This is a fossil pollen record dated to 540 AD from Lough Adoon bog approximately 3 km south of Brandon Bay.[26]

However, in a contribution to the journal *Feasta* in 1983, Seán Ó Cinnéide challenged this interpretation of *Ard na Caithne* on a number of grounds.[27] He drew attention to the exposed nature of this place, and expressed doubt

[22]J.-J. Clément-Mullet (trans.), *Ibn al-'Awwâm, Le Livre de l'Agriculture: Kitâb al-Filâha* (Arles, France, 2000), 214–15 (chapter 7, §8).

[23]Joyce, *Irish Names of Places* (1875 ed.), ii, 358–9.

[24]An Seabhac (Pádraig Ó Siochfhradha), *Triocha-céad Chorca Dhuibhne: Log-ainmneacha agus an Seanchas* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1938), 100.

[25]Pádraig Ó Riain, Diarmuid Ó Murchadha and Kevin Murray (eds), *Historical Dictionary of Gaelic Placenames: Foclóir Stairiúil Áitainmneacha na Gaeilge* (ITS, London, 2003) fasc. 1, s.v. *Ard na Caithne.*

[26]Michael O'Connell and Steffen Wolters, 'Holocene flora, vegetation and land-use changes on Dingle Peninsula, Ireland, as reflected in pollen analytical, archaeological and historical records', *Diversity* 2025 17/7, 456.

[27]Seán Ó Cinnéide, 'Logainmneacha Duibhneacha', *Feasta* 38 (1983) 13–14. In a recent article in M. Ó Sé (ed.) *Séamus Ó Muircheartaigh: An Spailpín Fánach. Saol agus Saothar* (Baile an Fheirtéirigh 2025), 10–14, Breandán Ó Cíobháin has put forward the suggestion that the second element in the

that the arbutus could survive in such a location. He also noted that the local pronunciation is generally *Árd* (or *Árt*) *na Cainne*, and remarked that an epenthetic vowel /ə/ between the *-th-* and the *-n-* would be expected if the word were *caithne* 'arbutus'.[28] He refers to the entry in Dinneen's *Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla* s.v. *caithne* where it is stated that the word is 'pronounced as three syllables, *caithine*'. He further draws attention to the epenthetic vowel in the anglicised forms of place-names such as Iskanagahiny, mentioned above. He suggests that *cainne* in this place-name is gen. sg. of *cainneann*, a term for various cultivated species of *Allium* (the Onion family).[29] But there are counter-arguments to Ó Cinnéide's views. Sheehy Skeffington and Scott in fact regard the Smerwick location as favourable to the arbutus and comment that there are 'many suitable cliff ledges around the cove, particularly on the two headlands'. It is also open to question whether the headland at Smerwick would be a likely location for the cultivation of vegetables such as the garden onion or leek.

A similar place-name – not mentioned by Joyce – has been applied since medieval times to a religious site on the coast of Co. Limerick in the present parish of Kildimo. This is *Ard Caithne* 'the height of arbutus', variously rendered as Ardcatny, Ardcannie or Ardcathny in official records. For example, a 1464 account of the dues of the Diocese of Limerick refers to *prebende de Archanne*.[30] No arbutus has been found in this area. However, Sheehy Skeffington and Scott are of the opinion that soil conditions would be suitable for it to grow there.[31]

Joyce suggests that the name of the Co. Clare town of Quin (Ir. *Cuinche*) derives from *caithne.* In this I believe him to be mistaken, as the spelling *Cuinche* is well-attested in the early language, and is not liable to confusion with *caithne.*[32] In the *Historical Dictionary of Gaelic Placenames* two separate locations for *Cuinche* are identified.[33] Fourteen instances of the Co. Clare *Cuinche* are listed, going back to the thirteenth century. There is also an early instance of a place named *Cuinche* in the Cooley peninsula, Co. Louth. It occurs in a passage in the eighth-century *Táin Bó Cúailnge* 'the cattle-raid of Cooley', which describes Cú Chulainn's attempts to kill Queen Medb by hitting her with a stone. He throws the stone from *Cuinche*, which is described in a

place name Ard na Caithne may be a personal name, represented also in the form CATTINI on an Ogham stone in nearby Baile an Reannaigh.

[28]Thomas F. O'Rahilly, notes that 'in the groups *thl*, *thn*, *thr*, an epenthetic vowel is developed in some words in Munster Irish' (*Irish Dialects Past and Present, with Chapters on Scottish Gaelic and Manx* (Dublin, 1932; repr. 1972, 1988), 202).

[29]On these vegetables, see discussion at Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming: A Study Based Mainly on the Law-texts of the Seventh and Eighth Centuries AD*, Early Irish Law Series 4 (Dublin, 1997), 251–3.

[30]Michael Moloney, 'Obligationes pro Annatis Diocesis Limiricensis 1421–1519', *Archivium Hibernicum* 10 (1943) 104–62, at 121 §49.

[31]Sheehy Skeffington and Scott, 'Is the Strawberry Tree native to Ireland?', 403.

[32]I also believe Joyce to be mistaken in his view that the island of Quinsheen in Clew Bay, Co. Mayo, means 'little arbutus island' (*Irish Names of Places*, ii, 360).

[33]Pádraig Ó Riain, Kevin Murray and Emma Nic Cárthaigh (eds), *Historical Dictionary of Gaelic Placenames*, fasc. 6, 180–1, s.vv. *Cuinche* (1), *Cuinche* (2).

gloss as 'a hill' (*.i. slíab*). He misses his target and kills the queen's handmaid instead.[34] As noted at the beginning of this article, botanists do not believe that the arbutus is ever likely to have grown naturally in east or central Ireland, and it would not be expected to occur in the Cooley peninsula. I should add that no satisfactory etymology of the place-name *Cuinche* has yet been put forward.

There is another place-name which strongly suggests that the arbutus was to be encountered in Co. Clare in former times. This is Derrynacahney, which is included among the place-names referring to locations on the lower slopes of Slieve Aughty (ModIr *Eachtgha*, OIr *Echtge*), near Inchicronan Lough, Co. Clare. To my knowledge, no written Irish form of this name has been recorded, but it seems to be from *Doire na Caithne* 'the oak-wood of the arbutus'.[35] I know of no Irish word other than *caithne* 'arbutus' which is likely to be anglicized as *cahney* in the name of a wood. In an article entitled 'The forests of the counties of the Lower Shannon Valley', T. J. Westropp made a study of the evidence provided in the written records for the existence of extensive woodland in this part of Co. Clare. He refers to 'an enormous oak forest that, even in the fourteenth century and certainly down to Tudor times, ran round the flanks of Aughty, and covered the lower slopes of its hills from Crusheen and Inchicronan lake eastward. The districts in which the "Derry" names are crowded are as a rule devoid of forts, dolmens, castles, and churches, and so were probably from the earliest times to the fifteenth century uninhabited woodland'.[36] He records the existence of some fifty such Derry names – including Derrynacahney – and provides a map showing their locations.[37] The Irish word *doire* is well-attested at all periods of the Irish language. The earliest spelling is *daire*, a derivative of *dair* (*daur*) 'oak', with *io*-suffix.[38] In the seventh-century Life of Columba by Adamnán the place-name *Daire Calgaich* 'the oak-wood of Calgach' – the original name for the site of the monastery of Derry – is latinised as *Roboretum*

[34]Cecile O'Rahilly (ed. and trans.), *Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension I* (Dublin, 1976; repr. 2006), 30.969.

[35]I should record that Sheehy Skeffington and Scott, 'Is the Strawberry Tree native to Ireland?', 403, regard it as extremely unlikely that this wood ever contained *Arbutus unedo*. I should also add that neither Westropp nor Joyce identified Derrynacahney as containing the tree-name *caithne*, so neither should be held accountable if my suggested identification proves to be untenable!

[36]Thomas Johnson Westropp, 'The forests of the counties of the Lower Shannon Valley', *PRIA* 27 C (1908–09), 270–300, at 278.

[37]On his map, he gives the spelling *Derrynacahney*, whereas in the text of his article he has *Derrynacaheny* with the epenthetic vowel /ə/. See discussion above in relation to the place-name *Ard na Caithne* in the Dingle Peninsula.

[38]*LEIA* D-12 s.v. *dair, daur*. At *DIL* s.v. *daire*, it is taken to be a probable neuter *io*-stem, but the place-names listed by Edmund Hogan (*Onomasticon Goedelicum* (Dublin, 1910), 326–9) contain no case of nasalisation after this word. It seems better therefore to treat it as masc. In place-names it occasionally shows fem. inflection. This is indicated by forms such as fem. Derrywee (*Doire bhuidhe* 'yellow wood') beside masc. Derryboy (*Doire buidhe*) (P. W. Joyce, *Irish Names of Places*, iii, 293, 305). In the later language, *doire* is sometimes used in the general sense of 'grove, thicket', rather than specifically 'oak-wood', e.g. *doire āluinn d'ablaib cubra* 'a beautiful grove of sweet apples', *doireadha neannta* 'clumps of nettles' (*DIL* s.v. *daire* II).

Calgachi.[39] Here *roboretum* is a derivative of Latin *robur* (*robor*) 'hard tree or wood, oak'.[40]

In natural conditions, oak-woods often contain an understorey of other trees, or there may be stands of other trees here and there within the oak-wood.[41] This situation is sometimes reflected in place-names. For example, Westropp's map of the oak-forest of Aughty includes Derrynagullion (*Doire na gcuilleann* 'the oak-wood of the hollies'), Derrybehagh (*Doire beitheach* 'the oak-wood of birches') and Derrynaskeagh (*Doire na sceach* 'the oak-wood of the whitethorns').[42] Elsewhere in Ireland there is a number of examples of *Doire* in combination with (*f*)*uinnseann* 'ash', e.g. Derryfunshion (*Doire fuinnseann* 'the oak-wood of ashes'), Derranafunchin (*Doire na fuinnseann* 'the oak-wood of the ash').[43] Other trees also feature, e.g. Derrylavan (*Doire leamháin* 'the oak-wood of elm'), Derrysillagh (*Doire saileach* 'the oak-wood of willow').[44]

I turn now to consider what evidence can be gleaned from Irish verse and prose texts which might cast light on the distribution of the arbutus in historical times. As we have seen, the seventh-century author of the tree-list in the law-text *Bretha Comaithcheso* was sufficiently well-informed to include the arbutus among the 'lower classes of the wood', even though he was probably based in the north-east of Ireland where this tree is unlikely ever to have grown in the wild. In some later versions of the tree-list, the arbutus has been omitted. Thus, legal commentary from around the twelfth century has *eidlenn* (*féithlenn*) instead of *caithne*.[45] This word refers to the honeysuckle or woodbine (*Lonicera periclymenum*), a common woody climber which sometimes reaches considerable dimensions, but is of little economic worth.[46] Presumably, the legal commentator was unacquainted with the arbutus, and substituted a less valuable woody plant with which he was familiar. The version of the tree-list in the OIr grammatical text *Auraicept na nÉces* likewise has the honeysuckle in place of the arbutus.[47]

Both the other attestations of *caithne* cited in *DIL* occur in material relating to the supernatural people known as *Tuatha Dé Danann*, whose home was in the Otherworld (*Tír Tairngire* 'the Promised Land').[48] The text entitled *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* 'The pursuit of Diarmaid and Gráinne' – most probably composed from earlier material in the fourteenth century – describes how the *Fianna* (a war-band led by the warrior Fionn Mac Cumhaill)

[39] *A Roboreto Calgachi* (*Thes.* ii 272.44; A. O. and M. O. Anderson (eds and trans.), *Vita Sancti Columbae: Adomnán's Life of Columba* (London, 1961; repr. Oxford, 1991) bk. 1, ch. 2, f. 6a).

[40] C. T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1933), s.v. *robur*.

[41] Daniel L. Kelly, 'The native forest vegetation of Killarney, south-west Ireland: an ecological account', *Journal of Ecology* 69/2, 437–72.

[42] Westropp, 'The forests of the Lower Shannon Valley', 278.

[43] Joyce, *Irish Names of Places*, iii, 295, 300.

[44] Joyce, *Irish Names of Places*, iii, 298, 303.

[45] *CIH* i 202.29–30; ii 582.18.

[46] *DIL* s.v. *féithlenn*.

[47] George Calder (ed. and trans.), *Auraicept na nÉces: The Scholars' Primer* (Edinburgh, 1917), 90.1156; 232.4250.

[48] *DIL* s.v. *caithne*.

found themselves in the vicinity of the *Tuatha Dé Danann* at *Gleann Fleisge* (Glenflesk, Co. Kerry). The provisions which the latter brought from their home in the Otherworld consisted of *cnódha corcra agus ubhla caitne agus caora cubhartha* 'purple nuts and arbutus apples and fragrant berries'.[49] Later in this passage, we are told that *caora cubhartha* refer to the berries of the *caorthann* (mountain ash or rowan, *Sorbus aucuparia*), and that they had magical qualities. The text has nothing further to say about the 'purple nuts' or 'arbutus apples'. It is noteworthy that the encounter takes place in the Glenflesk area of Co. Kerry, now the main home of the arbutus. However – as Sheehy Skeffington and Scott point out – the author of the text regards these three fruits as having originated in another land.[50]

There is also an association between the *Tuatha Dé Danann* and the arbutus in a poem of the EModIr period which is included without translation in T. F. O'Rahilly's *Dánta Grádha* 'poems of love'.[51] In one manuscript it is attributed to Muiris mac Dáibhi Dhuibh mac Gearailt.[52] In this light-hearted composition the poet sets out various methods by which women were wooed in early Irish literature in what he terms the 'mystery of courtship' (*diamhair na suirghe*). In some cases, the poet's likely source can be identified. Thus, in quatrain 2 he refers to the love-affair of Diarmaid and Gráinne as recounted in *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* cited above. In q. 4 he describes the kisses which Naoise bestowed on Deirdre on his return from hunting. This harks back to the OIr tale *Loinges mac nUislenn* 'the exile of the sons of Uisliu', which records the ill-fated elopement of this couple.[53] In q. 3 he refers to Cú Chulainn's courtship of a Greek woman through his ability to close up one eye to vanishing point (*is leis do rinneadh an sméideadh*).[54] This strange method of beguiling the opposite sex is also to be encountered in the ninth-century *Serglige Con Culainn* 'the

[49]Standish Hayes O'Grady (ed. and trans.), *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmuda agus Ghráinne, or, The Pursuit after Diarmuid O'Duibhne, and Gráinne, Transactions of the Ossianic Society for the year 1855*, vol. 3 (Dublin, 1857), 118.14–15; Nessa Ní Shéaghdha (ed. and trans.), *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne: The Pursuit of Diarmaid and Gráinne*, ITS 48 (Dublin, 1967) 52.898–9. For discussion of the date of the text, see Ní Shéaghdha, *Tóruigheacht*, Introduction, x–xiv.

[50]Sheehy Skeffington and Scott, 'Is the Strawberry Tree native to Ireland?', 406. Their suggestion that *cródha corcra* 'purple nuts' could refer to the Spanish chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) is certainly worth considering. *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* is a romantic tale where botanical accuracy is not to be expected. However, there may have been an awareness of the existence on the Continent of an edible nut, larger than the familiar hazelnut. The adj. *corcra* is applied to a wide variety of colours, ranging from deep purple to crimson: it could well have been employed to describe the reddish-brown hue of the Spanish chestnut.

[51]Tomás Ó Rathile, *Dánta Grádha*, 2nd ed. (Dublin and Cork, 1926), 8–9. His source is Maynooth MS M86 (a) (4 A 11), pp. 22–5. Versions of this poem are to be found in many other MSS. Eight versions are listed in Kathleen Mulchrone and Elizabeth FitzPatrick (assisted by A. I. Pearson), *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy: Index I* (Dublin, 1948), 505.36–8. Three versions are listed in the index of first lines in T. K. Abbott and E. J. Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin, 1921), 398 s.v. *Sgéul ar dhiamhair na suirghe.*

[52]RIA MS 23 G 23 (256), p. 190.

