Seacht bpearsain fhichead uair mé:

A poem on the optative subjunctive in a copy of *Irish Grammatical Tracts* III–IV

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(Short title: Seacht bpearsain fhichead uair mé)

Abstract

This article concerns a re-discovered Classical Modern Irish poem on the optative subjunctive. In Classical Modern Irish most verbs are regularly preceded by *gur* (neg. *nár*) in the optative subjunctive (e.g. *gur léagha* ‘may you read’), but 27 verbs take *go* (neg. *ná*) (e.g. *go bhfionna* ‘may you know’); the poem edited here lists the latter verbs based on information gleaned from *Irish Grammatical Tracts* III–IV. This article discusses the manuscript context of the poem, its relationship to *IGT* III–IV and the make-up of that tract, the linguistic background to *go/gur* variation in the optative, and it presents a critical edition of the poem itself with an English translation.

*Irish Grammatical Tracts* III–IV

In 1946, Osborn Bergin published a Classical Modern Irish grammatical treatise on verbal morphology and the derivation of abstract nouns from adjectives in a supplement to this journal as part of a series of editions of Bardic didactic works (*Irish Grammatical Tracts* or *IGT*). For reasons that will become clear, I refer to this particular text as *IGT* III–IV. It is preserved in four manuscripts: TCD H 2.12 (1305), 1–17r [Section 4], henceforth referred to as ‘H12’; TCD H 2.17 (1319), 195a–232b, henceforth ‘H17’; RIA C i 3 (750), 1a–27a [Section B], henceforth ‘C’; RIA E iv 1 (751), 1–50b, henceforth ‘E’.¹ In common with his

¹ *I am grateful to Damian McManus for his incisive comments on this paper and to Liam Breatnach for helpful suggestions. My thanks also to the anonymous reader and Professor Ruairí Ó hUiginn for suggesting a number of improvements. Translations of material published without an English translation are my own. Where the reference follows the Irish text and precedes the translation, the English rendering is mine; where the citation and translation both precede the reference, the translation is that of the published edition. Citations from *ABM* have been normalised.*
editions of other grammatical tracts, Bergin provides no translation or commentary, though he had hoped at a later point to provide ‘an introduction describing the MSS., a commentary on the text, identifications of poetical quotations where possible, a glossary of technical terms, and indexes to words discussed and lines quoted’ (IGT I, p. iv). Bergin died in 1950, prior to the publication of IGT V, before he could supply these desiderata for IGT III–IV or any of the other tracts published in that series.

Setting aside the deficiencies common to the entire IGT series, Bergin’s edition of IGT III–IV has its own particular flaws. Perhaps most seriously Bergin obscured the original unity of the tract, publishing it as two discrete tracts under the titles ‘Irregular Verbs’ (IGT III) and ‘Abstract Nouns’ (IGT IV) – a division for which there is no manuscript authority. In all four extant manuscripts, IGT III and IV are presented as a single text. In no manuscript is there a break between the end of what Bergin edits as IGT III and the beginning of his IGT IV; the text edited as IGT IV is presented in the manuscripts as the final section of a tract beginning with IGT III, §1. IGT III–IV should be understood as a text consisting of 126 sections on verbal morphology (Bergin’s IGT III) with a coda (Bergin’s IGT IV) on the morphology of adjectival abstracts. In the case of the verbal sections, information on morphology is given (for the more irregular verbs, sometimes a more or less complete paradigm of the verb is provided), followed by citations which illustrate in metrically-fixed form correct (and sometimes incorrect) usage; in the final section on adjectival abstracts, examples of correct and incorrect forms are presented first with minimal commentary and these are then followed by verse citations. For the first 126 sections of IGT III–IV, the

E is a seventeenth-century paper manuscript, while the others are sixteenth-century vellums. Bergin did not consult H12 for his edition.

Thomas Astle’s The origin and progress of writing [...], published in London in 1784, would appear to point to there being another copy of IGT III–IV in existence in the eighteenth century which is not now known, but the evidence is misleading. Astle reproduces (pp 125–6 and Plate 22) a part of IGT III, §1 (‘from a treatise on Grammar, written in the Gaelic or Erse tongue in the latter end of the fifteenth century’) and the beginning of §83 (‘from a fair MS. on paper, written in the latter end of the fourteenth, or in the beginning of the fifteenth century, the initial letters of which are much ornamented’). Of the former manuscript, the Rev. Charles O’Conor reports at p. 206 of his Bibliotheca MS. Stowensis (Buckingham, 1818) ‘it is part of an Irish Grammar, of the 16th century, in ten pages, 4to’; O’Conor has no comment on the second putative manuscript. Despite Astle’s descriptions, it is clear from the accompanying plate that both extracts are from E.

2 For citations marked faulty, see McManus 2017.
headword is a verbal noun (or *pearsa* (*oibrighthe*) in Bardic grammatical taxonomy), as Bardic grammarians evidently believed finite verbal forms to be derived from the verbal noun. The final section of the tract is headed *Persoin lóir ann so sí* ‘Abstract nouns derived from adjectives from here on’. While the grammatical categories of verbal noun and adjectival abstract are not treated together in any modern grammatical framework used to describe and teach the Irish language, and for that reason it is perhaps understandable that Bergin thought it right to present *IGT* III–IV as two separate texts, it was perfectly natural

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3 Liam Breatnach informs me that the verbal noun is often employed as the ‘citation form’ to gloss finite verbal forms in Irish glossaries.

4 In light of this understanding of the verbal noun, *pearsa* is often best translated simply ‘verb’. The belief that finite verbal forms were derived from verbal nouns accounts for the use of what we might term ‘synthetic’ or – to avoid confusion with another use of the term ‘synthetic’ in Irish grammar – ‘invented verbal nouns’ in *IGT* III–IV. For example, note the comment on the limited use of *do-chichs-* as a stem of *do-chí* (for which, see *SNG* iv, §7.19) in the treatment of that verb in the tract (*IGT* III §4):

> an chichsin ní thógaib ceann acht ar chúig fhoclaib, do-chichser, do-chichsedh [sic?],
> do-chichsind, do-chichsead .c., 7 ní .c. uirre acht sin, 7 ar énlorg gabas fáisdine ; leíthfáisdine orra sin

*Cichsin*: it only appears in five words: *do-chichsear* [1 sing. pres. subj.], *do-chichseam* [1 pl. pres. subj.], *do-chichsead* [3 pl. pres. subj.], *do-chichsinn* [1 sing. past subj.], *do-chichseadh* [3 sing. past subj.] are correct; and only those are correct from it, and the future and the conditional follow the same pattern in those.

In other words *do-chichs-* is also found in the 1 person sing. and pl. and the 3 person pl. of the future tense (identical with the pres. subj. forms *do-chichsear*, *do-chichseam* and *do-chichsedd* respectively), and also in the 1 and 3 sing. of the conditional (identical with the past subj. forms *do-chichsinn* and *do-chichseadh* respectively). The headwords for *do-chí* are *faicsin*, *faisgin*, *fairgsin*, *fairsge* and *cichsin*. (Grudging acknowledgment is also given to *aicsin* in the statement *Do-rindedh aicsin ‘Aicsin has [also] been used’, i.e. ‘Aicsin is [also] found*. Given the wording of this remark, its position at the end of the ‘theory’ section of the treatment of this verb and the examples of vowel-initial prototonic forms for the more familiar *f*-initial forms, it is likely that this statement refers not only to the existence of a verbal noun *aicsin* and its use in Classical verse but also to its status as a derivational basic for verbal forms without an expected inorganic initial *f*.-) I know of no example of the verbal noun *cichsin* in poetry or in any other source but the ‘theory’ section of §4 of *IGT* III–IV, whereas examples of *faicsin*, *faisgin* and *fairgsse* (but not *fairgsin*) are found in verse. See, for example, *Tig bean is táiplis don tigh. fáibitis “fear agá “faigsin (tigh : faigsin) (IGT III 785 = ii 608), ‘A woman with a backgammon-board come to the house; a man smiled upon seeing them’ (there is likely some innuendo here; see Greene 1955); *téd ar “bhfaicsin na “faillle / go géig n-aisdrigh nEochaille (bhfaicsin : aisdrigh), ‘Having noticed that [Toirdhealbhach Ó Conchobhair] was unguarded, [his kin] went to the roving hero of Éóchaill’ (DiD 86.15cd); *Leasg liom aghaidh ar Chúil Chliabh / cús mhaoithe fairgsse a foinnrian (ABM 297.1ab), ‘I am loathe to journey to Cúil Chliabh; it is a cause of sadness to look upon its paths’; and *Tuc drem ar n-“aicsin a “fhedma.
that Bardic grammarians should treat them together as they both were perceived as belonging to the grammatical category of *pearsa*; every paragraph of *IGT* III and IV thus begins with one or more *pearsain*. In other words, the unifying principle of *IGT* III–IV is the grammatical category of the headwords.

Besides misrepresenting the unity of the text, Bergin’s edition is unsatisfactory in other respects. As noted by Armstrong (1985, 187), his edition is compromised by the editorial policy. Both in terms of content and *mise-en-page*, there is significant variation between the different manuscript witnesses. Despite complex recensional differences, Bergin creates a single text by combining the texts of all of the manuscripts consulted. The critical apparatus is awkward and, indeed, partially unusable: frustratingly, Bergin uses superscript \(^a\) and \(^b\) throughout his edition, but never explains what these letters refer to. It is not at present possible to reconstruct with ease or certainty the content of the individual witnesses on the basis of the published edition.

Curiously, Bergin also omitted information found uniquely in H17 regarding the authorship of some of the metrical citations in the tract; forty ascriptions, apparently in the scribal hand, written either after particular citations or in the margin find no place in his edition. This information might have been withheld for the projected introduction to *IGT* and the ‘identifications of poetical quotations’ (see above), but it is regrettable that the editor chose to pass over such a rich vein of information on the compilation of the Bardic tracts in silence when publishing this tract. Bergin was a pioneer in the investigation of medieval Irish

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5 For various uses of the term *pearsa*, see *ABP* pp 174–5.

6 See also the remarks on the ordering of citations in *IGT* III–IV in Breatnach 2015, 14–15.

7 In this regard, the approach of Lambert McKenna in editing *BST*, where the different manuscript versions are printed separately, is far superior.

8 See Breatnach 2004, where these ascriptions are incorporated into an index of names in *IGT*. I hope to publish more on these identifications in the near future. The manuscript has been digitised and can be viewed (under the rubric ‘1319/2/7’) on Irish Script on Screen (isos.dias.ie; accessed 13 August 2018).
grammatically and his editions of the Grammatical Tracts have been used with great profit to shed light on Classical Modern Irish language and metre; nonetheless, given the problems outlined above, scholarship in this area would greatly benefit from a new edition of IGT III–IV (currently in hand) and the other tracts that have not yet been re-edited.

Didactic material added to H 2.17

As a result of Bergin’s policy of ignoring marginalia (both in the scribal hand and material added later) and other extratextual material, at least two short Classical Modern Irish didactic texts have gone unnoticed in this manuscript: the first is a poem on the optative subjunctive, which I edit and translate below; the second is a list of defective verbs, which I will publish on another occasion. Both are found on p. 197 of the manuscript, written in two of the fairly extensive blank spaces between the different sections of IGT III–IV, lines which were presumably left blank to allow for the addition of relevant citations in the future. Both of the added texts were written out by a single scribe, whose hand is similar to that of the main scribe of the manuscript but somewhat less confident. He may have been a pupil of the Mac Craith poetic family of Thomond, as the copy of IGT III–IV in this manuscript was probably made in a Mac Craith school: that family is afforded particular prominence in the added ascriptions referred to above, and on the upper margin of p. 219 a later hand has written as maith an leabhar-so ag Cloinn C[h]raith ‘this book of Clann Chraith is good’. The manuscript appears to have changed hands among learned families, however, for on the upper margin of p. 221 a later somewhat immature-looking hand writes Ag so leabhar Iollainn Í Dhomhnalláin ‘Behold Iollann Ó Domhnalláin’s book’.

The text of the poem on the optative subjunctive occupies ten manuscript lines of p. 197a. It is hardly coincidental that the first verbal noun listed in the poem is teagmháil and that our poem begins after the last citation given under that headword (IGT III, §2.29). The poem is in deibhidhe metre and – unusually for a didactic poem – fulfils the requirements of strict verse (dán direach). The anonymous poet sets out to list the 27 verbs which in the

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9 It is a feature of this copy of IGT III–IV that it omits many of the citations found in other copies of the tract.
10 He may be the poet of this name who composed a poem for Cú Chonnacht Máig Uidhir (†1589) (DMU 24) and for Toirdhealbhach Ó Néill (†1595) (ABM 449). In addition to the marginalia noted above, the name Domhnall is written in Ogham on p. 199, but no surname is given.
11 I know of six other Classical Modern Irish didactic poems: Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh’s wide-ranging Madh fiafraighbeach budh feasach (McKenna 1947); Tadhg Ó hUiginn’s poem on rhyme, Comhardadh cionnas is cór? (Ó Riain 2013); another poem on rhyme beginning Feadha an oghaim aithnídh damh (Breathnach 1941–2);
optative subjunctive (itche)\(^{12}\) are preceded by the verbal particle go rather than gur. Our text is incomplete, however: only 25 verbs are listed\(^{13}\) and a dúnadh (metrical closure) is lacking.

The optative subjunctive

To contextualise the issue addressed in this poem, it may be useful to briefly examine here the history of the optative subjunctive in Irish and some references to it in other Classical Modern Irish didactic works.

In Old and Middle Irish, one of the functions of the verbal particle ro was to make the preterite form of the verb perfect in meaning, e.g. gabais ‘took’ (dependent -gab), but ro gab ‘has taken’ and as-bert ‘said’, but as-rubart ‘has said’. Another function of ro was to give optative force to the present subjunctive of the verb (GOI §531), e.g. da-rolgea dó doib ‘may God forgive it to them’ (Wb. 31a2) (< 3 sing. pres. subj. du-łoga with infixed ro),\(^{14}\) ní rohèla uáit ‘may it not escape thee’ (Wb. 30a10) and Ro bëosa fort láimsiu / isind *flaith i *mbísiu! ‘May I be on Thy hand in the realm wherein Thou art!’ (Fél Prol. 273–4).\(^{15}\) Some verbs, however, are never augmented by ro. To mark the perfect (or to give optative sense to the subjunctive) some of these latter verbs took other particles in place of ro or formed their perfect and subjunctive by suppletion, while some did not distinguish morphosyntactically between perfect or preterite at all (or between the optative subjunctive and other uses of the subjunctive mood) (see GOI §§532–6).

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\(^{12}\) The primary sense of itche is ‘prayer, entreaty’; ‘optative subjunctive’ or ‘optative subjunctive particle’ is a natural extension of meaning. The word remains in use in its original sense in Bardic poetry. See, for example, Muire Óg an uair aitghe. ní haibche fuair ógh itche (IGT III 447), ‘No more promptly has a virgin received what she was praying for than when you prayed to the Virgin Mary’ and Mór n-itche bhan is bhrughadh / 's guidhe ord is ollumhan / dod chaomhna ar ghniomh na ngaenschath, / a ghríobh aobhdha imreasnach (ABM 433.6), ‘Many the supplications of women and hospitalers, and the prayers of those in holy orders and of master-poets that you be protected from the wicked deed of the hostile battles, O lovely, bellicose hero’.

\(^{13}\) 1c claisdin and cluinsin, verbal nouns of do-chluin (eann), are to be counted as a single verb.

\(^{14}\) For the palatalisation of the medial consonant in -łoga following syncope, see GOI §607.

\(^{15}\) Note also the long sequence of quatrains beginning Rom *sóerae ‘May you save me’ (Fél Epil. 441–561).
The conjunction co ‘that’ was used to introduce a subordinate optative subjunctive clause after verbs such as guidid ‘prays’ and áilid ‘beseeches’, as in no-t-guidimm co ro-airchise dimm ᵈ do’n uli atāt imallē frim, co tarta dún comartha na Cristaidechta, co na dechsum is-in lucc dorcha cētna, ‘I beseech thee to have mercy on me, and on all who are with me, and give us the token of Christianity, that we may not go into the same dark place’ (Atkinson 1887, ll 1299–1302). In the course of the Middle Irish period, subordinated optative co-clauses were re-analysed as direct objects of verbs such as guidid rather than as subordinate clauses, as if coro airchise dim... in the last citation were an instance of direct speech (‘I beseech you “May you have mercy on me...” ’). As a result co began to appear in main clauses with no connective force (see McQuillan 2002, 45–9), giving the likes of Co tartar cuir ᵈ glinne, rátha ᵅ trebairi imm airisium arna comai-[-sin ᵈ ’ma tabairt di Choin Chulaind, ‘Let pledges and covenants, bonds and guarantees be given for abiding by those terms and fulfilling them to Cú Chulainn’ (TBC LL 1562) and Ar cach óen ro chí / a chloéin for bith ché, / mo chloîne, a Dé bí, / co ro choîne mé, ‘For the sake of everyone who has wept for his wrong-doing in this world, may I, O living God, bewail my wickedness’ (Murphy 1956, poem 27.6). By the Early Modern Irish period a positive optative verb is regularly introduced by the conjunction go (< co) or gur (< cor < coro).