[53]Vernam Hull (ed. and trans.), *Loinges mac n-Uislenn: The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu* (New York, London, 1949); Whitley Stokes (ed. and trans.), 'The Death of the Sons of Uisnech', *Irische Texte mit Übersetzungen und Wörterbuch* (eds Wh. Stokes and E. Windisch), II.2 (Leipzig, 1887), 109–78.

[54]References to Greece and Greeks are quite common in the literature, especially in tales of

wasting sickness of Cú Chulainn', though in this case it is the women who make the advances: the Ulsterwomen who loved Cú Chulainn would close one eye in the manner of their hero.[55] The same tale may be the source of the account in q. 5 of Uaithne, son of Conall Cearnach, who twisted his neck (*claonadh an mhuiníl*) so as to attract female attention. This procedure is to be compared with the manner in which the Ulsterwomen who loved Conall Cernach adopted a crooked stance in imitation of the object of their affection.[56]

I have found no early source claiming a role for the fruit of the arbutus in courtship, as described in q. 6. Here the poet speaks of the liaisons of Ábhartach mac Ioldathaigh, a noble of the *Tuatha Dé Danann.* In his edition O'Rahilly renders the second couplet of this quatrain as: *le hubhlaibh na gcrann gcaithne / is leis do caitheadh an bhantracht* which might be translated 'with apples of the arbutus trees, it is by him that the women were seduced'. This doubtless refers to the supernatural associations of the fruit of the arbutus, as described in *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne.* Evidently, the tasting of these fruits assisted Ábhartach in his seduction of various unnamed women, and was regarded as having an aphrodisiac effect upon them. In another version of the poem the MS has *do mhealladh* '[the women] were beguiled' in place of *do caitheadh.*[57]

I should finally mention some negative documentary evidence which indicates that the arbutus was never an abundant tree on this island. The MIr tale *Aidedh Ferghusa* 'the death of Fergus' lists fifteen trees and shrubs which should not be burnt, but makes no mention of the arbutus.[58] Similarly, the tenth-century tale *Buile Ṡuibne* 'the madness of Sweeney' contains a poem extolling the characteristics of fourteen species of tree and shrub, but does not include the arbutus.[59] From approximately the twelfth century a legal commentator provides examples of two categories of wild fruit: those which are sweet (*cumra*) and those which are coarse (*fiadain*).[60] The fruit of the arbutus does not appear under either heading. Official English documents of the Elizabethan period likewise indicate the absence of the arbutus from

the Finn Cycle, see Gerard Murphy, *Duanaire Finn: The Book of the Lays of Fionn*, iii (Dublin, 1953), Index of Places and Populations, p. 402 s.v. *Gréig*.

[55]Myles Dillon (ed.), *Serglige Con Culainn*, Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series 14 (Dublin, 1953; repr. 1975), 2.42–4

[56]Ibid. 2.40.

[57]RIA MS 23 N 12 (488), p. 206. This version has: *is gur le hubhallaibh na ccrann ccaithne do mhealladh*, with omission of *an bhantracht.*

[58]Standish Hayes O'Grady (ed.), *Silva Gadelica: A Collection of Tales in Irish* (London, 1892), 245 (British Library MS Egerton 1782, fol. 30v). The fifteen trees and shrubs are – in the order presented in *Aidedh Ferghusa* – wild apple (*aball*), blackthorn (*draigen*), willow (*sail*), rowan (*cáerthann*), hazel (*call* (*coll*)), ash (*uinnsenn*), bramble (*dris*), oak (*dair*), alder (*fern*), whitethorn (*scé*), holly (*cuilenn*), elder (*trom*), birch (*beithe*), poplar (*crithach*), yew (*ibar*).

[59]J. G. O'Keeffe (ed.), *Buile Ṡuibhne*, Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series 1 (Dublin, 1931; repr. 1975), 35.972–36.1011. A series of fourteen trees and shrubs very similar to that of *Aidedh Ferghusa* is to be found in this poem in *Buile Ṡuibhne.* There is no mention of the willow or elder, but ivy (*eidhinn*) is included at l. 908.

[60]*CIH* v 1874.13–14. The sweet wild fruit are blackberries (*sméra*), bilberries (*fraochóga*), hazelnuts (*cna*) and strawberries (*suba*). The coarse wild fruit are acorns (*dercain*), haws (*scechóra*), hips (*mucóra*) and rowanberries (*caora*). See discussion at Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, 306–7.

most of the country. There is a record in the *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland* (1586–8) of a bundle of trees called the *wollaghan* being sent to England as a gift to the Lord of Leicester and Mr Secretary Walsingham.[61] The word *wollaghan* is an anglicisation of Irish *ubhla caithne* 'arbutus-apples'. The sender explains that these trees 'have blossoms and fruit green or ripe all the year long, and the same of a very pleasant taste and growing nowhere else but in one part of Munster'.

In conclusion, I do not claim that the identification of Derrynacahney as *Doire na Caithne* 'the oak-wood of the arbutus' constitutes a conclusive argument against Sheehy Skeffington and Scott's theory that this tree was introduced to Ireland by prehistoric miners. One has only to think of the rapid spread of alien species such as rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*), Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) and montbretia (*Crocosmia* × *crocosmiiflora*) in the recent past. Nonetheless, the existence of the place-name *Doire na Caithne* in an area far from prehistoric mining activity seems to me to bolster the case in favour of the native status of the arbutus. The remoteness of this area is emphasised with dramatic phraseology in the fourteenth-century *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh* 'the battle-triumphs of Turlough': *do lenadar a dtromchrecha agus a dtimána agus a dtáinte … go críchaib coilltecha cumardoimne cnocárdmóra carraigbána cíchbennacha cabáinlethna conardaingne na cráibEchtge, agus do roinnetar a náirdchrecha agus a nédála ann sin* 'they (the forces of the king Turlough O'Brien) followed their weighty booty and their droves and their herds … into branched Echtge's wooded deep-valleyed lofty-hilled white-rocked pap-peaked wide-sloped firm-pathed territories, and divided their great spoils and their plunder there'.[62]

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[61]William A. Watts, 'Contemporary accounts of the Killarney woods, 1580–1870', *Irish Geography* 17 (1984), 1–13, at 3; Hans Claude Hamilton (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland 1586–88* (London, 1877), 240.

[62]Seán Mac Craith and Standish Hayes O'Grady (eds and trans.), *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh: The Triumphs of Turlough*, 2 vols, ITS 26 (London, 1924 (1929)), 139.31–4; trans. ITS 27 (London, 1925 (1929)), 123). [I have revised the editors' translation, as some of the descriptive adjectives were left untranslated in their edition].

THE FALL OF *DO* AND THE RISE OF THE LINKING YOD

Abstract

This article reassesses the historical development of the Early Modern Irish preverbal and infinitival particle *do* and the origin of *dh'* in Irish dialects and Scottish Gaelic. It argues that the traditional pathway *do* > *dho* > *dh'* is problematic and proposes instead a sequence *do* > *a/ø* > *a dh'*, where *dh'* reflects the grammaticalisation of an ahistorical hiatus-filling yod glide heard across word boundaries. The study links the weakening of *do* to metanalysis after dentals (e.g. *cad*, *rud*, *iad*), explains the emergence of ø-relatives in Munster, and compares parallel developments in Manx and Scottish Gaelic. It also examines other repairs to word boundary hiatus and syntactic ambiguity that arise as a consequence of this development, including reborrowing *d'* in northern relatives and the spread of *ag* in infinitival environments.[1]

The historical development of the EMIr preposition *do* **də** to Modern Irish *a* **ə** in infinitive structures such as *X do dhéanamh* > *X a dhéanamh* was briefly discussed by T. F. O'Rahilly who described it as a 'weakening': 'probably as a result of *do* becoming weakened to *a* (pron. **ə**) in speech and being consequently liable to disappear, this use of *do* grew less frequent' (O'Rahilly 1932: 233). It is usually assumed that this 'weakening' consisted of the diachronic stages *do* **də** > *dho* **ɣə** > *'o/a* **ə**, as well as being influenced by the third person possessive masculine *a*, as in *Desiderius*, *mar is éidir a fhaicsin* (O'Rahilly 1941: 270). Interestingly, *do* as a preverbal particle has undergone a parallel development and has gradually all but disappeared except before vowels and lenited *f*, in most dialects. From the fifteenth century we find evidence that *do* had begun to acquire a new function as a leniting relative particle, (Dillon 1962 and Ó Buachalla 1964), probably through analogy with the commonly occurring compound verbs such as *do-ní*, *do-bheir*, *do-chí* etc, as well as with the leniting *do* that marked regular past, imperfect and conditional forms. Ó Buachalla (1964: 110) suggests that the subsequent reduction of the leniting relative particle *do* occurred because '*d-* was lenited (> *dh*) in intervocalic position and after final *-r* and that subsequently the spirant was lost. It could also have been developed by analogy with *atá* and *adeir* where

[1]I would like to thank Seán Ua Súilleabháin, Christopher Lewin and Will Lamb for their valuable comments on draft versions of this article. I am grateful to the editors of *Celtica* and to an anonymous reviewer for further helpful comments and suggestions. I would furthermore like to thank Tomás L. Ó Murchú who pointed out to me anecdotally how past generations of speakers of the Corca Dhuibhne dialect often showed no *dh'* stage. I would also like to thank Art Hughes for encouraging me to pursue some of the ideas explored in this article. His jocular reference to Co. Cork as 'the people's republic of *do*' spurred investigation into the matters discussed below.

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the pretonic particle was already an unstressed *a*.' This framing of the problem agrees with the suggested development stages of infinitive *do* summarised above. It is therefore assumed that dialects that have *dh'* before verbal nouns in infinitive structures, for example *deoch a dh'ól*, have retained historic *do* in a 'weakened' lenited stage. The parallel assumption is that the *dh'* in past tense *(do) dh'ólas deoch*, is simply a lenited form of a reduplicated preverbal particle *do*.

There are some issues with this overall chronology and understanding of the historical development of *do*. Dialects, like those of south-west Munster, that preserve *do* or *d'* also tend to have the *a* or ø stage, but examples of the *dh'* stage in these dialects are generally rare, which, if we adopt the traditional understanding, means that we have recorded evidence in the one dialect of the first and final steps, but not of the intermediary step. Older generations of speakers of some of the dialects where *dh'* is generally the norm today, like in Corca Dhuibhne, sometimes display the *a* stage and sometimes display the *do* stage, but it is the *dh'* stage that is currently expanding far beyond its original remit (e.g. *níor dh'fhan* 'he didn't stay'), at the expense of the *do* and *a* stages. Furthermore, there is an uncomfortable question for dialects that have relative *a d'* before vowels and *f*, like in Connacht and Ulster, i.e. if the *d'* in *an bhean a d'fhan san oileán* is directly passed down from original historic relative *do*, then what is the *a* **ə** vowel that usually precedes it?

Classical Irish	**South-west Munster dialects**	**Corca Dhuibhne and Déise dialects**	**Connacht and Ulster**
Do fhan sé nuair do éirigh sé	Do fhan sé nuair a éirigh sé	(Do) dh'fhan sé nuair a dh'éirigh sé	D'fhan[2] sé nuair a d'éirigh sé
An deoch do bhí sé do ól	*An deoch a bhí sé do/d'/a ól[3]	An deoch a bhí sé a dh'ól/ag ól	An deoch a bhí sé a ól

In the following discussion, I suggest that the historical development is as follows *do* > *a* > *a dh'*, the last step being a grammaticalisation of a hiatus-filling yod glide, a sandhi phenomenon that can be perceived across word boundaries in all Gaelic dialects, e.g. ***ní íosfaidh mé an rud atá sí a iarraidh***, which is interpreted natively by some dialects as *dh'*.

[2]The Irish that was spoken in west Clare regularly had the following pattern, *do d'fhan sé nuair a d'éirigh sé*. I understand the *do d'* formation to be an interdialect innovation (Trudgill 1986: 62 et seq.) based on the historic non-relative *do* + past tense, that re-introduces the elided *d'* form through analogy with the relative form. The spread of the elided *d'* in the relative forms in the dialects of Clare and south Galway is discussed below, and is seen in present and future relative forms such as *cad a d'airíonn tu* **kad ə darʲ iːn tə** (QQTRIN040946c1, 6:40).

[3]This syntax is mostly if not entirely avoided in south-west Munster dialects. The periphrastic construction *an deoch a bhí á (h)ól aige* or *an deoch a bhí aige á (h)ól* is instead preferred (Ua Súilleabháin 1994: 525). Perhaps this periphrastic construction was formed in order to avoid the ambiguities that arise from the fall of *do* discussed in this article.

I have used examples from Canúint, a repository of transcribed sound recordings of Irish dialects compiled from RTÉ Archives available on www.canúint.ie (Palandri et al. 2025), to illustrate the points discussed below. Readers are welcome to listen to and verify these examples by copying the recording ID number into a search engine and going to the timestamp marked in the reference. For this reason, I have transcribed examples in IPA only if my interpretation of their phonology is particularly relevant to the discussion.

Historical and modern dialect evidence

The dialects of Cork are the most conservative in their treatment of the preverbal particle *do*. Not only is it often retained before consonants, but it is also sometimes found in its unelided form before vowels, e.g. *do bhí*, *do bhain*, *do fhéach* and *do fhíodh*, as was recommended by the grammarians of *Irish Grammatical Tracts* (*IGT*) I, §73 (Mac Cárthaigh 2014: 98; Hughes 2013: 188–9). Examples of elided *d'* before front vowels in this region can even resist palatalisation through sandhi, e.g. *d'itheamar*[4] and *d'fhíl*[5] with broad **d** (Ua Súilleabháin 1994: 525). Notably, these are also the regions where we often find a phonologically intact *do* in infinitive construction, as heard in two examples from Canúint: *gurbh fhéidir iad san do fhí*[6] *agus do chasadh* (Peadar Mac Suibhne QQTRIN016118c1, 4:00) and *gach ní eile do dhéanamh dom* (Aodh Ó Tuama OD016950_CD0135_23, 8:25).[7] Yet, in the same south-west Munster dialects that preserve non-relative *do* so well, the regular outcome of the relative particle *do* is *a* before consonants and **ø** before vowels, with relative *do* and *d'* being rarer and being perceived as higher register variants (Ua Súilleabháin 1994: 526). It is important to note at this point that this higher-register *d'* before vowels is simply *d'* and not *a d'*, as in: *a mháthair chneasta an aenmhic d'fhuilig an pháis* (OD017723_CD0928_15c1, 17:35). Similarly, *a* is more widespread than *do* as an infinitive marker, *do* being perceived as a higher register form.

The complete disappearance of *do* as a relative particle before vowels in the everyday informal register of these dialects, henceforth ø-relative,[8] is of particular interest, as noted by Ua Súilleabháin: 'I gcoibhneas díreach is gnáth nach bhfágtar aon rian de mhír choibhneasta roimh ghuta in iarthar Chorcaí agus chomh fada ó thuaidh le hUíbh Ráthach ar a bheag' (Ua Súilleabháin 1994: 525–6). Some examples from Canúint are: *conas fhéatainn* (QQTRIN016188c1, 5:49) and *nuair fhéach* (QQTRIN011960c1, 10:00) and *an chéad duine éirigh* (QQTRIN011960c1, 6:03). The development therefore appears to be that, even though *do* holds strong as an independent preverbal particle, it is being eroded by *a* or **ø** in relative and infinitive position.

[4]See *LASID* II, question 303 points 8, 10, 15, 16, 17 and 19.

[5]Spelled *duíl* in Ó Murchadha (1932: 221 n. 1).

[6]Pronounced **də ʔˈiː**.

[7]This use of *do* is occasionally found in other regions, but is less common and more high register. For Corca Dhuibhne see Ó Sé (2000: 367); for Iorras Aithneach see Ó Curnáin (2007: 1544 n. 1).

[8]As coined by Hughes (2013: 97) 'The Munster ø-relative'.

Manx appears to have been similarly conservative in its treatment of *do* (spelled *dy*), and while the periphrastic nature of Late Spoken Manx means that examples of relative past and secondary tenses are hard to come by, a phonologically intact and leniting **də** *dy* could be still heard in the twentieth century in infinitive constructions, e.g. **də hɔdˊəm ɑrənˊ** (*do thuitim orainn*) (Broderick 1984: 87). In Manx texts from the eighteenth century however, we find *dy* (= *do*) is used in infinitive, past/conditional/past habitual and relative constructions, beside a 'weakened' leniting schwa form, **ə** *y*. Such was the force of this leniting form **ə** *y*, that the relative forms of the conditional/past habitual inflection of verbs, such as *oddagh* (cognate with *fhéadadh*), appear to have influenced the non-relative forms, so that in Manx we find non-relative *oddin* and *cha voddin* (cognate with *fhéadainn, cha bhféadainn*).[9] A parallel between Manx and the Irish of south-west Munster today is visible therefore in the cognate phrases *kys oddagh* and *conas fhéadadh*, where *do* is substituted by *a* and the *a* is elided into the first vowel of the verb, leaving only lenition behind.

DO > *A* BEFORE CONSONANTS

I would suggest that the historic preverbal particle *do* **də** was reanalysed as **ə** in relative position due primarily to resegmentation or metanalysis with commonly-occurring words ending in **d**.[10] The most likely starting points for the disappearance of relative *do* are the *IGT*-proscribed *cad* (*IGT* 1, §16) and *céard* (EMIr *creud* < *crét*), *fa(i)d*, the pronoun *iad* in cleft constructions as well as the noun *rud* (OIr *rét*). Fifteenth century manuscript examples such as *cat do-ghén feasta* (Laud. 610, fol. 24ra10), *cat do-beir ort* (Laud. 610, fol. 47va41), *cred do-dhēntaí re ser Gilda* (Egerton 1781, p. 19r16), *cad d'fhoghain* (Laud. 610, fol. 53 vby) show how the component parts for this reanalysis were already present over five hundred years ago. From the birth of *cad*, for which see Quin (1966), high-frequency phrases such as *cad/rud do bhí*, *cad/rud do tharla*, *céard/rud do rinne*, etc., would have allowed for the new leniting relative particle *do* to be reinterpreted as **ə**: *cad do bhí* > *cad a bhí*. This is, of course, probably also the cause of the copula form *dob* regularly becoming *ab*, as in *cad dob áil leat do?* > *cad ab áil leat do?* The earliest examples of *a* for *do* as a relative preverbal particle are from Scotland, cited by Ó Buachalla (1964: 110), from the Book of the Dean of Lismore (*c.* 1515), which has *nuair a shuidh Fionn* (< *noyr a hwyth Fionn*), *mòr an phèin a chuiris orm* (< *mor in feine a churris orm*). The earliest known examples from Ireland are from almost two centuries later, *gá mhéad a dhligheas mo thíghearna dhíot?* (Ó Domhnaill 1681: 106).[11] Interestingly, the spread of *do* as a relative particle is datable at latest to the first half of the fifteenth century (Dillon 1962: 124), so it is possible that

[9] But past tense *dod* (= *d'fhéad*). A parallel development is found, albeit rarely, in Corca Dhuibhne Irish, and is discussed below under '*d'* > *ø before vowels and f*'.

[10] A commonly cited example of metanalysis in English is ME *a napron* > ModE *an apron*.

[11] This *a* does not appear in the original 1602 edition, which has *ga mheud d'fhiachaibh dhligheas mo thighearna dhíot* (Ó Domhnaill 1602: *Lucas* 16.5).

relative *do* accelerated if not even triggered the birth of relative *a* within a few generations.

In parallel to the above development, *do* in the inherited infinitive construction undergoes the same univerbation with preceding words ending in **d** allowing it to be reanalysed as a leniting **ə**. This time I would suggest *iad* and *read* > *rud* as the starting points for the spread: *ó nach féadtar réad do ríomh air* (Céitinn 1900: 52); *as urusa iad do chur na cciomhne* (Stapleton 1945: 264). The interrogative pronouns *cad* and *céard* may have also played a secondary role here by triggering the infinitive structure with *do*: *crét tuc mo mac do chlódh* (Stokes 1898: 118).[12] Therefore, phrases such as *cad do bhí siad do dhéanamh* become reanalysed as *cad a bhí siad a dhéanamh*.[13]

Presumably, the environment for this reanalysis would have already existed from the birth of the independent object pronoun *iad*, at the end of the Middle Irish period. Furthermore, since relics of homorganic delenition of **ð** in *bheadh siad* **v´et´ ʃəd**, found in Connacht and Ulster, as well as Scottish Gaelic *bhíodh tu* **viɣ tu** or **vi tu** suggest that the northern Gaelic speaking regions may have already been acquiring a greater proclivity for enclitic non-synthetic pronouns before the late Middle Irish phonological development of **ð** > **ɣ** (O'Rahilly 1926: 193; Ó Baoill 1988: 128),[14] we may also add independent subject pronouns *muid/muíd* and *siad* to the list of likely accomplices in the disappearance of northern infinitive *do*. As these gradually replaced the secondary tenses' synthetic endings, *-mis* and *-dis*, as well as past tense endings *-mar* and *-dar*, they would have increased the frequency of fusion of the infinitive *do* with a preceding pronoun ending in *-d*. Indeed, perhaps this may have contributed to the fact that historic infinitive *do* is seldom preserved phonologically as **də** in the regions with a higher frequency of non-synthetic endings, with the exception of Manx.

[12]This periphrasis is commonly used to express *why* in Early Modern Irish: *cad/crét do-bheir ar* X Y *do dhéanamh*, i.e. 'why does X do Y'. It is comparable to the periphrasis used in Scottish Gaelic *dè a chaidh a thogail* 'what was built?'. It could also be used without a verb: *fochtuis in t-iarla do Gyi créd tuc gan mnai e* 'the earl asked Guy why he was without a wife' (Robinson 1908: 82). An echo of this periphrasis is used in the modern language, e.g. *cad a thug abhaile tu?* which sooner means 'why did you come home?' rather than 'what (physical element) brought you home,' although influence from parallel semantic development in English cannot be excluded. The idiom, preserving *do-bheir*, was well known in Cork until recently: *más ea cad a bheir eagla na dlighe ort i dtaobh an phionóis bhig agus tú ag briseadh na dlighe leis an bpionós mór?* (Ua Laoghaire 1913: 51); *cad do bheir cos-nochtaithe í? agus cad do bheir dí mo sgilling do bhreith uaimse …?* (Ua Laoghaire 1904: 13); *D'fhiafruigheadar de cé bhí ann nó cad do bheir ann chomh déidheanach san oidhche é.* (Barrett 1899: 74); *cad a bheir di bheth ann? …* (Ó Briain 1947: s.v. *bherim*); *cad a bheir duit na ba san a leogaint isteach im choill?* (Ó Cróinín 1971: 3). I would like to thank Seán Ua Súilleabháin for providing me with these examples.

[13]On the other hand, northern regions better preserve the syntax of Early Modern Irish *do* in final clauses. Whereas all dialects famously preserve *dul a chodladh* (*do* < *a*), this syntax has remained productive in Ulster, Scotland and Man, so we find *chua muid a chaint leis*, and *thainic siad a theagasc* and Scottish Gaelic *thèid iad a dh'ionnsachadh*. (O'Rahilly 1932: 233).

[14]Evidence for the coming to the fore of analytic forms in northern dialects has been presented by Skerrett (1966) and Ó Baoill (1988).

D' > Ø BEFORE VOWELS AND *F*

Following a word ending in **d** and preceding a verb beginning with a vowel or *f*, the eliding form of *do* **də**, i.e. *d'*, fuses with the preceding consonant and its articulation vanishes entirely, giving us *cad d'ólais? céard d'aire tú? cad d'fhéadfainn?* These pronunciations can still be found in Conamara, as in *céard a d'ól sé* **kˊeːr doːlˊ ʃe** and *céard a d'éirigh* **kˊeːr dˊairˊə** (Ó Curnáin 2007: 438). In south-west Munster, these forms allowed for *d'* before a vowel to simply vanish in all relative positions, thus triggering the birth of the ø-relative, albeit preserving lenition: *cad d'fhéadfainn? > cad fhéadfainn? > conas fhéadfainn?* and *nuair fhéadfainn*.

As with Manx *oddin* (= *fhéadainn*/*fhéadfainn*), some recorded examples from Corca Dhuibhne show how the ø-relative can spread to the non-relative form, in that the preverbal *do/d'* before vowels can also be sporadically omitted in that dialect, albeit rarely: *agus fhiafraíos-sa dho* **agəs ʔiəˈriːsə ɣo** (OD017715_CD0919_46c1, 08:31) and *iompaigh sé uaithi* **ʔuːmpə** (CD0188_22412316_30, 24:27). The ø-relative form is also fossilised in the Munster expression *a imig tharainn* **mˊiˈkarɪnˊ**, as in *an tseachtain seo imigh tharainn* 'last week'.

Munster by-forms *nis* (Ó Sé 2000: 561) and *mig* (< *inis* and < *imigh*) may be further consequences of this overall development, since where non-eliding *do* **də** before vowels remained strong, phrases such as *cad do imig air* **kad ə ˈmˊigˊ erˊ** and *cad do inis sé* **kad ə ˈnˊiʃ e** would allow for the root of the verb to be reanalysed due to the elision not of *do* but of the first short vowel of the verb, i.e. *cad do 'mig air > cad a mig air* and *cad do 'nis sé > cad a nis sé*.

Similarly, and again in parallel to this, the infinitive *do* when following a word ending in *d* vanishes, leaving behind only its lenition on *f*, as in *iad d'ithe > iad ithe*, allowing it to be interpreted as **ø**, *í d'ithe > í ithe*.

THE BIRTH OF YOD, I.E. SLENDER *A DH'*, AS A HIATUS FILLER

A recent article by Davidson and Erker (2014)[15] published results of an experiment that was conducted on fourteen American English monoglots to determine how they handled hiatus in word-internal vowel-vowel sequences (VV:[16] e.g. *kiosk*), across word boundaries (VBV:[17] e.g. *I see otters*) and before glides (VGV:[18] e.g. *I see yachts*). The study determined that speakers were more likely to use glottal stops and voice creaks to resolve VBV, and that they mostly tolerated hiatus in VV environments. The phonological quality of the glides used to resolve VV as opposed to VGV were empirically different when measured on a text grid using PRAAT. This correlates with Cruttenden's (2008) observations that a linking glide /ʲ/ is not the same as a phonemic /j/, a

[15] I would like to thank Brian Ó Curnáin for pointing me in the direction of this article some years ago.

[16] VV is used to abbreviate 'vowel-vowel' sequences.

[17] VBV is used to abbreviate: 'vowel-boundary-vowel' sequences.

[18] VGV is used to abbreviate: 'vowel-glide-vowel' sequences.

difference that can be illustrated with the minimal pairs, e.g. *my ears* and *my years*. The article is important since it challenges the assumptions that American English resolved hiatus with glide insertion, presenting instead evidence that speakers mostly tolerate it and that glottal-stop insertion is the preferred strategy for resolving vowel-vowel sequences across word boundaries, i.e. VBV (Davidson and Erker 2014: 505). Nevertheless, the article had to challenge long-standing assumptions that glides are used in these contexts, showing that 'a percept of a glide-like element' (Davidson and Erker 2014: 501) can develop in our understanding of such sequences.

The situation presented by Davidson and Erker for American English is comparable to that in Irish dialects that do not have a regularised *a dh'* stage, where, if a vowel is not elided, elision, hiatus toleration and sometimes glottal stops seem to be the preferred methods used to resolve VBV contexts where the stressed syllable is a high front vowel.[19] Nevertheless, glides or perceptions thereof can sometimes be heard in vowel to front high vowel sequences in circumstances that do not derive from historic *d'*. Some examples from Canúint are: *ní íocfadh sé* **N´iː ˈjiːkət´ ʃe** (QQTRIN016152: 10:55), and *le iascaireacht* **l´e ʲiəskər´ət** (OD018765_CD1983_nuig1983_19, 05:15) by Seán Ó hEochaidh in south Donegal *chuirfinn á iarraidh* **χir´hin´ ɑː ˈʲiərə** by Tomás Ó Máirtín (OD018362_CD1573_nuig1573_05c1, 01:57), *bhí iallach orainne* **v´iː ʲiələχ orn´ə** by Tomás Breathnach (QQTRIN016170: 11:04) and *ní aontóinn* **n´iː ˈʲeːntoːN´** (OD016950_CD0135_6c1, 00:06) by Johnny Chóil Mhaidhc Ó Coisdealbha, all three from Cois Fharraige.

Various Gaelic dialects have regularised this ahistorical **j** glide before front vowels when the second vowel is stressed. For the Irish of Iorras, Mhac an Fhailigh writes: 'Following the preposition **gə** representing *de/do*, **j** is often inserted before an initial vowel of a noun. In this matter usage varies. The practice is more widespread in Dû Chaocháin than in Faulmore.' (Mhac an Fhailigh 1980: 177).[20] He goes on to cite examples *de aois* **gə jiːʃ**, *de Éire* **gə jeːr´ə**, *de fhear* **gə jar** from Dû Chaocháin, contrasting *de aol* **gə iːl**, *de Éire* **gə eːr´ə**, *de aois* **gə iːʃ** from Faulmore, which nevertheless has *de fhear* **gə jar**. It is noteworthy that he cites no examples of glides following *de/do* before back vowels, *d'Eoin* **goːn´**, *d'Albain* **galəbin**, *d'eorna* **goːrnə**. In south Connacht, Ó Curnáin (2007: 1370) shows us that speakers in Iorras Aithneach generally tolerate the elision or the hiatus resulting from *de/do* + vowel, where he

[19]The impression gleaned from a survey of readily available examples is that the glide is not the preferred method to resolve VBV homorganic front vowel hiatus in Irish dialects that do not have a regularised *a dh'* stage, with toleration and glottal stops being more common. Examples from Canúint of toleration include *ní fhéadfadh*, *bhí íonú*, *a díona íontas*, *goidé a íosa siad*. Examples of glottal stops are *ba íontas mór é*, *ní iasc in ae chor é*, *má dh'fhaigheas tú iasacht*, *bia eile*, *coileach a únsaig cailín*. A pan-Gaelic examination of hiatus resolution in VBV contexts would be fascinating but is beyond the scope of this article. David Mandic's recent dissertation on hiatus in Scottish Gaelic has shown how 'glottalisation can occur in sandhi when a stressed monosyllable is followed by a clitic or by a word with non-initial stress'. Examples include *nigh e* **ɲɪ ʔə̯** and *gun gabh e* **g̊ɤ̈ŋ gəˀɛː** (Mandic 2021: 33).