Another development in connection with the optative subjunctive to be mentioned here is the spread in the Middle Irish period of the negative particle ná – in main clauses earlier proper only to the imperative – to optative subjunctive main clauses at the expense of

16 The rise of obligatory co (go) is a symptom of the retreat of the subjunctive from the main clause in Irish: by the Early Modern Irish period, the subjunctive is only found in dependent and relative clauses, outside of the optative, which is morphologically a dependent clause. McQuillan (2002, 279–81) sees the spread of co to main clauses as a result of de-semanticisation: the independent subjunctive gradually became ‘semantically too inexpressive for main clause function, with the result that it has to be buttressed by an appropriate subordinator, the final conjunction/complementizer co’.

17 Perhaps translate rather ‘By everyone who has wept...’, i.e. ‘by penitents who are now saints’ (see DIL s.v. 1 ar II (b)).

18 A partial exception is the copula, which occurs combined with go (e.g. gurab buan an teach mar tá, ‘may this castle stand forever as it is’; McKenna 1923, quatrain 37a = DiD 120) and also without go (e.g. rob tuar baoghlaithe biodbhadh, ‘may it be an omen of danger to the enemies [...]’, Rob séan caomhanta carad, ‘May [it] be a sign of protection of friends’, etc.; TD 19.1d, 2a). The copula is not treated in IGT III–IV; in Classical Modern Irish grammatical terminology it belonged to the category of sealbhadh, for which see fn. 30 below.
nī (cf. McQuillan 2002, 49–52), e.g. Clunid mo thimna do lēir, / nārbar dúrch[h]ridig dochēil; nā dénaid friū, rū athar mbras, / cuibdi, cardes nā clemnas, ‘Hear my commandments attentively, do not be hard-hearted or foolish; do not make any agreement, treaty or marriage with them, swift attack’ (Saltair na Rann 4841–4) and Nā ro tréice do ruire / in chéin bheir a[r] bith bhuidhdi, / ar ór ná ar *séd ar bith cé / nā tréic-si do chomairce (Stokes 1900, ll 592–3), ‘May you not abandon your lord so long as you are alive; for gold or for any wealth whatsoever do not forsake the protection you give!’ . While the Grammatical Tracts sanction both nī(or) and nā(r) as negative particles in optative clauses, I am unaware of any example of optative nī(or) in Classical Modern Irish poetry; the retention of nī in the tract is most likely an example of the conservatism of the Bardic grammarians and their familiarity with earlier linguistic conventions.

As is well known, the verbal system was greatly simplified in the Middle Irish period, so that by Early Modern Irish there was no longer a category of deponent verbs and only a handful of compound verbs. Of relevance for this paper too is the loss of distinction between preterite and perfect, so that the Early Modern analogues of historical perfects such as OIr as-rubart (a-dubhairt, a-dobhairt etc.) could mean both ‘said’ and ‘has said’. Despite the general diachronic trend towards simplification, many complexities in verbal morphology and syntax endured into the Early Modern Irish period (as IGT III–IV attests), new complications arose and certain archaic verbal forms that had probably long vanished from

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19 The optative subjunctive and the imperative have similar though not identical semantic force and, as noted, for example, by McKenna for Classical Modern Irish (BST p. 175), are regularly identical in (dependent) morphology for some persons. For overlap between the subjunctive and imperative, see also McQuillan 2002, 32–3. Note also that the 1 sing. subjunctive ending -ear serves also as the 1 sing. imperative ending throughout IGT III–IV: see dénar, déinear: ná dénar, ná déinear in §1 (do-nī), for instance, or eirgear, eargar in §8 (téid); the 1 sing. subjunctive and 1 sing. imperative of regular verbs are, of course, identical.

20 I am citing the edition of David Greene available on the website of the Dublin Institute (https://www.dias.ie/celt/celt-publications-2/celt-saltair-na-rann/; accessed 14 August 2018). Note the move in this and the following citation from optative to imperative. The clause nārbar dúrchridig... is probably to be understood as a parenthetical wish (‘may you not be...’) in this context and not as an order. Note that the actual commandments, in the cited quatrain and those following, are all given in the imperative: ná dénaid ‘do not make’ (l. 4843), cométaid ‘keep’ (ll 4853 and 4857), ná dermaid ‘do not forget’ (l. 4869), clünid ‘hear’ (l. 4872).

21 In the paradigm of do-nī in IGT III, §1, for example, both nī dernar and nā dernar are given as negatives of optative gu ndernar. See further discussion on the negative particles of the optative below.

22 The breakdown of the distinction between preterite and perfect and the dominance of originally perfect verbal forms was already in train in the Old Irish period (McCone 1997, 93–8) and was more or less complete by the tenth century (see SNG iii, §12.27 and also McCone 1997, 183–7).
speech remained in use for high-register literature. Among the difficulties of Classical Modern Irish verbal syntax observed by contemporary grammarians was variation in the verbal particles used in the past tense and in the optative subjunctive. In the past tense, most verbs were preceded by a particle ro (later do) in declarative past tense sentences and, in other environments, by particles which contained a historical ro (níor, gur, nár, nachar, interrogative nar etc.); these same verbs were preceded by gur or nár in the optative. Other verbs were not preceded by a verbal particle ro in declarative past tense sentences. In other environments this second group of verbs was preceded by the particles ní, go, nach, nocha(n), an etc. in the past. In the optative they are found with go or ná.

The distinction described in the preceding paragraph is adverted to several times in Bardic didactic literature. See for example, the following passage from IGT I:

\[\text{Gach pearsa agá bhfuil .r. ar a hitche, .n. as cóir ar a fiafraighidh ar ländemhníognadh. An pearsa ag nach bhfuil, ní cóir .n. ar a fiafraighidh, mur tá so: 'Ar mharbhus tú?' lochtach; 'Nar mharbhus tú?' as cóir ann.}\]

‘Every verb that has r on its optative subjunctive should have n on its interrogative in the perfect sense. A verb that does not [have r on its optative subjunctive] should not have n on its interrogative; for instance, \textit{Ar mharbhus tú?} is incorrect; \textit{Nar mharbhus tú?} is what is correct there.’

\[(\text{ABP II 275–8})\]

The point being made here appears at first sight to be that ar, the reduced form of the past interrogative particle, is sometimes used incorrectly – in the view of the prescriptive Bardic grammarian – in place of the more correct nar, but it is more likely that the passage here is concerned with the distribution of verbal particles, namely the use of interrogative nar rather than an; in citing examples, the grammarian incidentally notes that ar is an incorrect form of nar.\(^2\)

Verbs that mark their past tense forms with a particle ro (do) in the positive will take nar in the interrogative; verbs that do not mark their past tense with ro take an (earlier in) as

\(^2\) One might object that both nar and an contain n and that this passage is therefore really concerned with prohibiting past tense interrogative ar, but the ‘n on its interrogative’ (\textit{n. ar a fiafraighidh}) most likely refers to an initial n- (nar). Cf. \textit{Gach pearsa ar a mbia duir ailm coimlenamna} ‘Every verbal form on which [or ‘before which’] there is an adhering da’ (i.e. the preverb do-/ida-) (see fn. 88 below). Cf. BST 211.13, which forbids interrogative \textit{ar mharbhus tú?} and sanctions \textit{nar mharbhus tú?}. 
an interrogative particle. To define the set of verbs which take nar (earlier inro²⁴), the grammarian refers to the distinction between verbs which take go in their optative subjunctive and those which take gur, as the past tense and the optative subjunctive pattern together in the use (or non-use) of verbal particles in -r. The verb marbhaidh will properly take nar as an interrogative particle in the past tense (nar mharbh? ‘did he kill?’) because it takes gur in the optative subjunctive (gur mharbha ‘may he kill’); do-ní will not take nar as an interrogative particle in the past tense (an ndearna? ‘did he do?’) because it takes go in the optative subjunctive (go ndearna ‘may he do’). The correspondence in the verbal particles used in the past tense and the optative subjunctive is referred to elsewhere in Bardic didactic literature: for examples of similar formulations in IGT III–IV, BST and Rudimenta Grammaticae Hibernicae, see the notes on the above passage in ABP (pp 204–5).²⁵

As will be clear from the list in our poem (see below), among the verbs that take go rather than gur in the optative subjunctive are some of the most commonly occurring verbs in the language (the verb do-ní ‘does, makes’ mentioned in the last paragraph is a case in point). It should also be noted that, outside of the optative use of the subjunctive, go is the conjunction used in subordinate clauses even before verbs that regularly take gur in the optative. It is probably for these reasons that go begins to spread at the expense of gur to verbs that historically took gur in the optative, a development commented on in BST 225.1–6 (cf. also 14b and 45a), where go for earlier gur is called itche chanamhna. This term is translated by McKenna as ‘a colloquial way of expressing wish’ (BST p. 174). Cf. McQuillan’s ‘ “popular” optative’ (2002, 45–6). I prefer the translation ‘anomalous optative’, though the use of go for gur in these examples is innovative and almost certainly reflects developments in ordinary spoken Irish. The label canamhain is used to describe both historical and innovative forms in the Tracts (see SNG iv, §4.9): it is best understood as meaning ‘a form which does not conform to the paradigm/rule but is nonetheless acceptable’.²⁶

²⁴ We might expect inro to have been reduced to *nro, but presumably because absolute initial nr- was not found in Irish (as opposed to vowel + nr-) the reduced form was realised with a secondary vowel as naro. Like coro (> gur), naro was reduced to nar and eventually to ar, the last-mentioned form showing the influence of interrogative an (in).

²⁵ While go is the only particle used in the positive optative subjunctive in Modern Irish, the patterning of go/gur, ní/níor etc. is still found in the past tense (at least in standard written Irish), e.g. níor mharraighe but ní dhearna.

²⁶ I have slightly altered the formatting of passages cited from BST and added the letters (a), (b) and (c) for ease of citation.
Itche chanamhna sunn.

(a) Go nach bía oirbhire air

Día go *soirbhighe an *sédsain.

(b) Óm rún go *síothlór go *soirbh

giodh doirbh dhúnn síothlódh ór snaidhm.

(c) Teampall *Solmhan

go *sléachtar ann go hoirichealach:

cloch go ngné ngairbh

gurab é m’ainm a hoilithreach.

Anomalous optative here.

‘May God bless that treasure so that no harm may ever befall it.’

‘May I enjoy a pleasant peace owing to this decision, though ’tis hard for me to be at peace from my trouble.’

‘May I in all observance prostrate myself in Solomon’s Temple; may I be known as a pilgrim to that smooth-polished castle.’

27 Better ‘so that there will be no malediction upon it may God clear that way’.

28 From A-tú i ndeacair eder dhís (ABM 57), quatrain 29cd. The complete quatrain in the unique copy of this poem (TCD H 3. 19 (1340)) when normalised reads An t-anam ara bhfuil feidhm / is an chalann fár chúir tairm / re mnúd go síothlór go soirbh / giodh doirbh dhúnn síothlódh re snaidhm, which I would translate ‘The soul, which is essential, and the body, which it has disturbed, with purpose may I tame [them] completely, though it is hard for me to tame [them] for good [lit. ‘with a knot’]’.

29 I am unsure why McKenna takes go ngné ngairbh to mean ‘smooth-polished’. This is quatrain 13 of Gofraidh Ó Cléirigh’s Ælthíc iasacht (edited from the unique copy of the whole poem in the Book of Úi Mhaine (RIA D ii 1 (1225)) in AiD 61, from where I cite the translation). The version of this quatrain in the Book of Úi Mhaine reads Solmha for Solmhan: both are acceptable forms of the genitive of Solamh, as also is Solaimh (see IGT ii, §§19 and 194). In the same poem (quatrain 16), we find another example of itche chanamhna: sruth cithmhear cas / go nighthear as an t-anamsa, ‘may my soul be cleansed by that rapid winding stream’. This example is not metrically fixed, however.
Historically we would expect the verbs 
soirbhígídh (a), síothlóidh (b) and sléachtaidh (c) to take 
gur in the optative (and, following the teaching of IGT I discussed above, interrogative 
nar in the past tense), but in all three instances we have go confirmed by metre: in (a), a 
poem in deibhidhe (dán díreach), reading gur shoirbhígídh would spoil alliteration (uaim) 
with séad-sain; in (b), a poem in rannaigheacht mhór (dán díreach), reading gur shíothlóir 
would spoil alliteration with soirbh; while in (c), a poem in snéadhbhárdne (dán díreach), 
reading gur shléachtar would deprive the first half-quatrain of linking alliteration (lorga) 
with Solmhan.

The issue of itche chanamhna is also addressed indirectly in a discussion of 
sealbhadh in BST 72a32–b3:30

‘Gur shaora Dia thú’ agus ‘gu saora Dia thú’, ‘gurad saora Dia’ a .s. araoon; ‘nīr’ 
agus ‘nār’ a n.d.31 Gach pearsa gā mbí soil ar a tosach, .c. itche cheart agus 
chanamhna mar sin aici, agus a ndiaigh an chirt tēid a .s. araoon, gē a-dubhradh 
gur .c. so Ó .s.: 

‘Go sāsar’32 ort mo bhrū a bhairgean.


as tū corp an Choimheadh’

Agus a-dearar gura .c. ‘gu ad saora Dia’ do .s. aige so: ‘gu saora Dia thú’; .l. aige 
achd ‘nār’ do .d.

Gur shaora Dia thú and go saora Dia thú: gurad saora Dia is the sealbhadh of both; 
nior and nār are their negative. Every verb which has an s at the beginning, it can 
have a regular subjunctive or an anomalous subjunctive like this, and the sealbhadh of 
both follows the correct form, though it has been said that the following is correct as 
regards sealbhadh:

‘May I satiate my appetite with you,’33 O bread;

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30 Sealsbdh refers to both infixed pronouns and the conjugated forms of the copula (SNG iv, §§7.27 and 9.2).
31 Printed an .d. by McKenna.
32 From context, this must represent gos sásar, i.e. go + 3 sing. feminine infixed object pronoun (cf. nā[s] sir 
and do[s] sgoilt in IGT I, §82). This helps to explain nom. brú (: tú) here for the expected accusative broinn,
though one could also argue that the accusative is avoided as the object is separated from the verb that governs 
it. See IGT I, §82 (= ABP II 794–804) for the use of the infixed pronoun to avoid the accusative.
33 More literally, ‘may I satisfy it, my stomach’.
you are the body of the Lord’

And it is said that *gu ad saora Dia* is correct as *sealbhadh* to this: *gu saora Dia thú*;
as a negative, only *nár* is not faulty with it.

This passage makes clear that despite the asymmetry involved, the anomalous subjunctive (in this case specifically with infixed pronouns) takes *nár* as its negative particle. It states that only the regular subjunctive is to be used when infixing an object pronoun (or with the conjugated forms of the copula), though it is acknowledged that there is a difference of opinion among Bardic grammarians on this point with some allowing *go* + infixed pronoun (or *go* + conjugated forms of the copula).

The relationship of the poem to *IGT* III–IV and the identity of the poet

*IGT* III–IV makes no mention of *itche chanamhna*. This could be an instance of disagreement between the tracts, but it is unsurprising that *IGT* III–IV, which is concerned primarily with morphology, should not treat in detail of what is essentially a point of syntax. Our poem also makes no mention of the anomalous subjunctive, though this too is unsurprising as the poem is a précis of information to be gleaned from *IGT* III–IV on the optative subjunctive with *go*.

That our poem is a synthesis of another source might be suggested by the wording of the first line, in which the poet states that he has found (*uair mé*) 27 verbs. This naturally

34 With the exception of the first line of the verse citation (a half-quatrain in strict *deachnadh mhór*), McKenna does not translate the rest of this passage, but provides some commentary in his notes on *BST* 225.1–6 at p. 175. McKenna’s translation of the first verse line is ‘May I comfort my bosom resting on Thee, O Wafer’.

35 In the optative subjunctive in Modern Irish, only *go* (not *gur*) and neg. *nár* (not *ná*) are used (in standard written Irish at any event): *go gcúití Dia leat é* ‘may God reward you for it’ but *nár laga Dia do lámh* ‘may God not weaken your hand’.