[20]See also p. 146: 'Preceding **a** in the word *fhear*, *de* > **gə j** with all good speakers, and also with some in **gə jaLəx** *de eallach*, **gə jarəx** *de earrach*.'

collected **gˊæːr**, **gaːr** and **go ar** for *d'fhear*, as well as **gaˑtiː ogəs gə aːruːr** for *dh'fhataí agus dho arbhar*. The synchronic evidence from other dialects as well as with the ahistoricism of **do dh'fhear* show that the Dû Chaocháin glide following **gə** is the innovation, and a useful one at that as it helps maximise syntagmatic contrast in what is otherwise a hiatus or elided sequence across grammatical units.[21] Ó Máille reports in *Urlabhraidheacht* (1927: 101) that this *do/de dh'* pattern before vowels was regular among speakers in central and north Connacht, north Conamara and Mayo, and that speakers from Sligo often omitted the *de/do* entirely, as in *a leithéid seo dh'fhear* **ə lˊehədˊ ʃo jær**.

A similar development has occurred in parallel in Scottish Gaelic, where the simple preposition *do/de* prefixes a *dh'* to the following vowel, effectively regularising a hiatus filler if the following word is vowel initial (Lamb 2025: 165–6). Gaelic speakers and writers from Scotland may have begun regularising this feature as far back as the fifteenth century to some extent, as we find *dhanadar* (= *dh'fhanadar*) already in the hand of a certain Dubhghall Albanach mac mhic Cathail in a manuscript from 1467, National Library of Scotland Adv. MS 72.1.1, fol. 7vb.35 (Ó Baoill 1988: 128). The differentiation of Scottish Gaelic *do*^{L} to *a*^{L} in the purposive and locative sense *chaidh e a dh'Íle* 'he went to Islay' as opposed to *thug e leabhar do dh'Iain* 'he gave Ian a book' is discussed below.

Manx, again showing its conservatism in regard to the developments discussed in this article, does not grammaticalise a glide and instead tolerates the hiatus formed between the preposition *dy* and a vowel-initial stressed word (*dy eash* = *do aois* **də ˈʌːʃ**).[22]

I would also argue the same origin for the hiatus filling yod we hear in the Iorras, Conamara and Déise pronunciations *ba é* **bə jeː**, *ba í* **bə jiː**, *ba ea* **bə ja**, *ba iad* **bə jiəd** and *ba shin* **bə jinˊ**, which are often interpreted orthographically with the historic *-dh* ending of the past subjunctive forms of the copula, the assumption being that **j** is an outcome of **ɣ**. But final *-dh* regularly gives **ɣ** and then either **ø**, **β**, **χ** and **g** in the southern half, and **uː** in the northern half of Ireland. On the other hand, *badh ea* **bə vˊa** (Ó Curnáin 2007: 1184) represents a possible expected outcome of final *-dh*, as seen in the English transliteration of the placename *Achadh Fhearaigh* in Antrim, i.e. Aghavary.[23]

Another situation where a yod appears is in the conditional forms of *abair* following *ní* in the northern half of the island.[24] From Clare up, the past tense of *abair* is reanalysed as *d'úirt* and *níor úirt*. In Connacht, the conditional forms are analysed as *d'éarfadh* and *ní éarfadh*, which is more commonly pronounced *ní dh'éarfadh* **nˊiː jeːrhəx** / **nˊiː jeːrhuː**, and interpreted orthographically as *ní*

[21]In the Irish of east Ulster another kind of hiatus filler, *h*, developed following the possessive pronouns before vowels, e.g. *mo hathair* **mə hɑːrˊ** as noted by Wagner (*LASID* IV, 297).

[22]From the speech of Ned Maddrell on UOSH SA0002: available on https://corpus.gaelg.im/docs/UOSH-HOYFM-SA0002 (accessed January 2026).

[23]See www.logainm.ie/63036.aspx (June 2026). Another possible explanation of origin of the **vˊ** pronunciations in the past and conditional forms of the copula is that it may have spread synchronically from indirect relative forms such as *gurbh* and *nárbh*, e.g. *gurbh ea* > *babh ea*.

[24]Excluding of course the Ulster dialects that prefer the negative prefix *cha*^{N}, where we find the *th-* and *cha dt-* opposition.

dhéarfadh (Ó Curnáin 2007: 1799 et seq.; De Bhaldraithe 1953: 284; Mhac an Fhailigh 1980: 21).

In the west Munster dialect of Corca Dhuibhne the *dh'* stage is also regularised to back vowels, pronounced **ɣ**, and is expanding well beyond what could be argued to be an etymological remit inherited from historic *do* > *dho*. Recent generations of native speakers increasingly use it to replace historic *-r* (< *ro*) in preverbal *níor* and *nár*, so we find the progression *níor fhéach*[25] > *níor dh'fhéach* > *ní dh'fhéach* and *níor fhan*[26] > *níor dh'fhan* > *ní dh'fhan*, as well as optative *ná dh'fhana* and sometimes even following *go/gur*[27] as in *go dh'imigh* (Ó Sé 2000: 68 §118–19 and 332 *et seq.*). It is also replacing the fossilised eclipsis in the past habitual forms *ní bhfaigheann* > *ní dh'fhaigheann*, which can be heard on Canúint from Seán snr. Ó Cíobháin from An Ghráig (OD017734_CD0939_1c1, 22:22). Notably, it has also been regularised following *á*, i.e. the third singular masculine prepositional-possessive form used with verbal nouns (< EMIr *agá* and *dá*): *á dh'ithe* **ɑː ɣ´ihɪ** 'eating it' and *á dh'fhaire* **ɑː ɣar´ɪ** 'looking at it'. It is also found in the first and second person singular forms, e.g. *'om dh'ithe* **ɪm´ ɣ´ihɪ** 'eating me', *'om dh'fhaire* **əm ɣar´ɪ** 'looking at me', *id dh'iompú* **əd ɣuːmpuː** 'turning you' and *id dh'fhiafraí* **əd ɣ´iːərˈhiː** 'asking for you' (Ó Sé 2000: 174–5). It is not found in the simple prepositional possessive forms, so we can contrast *im aonar* **əm eːnər** 'by myself' with *'om dh'aidleáil* **əm ɣaˈd´lˈɑl´** 'addling/confusing me'. It is also regular following *má* before vowels, as in *má dh'fhaighim* **mɑː ɣaim´** (Ó Sé 2000: 456 §798), *má dh'itheann* and *má dh'ólann*.

In south-west Munster, which as we have seen is the most conservative Irish dialect in its treatment of *do*, we very rarely find an infinitive-making and preverbal particle *dh'*, whether relative or not. When it is found however, it is used with the verb *ithe* (Ua Súilleabháin 1994: 525)[28] as in *mo dhóthain a dh'ithe* (QQTRIN016188c1, 1:07),[29] spoken by Nell Uí Ríordáin from Cúil Aodha. To this we may Dónal Ó Murchú's use of glottal stop in *ionganna ínsint* (OD017722_CD0927_18c1, 20:32), a speaker from Uíbh Ráthach. Similarly, in Iorras Aithneach Ó Curnáin (2007: 492 n. 1 and 1544) reports a rare occurance of *a dh'insean* **ə jiːnʃən**, as well as a rare occurrence of *a dh'fháil* **ə ɣɑːl´**, but the norm is generally to elide, tolerate the hiatus or use a glottal stop. An example from Canúint of a glottal stop in fast speech can be heard in *bia a í* (< *ithe*) **b´iə ʔiː**, by Seán Ó Conaola from Na hAille in Cois Fharraige (QQTRIN016177: 11:32).

[25]For example, Peig Sayers *gur fhéach* (QAC000158Ac1, 7:52).

[26]For example, Cáit Feiritéar *nár fhan* (QQTRIN016187c1, 18:10).

[27]Although *go* is usually followed by eclipsis, e.g. *go bhfan* and *go n-imigh*.

[28]Seán Ua Súilleabháin has referred to me in personal correspondence that *dh'* is quite regular before *ith* in Múscraí, both as a preverbal particle and as an infinitivising *do*, so we very often find *is í a dh'ith é* 'it is she who ate it', and *ní féidir liom í a dh'ithe* 'I can't eat it (lit. her)'.

[29]In the same recording, the speaker tolerates the same hiatus in *is náir orm é insint* (QQTRIN016188c1, 14:08). Perhaps there is a very slight articulation of the *yod* here, that is so faint that other ears may hear it differently, which itself shows how the perception of the *yod* in its initial stages is so elusive and parallel to the problems described in Davidson and Erker (2014).

These examples suggest that the **j** glide is in a very early stage of being grammaticised and interpreted as *dh'*, starting from long front-vowel to high front-vowel sequences *é dh'insint* and *é dh'ithe*, but it has not yet been consistently applied to back vowels *é dh'fháil*.

A > *A DH'* BEFORE VOWELS

Relative *a dh'* is today regular in Scottish Gaelic,[30] Corca Dhuibhne and the Déise. It was also found in south Kilkenny,[31] east Cork, south Tipperary, north Kerry[32], perhaps west Limerick,[33] and also in west Clare, albeit sporadically (Ua Súilleabháin 1994: 526). It is of course tempting to think that this isogloss may have been found continuously from north Kerry through to south Tipperary, but this is difficult to ascertain today. Relative *a dh'* is based on the ***a*** / **ø** stage with a grammaticalisation of the glide vowel that can appear in the regular south-west Munster Irish outcome *is í ith é* and *is í iarr orm*. Similarly, infinitive *a dh'* is the regularisation of the glide vowel **j** that can appear in *cad a bhí sí ithe* and *an rud a bhí sí iarraidh*, and its rationalisation as *dh'*, so Irish speakers from the western part of Corca Dhuibhne say *cad a bhí sí a dh'ithe*.[34]

These **j** glides are grammaticised and understood natively as a lenited *dh'*, after which they are generalised to back vowels as well, *é a dh'ól* and *an deoch a dh'ól sé*. Whether the hiatus filler is **j** or **ɣ** generally depends on the phonological quality of the stressed vowel in each dialect, not on its historical onset. For example, in *a dh'iompó* **ə ˈɣuːmpoː** and *a dh'ionsaigh* **ə ˈɣuːnsɪg´** the onset is a back vowel in Corca Dhuibhne (Ó Sé 2000: 67–8), but in the Déise the onset is a front vowel **ə jaumpoː** and **ə jaunsɪg´**, according to the regular phonology of the diphthong **au** in word initial position (Breatnach 1947: 23 and 39). Similarly, in Scottish Gaelic the onset is a front vowel in *ionnsachadh* **iũːsəχəɣ** ('to learn'), so we find *a dh'ionnsaich* **ə jũːsix´** *dh'ionnsaighe* **jũːsiː** ('towards') (Borgstrøm 1940: 147–8).

In Corca Dhuibhne the preverbal and infinitive *dh'* stage may have only taken hold in the past two centuries or so, since recordings of speakers born in the late-nineteenth century have more examples of the *a* stage than are

[30]But not Manx.

[31]See Breathnach (1992: 30), e.g. 'mar a oilfear' **mɑr ə ɣilʹfər**.

[32]I'd like to thank Séamus Barra Ó Súilleabháin for bringing CBÉ MS 658 to my attention, which on pages 278–84 contains three stories in Irish transcribed in 1939 by Seosamh Ó Dálaigh from a cylinder recording of Séamas Ó Riada, a native speaker from the Ceann Chiarraí peninsula in the parish of Ballyheige. The transcriptions show that the speaker had a regularised *a dh'* stage in *nead a dh'fhág* (p. 282), *do dh'imig*, *seara dh'itheadar*, *seara dh'fhágfadh*, *nuair a dh'imi' sé* (p. 283) *agus dh'fhág*, *nuair a dh'imig* (p. 284). To these we can contrast east Kerry's Donnchadh Ó Cuilleanáin's *má éirig* and *nuair éirigh* (CBÉ MS 475, 258), a speaker from Ré Chaislí, near Brosna, also transcribed by Seosamh Ó Dálaigh in 1938: which shows no regularised *a dh'* stage, like Uíbh Ráthach and Cork. Both speakers were born in the 1860s.

[33]I know of only one example, in a CBÉ recording made of John Roche of Mountcollins in 1961 (CBÉ T0144), who in his rendition of the song *Bean Dubh an Ghleanna* says '*nuair a dh'fhéachainn féin anún*' **jaːχɪn´** (1:29).

[34]In the south-west Munster dialects of Cork these structures are avoided, and the periphrastic structure *cad a bhí aici á ithe* or *á ithe aici*, likewise *an rud a bhí aici á iarraidh*, or *an rud a bhí á iarraidh aici* is preferred (Ua Súilleabháin 1994: 525).

typically heard today. One example from Canúint is: *b'fhiú dhuit é fhiscint* **eː ˈiʃkˊɪnˊtˊ** from Muiris Kavanagh, a.k.a. Kruger (QQTRIN016178: 27:24). The same generation also have examples where the glide is regular but seemingly not fully rationalised as a *dh'*, so we regularly hear *á dh'fhuineadh* **ɑː jinˊɪ** (QQTRIN011960c3, 6:48) 'kneading it', with a slender yod glide, despite the word *fuineadh* having a broad **f** in the dialect, beside *á dh'fhuirseadh* **ɑː ɣirˊʃɪ** 'harrowing it', with a broad **ɣ**. Similarly, the verb *aontú* takes a broad **ɣ** in the Corca Dhuibhne dialect, e.g. *ní dh'aontaím* **nˊiː ɣeːnˈtiːmˊ** (Ó Sé 2000: 324 §595), but in Conamara, where the yod glide is not rationalised as *dh'* and where it only occurs as an optional and sporadic hiatus-resolution mechanism, we sometimes hear *ní aontóinn* **nˊiː ˈʲeːntoːNˊ** (OD016950_CD0135_6c1, 00:06).

We can date the earliest preverbal and infinitive *dh'* in Scotland to the first half of the sixteenth century, from the Book of the Dean of Lismore, which has a plethora of examples, spelled with *z*, showing the *dh'* stage, in both relative, e.g. *a zayg a zeyrris gi moch* (= *a gheug a dh'eireas gu moch*) (McLauchlan 1862: 78.18), and non-relative position: *di zagamir* (= *do dh'fhàgamair*) (McLauchlan 1862: 8.11). It also shows an infinitive glide in *gin skaili a zinsi* (= *gun sgeul a dh'innse*) (McLauchlan 1862: 36.6) where *sgeul* is clearly the object of the verbal noun. Interestingly, Scottish Gaelic no longer allows for *dh'* on a vowel-initial transitive verb when the object precedes it (Lamb 2025: 300–1), and the *dh'* of *zinsi* (= *dh'inse*) was omitted by Cameron in his 1892 transcription from the original manuscript (Cameron 1892: 60–1: 'gun sgeul do innseadh').[35] In Modern Scottish Gaelic *dh'* is prefixed to a vowel following *a* only when it is the subject of the verb that precedes it. So, theoretically at least, we find the minimal pairs:

chan eil cuimhne agam air a' bhò ithe 'I can't remember eating the cow'
chan eil cuimhne agam air a' bhò a dh'ithe 'I can't remember the cow eating'

However, as explained by Lamb (2025: 301), modern speakers prefer to use a finite complement or the *a bhith ag* construction to resolve the second scenario, so we would typically find *chan eil cuimhne agam gun robh a' bhò ag ithe* or *chan eil cuimhne agam air a' bhò a bhith ag ithe*. I am aware of one further example of an irregularly written yod glide where the object precedes the verbal noun in Modern Scottish Gaelic, i.e. *iadsan leis am miann oidhirp a thoirt air na dàin a dh'eadar-theangachadh*, 'those who wish to take it upon themselves to translate the poems', written by Calum Mac Phàrlain, the editor of *A Handful of Lays* (1923: ix), i.e. the transliteration and translation of *Lamh-sgribhainn Mhic Rath*.[36]

Infinitive A^L > *AG*

Once the Early Modern infinitive *do* structures are realisable with a^L **ə**, we see parallel efforts across several Gaelic dialects to reanalyse or avoid the particle

[35] But not by McLauchlan (1862: 36–7).
[36] I am grateful to Will Lamb for discussing these points with me.

in a number of constructions. Phonologically the sound **ə** is weak and exposed to elision before vowels and *f* which puts pressure on speakers to try and resolve potential syntagmatic ambiguity with periphrasis or by strengthening the particle through reanalysis.