36 I agree with McKenna (*BST* pp 174–5) that, despite the potentially misleading wording above, the anomalous subjunctive was not confined to *s*-initial verbs: such verbs were, however, particularly useful as examples in the tracts given the rules of alliteration in Bardic poetry. McKenna gives a number of putative examples of *itche chanamhna* but only one of these (*go gcuire*) is relevant: the rest are not optative subjunctive and/or regularly take *go* in that mood. Similarly, only one of McQuillan’s examples (2002, 50) (3 pl. *go ttréigít*) is relevant. For a genuine example of *itche chanamhna* confirmed by alliteration, see *A óigmheic arsaidh dar siair / mo chasbhraid go bhfoire *fíin ’s ná leig m’anam uibh dá thaobh / sqaoil uainn mo ralam go réidh* (*DiD* 51.8), translated by McKenna (1925) as ‘Relieve, O son of my sister, young yet eternal, my sore plight; let me not, by it, be lost to Thee; free me gently from my exposure (to sin)’. Note again the shift from optative to imperative in this quatrain (cf. fn. 20).
raises the question ‘Where did he find them?’. The dependence of our poem on IGT III–IV is suggested not only by the manuscript context of the poem, but also by the ordering of the verbs listed. As will be clear from the references to IGT III–IV in the list below, they occur in broadly the same order in both our poem and in IGT III–IV as edited by Bergin. The small number of exceptions would seem to be motivated by the requirements of the strict metre. Déanamh (§1 in IGT III–IV) occurs between beith (§7) and dol (§8), but déanamh provides alliteration with dol as well as the correct number of syllables in quatrain 2a. Rochtain (§15) occurs between rugadh (§13) and tugadh (§14), but this positioning allows for end-rhyme with 2d táróchtain; it also allows rugadh and tugadh to make internal rhyme with one another. Similar motivations are clear in the re-ordering of verbs in quatrain 3 (which correspond to §§17, 21, 19, 18, 20 and 22 of IGT III–IV). As mentioned above, our poem is incomplete, giving only 25 of the 27 relevant verbs. If it is indeed a synopsis of IGT III–IV, we would expect the two missing verbs to occur later in IGT III–IV than the last-mentioned verb in our poem, an ithe (§31 in IGT III–IV). If I am correct, the two missing verbs are an ibhe and béarla na buana, and these do occur later in the tract than an ithe: an ibhe is mentioned after an ithe in §31, while béarla na buana is treated in the next section.

The fact that Bergin’s edition of IGT III–IV obscures significant differences between the manuscripts he consulted has already been adverted to. Bergin is silent on the fact that the order of sections is not identical in the different witnesses. All of the verbs listed in our poem occur in the first 32 paragraphs of the tract, but they do not occur in the same order in all the manuscripts. The order of sections in Bergin’s edition follows that of H17 (and also H12, which he did not consult). In E and C there is a different sequence: béarla na tuitme (§21 in Bergin’s edition) follows torachtain (§19) and precedes fionnachtain (§20), while ithe (§31) precedes gabháil (§23). The placement of ithe in our poem in particular suggests that the poet was working from a copy of IGT III–IV similar to that in H17 (where we find the sole extant copy of the poem) and H12 or, indeed, from one of those two manuscripts. Conversely, it is unlikely that our poet was working off a copy of IGT III–IV like that in C or E.

In addition to extratextual evidence such as scribal marginalia, it is likely that a closer analysis of the citations found uniquely in individual witnesses of IGT III–IV will shed light

37 Marthain (§23 in Bergin’s edition) does not occur among the first 32 paragraphs of C, however. All of the verbs listed in this poem are – at least viewed synchronically – highly irregular in Classical Modern Irish and therefore occur early in IGT III–IV.
on their provenance (and so on the provenance of our poet); this will form part of a future edition of the tract. The Mac Craith associations of the H17 copy have already been mentioned. I am not at present in a position to suggest a possible provenance for either H12 or C, but it is clear that the copies of BST and IGT III–IV in E were produced for an Ó hUiginn school (see BST p. viii). Particularly significant is the remark concerning the school of Cill Chluaine added to §106 of IGT III–IV in E. The citation A chlú oraib 'gun oireacht. gur gnodaig tú in teachtaireacht, translated by McManus (2017, 207–8) as ‘You are credited in the assembly with success in the errand’ or ‘with having earned the prophecy (?)’, is marked as faulty because the hiatus marker -dh- in the verb gnodhaighidh (gnōaighidh) is allowed to rhyme (gnodhaigh : oraibh). To the copy in E has been added the sentence Tángas leis sin do bheith .c. ar sgoil Chille Cluaine ‘It was agreed that this is correct on the authority of the school of Cill Chluaine’ (cf. McManus 2017, 207–8).38

The poet reveals little about himself in the poem and unless further evidence comes to light his identity must remain a mystery. It is noteworthy that in four extant quatrains he refers to himself twice (1a, 4cd) in a manner that suggests a justifiable pride in his achievement in synthesising information on an aspect of the syntax of the optative subjunctive.

The 27 verbs: synchronic analysis

The following 25 verbs are named in our poem. The information on the Classical Modern Irish verbal forms given below is derived from IGT III–IV. Cited final verbal forms are 3 sing. unless otherwise stated. The reason for giving the past tense and its negative will be obvious from the discussion above. In Classical Modern Irish, the present subjunctive is only found in subordinate or relative clauses (except for the optative where even in main clauses it is always preceded by go/gur); following the usage of IGT III–IV, therefore, I give the relative form of the present subjunctive as well as the optative form (go + dependent form of the present subjunctive).39 In citing examples from verse to illustrate how far the teaching of this poem was observed by poets and scribes, I am not concerned with providing a representative selection of morphological forms – which are common to the subjunctive in all its functions in Classical Modern Irish – but with the use of the verbal particles. Where usage can be confirmed by metre, this is mentioned.

38 For the Ó hUiginn school at Cill Chluaine (englished ‘Kilcloney’, north of Tuam), see the notes on TD 12.6.
39 In some verbs the future and pres. subj. forms are identical (such as (xxi) below).
(i) **Teagmháil (IGT iii, §2):** Verbal noun to the compound verb\(^{40}\) *teagaimh / do-eagaimh* ‘happens’; past tense *tarla / do-arla / do-rala*,\(^{41}\) neg. *ní tharla*; rel. pres. subj. *teagmhas / do-eagmha*, optative *go dteagmha*. The sole example of the optative of this verb in verse known to me is the 2 sing. form in ABM 315.13:

*Lá an chomhthroim do dhéanamh deit,* / *a Mhíchéil uasail oirdhreic,* / *(iúl taidhiúir!)* go dteagmha dhó / ar eagla ainiúil m’anmo (dteagmha : *eagla*), ‘On the day when you work the scales [i.e. Judgement Day], O noble, famed Míchéal (it is sad to think about it!) may you meet my soul lest it go astray’.

(ii) **Claisdin is cluinsin (§3):** Verbal nouns to the compound verb *do-chluine* (eann) ‘hears’ (also *ad-*); past tense *do-chuala*(idh), neg. *ní chuala*; rel. pres. subj. *do-chluine / do-chló / do-chlá*, optative *go gcluine / gcló / gclé*. For examples of the expected optative, see *go gcluine sinn* ‘may we hear’ (*DiD* 81.30) and 1 pl. *go gcluineam* (*ibid.* , 31), but note also 1 sing. *nár chluinear* (ABM 159.32)\(^{42}\) and 1 pl. *nár chluineam* (*DiD* 63.30),\(^{43}\) where there is, in theory at least, no impediment to emending to *ná cl-*.  

(iii) **Faicsin (§4):** Verbal noun to the compound verb *do-chí* ‘sees’ (also *ad-*); past tense *do-chonnai*(r)c (also *ad-*), neg. *ní fhaca*(idh); rel. pres. subj. *do-ché*, optative *go bhfaice*. I note the following metrically-confirmed instance of the expected go-form: *an tslighe ghlan* *fós go “bhfaicear*, ‘may I yet see the virtuous path’ (Ó Cuív 1946–50, l. 3). However in a quatrain by Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh we find both the expected *go* and also the ‘incorrect’ *nár* confirmed by alliteration:

*Brugh şifreinn nár “fhaisce mé / […] / an dún i “bhfuil go “bhfaicear* ‘May I not see the hall of Hell […]'; may I see the house he [God] is in’ (*DiD* 37.39ad). This quatrain would appear to indicate that no less an authority than Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh was guilty of the use of *nár* for expected *ná*. It is worth noting, however, that vowel-initial present subjunctive forms of *do-chí* may have been permitted by some schools (see fn. 4), and so an emendation to *ná haice mé* or similar might be possible. As noted by Damian

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40 The term ‘compound verb’ here should be understood as covering ‘contracted deuterotonic’ forms such as *teagaimh* and *tig* in independent position.

41 Note the comment *ní uil do-rala acht ar in focall[-sin], ‘do-rala is only found in that form [the 3 sing. past]’, i.e. 1 sing. *tarladh/do-arladh* does not have a variant *do-raladh*. The past tense forms of this verb are taken over from the perfect forms in *to-ro-la-* belonging to OIr *do-cuirethar*. *Do-arla* is back-formed from *tarla* like *do-ig* from *tig*.

42 Note also, in the same poem, the regular use of *nár* with the 3 pl. pres. subj. of *tuillidh: nár thuillead féin ar bhfeirg-ne / *náid goirtbhriathra ar nGaoidheilge*, ‘may they not earn my anger or the bitter words of my speech’ (quatrain 29ab).

43 Compare, in the same poem, optative *go dtí* (quatrain 24) and *nár léige* (quatrain 25).
McManus (SNG IV, §7.19), IGT III 53 contains an example of a 1 sing. subjunctive form -acar (cf. OIr -accar); the expected 1 sing. subjunctive is -faicear, following IGT, but, while the citation is faulted in H17, it is there ascribed to Tadg M[ór], probably the distinguished poet Tadhg Mór Ó hUiginn (†1315), for whom see Ó Riain 2013, 56–7.44

(iv) Teacht (§5): Verbal noun to the compound verb tig /do-ig ‘comes’,45 past tense táinig / do-áinig, neg. ní tháinig, and tánaig / do-ánaig, neg. ní thánaig; rel. pres. subj. tí, optative go dtí.46 Optative go dtí is very common in verse (see, for example, AiD 61.16–17 and ABM 160.16, 18–19, 21), but examples of nár tí are also found, for instance in TD 12.10 and L Bran 33, l. 3611. In the case of TD 12, Knott registers the expected ná tí in the MS variants (cf. AiD 81.10 for another example); it is interesting to note two of the most important seventeenth-century miscellanies, the Book of the O’Conor Don and RIA A iv 3 (743), among the MSS which read nár.

(v) Abairt (§6): Verbal noun to the compound verb a-deir / a-dir ‘says’,47 past tense a-dóbairst / a-dubairt / a-dóbairst / a-déabhairst / ad-óbairst / ad-éabhairst, neg. ní dobhairst / dubhairst / dóbhairst / déabhairst;48 rel. pres. subj. a-deara, optative go n-abra. I have no examples of the optative of this verb in verse.

44 For the status of non-f-initial forms such as -acar in the Bardic register, see McManus 2017, 215. It should be noted that an emendation to ná haice is not as violent a departure from the manuscript texts as might initially appear. Even in authorial copies of Bardic poems, one acceptable variant is often written in place of another equally acceptable variant, even when the latter form is required by metre (see Ó Macháin 1991, 273–85). Rather than assuming that ná haice has been corrupted – in stages or in a single scribal intervention – to nár fhaice, we could imagine an archetype which read ná faice (though ná haice was required for alliteration), which was then corrupted to nár fhaice under the influence of itche chanamhna.

45 Do-igeann is given as faulty in IGT III–IV.

46 Rel. do-i is faulted ara mheirbe ‘on account of its weakness’ in IGT III–IV.

47 For examples of forms in b- (from ad-bheir rather than a-deir), see McManus 2005, 152–3.

48 For the past tense forms of a-deir, see Ó Cuív 1971–2, 66–72. Sometimes neg. forms without the initial d- are found, though this is not the teaching of IGT III–IV; outside of the negative, dependent forms with and without initial d- are acceptable, e.g. a n-éabhairt and a ndéabhairst ‘that which she said’ (see SNG iv, §7.21). As an explanation for this rather arbitrary-seeming rule, it should be noted that, following the teaching of the Tracts, these vowel-initial dependent forms will only occur after nasalising particles, i.e. where there is no phonological distinction between n- + vowel and nd- (though despite this homophony n- and nd- are always distinguished for alliteration in poetry). In Modern Irish, some dialects have re-analysed forms with initial unlenited d- such as dúirt (< a-dubairt), taking the initial d- to be a past-tense marker (as in d’óíl, d’fhoghlaim etc.); this re-analysis allows the likes of níor úirt (McManus 2017, 221 n. 28), which find no place in the Bardic register (unlike do uaidh, níor uaidh, beside do-uaidh, ní duaidh, discussed below).
(vi) **Beith** (§7): Verbal noun to a-tá ‘is’ (consuetudinal bídh); past tense do bhí /do bhaoi, neg. ní rabha / raibhe / robha / roibhe; rel. pres. subj. beas / ra(i)bh (and, in E, bheith is given as a canamhain-form), optative go mbé / ra(i)bh (also ro(i)b). These forms are common in verse; see, for example, go rabh (DiD 38.30), ná rabh (IBP 21.37), 1 pl. go mbeam (AiD 61.10) and 1 sing. go mbear (see (xiii) below) and go rabhar (AiD 92.18, 20).

I have not noted their use with gur or nár.

(vii) **Déanamh** (§1): Verbal noun to the compound verb do-ní ‘makes, does’; past do-rinne / do-roinne / do-ríne / do-roigne / do-roighne, neg. ní dhearna; rel. pres. subj. do-né, optative go ndearna. The 1 sing. optative form is explicitly mentioned in IGT III–IV, along with the observation that both ní and ná can be used with it. For examples of the optative of this verb in verse, see 1 sing. go ndearnar (DiD 39.14) and ná dearnor (DBM 15.3), and 1 pl. go ndearnam (AiD 92.19). I note the following forms with nár in late MSS: nár dearna mé (ABM 160.27) and 1 sing. nár dhearnar (DiD 4.3); for the latter example, McKenna registers a variant ná dearnar.

(viii) **Dol** (§8): Verbal noun to the (compound) verb téid; past do-chuaidh / do-chóidh / do-cháidh / do-dheachaidh, neg. ní dheachaidh; rel. pres. subj. deach / digh, optative go ndeach / ndigh. For examples of the optative of this verb, see 1 sing. go ndighear (DiD 491). Of which the copies are ‘all late and corrupt’ according to its editor, has many examples of itche chanamhna (see 1 sing. go n-iodhbraim [sic], 1 pl. go ndáileam in quatrain 6; passive go ngabhthar, go mbraittear, go naomhar in quatrain 9, etc.), but only one of these examples can be tested with alliteration (quatrain 21) and unfortunately it is ambiguous: Grása ód naomhspiorad arnimh / dot iarraidh, a mheic mhaithmhigh, /go bhfeara ’na firtlinn te / im inntinn cheana im chroidhe. McKenna translates as ‘At Thy command, O kindly Son, may the grace of the Holy Ghost in Heaven pour down in warm virtue-rich flood on my sinful mind and heart’, but as fearaidh is not usually intransitive, optative go bhfeara should perhaps be interpreted as 2 sing. referring to Christ (‘may you pour’). Grása could be a sing. masc. noun (see IGT II, §2 for grása ‘grace’), in which case we must lenite fhirtlinn after the 3 sing. masc. possessive pronoun, which necessitates reading grása go bhfeara for alliteration. However, grása could also be the pl. of grá (see IGT II, §38), in which case we must read ’na bhfirtlinn and retain go bhfeara.

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49 AiD 92, of which the copies are ‘all late and corrupt’ according to its editor, has many examples of itche chanamhna (see 1 sing. go n-iodhbraim [sic], 1 pl. go ndáileam in quatrain 6; passive go ngabhthar, go mbraittear, go naomhar in quatrain 9, etc.), but only one of these examples can be tested with alliteration (quatrain 21) and unfortunately it is ambiguous: Grása ód naomhspiorad ar nimh / dot iarraidh, a mheic mhaithmhigh, /go bhfeara ’na firtlinn te / im inntinn cheana im chroidhe. McKenna translates as ‘At Thy command, O kindly Son, may the grace of the Holy Ghost in Heaven pour down in warm virtue-rich flood on my sinful mind and heart’, but as fearaidh is not usually intransitive, optative go bhfeara should perhaps be interpreted as 2 sing. referring to Christ (‘may you pour’). Grása could be a sing. masc. noun (see IGT II, §2 for grása ‘grace’), in which case we must lenite fhirtlinn after the 3 sing. masc. possessive pronoun, which necessitates reading grása go bhfeara for alliteration. However, grása could also be the pl. of grás (see IGT II, §38), in which case we must read ’na bhfirtlinn and retain go bhfeara.

50 For forms in g- (from do-ghni), see McManus 2005, 153–4 and McManus 2017, 215–16.

51 Do-róna is faulted in IGT III–IV.

52 For 2 sing. do-néis, see McManus 2013.

53 Note an example of itche chanamhna in this poem: go mbeana (quatrain 16).
38.29)⁵⁴ and 3 sing. go ndeach (AiD 61.11), ná deach (IBP 3.5).⁵⁵ I have not noted any examples with gur or nár.⁵⁶

(ix) *Tairgsin* (§9): Verbal noun to the (compound) verb tairgidh / do-airg(eann) ‘offers’; past targaidh / do-argaidh, neg. ní thargaidh; rel. pres. subj. tairge / do-airge, optative go dtairge. I have no examples of the optative of this verb in verse.