Some Gaelic dialects have reanalysed this a^L with *ag* in sentences where the object of the verbal noun precedes the main-clause verb, i.e. *cad a bhí sí a ithe* > *cad a bhí sí ag ithe*. This reanalysis has become the standard in Scottish Gaelic where we now find *dè tha thu a' dèanamh* (*do dhéanamh* > *a dhéanamh* > *ag déanamh*) (Watson 1994: 695). Classical Manx (Lewin 2016: 173) shows both the leniting *do* and *a* stage (spelled both *dy* and *y*),[37] but Modern Manx appears to have undergone a similar reanalysis, i.e. *c'red ta shiu jannoo* **ʤanu:**[38] (= *céard tá sibh déanamh*), where the historic *do* is lost entirely (Lewin 2016: 172–80). Reanalysis of traditional a^L with *ag* was regular among the older speakers from Iorras Aithneach surveyed by Ó Curnáin in *iarraidh* and *fáil*, e.g. *céard a bhí tú ag iarraidh a chuir air* **kʼeːrd ə vʼiː tuː gʼiər ə xirʼ erʼ** and *céard a bhí mé ag fáil* **kʼeˑrd ə vʼiː mʼɛ fɑˑlʼ** (2007: 1547–8). Evidence from Irish of the northern half shows a tendency to retain a^L, for example Joe Mac a' Luain's *goidé a bhí sé a iarraí* (QAC000319Bc1, 4:10) and Peadar Mac Suibhne's *an rud a bhí sé a iarraí* (QQTRIN016195c1, 7:36). Pádraig Ua Maoileoin (1978: 94) noted his impression that reanalysis of a^L with *ag* was as a general tendency of Irish speakers from the northern part of the Corca Dhuibhne: ' "cad tá sé a dhéanamh?" i nDún Chaoin, ach "cad tá sé ag déanamh" go minic thuaidh." ' But Ó Sé reports some examples of *ag* for a^L from western Corca Dhuibhne as well (2000: 364–6).

Like the bardic grammarians before him Bergin's proscription of this innovation, 'a solecism unknown to the speech or literature' (Bergin 1930: xv), is a tell-tale sign that it was already in use in his time.[39] The first written example I know of is from 1836: in *cad do bhí mé a' déanadh*, albeit in a translation made by an Englishman who had probably learned Irish as an adult, Revd Dr Charles Gostling Townley (1781–1856), who served as minister for Limerick between 1816 and 1844. But another example from a native speaker appears in Muiris Paodhar's *Teagasc ar an Sean-Tìomna* printed in 1864: *ná raibh fhios aca cá raibh sé ná cad a bhí sé ag déanamh* (Ó Madagáin 1974: 334). On a phonological level, the innovation a^L > *ag* can be understood as another mechanism to improve the hiatus resolution across the word boundary *cad a bhí sí a dh'ithe* > *cad a bhí sí ag ithe*. Speakers must have also felt the analogical pressures of the regular present continuous structure *tá sé ag ithe* > *cad tá sé ag ithe*, as well as from temporal structures like *an fhaid a bhí sé ag ithe*.

Another construction where historical infinitive do^L > a^L is prone to reanalysis or periphrasis in Irish is that in which the subject or the agent of a

[37] For example *nee eh ad y hilgey reesht* (Job 20:15), which in EModIr orthography we could render *do-ní sé iad do theilgeadh a-rís*. Example from Lewin (2016: 182).

[38] https://corpus.gaelg.im/docs/YouTube-Skeealyn-Vannin-Disk-1-Track-9, accessed January 2026.

[39] In 1930 when Bergin printed this comment, the Dún Chaoin informants from whom Ó Sé collected *an rud a bhíonn an broc ag tóch* were children.

transitive verbal noun directly precedes it, i.e. when the doer of the action expressed by a verbal noun precedes it and the verbal noun can take a direct object. In his notes on *Desiderius*, O'Rahilly (1941: 263) explains that the agent is to be inferred by the context in these constructions in Early Modern Irish. When a verb is only intransitive, e.g. *teacht*, *imeacht*, *dul*, Modern Irish still supports these constructions, e.g. *is maith liom é a theacht*. But for transitive verbs, especially for those that can be both transitive and intransitive (i.e. ambitransitive), e.g. *ithe*, *ól*, *bogadh*, Modern Irish speakers today mostly avoid a^{L} with the verbal noun if the subject precedes it, and a^{L} is reserved for cases where the object precedes. In other words, *ní maith liom é a ithe* only means 'I don't like to eat it', not *'I don't like him to eat it'. There are three main solutions: 1) finite clauses: e.g. *cuir an bia i bhfolach ní maith liom é a ithe* > *ní maith liom go mbíonn sé ag ithe*; 2) use the infinitive *a bheith ag* construction, which ensures that the noun or pronoun that precedes the verbal noun it is perceived as the subject, *ní maith liom é a bheith ag ithe*; 3) replace a^{L} with *ag*, e.g. *ní maith liom é ag ithe*, which can also be *ní maith liom ag ithe é*.[40] This last solution requires some further comment as I am not aware of any description of it.

Since the Old Irish period the preposition *ag* (OIr *oc*) can be used with verbal nouns to create a present continuous or gerundive idiom *cách ro-t-chechladar oc precept* 'whoever shall hear thee teaching' (*Wb.* 28d16). When the subject of the main clause verb is the same subject of the verbal noun, excluding final clauses, Irish uses *ag*, e.g. *donaib hí robatar oc crochad christ*, 'to those who were crucifying Christ' (*Ml.* 86d19). On the other hand, as O'Rahilly explains in his notes on *Desiderius* (1941: 264), when the subject of the verbal noun is the object of the main clause verb, the structure is typically '*an fear do mholadh na mná*', i.e. 'for the man to be praising the woman'. O'Rahilly's invaluable notes on the *do* construction with the verbal noun omit the important detail that *ag* can also be used in these constructions: *do bhrígh go bhfaicim, gach lá dá ttig, an riaghuil ag dul síos a mórán d'ionaduibh* (O'Rahilly 1941: 209, ll. 6438–9). The difference in meaning is well juxtaposed when the main clause verb is one of perception, since we can either directly witness something in the moment that it is happening (*ag*) or we can perceive something to happen indirectly (*do*), i.e. perceive the fact that something is happening or that it has happened, maybe even from a secondary source. Keating illustrates these two usages in close succession in the following sentence:

> Iomthúsa sluagh Mumhan […] ar a chlos ar n-a mhárach dhóibh Sitric go n-a shluagh **do dhul** ré Ceallachán go Dún Dealgan

[40]These examples are my own, but they are based on syntax sometimes heard, albeit rarely, in everyday speech. I have documented the following examples from recordings: *is cuimhneach liom thú ag inseacht dom* (Bailiúchán Béaloidis Árann Sound Archive, 6100196); *ba bhreá leat iad a rith amu air a coínlig nú ag iúmpó sceaimhín ar chlais bán* (from Canúint: QQTRIN040946c1, 33:45); *is mór an cúlódar dhom é a siúl thríd an mbaile* (Doegen: LA_1117g1, 03:16); *nuair a tharneós mise ort an tua gan thú a cuir asad glaoi ná fead* (Doegen: LA_1133d1, 03:07).

> triallaid 'n-a dtóraidheacht, agus mar do mhothuigh Sitric iad **ag teacht** i ngar don bhaile … (Dinneen 1908b: 230)
>
> 'As regards the Munster host […] after they heard the next day about the fact that Sitric and his army had gone to Dundalk with Ceallachán they went after them, and when Sitric perceived them arriving close to town …'[41]

Since the above example uses two intransitive verbs, *dul* and *teacht*, the sense intended by Keating is still understood well today in Modern Irish, where it is still productive. But if we try to construct a minimal pair with an ambitransitive verb, e.g. *iompó*, using the two constructions, it is evident that the shade of meaning once conveyed by *do* is now obsolete.

*chuala mé an bád a iompó	*'I heard about the fact that the boat capsized'
chuala mé an bád ag iompó	'I heard the boat capsizing.'

The phonological development *do* > *a* in this case must have strained the syntactic distinction between this type of infinitival *do* structure and the gerundive *ag* structure. I would suggest that this in turn contributed to rise of the first and second periphrases discussed above, i.e. finite clauses and the *a bheith ag* structure, but also to reanalysis with *ag*. This entails that the sense conveyed by the infinitive structures become construed and interpreted as a gerundive structure. While the gerund in English has its own complexities and history, which have been well documented by De Smet (2012), the Modern Irish substitution of *ag* in some of the older infinitive *a* < *do* structures may have contributed as a substrate to syntax common in Irish English today: *bhfuil tú ag dul a dh'ithe* > *bhfuil tú ag dul ag ithe* > *are you going eating?* and *ní maith liom é a dh'ól fuiscí* > *ní maith liom é ag ól fuiscí* > *I don't like him drinking whiskey.* That certain infinitive *do* structures have been reanalysed with *ag* can be further demonstrated by the following type of sentence: *is breá liom é a theacht ach is breá liom é a' fágaint leis* 'I like it when he comes but I also like him leaving/when he leaves'. In this sentence the two verbal noun constructions are identical, *é* being the subject of both, but the first verb *teacht* is only intransitive whereas the second, *fágaint*, can be both transitive and intransitive. To avoid ambiguity, verbs that can be both transitive and intransitive use a^{L} when the object precedes them but increasingly use *ag* when the subject precedes them, e.g. *níor mhaith liom é a (dh')ithe* 'I wouldn't want to eat it', but *ceangail an gabhar san níor mhaith liom é ag ithe na bpósaíos orm* 'tie up that goat I don't want it eating my flowers.' A closer look at Keating suggests that the subtle distinction between *ag* and *do* in these constructions may have already been confused with ambitransitive verbal nouns in the seventeenth century. In the following two examples, *do* might improve the sense of the first and *ag* might be more appropriate for the second.

[41] Translation is my own, in order to elucidate the contrast in syntax.

Mar do chonnairc iomorro Cú Chorb Muimhnigh ag gabháil treise i Laighnibh. (Dinneen 1908b: 308)

'When Cú Chorb saw the Munstermen getting stronger in Leinster'.

Ód chonnairc iomorro Niúl Pharao go n-a shluagh do bháthadh. (Dinneen 1908a: 21)

'When Niúl saw that Pharo and his host had drowned'.[42]

Similarly, we find examples of *ag* being used where we might expect *do* in infinitive constructions from other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century authors:

As gnáth Dia ag tabhairt furtachta do na riachtanasuibh.

Óir as gnáth an t-anam ag malartughadh an choirp. (Ó Conchúir 1972: 48 and 78)

'As truagh leam an cás beirte sin ort, a Oisín, agus gan mé féin ag tabhairt teagaisg duit.' (Ní Shéaghdha 1967: 72)

as leór leamsa mé féin ag rádh seanmóra isin ccathraigh si. (Ó Súilleabháin 1957: 59)

To which we might compare the more common and expected syntax from the period, subject + *do* + verbal noun + object structure, described by O'Rahilly:

is í mo thoil tusa do thabhairt chinn Eóin baisde dhamh anois. (Ó Domhnaill 1602: *Marcas* 6:25)

nách áil leis sinn do dhéanamh comhluadair. (O'Rahilly 1941: 144 l. 4849)

dob áil liom gan tusa do thabhairt achmhasáin damh. (O'Rahilly 1949: 62)

Ní leor leis sinn do dhéanamh maitheasa dár n-eascáirdibh. (Connradh Chuilm Naomhtha 1907: 99)

The confusion between the two structures must have been further compounded by the use of the possessive + prepositional forms *dá* and *agá*, which through lenition of *dá* > *dhá* and elision of the first vowel in *agá* > *gá*, must have collapsed the distinction between this Early Modern minimal pair:

chuala fear dá moladh	'I heard that a man was praising her'
chuala fear agá moladh	'I heard a man praising her'

[42]Translations are my own, in order to elucidate the contrast in syntax.

PURPOSIVE *DO*^{L} > *A*^{L} > *AG* AND LOCATIVE *DO*^{L} > *A*^{L}

Lastly, as was discussed by O'Rahilly (1932: 233), *ag* generally tends to replace *do*^{L} > *a*^{L} in purposive infinitive clauses in Irish dialects south of Ulster, e.g. *teacht do chaint leis* > *teacht a chaint leis* > *teacht ag caint leis*. Although this locative or purposive syntax has become unproductive in most modern Irish dialects, as O'Rahilly noted, it has everywhere been preserved in *a chodladh* and *abhaile*.[43] It is useful to distinguish here between the purposive use of *do* before verbal nouns, e.g. Scottish Gaelic *chaidh e a shuidhe* 'he went in order to sit down' or Donegal *chuaigh mé a chaint leis*, and the locative use before nouns, especially placenames, as in Scottish Gaelic *dol a Ghlaschù* and Irish *dul abhaile*.[44]

Both Irish and Scottish Gaelic (Lamb 2025: 165–75) regularly reduce *do*^{L} to *a*^{L} **ə** in the purposive sense, e.g. *chaidh e a shuidhe* 'he went in order sit down' and *dul a chodladh*, but retain *do* **də** when the sense is 'giving to someone', e.g. *thug e leabhar do dh'Iain* 'he gave Ian a book' and *thug sé leabhar d'Eoin*.[45] One exception is Munster[46] *a d'iarraidh* **ɪ ˈdʹiːərɪgʹ** or **ɪ ˈdʹiːərə**, which has retained a fossilised purposive *d'* in its 'unweakened' form, but on a phonological level only that nevertheless prefixes **ə** (*a'* < *ag*) to it through analogy with the expected present continuous construction, *d'iarraidh* > *a' d'iarraidh* . It is used interchangeably with *ag iarraidh* and conveys the meanings of both the present continuous 'trying to' and the purposive 'in order to seek', as can be demonstrated by two examples in close succession from a recording of Peig Sayers on Canúint: *táim a d'iarraidh an ocrais a bhuint díom féin* and *é ina ndiaidh a d'iarraidh ná ligfeadh sé aon cheann dos na giorraithe thar chlaí* (QAC000158Ac1, 10:10 and 9:22). But aside from this fossilised survival, purposive *do*^{L} is reduced to *a*^{L} where the syntax has remained productive, i.e. Scottish Gaelic and Ulster dialects, where it regularly prefixes *dh'* to a vowel-initial verbal noun. Remarkably, in Ulster this *dh'* is prefixed in purposive infinitives only, not in simple infinitives. The two systems can be heard in close succession on a recording from Dom Mag Fhloinn from An Ghaeltacht Láir, *go mbeadh sé ábalta tionsclóir a fháil le teacht agus a ghol a dh'obair insa mhonarclain sin* (OD018569_CD1786_nuig1786_10, 3:01). Some more examples of the purposive infinitive in Ulster are *d'imigh sé a sheilg* and *rachadh sé a dh'iarraí mrá*, pronounced **rahatʹ ʃə ˈjiːəriː mraː** (QAC000317Ac1, 6:12 and 9:17) by Anna Nic an Luain from Na Cruacha and *tá siad ag imeacht a dh'obair* **ə ˈɣobɪrʹ**, from Joe Bheag Mac an Luain (OD018582_CD1799_nuig1799_10, 11:38) and *chua mé a*

[43] Although in Ulster we usually hear *na bhaile* < *chun an bhaile*.

[44] For Old and Middle Irish examples of these two uses see *DIL* s.v. *do* A ii 'with follg. vn. in phrases expressing purpose' and A i 'introducing *terminus ad quem*' respectively.