(x) *Tairgsin* (§9): Verbal noun to a defective compound verb meaning ‘comes to an end’,⁵⁷ which in the past tense has the forms tarnaig / do-arnaig (neg. ní tharnaig) and tairnig / do-airnig (neg. ní thairnig) and in the present subjunctive táir / do-áir (optative go dtáir). For examples of the optative, see 1 pl go dtáiream bocht id bhochtacht ‘may I suffer poverty in thy poverty [lit. ‘may I die as a pauper in your poverty’?]’ (AiD 92.6) and note the variation in Nár tháire [v.l. ná táire] – ná táire mé – / Aodh Ó Domhnaill i ndaoirse (DiD 63.30ab), ‘May Aodh Ó Domhnaill not end up imprisoned – may I not end up imprisoned [either]’. It is difficult to separate forms of this verb from (xviii).

(xi) *Teasdáil* (§10): verbal noun to the defective compound verb which has as its past tense teasdó / teasdá / teasda / do-easdó / do-easdá / do-easda ‘(has) died’, neg. ní theasdó / theasdá / theasda; the present subjunctive forms are identical, which would give optative go dtéasdó etc. I have no examples of the optative of this verb in verse.⁵⁸

(xii) *Téarnamh* (§11): verbal noun to the (compound) verb téarnóidh / téarnáidh / téarnaidh / téarnáeïdh⁵⁹ ‘escapes, recovers’; past tense téarnó / téarná / téarna, neg. ní théarnó /

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①注54 Note also an example of *itche chanamhna* in this poem: 1 sing. go duillior (quatrain 2).
①注55 *IBP* 3 contains a few examples of *itche chanamhna*, including go tréigitt and go tille (quatrain 4).
①注56 The suppletive subjunctive forms of Classical Modern Irish are replaced in Modern Irish by forms based on téigh- (Mod. Ir. go dté < go dtéighe), the same stem as the indicative (1 sing. téighim) (see *SNG* iv, §7.23). Owing to phonological developments, the Mod. Ir. subjunctive forms superficially resemble OIr dependent 3 sing. pres. subj. -té (independent tés).
①注57 The two verbs are distinguished from each other in *IGT* III–IV as tairgsin duit ‘offering to you’ and tairgsin ó thairgsin an éadaigh ‘tairgsin in the sense “wearing away of clothes”’ (Bergin 1932, 140).
①注58 In *IGT* III, §10 doubt is expressed about how far this verb can have a meaningful verbal of necessity: *is* tesdótha, *is* tesdáth a.c. (má tá ciall and), *is* tesdótha, *is* tesdátha are correct [as verbs of necessity], if that makes sense’. It is further stated that it does not have forms in two tenses (presumably the past habitual and present indicative) (1. cuid aici ar in dá aímsir (sin) eili, muna fagthar ciall and, ‘it is faulty for this verb to have equivalents in the other two tenses, unless sense can be found in that’) and the verb also does not have an imperative mood (1. furáilim aici).
①注59 A later hand in E adds *do-éarnó(nn) / do-éarná(nn) / do-éarnae(eann) / do-éarna(nn).*
théarná / théarna; rel. pres. subj. téarnós / téarnás / téarnaíeas / téarnas / do-éarnóa / do-
éarnáa / do-éarnáae / do-éarnaíe / do-éarna, optative go dtéarnó / téarná / téarnaíe / téarna /
téarnóa / tárnáa / téarnaíe. The only example of the optative of this verb in verse that I have
found is Más é mh’olc nar fhagha sionn / saoghal is sia ná a bhfuairsiom; nar théarna leam,
tar mo leas / gidh énlá i gceann ar chaitheas, ‘Should it be bad for me, may I not live any
longer – may I not survive with prejudice to my salvation, even a single day more’ (DBM
15.6).60

(xiii) Ríochtain (§12): verbal noun to rig ‘arrives’; past tense, ránaig, neg. ní ránaig and
ráinig, neg. ní ráinig; rel. pres. subj. rí, optative go rí. I note the following 1 sing. example
from an Early Modern Irish dialogue-poem put into the mouths of Mac Liag and Mac Coise,
where rís may be an error for rús.61 Go rís co Cíarán Clūana / gusna ceōla[ibh] rochūala, /
go mber isin flaith i bfuil / mar i mbía maith ar marthain (Meyer 1912, 222, quatrain 52),
‘May I come to Ciarán of Clonmacnoise, to the music of which I have heard; may I be in the
kingdom where he is, where goodness will endure forever’.

(xiv) Ríochtain (§12): verbal noun to rig a leas ‘needs’, which is regarded as a separate
lexical item from (xiii) by Bardic grammarians, though it is inflected the same way. I have no
evidence of this construction used in an optative sense.

(xv) Rugadh (§13): ‘invented’ verbal noun to beiridh ‘bears’ (see fn. 4 above), the normal
verbal noun of which is breith. I have no evidence that this verbal noun (or the similar
tugadh) was ever used outside of the treatment of beiridh in IGT III–IV (see Quin 1983, 119–
20).62 It was only created to account for finite forms of the verb in rug-. Beiridh has past tense
rug, neg. ní rug, and rel. pres. subj. ruga (optative go ruga) on the same stem. It also has rel.
pres. subj. bheireas and bhearas (optative go mbeire / beara). Bardic grammarians would

60 I assume that reflexive leam here indicates continued action: ‘may I not continue to survive’. Cf. Mod. Ir.

61 A <v>-shaped u can easily be confused with <i>.

62 Rugadh is given a genitive in H17 (méid in rucaid, méid [in] ructha) but in no other copy of the tract. All of
the Tracts have .l. oibrugad ná fuláirem aige, › do-rindeadh ruc ó fuláirem, ‘It is faulty for it to have a verbal of
necessity or imperative, and rug is found as an imperative’. For the term oibrugadh, see ABP pp 205–6. The

The genitive of the verbal noun is normally given before the verbal of necessity in the tract because the verbal of
necessity is generally formed by adding -(h)a or -the to the verbal root (SNG iv, §7.29) and so is often identical
with the genitive of the verbal noun (e.g. buailte) (cf. Greene 1966, 84). For 2 sing. imperative uic (?) in OIr, see
GOI §759 and cf. tug, 2 sing. imperative to do-bheir ‘gives’.

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regard these latter forms as being derived from the verbal noun *breith*.\(^{63}\) It seems likely that our poet wished to include all subjunctive forms of *beiridh* here and not merely those ‘derived’ from *rugadh*. In the cases of other verbs, he does not give all the various verbal noun-forms of each verb (the only variation noted is (ii) and even there the full range of alternative forms is not given), but cannot have meant to exclude other forms. For example, the poet only gives one of the eight sanctioned forms of the verbal noun of *do-gheibh* (xxiv), but could hardly have meant to limit the use of *go/ná* in the optative subjunctive only to forms in *fa-*, excluding *a-*, *o-* and *fo-*forms. Note also that in the case of a verb that does have two sets of optative subjunctive forms – one which takes *go* and one which takes *gur* – this variation is explicitly referred to (xxv) in quatrain 4ab. For examples of the optative of this verb in verse, see *go mbeire* (ABM 297.22), 1 pl. *go mbearam* (McKenna 1922, 27.16)\(^{64}\) and 2 sing. *go rugair* (Gearóid Iarla 14.9).\(^{65}\) For an example with *nár*, see Nár bheiread [MS bheirid] Gaochdhiil ghuirt Fhionntain / urraim riamh ó rioghraid Ghall (ABM 373.9ab), ‘May the Gaels of Ireland never take any honour from English kings’.