[45] Manx on the other hand seems to have been an outlier in preserving the initial *d* of the purposive *do* (*dy*) into the twentieth century.

[46] Regarding the northern boundaries of *a d'iarraidh*, I am aware of a north-west Clare example from Seán Ó Briain from Sráid na nIascairí that can be heard on Canúint: *dúirt muid go raghamuis go Conamara a d'iarra braon poitín* (QQTRIN040946c1, 34:43). Ó Curnáin (2007: 1542 and 1548) reports examples of *d'iarra* to the east of Iorras Aithneach as well, specifically An Cheathrú Rua. De Bhaldraithe (1953: 11) also reports the example *a d'iarra seagal* from Cois Fharraige.

dh'obair, from Peadar Mac Suibhne of Árainn Mhóir (QQTRIN016195c1; 2:15). As noted by O'Rahilly (1932: 233 n. 2), the verb *tosaigh* regularly triggers the purposive a^L in Ulster, e.g. *thosa siad a dheanú* (QQTRIN016152: 14:38), *thoise sí a dh'inse dó* (QAC000317Ac1, 8:39). There are also examples without the prefixed *dh'*, *a gol a oibriú* (OD018765_CD1983_nuig1983_19, 15:30), spoken by Seán Ó hEochaidh. North Connacht Irish generally has *ag* instead of a^L in the purposive, e.g. *thoise mé a déanú* (QQTRIN023372c1, 4:45), but the older syntax is sometimes preserved with *cónaí* in the sense 'going to live', e.g. *chuaigh sé a chónaí go Cathair na Mart*,[47] from Inis Gé islander Mícheál Mac an tSaoir and, *cuireadh fear as an Aird isteach a chónaí ann*, from Seán Ó Clochartaigh from An Aird Mhóir in Iorras Aithneach (OD017119_CD0309_1c1, 15:15).

The purposive a^L was also inherited by the regular double verbal noun constructions *ag goil* a^L/*ag dol* a^L, which are used from south Galway to Scotland (O'Rahilly 1932: 234). But in areas where the purposive syntax is no longer productive, i.e. outside of Ulster and Scotland, this structure has been hypercorrected to *ag goil ag*, which is now the regular pattern in Conamara (Ó Curnáin 2007: 1546 *et seq.*).[48] Some examples include: *níl mise ag goil ag tóigeáil* (OD018362_CD1573_nuig1573_05c1, 2:46), from Tomás Ó Máirtín from Cinn Mhara in south Galway; *tá mise ag goil ag ínseach scéil* (QQTRIN039961c1, 12:35) from Colm Ó Caoidheáin and *bhí bean (…) a bhí ag goil ag fáil* (OD018362_CD1573_nuig1573_05c1, 14:09) from Máire an Ghabha Uí Cheannabháin (both from Iorras Aithneach), *ar an toirt a bhfaca mé an rón ag goil ag iascaireacht taobh an churaigh* (QQTRIN016152: 2:32) from Riocard Breathnach from Inis Gé. To these we might compare *bhí sé a gol a thóirt* from Na Cruacha's Joe Bheag Mac an Luain (QAC000319Bc1, 3:29), *nach bhfuil tú a goil a phósú* from Tyrone's Jane Nic Ruairí's (QQTRIN028506c1, 10:58). But even in these regions the historical purposive a^L is prone to reanalysis with *ag*, e.g. *thiocfadh le daoiní dul amach ag coimhead*, from Caitlín Nic Giolla Bhríde in Gaoth Dobhair (QQTRIN016153, 5:05).

The picture that emerges from the modern dialect evidence is that the purposive *do* split phonologically from the rest of the preposition and was regularly reduced to a^L before verbal nouns, a formation which Munster and Connacht dialects reanalysed as *ag*. Munster *d'iarraidh* may have been fossilised and conflated with the regular present continuous *ag iarraidh* before the purposive a^L split phonologically from the rest of the preposition and was used hypercorrectly as the syntax became less productive in that region. The purposive syntax appears to have been best preserved in the northern Gaelic speaking regions, gradually becoming less productive as we move southward in Ireland.

In the locative use before nouns, especially place-names, do^L appears to have also been reduced to a^L, both in Scottish Gaelic and in Irish dialects, e.g. *chaidh e a dh'Ìle* and *chuaigh sé abhaile*. However, modern Irish dialects no

[47] https://www.rte.ie/radio/rnag/clips/21297294/ 54:40 (accessed 11 September 2026).

[48] This change is also happening amongst younger speakers in Scotland as well, e.g. *tha mi a' dol a' dèanamh an obair*. I am grateful to Will Lamb for providing me with this example. He also noted that Gàdhlig has *chaidh mi ga dhèanamh* and not *dha dhèanamh*.

longer use this locative a^L productively and appear to have replaced it, mostly with *go*[49] or perhaps by fossilising it in prepositional phrases, e.g. *chuaigh sé a fhad leis*.[50] A possible descendent of this weakened locative a^L preposition may however survive in the preposition + article formation **ən**, often spelled *'on*, as in Corca Dhuibhne *dul 'on Daingean*, south-west Clare *isteach 'on chalaithe* **ʃtax ə ˈxaləhə** collected by Holmer[51] (1965: 164), or Donegal *goil 'on Oilean* (OD018765_CD1983_nuig1983_19, 0:55) and *ar an bhealach 'on Charraic* (QQTRIN016152: 12:37), both by Seán Ó hEochaidh.[52] It is used with place-names that take the article and does not take the genitive, so it is not derived from *dochum* > *chun* > *'un*. In Corca Dhuibhne, where this locative preposition is most productive today, $'on^L$ has a distinct mutation pattern from don^N or $dhon^N$ and is not interchangeable with it, so much so that we may form a minimal pair: *cé a thug 'on tsagart é?* 'who brought him to the priest?' and *cé a thug don sagart é?* 'who gave it to the priest?'.

It must also be added that the simple preposition *do* can be reduced to *a* in its partitive sense inherited from the semantic conflation with *de*. This *a* is then sometimes elided and omitted entirely in Munster dialects, usually following a vowel, e.g. *an taobh so Dhaingean* (OD017734_CD0939_1c1, 20:49); *an taobh so thír* (QQTRIN016192c1, 12:57), but also following a **r** in *trí nó ceathair cheannaibh* (QQTRIN040946c1, 3:03). Before a vowel however, the norm is to retain *dh*: *san am so dh'oíche* **ɣiːhɪ** (OD017722_CD0927_18c1; 5:01). Another example of the spread of *a* from historic *do* (< *de*) can also be found in the expression *a chlog* 'o'clock' when telling the time. Perhaps numbers ending in dentals, i.e. *seacht* and *ocht* assisted the spread of the *a* form in these expressions, e.g. *seacht do chlog* > *seacht a chlog* and *ocht do chlog* > *ocht a chlog*, therefore giving rise to *trí a chlog* and *naoi a chlog*. This development is parallel to that which appears to have taken place after *teacht* and *imeacht* in the purposive and locative use.

[49]In Scottish Gaelic the subtle distinction between the locative prepositions *gu* and *do* is maintained, as explained by Lamb: 'both *gu* and *do* can mean 'to', but *do* typically conveys passing a boundary point, while *gu* conveys stopping at it (…) e.g. *a' dol do Pheairt* and *a' dol gu Peairt*.' (Lamb 2025: 176). The 'stopping at it' sense of *go* is preserved in the Irish expression *bliain gus an lá inniu* 'a year up until today', in which an inherited EMIr *gusan* 'to the' has been reanalysed as *agus an* 'and the'.

[50]Another interpretation of this construction is that the *a* is the third singular masculine possessive, 'he went its length by him'.

[51]Holmer spells this *isteach do chalaithe*. I have amended this, the phrase is identical to the current one in Corca Dhuibhne *isteach 'on chala* or *'on chalaithe*, the **n** of the article formation *'on* often being elided in speech. The noun *caladh* was pronounced *calaithe* in the nominative singular in the Irish of south-west Clare. See *LASID* II, pt. 22, n. 1064 **kɑlɪhĕ**. Both *cala* and *calaithe* are current nominative singular pronunciations in Corca Dhuibhne (OD017800_CD1007_nuig1007_05, 16:51).

[52]We should also consider Mac Clúin's examples *chuaidh sé dhon bhaile mór* and *chuaidh sé don bhaile mór* (1940: xxxiv). Seán Ó Flannagáin reports an example *raghad do'n nGort* from the parish of Beagh on the south Galway and east Clare border area (see CBÉ MS 707 p. 280), but also has *an blas Connachtach athá ag muinntear Loch a' Tóraic ar fad go dteighe tú dho'n Ghráig* (p. 340). Ó Flannagáin regularly has don^L in the other sense, e.g. *san aimsir chaite do'n bhriathar* (p. 282). From west Limerick, Liam Ó Danachair (1947: 67) reports *nuair a rachaim-se 'on Tóin Bhán*.

It is not entirely obvious why the purposive or locative use of the preposition should split phonologically from the rest of the preposition, but perhaps the following environments increased instances of reanalysis enough to trigger the birth of *a* **ə** and *'on* **ən**: 1) the fusion of the initial *d* of *do* with the dental ending of the verbal nouns *teacht*, *imeacht* and *tabhairt*, in the 'bringing' sense, resulting in metanalysis to *a* and *'on*; 2) the typical[53] loss of an unstressed **ɣ** following **r** in the combinations *siar dhon* and *soir dhon*, e.g. Colm Ó Caoidheáin's *chuaigh sé siar 'on áit* (QQTRIN039961c1, 14:18), exemplified in surnames such as *Ó Ciardhubháin* **kiːərəvɑːn´** (anglicised *Kerwan*) and *Ó Fearghasa* anglicised Ferris as in *Baile Uí Fhearghasa*, i.e. Ballyfaris in Sligo, and other placenames such as *Paróiste Mórdhach* **muːrəχ** in Corca Dhuibhne; 3) the regular loss of unstressed **ɣ** following the stressed final **χ** in locative phrases such as *isteach dhon* and *amach dhon*, exemplified word-internally in the placenames *Baile Uí Eachach* (< *Eachdhach*), *Eachroim* (< *Eachdhroim*) and *Ráth Eachainn* (< *Eachdhonn*). A combination of these factors may have favoured the reduction of *do* to *a* and of *don* to *'on* in locative or purposive use enough to split it from the rest of the preposition, which remained *do/dho* and *don/dhon* in the pure dative sense of 'giving to'. Although the preposition + article formation *'on* is now mostly associated with the Irish of Corca Dhuibhne, the common exclamation *h'anam 'on diabhal*[54] is widespread in Munster even where *'on* is not productive, e.g. Cúil Aodha's Nell Uí Ríordáin *h'anam 'on dial* (QQTRIN016188c1, 10:12) and Rinn Ó gCuanach's Déaglán Ó Muiríosa *t'anam 'on dial* (QQTRIN016189c1, 6:37). I am not aware of evidence from Connacht dialects that shows that *'on* ever split from *don*, instead *'on*^{L} and *gon*^{L} can alternate in the equivalent expression, as heard in close succession by the same speaker Tomás Ó Beirn from Port an Chlóidh, *h'anam 'on deabhal* and *d'anam gon deabhal* (Dúchas.ie, T0047.9, 2:06 and 2:57),[55] or Iorras Aithneach's Beairtle Ó Conghaile *thug a mháthair (...) gon diún is gon deabhal é* (QQTRIN039961c1, 21:35); also *chua muid héin agus scata eile go bhuachaillí na háite gon Teach Dóite* (Doegen recording, LA_1175g1, 1:50).

Paradoxically, Scottish Gaelic, which as we have seen regularly reduces *do (dh')* to *a (dh')* in the locative sense, e.g. *chaidh e a dh'Íle*, regularly has *dhan* when the preposition is combined with the article, so we find *chaidh e dhan eilean*. However, some examples of *dhan*^{L} > *an*^{L} are attested, e.g. *ruith an cu 's chaidh e an chathair*[56] and *dol an chladach*.[57] The Scottish Gaelic word *dachaigh* 'home', which is semantically parallel to Irish *abhaile*, adds further complication since it appears to have been formed through univerbation of a lenited locative *do*^{L} with the word *taigh* 'house', presumably before the preposition was regularised to *a*^{L} in these contexts, after which the stress

[53]Notable exceptions are Donegal *doraga* < *dorugha* < ON *dorg*, meaning 'fishing line', which developed to *dorú* elsewhere (*LASID* I, 275), Donegal *cargas* < *carghas* 'lent' as well as McGarrigle < Mac Fhearghail. I would like to thank the editor of this article for pointing these out to me.

[54]Another variant is *bheirim 'on dial* (Seán Criomhthainn, QQTRIN016203c1, 10:04).

[55]I am indebted to Liam Mac Congáil for pointing out these examples to me.

[56]https://dasg.ac.uk/CQPweb/dasg/context.php?batch=32&qname=i4drnrt24eq.

[57]https://dasg.ac.uk/CQPweb/dasg/context.php?batch=1&qname=i4e5p27e0ga.

was retracted to the first syllable of the new word through analogy with the regular stress pattern in Scottish Gaeilic, *a' dol dha thaigh* > *a' dol dhachaigh* **dɔl ˈɣaχi** (Borgstrøm 1948: 48). Perhaps the parallel Irish semantic development, i.e. *abhaile*, univerbated after the weakening of *do* > *a* and has been able to maintain stress on the second syllable through analogy with words like *arís*, *anois*, *aréir*, *anocht*, *inniu*, *anseo*, *ansin* etc.

RELATIVE *A D'* IN THE NORTHERN HALF

In Standard Modern Irish the leniting particle *a* (< *do*) is regular in relative constructions. Before past, imperfect and conditional forms, a lenition-resisting *d'* is reborrowed from the non-relative forms and prefixed to vowel- or *f*-initial verbs, so we find *an fear a d'ith* and *an bhean a d'fhág*. Broadly speaking, this reflects the usage in the spoken dialects of the northern half of Ireland. In the dialects of Clare and south Galway, we also often find the *a d'* sequence in the present and future tenses. One example from Canúint from Clare is *cad a d'airíonn tu* **kad ə darˊiːn tə** (QQTRIN040946c1, 6:40) by Anraí de Bláca, and some examples reported by Ó Curnáin (2007: 1487 et seq.) from Iorras Aithneach include *an duine deireannach a d'fhananns*, *cén fear a d'iocanns*, *cén uair a d'fhuadós*, *cé d'éalós*. For speakers that have this feature regularly, we may posit that it is the *a d'* sequence that is analysed as the relative marker before vowels and *f*, not just leniting *a*. This is a parallel development to the *a dh'* sequence that is the regular relative marker before vowels and *f* in Corca Dhuibhne, Déise and Scottish Gaelic, irrespective of tense, e.g. *nuair a dh'imeoidh mé* and *nuair a dh'fhalbhas mi*. Therefore, when inherited relative do^{L} > a^{L} was followed by a vowel, the Connacht and Ulster solution to the hiatus has been to reborrow *d'* from the past, imperfect and conditional non-relative forms, whereas the Scottish Gaelic, Déise and Corca Dhuibhne development has been to regularise the slender yod glide, rationalise it as *dh'* and then have it spread to back vowels. The development may be summarised in the following table:

Early Modern Irish	1. *Cad/créd d'ith sé nuair d'ith sé?* 2. *Cad/créd do bhuail sé nuair do bhuail sé é?*
Cork (and Manx)	1. *Cad ith sé nuair ith sé?* 2. *Cad a bhuail sé nuair a bhuail sé é?*

Scottish Gaelic	**Corca Dhuibhne and Déise**	**northern half**
1. *Dè a dh'ith e nuair a dh'ith e?*	1. *Cad a dh'ith sé nuair a dh'ith sé?*	1. *Céard ith sé nuair a d'ith sé?*
2. *Dè a bhuail e nuair a bhuail e e?*	2. *Cad a bhuail sé nuair a bhuail sé é?*	2. *Céard a bhuail sé nuair a bhuail sé é?*

Dialects that today have the *dh'* stage may have once had a stronger proclivity to retain a non-elided *do*, as can be still found in south-west Munster today,

e.g. *do ith* and *do fhág*, and as was marked as the correct form by the bardic grammarians '*'do íarr', 'do fhíafraigh' cóir, 'd'iarr', 'd'fhiafraigh' lochtach ar-áon*' (IGT §73; Mac Cárthaigh 2014: 98). These dialects then began regularising and morphologising the yod vowel **j** that could occasionally be used to resolve the hiatus sequence, i.e. *do ith* > *do dh'ith* and *do iarr* > *do dh'iarr*, rationalising it as a slender reduplicated and lenited *d* and therefore expanding it to the corresponding back vowel environments as **ɣ**, giving us *do dh'fhág* and *do dh'fhan*. Once these forms became established in these dialects, *dh'* was felt as a sufficiently distinct marker of the past/conditional/imperfect tenses, and the original *do* became increasingly omitted or reserved for higher registers, leaving us with only *dh'* as the usual spoken form before vowels. This seems to be the situation in Corca Dhuibhne, the Déise and Scottish Gaelic. Ó Sé remarks how *do (dh')* can be retained in the dialect of Corca Dhuibhne (2000: 323 §594), particularly in storytelling or to reinforce the affirmation of a phrase. Perhaps an echo of Scottish Gaelic's historic attachment to non-elided *do* is preserved in the still obligatory non-elided *do* fossilised in the conjunct forms, e.g. *cha do dh'fhalbh e* and *an do dh'innis e?* Conversely, as we have mentioned previously, the south-west Munster dialects that have best preserved the original phonology and prosodic rhythm of *do* structures have so far mostly resisted the yod development, although they may show early stages of it in infinitive examples like *a dh'ithe*.

On the other hand, Clare, Connacht and Ulster dialects may have once had a stronger proclivity to elide *do* before vowels, preferring *d'ith* and *d'fhág* in non-relative position. This greater proclivity to elide *do* before vowels may have been the catalyst for the reanalysis of *dubhairt* and *ní dubhairt* as *d'ubhairt* and *níor ubhairt* which we also find in these regions, as well as *d'uaidh* and *níor uaidh* (< *duaidh*) for Clare at least (Holmer 1962: 154).[58] In relative position, once *do* > *a* became established as an independent relative particle irrespective of the tense that followed, non-relative *do* before consonants would have felt pressure to be discarded, since the inherited relative sequence was *an bhean a bhain* not **an bhean a do bhain*, leaving *bhain* alone to be understood as the past-tense form. But before vowels the elided *d'* was reborrowed from the non-relative forms in order to resolve hiatus, and even expanded beyond the past/conditional/imperfect tenses in some cases, *an bhean a d'ith* > *an bhean a d'itheann*, particularly in Clare and south Galway.

Conclusion

This article has discussed the 'weakening' of the preposition *do* to *a* in Early Modern Irish and argued that Gaelic dialects that have a regular *dh'* do not in fact preserve a relic of a lenited *do* stage but instead show an innovation and a grammaticalisation of the linking yod glide that can be perceived when inherited *do* > *a* precedes a high front vowel. It has argued that the main trigger

[58] But compare Kilkenny *dhuaidh mé* **ɣuə m´e**; *ní dhuaidh mé* **n´iː ɣuə m´e** (Breathnach 1992: 28).

for the weakening of *do* to *a* is its fusion with the initial *d* of words ending in *d* or *t*. In this, it has an interesting parallel with the univerbation found in English *gotta*, *wanna* and *gonna*, where the cognate preposition to our Irish *do* (i.e. *to*), which in English is also used to form the infinitive, can be condensed into the preceding word in some dialects (Lorenz 2013). Having established itself as a useful sandhi phenomenon between front vowels, this 'linking yod' is subsequently backformed to the velar fricative **ɣ**, in accordance with the regular palatal and velar contrast, to resolve the same hiatus issues between back vowels. Indicative of this is that in the dialects of south-west Munster, which best preserve the historical phonology and prosody of *do*, have a regular *dh'* only with the verb *ithe*. Another indication of this is that in dialects that do have a regular *dh'* stage the quality of the glide tends to align not with the historical onset of the stressed vowel but with its modern articulation in those particular dialects, as demonstrated by the contrast between Corca Dhuibhne *a dh'iompó* **ə ˈɣuːmpoː** and Déise **ə ˈjaumpoː**. The orthographic rationalisation of the yod glide as *dh'* is an example of how historical etymology has been used to interpret a phonological innovation in the philological history of Irish. The birth of *cad* and the spread of independent pronouns may have been the catalysts for the 'fall of *do*', which in turn caused the various Gaelic dialects to search for new strategies to try and rebuild phonologically clearer word boundaries where they were becoming obscured by the weak *a*. This was done by 1) morphologising the linking yod glide and rationalising it as *dh'*; 2) reborrowing *d'* from non-relative past and conditional paradigms into the relative, *an rud do fhág* > *an rud a fhág* > *an rud a d'fhág*; 3) substituting *ag* in certain infinitive environments, especially with ambitransitive verbs, which causes the original infinitive syntax to be reinterpreted as gerundive syntax. These are parallel repairs to the same inherited problem caused by a 'weakened' *a* particle at fundamental prosodic junctures.

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REVIEW

Bodach an Chóta Lachtna. In eagar ag Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh.. Institiúid Ard-Léinn Bhaile Átha Cliath: Baile Átha Cliath, 2025. ix + 232 lch. €25 (bog) €35 (cruaidh). ISBN 978-1-85500-257-9.

Is é seo an tarna himleabhar i Sraith na Nua-Ghaeilge Moiche de chuid Institiúid Ard-Léinn Bhaile Átha Cliath, imleabhar ina bhféachtar le heagrán deifnídeach 'den téacs deireanach Fiannaíochta *Bodach an Chóta Lachtna*' (BCL) a chur ar fáil (1). Tá an t-eagrán bunaithe ar thráchtas dochtúireachta a chríochnaigh an t-eagarthóir, Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh, sa bhliain 2019 agus is léir gur deineadh a thuilleadh oibre ar an dtéacs ó shin sarar cuireadh faoi bhráid phobal scoláirí agus lucht léite na Nua-Ghaeilge araon é.

Dob fhéidir a rá go bhfuil BCL ar cheann des na scéalta Fiannaíochta is mó go bhfuil eolas ag léitheoirí na Gaeilge air toisc gur cuireadh eagráin éagsúla de i gcló ón 19ú haois ar aghaidh – eagráin a phléitear go cuí san nua-eagrán so gan amhras – agus, i dtaobh gur scéal taitneamhach grinn atá ann, is mó athinsint ar an scéal a cuireadh ar fáil ó shin bunaithe ar na heagráin scoláiriúla chéanna. Táim ag cuimhneamh go háirthe anso ar na hathinsintí breátha a sholáthraigh Cormac Ó Cadhlaigh (1936: 135–9) agus Niall Ó Dónaill (1996 [1942]: 48–52) agus is cuid de stair BCL iad san leis, dar liom.

Beidh cur amach éigin ag mórán daoine, mar sin, ar bhunphlota agus ar bhunmhóitíf an scéil seo: an stróinséir mistéireach, Bodach an Chóta Lachtna, a thagann i gcabhair ar Fhionn agus ar Fhianna Éireann nuair a sháraíonn sé an laoch arrachtach fíochmhar, Caol an Iarainn, mac Rí na Teasáille – atá ag iarraidh Éire a chur faoi smacht – i rás reatha agus ansan i gcomhrac aonair. Beidh sé soiléir ón gcur síos so a leanas ar an mBodach féin, cur síos a fhaighimid luath go maith sa téacs, go bhfuil an greann áiféiseach go mór chun tosaigh i stíl na hinsinte, agus is mar sin atá ó thosach deireadh an scéil i ndáiríribh. Soláthraíonn an sliocht so, chomh maith, dea-shampla den slí ina bhfuil an téacs curtha faoi bhráid an léitheora, agus sampla maith sa tslí chéanna den modh eagarthóireachta atá roghnaithe ag Nic Chárthaigh, rud a phléifear níos déanaí:

> Do chonnairc sē, ag gabháil tre cheartlár an bhóthair 'na agh*aidh* san tslighe, aitheach uathmhar urghránna ⁊ cōta lachtna síos go colp*aidh*e a dhá chos ime agus leithead lánbhoise fir chalma do mhéis dóibe ar íochtar an chóta sin ⁊ g*ach* uair dá dtógbhadh a chos, do bhuail*eadh* an t-íochtar dóib-sin an chóta fa cholpaidhe a dhā chos, ionnas go mbain*eadh* fuaim agus fothram asda b*udh* clos lánmhīle f*ea*rainn uadha, ⁊ b*udh* samhail do chrann seōil luinge mōire g*ach* cos don dā chois do bhī ag iomhchar an chuirp

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> aimhrialta-sin an fhir mhóir agus b*udh* samhail do bhád bronn-fhairsing g*ach* bróg don dá bhróig do bhí fa chrúbaibh crotacha camingneacha an aithigh fhuathmhair urghrānna sin ⁊, g*ach* cois-céim dā siubhl*adh*, ⁊ g*ach* uair dá dtóg[bh]*adh* a chos, do sgardadh sē lān bairille don ghreallach ⁊ don uisge as g*ach* brōig suas fo íochtair a chuirp ⁊ fana mhāsaibh air f*éin*. (118–20)

Tabharfar faoi ndeara sa sliocht thuas an 'stíl fhoirmleach, ornáidithe' (25) a bhíonn le fáil i bhformhór mór na scéalta rómánsacha ó thréimhse na Nua-Ghaeilge Moiche, agus faoi mar a mheabhraíonn Nic Chárthaigh dúinn tá gné 'den fhéinscigaithris' (25) i gceist sa téacs so faoi mar a bhíonn i mórán téacsanna ó dheireadh na tréimhse seo. Tá ceist seo na stíle agus mórán eile pléite go mion aici sa réamhrá cuimsitheach eolgaiseach atá ag tosach an leabhair, réamhrá ina soláthraíonn sí achoimre ar an dtéacs féin (3), agus ina bpléann sí comhthéacs agus foinsí liteartha an téacsa (3–16), sara dtugann sí faoi phlé a dhéanamh ar an ngreann agus ar an ngáirsiúlacht atá le fáil ina n-orlaí tríd síos ann (16–24). Deintear plé cruinn ina dhiaidh sin ar stíl phróis an scéil (25–8) agus ar na rainn filíochta a gheibhtear i roinnt lámhscríbhinní déanacha (naoi gcinn de dhánta atá curtha in eagar in Aguisín II: 173–93). Tugtar cuntas suimiúil dúinn ansan ar na leaganacha ar fad den dtéacs a cuireadh i gcló ón naoú haois déag ar aghaidh, ag tosnú leis an leagan a foilsíodh san *Irish Penny Journal* sa bhliain 1840 (28–33), sa tslí is ná fuil aon chloch fágtha gan iompó ag an eagarthóir ach a dtugann sí faoi chuntas a thabhairt ar roinnt tagairtí don dtéacs atá le fáil i litríocht na Gaeilge agus i litríocht an Bhéarla i bhfoinsí éagsula ón seachtú haois déag ar aghaidh (34–5).

Is dócha gurb í an fhoinse chlóite agus an t-eagrán is clúití den dtéacs a luaitear sa réamhrá ná eagrán Phádraig Mhic Phiarais a cuireadh amach sa bhliain 1906, 'an t-eagrán is mó a raibh tionchar aige ar scaipeadh an scéil taobh amuigh de chiorcail léannta' (32), agus tá an plé a dheintear anso ar mhodh eagarthóireachta an Phiarsaigh suimiúil sa mhéid is go ndeineann sí amach nár fhág an Piarsach aon rud 'suntasach' ar lár ina eagrán féin de BCL agus nár dhein sé 'aon athrú mór ar an bplota' (32), marab ionann agus téascsanna eile a chuir sé in eagar, go háirithe *Bruidhean Chaorthainn* gur fhoilsigh sé eagrán de sa bhliain 1908. Mar sin féin, teaspánann Nic Chárthaigh go soiléir anso na saghsannna athruithe ó thaobh litrithe agus gramadaí a dhein Mac Piarais 'ós íseal' trí shleachta lámhscríbhinne a chur i gcomparáid leis an dtéacs a sholáthraigh sé ina eagrán féin (33). Is sampla gléineach é seo den gcríochnúlacht atá le braistint ar gach aon leathanach d'eagrán so Nic Chárthaigh sa tslí is gur léir ó thosach gur eagrán den gcéad scoth atá anso againn.

Tá, dar leis an eagarthóir, 58 lámhscríbhinn ar marthain inniubh i measc lámhscríbhinní na Gaeilge ina bhfuil 'cóip, cóipeanna nó blúire' (37) de BCL le fáil iontu agus ceann de bhuanna móra an eagráin seo is ea ní hamháin an tslí ina dtugtar cuntas cruinn beacht ar gach aon cheann acu so (37–51) ach an tslí ina n-éiríonn le Nic Chárthaigh an líon mór lámhscríbhinní seo a rangú go cruinn córasach ina dhiaidh sin (51–73), agus leaganacha éasgúla den dtéacs

á n-aithint aici bunaithe (i) ar 'f(h)ianaise imhthoisceach', sé sin le rá dátaí agus áit scríofa na lámhscríbhinní; (ii) ar 'leaganacha éagsúla de chríoch an scéil' agus, ní nach iontach, (iii) ar mhalairtí 'i gcúrsaí foclóra agus teanga'. Tá obair éachtach déanta sa chuid seo den tsaothar ag Nic Chárthaigh go háirithe agus samplaí de mhalairtí á soláthar aici i bhfoirm táblaí (57–75) chun gur fusa go mór don léitheoir an argóint atá á déanamh mar le rangú na dtéacsanna a leanúint go soiléir, rud a fhágann nach móide go bhfuil aon dabht ná go bhfuil lán an chirt aici nuair a deir sí gur féidir 'trí phríomhghrúpa mar atá A, B agus C' agus '[s]eacht bpríomh-fhoghrúpa' (A1, A2, B1, B2, B3, C1 agus C2) a aithint i seachadhadh an téacsa (53).

Is é seo an tátal atá le baint as an obair seo ar fad, dar leis an eagarthóir: 'cé nach féidir craobh ghinealaigh iomlán údarásach de thraidisiún lámhscríbhinní BCL a rianú ina bhfuil áit ag gach finné, an tuiscint atá agam ar sheachadadh an téacs ná go bhfuil leaganacha ar leith den scéal tagtha anuas chugainn ach iad ar fad síolraithe ó bhunfhoinse choiteann, agus bunstruchtúr an scéil mar an gcéanna iontu uile' (72). Ar a shon go bhfuil 'coimeádachas ag baint leis an traidisiún lámhscríofa', meabhraíonn Nic Chárthaigh dúinn gur próiseas cruthaitheach atá ann ag an am gcéanna, faoi mar a léiríonn 'na mionathruithe agus an t-ornáidiú a dhealaíonn na leaganacha óna chéile' (72).

Tá an plé agus an cur síos atá déanta ag Nic Chárthaigh ar theanga BCL (73–100) chomh cáiréiseach cruinn céanna leis an bplé ar na lámhscríbhinní atá díreach luaite agam. Meabhraíonn sí dúinn go bhfuil an teanga in BCL níos nua-aimseartha ná gramadach na Nua-Ghaeilge Clasaicí, 'caighdeán liteartha a leagadh amach do chumadh an dáin dhírigh', ach nach ionann san is a rá 'go bhfuil aon locht ar an nGaeilge sa téacs seo nuair a imíonn sí ón gcaighdeán sin' (73). Is pointe tábhachtach é seo agus níl aon amhras orm ná go gcuireann an cur síos pointeáilte seo go mór lena bhfuil ar eolas againn faoi theanga phróstéacsanna déanacha na tréimhse, agus gur mór an áis an chuid seo den leabhar d'éinne a bheadh ag tabhairt faoi théacs den gcineál so a chur in eagar as so amach. Cuimsíonn an cur síos so plé ar dheilbhíocht an ainmfhocail (73–8), ar an réamhfhocal (78–85), ar uimhreacha (85–6), ar dheilbhíocht an bhriathair rialta (86–7), ar dheilbhíocht an bhriathair neamhrialta (87–92) ar ghnéithe de chomhréir na mbriathra agus an bhriathair choibhneasta (92–7), ar fhorainmneacha aidiachtaí agus dobhriathra (97–8) agus ar ortagrafaíocht na lámhsríbhinne ar a bhfuil an t-eagrán féin bunaithe (98–100), agus mar chuid de seo soláthraítear na foirmeacha ar fad des na réamhfhocail agus des na forainmneacha réamhfhoclacha ar fad atá sa téacs (81–5) maraon leis na foirmeacha ar fad des na briathra neamhrialta (89–92).

Ina dhiaidh seo, tugann an t-eagarthóir faoi dháta ceaptha an téacsa a mheas. Luann sí an dáta inar ceapadh an lámhscríbhinn is luaithe den dtéacs, 1731, mar '*terminus ante quem*' (101), agus luann an tagairt do Bharún Inse Uí Chuinn sa téacs mar fhianaise ar shórt *terminus post quem* sa mhéid is gur cruthaíodh an teideal oifigiúil seo sa bhliain 1543 d'Iarla Thuaman, Murchadh Ó Briain, 'mar chuid den pholasaí géillte agus athbhronnta' na linne úd (101). Dá bhrí sin, maítear anso gur féidir a rá gur cumadh an leagan den scéal 'mar atá sé tagtha anuas chugainn […] idir 1543 agus 1731' (101). Mar sin féin,

cé go bhfuil sé seo ar fad ana-shoiléir, deineann Nic Chárthaigh, iarracht an tréimhse cuíosach leathan so a chúngú beagáinín trí fhilleadh ar an bhfianaise theangeolaíoch agus trí fhianaise sheachtrach a lua chomh maith, sé sin le rá na tagairtí do mhóitíf an fheistis lachtna sa litríocht a pléadh sa réamhrá (3–16) agus béim ar thagairt do 'chóta lachtna' i ndán de chuid Dháibhí Uí Bhruadair, 'Dursan Éag Éamoinn Mhic Gearailt', a cumadh *c.* 1666–7. Is é seo an chéad tagairt do '*chóta* (seachas brat) *lachtna*' (108) dá bhfuil againn sa litríocht, agus b'fhéidir go bhfuair Ó Bruadair an leagan so ón dtéacs BCL. Toisc go dtugann an fhianaise theangeolaíoch le fios go bhfuil an téacs breac le foirmeacha déanacha (m.sh. líon na bhfoirmeacha scartha den mbriathar, bá na rémíre 'do' srl. (103–8)) ná fuil comónta in aon chor roimh an seachtú haois déag, is é tuairim mheáite an eagarthóra i ndeireadh thiar thall ná 'gur ceapadh BCL *c.* 1600–60' (109). Dar ndóigh, ba dhána an mhaise d'éinne againn dáta cumtha cruinn deifnídeach a lua le haon cheann de théacsanna Fiannaíochta na tréimhse seo, ach ba dheacair argóint a dhéanamh le haon chuid de sin.

Ba dheacair, ach oiread, argóint a dhéanamh leis an gcinneadh a dhein an t-eagarthóir (109) an leagan den dtéacs atá curtha in eagar anso a bhunú ar an lámhscríbhinn is luaithe dá bhfuil ar marthain inniubh, sé sin ARÉ 23 M 23, lámhscríbhinn a bhreac Aodh Ó Maolmhuaidh ó Chontae Ros Comáin sa bhliain 1731 agus é i mbun a chúraim mar scríobhaí i mBaile Átha Cliath de réir dealraimh (37). Is é an phríomhaidhm a bhí ag an eagarthóir eagrán ' 'aon-téacs' a chur ar fáil […] chomh gar don bhunleagan agus is féidir a rianú' (109) ach, mar sin féin, aithnítear anso go bhfuil 'bailíocht ag na finnéithe eile ar an scéal atá tagtha anuas chugainn', go bhfuil 'ról ar leith acu uile i seachadadh an scéil', agus gur 'léiriú iad gur próiseas dinimiciúil atá i gceist le seachadadh na bpróstéacsanna sa tréimhse iarchlasaiceach' (110). Toisc gur eagrán 'aon-téacs' é seo, agus nach féidir dá bhrí sin an próiseas seachadta ar fad a léiriú chinn an t-eagarthóir ar shleachta ó leaganacha éagsúla a sholáthar sna hAguisíní (157–72) agus, ina theannta san, pléann sí mórán malairtí sna nóta téacsa (141–55).

Mínítear ansan go cruinn soléir an modh eagarthóireachta a tharraing an t-eagarthóir chúichi féin (109–14) agus mar chuid de seo míníonn sí an cur chuige a bhí aici mar leis an aistriúchán den dtéacs a chuir sí ar fáil ar gach re leathanach – an téacs Gaeilge ar thaobh na láimhe clé agus an leagan Béarla ar an leathanach thall (116–39). Deir sí gur mar 'thaca don leagan Gaeilge' a cuireadh an t-aistriúchán ar fáil agus gur chuir sí roimpi a bheith dílis don mbunleagan agus dá bhrí sin gur thug sí 'tosaíocht do dhílseacht don bhuntéacs thar éascaíocht agus líofacht an Bhéarla' (113). Ní dóigh liom féin go bhféadfaí an t-aistriúchán a lochtú in aon tslí agus níl aon dabht ná gur cabhair mhór do léitheoirí é, go háirithe do dhaoine ná beadh an oiread san taithí acu ar léamh na Nua-Ghaeilge Moiche.

Cloítear tríd síos sa téacs féin (116–39) leis an modh eagarthóireachta faoi mar a míníodh é sin sna leathanaigh díreach roimhe sin, agus caitheann na 'nótaí ar an téacs' (141–55) solas breise ar ghnéithe éagsúla den dtéacs mar is cuí, m.sh. ainmneacha na gcarachtar, áitainmneacha, foirmeacha neamhchoitianta briathara le crostagairtí don bplé ar chúrsaí teangan féin (73–100).

Fágann sé seo ar fad gur mór an pléisiúr é an téacs féin a léamh agus, faoi mar a bheidh soiléir ón sliocht den dtéacs a soláthraíodh lastuas, bíonn an t-eagarthóir dílis do theanga an lámhscríbhinne tríd síos. Teaspántar scaoileadh noid na lámhsríbhinne le cló iodálach i gcásanna amhrais amháin, agus deintear formhór na leasuithe is gá a dhéanamh ó thaobh litrithe ós íseal nó 'go ciúin' mar is ceart dar liom, agus iad ar fad mínithe sa mhodh eagarthóireachta. Is fuirist don léitheoir an téacs féin a léamh toisc an cur chuige seo a bheith in úsáid – cur chuige atá trédhearcach tríd síos – agus an t-aon ní amháin go mbeadh aon deacracht agam féin leis ná an macran a bheith in úsáid chun sínte fada ná fuil sa lámhscríbhinn a theaspáint cé go dtuigim go mb'fhéidir go mbeadh an iomad léamh lámhscríbhinne le cur isteach mara mbeadh sé in úsáid. An lochtófaí an t-eagarthóir a déarfadh gur chuir sé nó sí sínte fada atá ar iarraidh sa lámhscríbhinn isteach go ciúin nó ós íseal? Ach is mionphointe é sin agus chuaigh an cnáimhseálaí seo féin i dtaithí ar an macran céanna tar éis cúpla leathanach.

Ní dócha go mbeidh aon dabht ar éinne a thugann faoin imleabhar breá so a léamh ná go bhfuil gaisce déanta ag Nic Chárthaigh leis an leagan thar a bheith críochnúil seo de BCL a chur in eagar. Tá curtha go mór aici le léann na Fiannaíochta agus na Nua-Ghaeilge Moiche araon sa tsaothar so agus, mara bhfuil dearúd orm, is é seo an chéad eagrán de théacs próis Fiannaíochta ó thréimhse na Nua-Ghaeilge Moiche a cuireadh i gcló ó foilsíodh eagrán Neasa Ní Shéaghdha de *Tóruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne* sa bhliain 1969. Is deimhnitheach dá bhrí sin go gcuirfidh scoláirí agus léitheoirí Gaeilge araon fáilte mhór roimhe. Luadh ag tús an léirmheasa so gurbh é an aidhm a bhí ag an eagarthóir ná 'eagrán deifnídeach' den téacs Fiannaíochta, *Bodach an Chóta Lachtna*, a chur ar fáil agus níl aon amhras orm ná go bhfuil an sprioc san aimsithe ag Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh óir ní dócha go mbeidh eagrán eile den dtéacs so ag teastáil go deo. Níl le rá ina dhiaidh sin ach go bhfuil moladh mór ag dul do Scoil an Léinn Cheiltigh in Institiúid Ard-Léinn Bhaile Átha Cliath as an bhfoilseachán snasta so a chur ar fáil sa tsraith seo agus níorbh aon díobháil a lua go gcuireann an íomhá shuaithinseach den mBodach a dhear Laoighseach Ní Choistealbha do chlúdach an leabhair an dlaoi mhullaigh ar an saothar ardchaighdéain seo.

Tagairtí

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Ó Dónaill, Niall 1996 [1942]: *Seanchas na Féinne* (Baile Átha Cliath).

Breandán Ó Cróinín
Coláiste Mhuire gan Smál

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are accepted for general use in *Celtica*, along with such universally known ones as p., ibid., etc. Any other abbreviations should be defined on first use and a list of them should be provided at the end of the article.

ABM	D. McManus and E. Ó Raghallaigh (eds), *A Bardic Miscellany: Five Hundred Bardic Poems from Manuscripts in Irish and British Libraries*, Léann na Tríonóide/Trinity Irish Studies 2 (Dublin, 2010).
ACL	Whitley Stokes and Kuno Meyer (eds), *Archiv für celtische Lexikographie*, 3 vols (Halle a.S., 1898–1907).
AFM	John O'Donovan (ed.), *Annála Ríogachta Éireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, 7 vols (Dublin, 1848–51).
AI	Seán Mac Airt (ed.), *The Annals of Inisfallen* (Dublin, 1951).
AL	R. Atkinson, W. N. Hancock, W. M. Hennessy, T. O'Mahony and A. G. Richey (eds), *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, 6 vols (Dublin, 1865–1901).
Anecdota	O. J. Bergin, R. I. Best, Kuno Meyer and J. G. O'Keeffe (eds), *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, 5 vols (Halle a.S., 1907–13).
AU	Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (eds), *The Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)* (Dublin, 1983).
BBCS	*Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*.
BL	British Library.
Br	Breton.
CIH	D. A. Binchy (ed.), *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, 6 vols (Dublin, 1978).
CMCS	*Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*; from number 26 onwards *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*.
CModIr	Classical Modern Irish.
Co	Cornish.
CSANA	Celtic Studies Association of North America.
DIAS	Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.
DIL	*Dictionary of the Irish Language* and *Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish Language* (Dublin, 1913–76; compact edition 1983).
EC	*Études Celtiques*.
eDIL	*Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language* (www.dil.ie).
EMod	Early Modern (in combinations EModIr etc).
GMW	D. Simon Evans, *A Grammar of Middle Welsh* (Dublin, 1964).
GOI	Rudolf Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish* (Dublin, 1946).
GPC	*Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* (Cardiff, 1950–2002).
GPC^2	*Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, second ed. (Cardiff, 2003–).
GPC Online	*Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, online ed. (www.geiriadur.ac.uk).

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IEW	Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 2 vols (Bern, 1959–69).
IGT	Osborn Bergin (ed.), 'Irish Grammatical Tracts', supplements to *Ériu* 8 (1916), 9 (1921–3), 10 (1926–8), 14 (1946) and 17 (1955).
Ir	Irish.
ISOS	*Irish Script on Screen* (www.isos.dias.ie).
ITS	Irish Texts Society.
JCHAS	*Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* (1892–).
JCS	*Journal of Celtic Studies*.
JRSAI	*Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*.
LEIA	*Lexique étymologique de l'irlandais ancien* (Dublin and Paris, 1959–).
LL	R. I. Best, O. Bergin, M. A. O'Brien and A. O'Sullivan (eds), *The Book of Leinster*, 6 vols (Dublin, 1954–83).
LModIr	Late Modern Irish.
LU	R. I. Best and O. Bergin (eds), *Lebor na hUidre/Book of the Dun Cow* (Dublin, 1929). Where necessary, the hands of the three scribes may be distinguished as *LU*(*A*), *LU*(*M*) and *LU*(*H*).
M	Middle (in combinations MIr, MW, MBr, MCo etc.).
MD	Edward Gwynn (ed.), *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, Todd Lecture Series 8–12 (Dublin, 1903–35).
Ml.	The Milan Glosses on the Psalms, Bibl. Ambr. C. 301, in Whitley Stokes and John Strachan (eds), *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1901–3; reprinted Dublin, 1975), i, 7–483.
Mod	Modern (in combinations ModIr, ModW, ModBr, ModCo etc.).
MV	Rudolf Thurneysen (ed.), 'Mittelirische Verlehren', *Irische Texte* III.1 (1891), 1–182.
NLI	National Library of Ireland.
NLS	National Library of Scotland.
NLW	National Library of Wales.
O	Old (in combinations OIr, OW, OBr, OCo etc.).
PBA	*Proceedings of the British Academy*.
PRIA	*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*.
QUB	Queen's University Belfast.
RC	*Revue Celtique*.
RIA	Royal Irish Academy.
SC	*Studia Celtica*.
Sg.	Glosses on Priscian, Codex Sangallensis no. 904, in Whitley Stokes and John Strachan (eds), *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1901–3; reprinted Dublin, 1975), ii, 49–224.
SGc	Scottish Gaelic.
SGS	*Scottish Gaelic Studies*.
SnaG	Kim McCone, Damian McManus, Cathal Ó hÁinle, Nicholas Williams and Liam Breatnach (eds), *Stair na Gaeilge in Ómós do Phádraig Ó Fiannachta* (Maynooth, 1994).
TBC 1	Cecile O'Rahilly (ed.), *Táin Bó Cúalnge: Recension I* (Dublin, 1976).

TBC LL	Cecile O'Rahilly (ed.), *Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Book of Leinster* (Dublin, 1967).
TBC St.	Cecile O'Rahilly (ed.), *The Stowe Version of Táin Bó Cuailnge* (Dublin, 1961).
TCD	Trinity College Dublin.
Thes	Whitley Stokes and John Strachan (eds), *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1901–3; reprinted Dublin, 1975).
THSC	*Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*.
Tur.	The Turin Glosses on St Mark, in Whitley Stokes and John Strachan (eds), *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1901–3; reprinted Dublin, 1975), i, 484–94.
UCD	University College Dublin.
VKG	Holger Pedersen, *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen*, 2 vols (Göttingen, 1909–13).
W	Welsh.
Wb.	Glosses on the Pauline Epistles, Codex Paulinus Wirziburgensis, in Whitley Stokes and John Strachan (eds), *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1901–3; reprinted Dublin, 1975), i, 499–712.
ZCP	*Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*.