(xvi) rochtain (§15): verbal noun to the compound verb *do-soich(eann) / do-roich(eann) / do-seich(eann) / do-reich(eann) / do-sóigh / do-róigh ‘arrives’; past tense *do-suacht / do-ruacht / do-siacht / do-riacht*, neg. *ní suacht / ruacht / siacht / riacht*, and also *ránaig / ráinig*, neg. *ránaig / ráinig*; rel. pres. subj. *do-só / do-ró / do-sua / do-rua / do-sia / do-ria*, optative *go só / ró / rua / sia / ria*. I have no examples of the negative optative in *s-*\(^{66}\) but the following examples of the positive with *go* are confirmed by alliteration: slán a Saghsaibh go *só* *soin* (ABM 112.28), ‘may he return safe from England’,\(^{67}\) and ar an orsain if*[s] sia siar / don tsliabh chorr-sain cu sia in slógh* (Carney 1945, poem 18.39), ‘May the host come to the

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\(^{63}\) Cf. the discussion of the imperfect forms of *beiridh* in IGT III–IV, where some forms are said to be derived from *breith* (and also *tabhart*, i.e. *do-bheir*) and some from *rugadh*, e.g. *do berinn, .s. .g. ón breith and .g. ón tabairt. do beruinn, .s. ón breith .óon tabairt ann. do ruguinn .s. ón rugadh, ‘do bheirinn, it is past subjunctive and imperfect to *breith* and [as do-bheirinn] imperfect to *tabhairt*; do bhearaoinn, it is past subjunctive to *breith* and [as do-bhearaoinn] to *tabhairt*; do rugaoinn, past subjunctive to *rugadh*’.

\(^{64}\) This poem has several examples of *itche chanamhna*, including *go dtorna* (quatrain 32) and 1 pl. *go bhfulingeam* (quatrain 33).

\(^{65}\) The -(a)ir ending is not Classical. Note in the same text (quatrain 1) *go saora*, an example of *itche chanamhna*.

\(^{66}\) In theory, a form *nár shia* might be confirmed by alliteration, though *s-* in this verb often resists lenition (e.g. 3 sing. present indicative *do-soich; IGT* III 195).

\(^{67}\) There is an example of *itche chanamhna* (*go dtille*) in this poem (quatrain 13).
furthest edge of that pointed mountain’. Note also neg. ná ria mé (ABM 172.9). I have not noted any examples with gur.

(xvii) tugadh (§14): ‘invented’ verbal noun to the compound verb do-bh(e)ir ‘gives’;\(^{68}\) past tense tug / do-ug / tard / do-rad, neg. ní thug / thard; rel. pres. subj. do-bheara, optative go dtabhra and go dtuga. As in the case of (xv) rugadh, it seems likely that our poet wished to include all the optative subjunctive forms of do-bheir here, both those ‘derived’ from tugadh (go dtuga) and from tabhairt (go dtabhra). For examples of the optative of this verb, see 1 sing. go dtugar (ABM 267.42)\(^{69}\) and 3 sing. go dtabhra (ABM 267.41 and Gearóid Iarla 21.6) and go tabhra (ABM 430.42). I also note 1 sing. nár thugar-sa (McKenna 1918, poem 29.37), and Damian McManus draws my attention to 1 pl. nár thabhram (AiD 73.19).\(^{70}\)

(xviii) tárrachtain (§16): verbal noun to tár(th)aidh / táir(th)idh / tarraidh / tairridh / tárthann / táirtheann ‘overtakes, catches; finds, attains’, though not all these forms may have been in use. No paradigm is given for this verb in IGT III–IV, the only comment being .l. d. neith aca acht in t-inad a fuigther dán orra, ‘It is faulty for them to have finite forms except where these are found in verse [i.e. except where authority is found for these in the corpus of poetry]’. Like tig and téid it did not take the verbal particle ro (do) to mark its past tense. For an example of the optative of this verb in verse, see Gan mhearbhall gan fhioch gan uail / do shioth go ndearnam fa dheoidh / i dtráth squir a Dhé don dáil / go dtáir mé th’fhúil agus th’fhéoil, ‘Crushing folly, anger, pride, may I at last make peace with Thee; when life is passing away, may I receive Thy flesh and blood’ (McKenna 1922, poem 27.16). It is formally difficult to separate forms of this verb from those belonging to (x).

(xix) béarla ón éirghe (§17): The simple verb éirghidh ‘rises’ is treated in IGT III, §54; the term béarla refers to forms that were not regarded as being derived from the verbal noun itself (éirghe) but are nonetheless regarded as belonging to that verb – in this case, archaic verbal forms derived from earlier at-reig rather than the simple verb éirgid. I understand the

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\(^{68}\) As with (xv) rugadh, H17 provides the genitive forms of this artificial verbal noun, but in this case the root tug- is found in the verbal of necessity (is (ion)tugtha and also is iontugaidh).

\(^{69}\) This quatrain also contains an example of itche chanamhna, viz. go gcreideam duit id dhiadhocht ‘may I believe in you in your divinity’.

\(^{70}\) Passive go dtuilltear is an example of itche chanamhna (AiD 73.15), as is 1 sing. go n-iarrar in the same quatrain. In quatrain 18 of this poem, we have another 1 sing. example (go gcroichnaighhear). Elsewhere in the poem we find regular nár (1 pl. nár ghrádhuigheam in quatrain 19 and nár thréige mé in quatrain 24). Note also the combination of ná + ro + 1 sing. infixed pronoun in nárom dhalitar ‘may I not be blinded’, where syllable-count precludes reading nám, which, in any event, we would not expect to encounter in this verb.
term béarla to mean something like ‘suppletive forms’. Unlike, beiridh and do-bheir, for which artificial verbal nouns were invented to account for suppletive forms in rug- and tug- respectively, or (xxi) béarla an teachta ‘the suppletive forms of tig’, for which an inherited verbal noun (torachtain, verbal noun to do-roich) was pressed into service (see also (xxii)), Bardic grammarians did not have – and evidently were unwilling to invent – a verbal noun from which to ‘derive’ the suppletive forms of éirghidh, hence the comment in IGT III, §17 that béarla na héirghe\footnote{In IGT III–IV, the headword is béarla na héirghe, while in our poem we have béarla ón éirghe. This variation may be metrically motivated: the syllable-count in 3a precludes reading béarla na héirghe. Similarly, in 3b we cannot read béarla na tuitme.} has neither verbal noun nor verbal of necessity (.l. persa ná oibriugad aigi).\footnote{One might wonder whether the reluctance to invent a verbal noun to serve as the theoretical derivational basis for the verbal forms in question is to be connected with the fact that they are deuterotonic in independent position. All of the forms of ad-chí in cichs- are also deuterotonic, however, and it was nonetheless furnished with a verbal noun cichsin (fn. 4 above). See also (xxii) dleachtain.} No present tense is allowed for béarla na héirghe in IGT but the past tense is a-dréacht, neg. ní dréacht, and the rel. pres. subj. is a-dré, which would lead us to expect optative go ndré.\footnote{Bergin prints ad-ré, but the negative forms of this verb point to the division a-dré. Note also IGT III ex. 217, where the stressed initial d- of a-dréacht is confirmed by alliteration and see Ó Cuív 1971–2, 62.} I have no examples of the optative of this verb in verse.

(xx) béarla ón tuitim (§21): The simple verb tuitidh ‘falls’ is given as part of IGT III, §79, while béarla ón tuitim embraces the future (indicative and secondary) and subjunctive stem táeth- and the suppletive past tense forms (torchair / a-drochair, neg. ní thorchair).\footnote{The use of the stem táeth in the preterite is faulted in IGT V, §25 (nachar tháeth) as an example of bérla lochtach. Gillies (2007, 47) takes mun tí taoth in IGT III 252 as meaning ‘about the one who has fallen’, but taoth is subjunctive in that example: Ní bhí a gcumhaidh [divide rather as ag cumhaidh?] mun tí taoth. ní bhí laoch bunaidh go bráth, ‘She (?) does not grieve for the one who dies; one born to be a warrior does not live forever’. Note the absence of a past-tense verbal particle (such as nachar in IGT V, §25) and the consuetudinal present ní bhi, which suggests that an tí is indeterminate here and as such is followed by the subjunctive in relative clauses. Cf. gi-bé bheas ‘whoso may be’ with rel. pres. subjunctive (IBP 1.5, 6).} Past tense do-oracht / do-aracht, neg. ní thoracht /

(xxi) torachtain (§19): verbal noun to the defective, compound verb a-droigh,\footnote{Sometimes also ad-roigh and a-troigh (see Ó Cuív 1971–2, 63 and BST 226. 14–15, 242.14–15).} regarded by Bardic grammarians as suppletive to tig.\footnote{Torachtaun, tarachtaun […] Bérla in techta iad, .l. cuid ag techt [E adds an srotha nó] in libhair dhíb, ‘Torachtain, tarachtain, they supply the suppletive forms of teacht; it is faulty for teacht an tshrotha or an}
The following 1 pl. example of the optative is found in this section of *IGT*: Gu tairseam san teag neamdha. in treabfhairseang oireaghdha (IGT III 223), ‘May I come into the heavenly house, the capacious, excellent homestead’.

**(xxii)** *dleachtain* (§18): The simple verb *dlighidh* ‘is entitled to’ is ‘derived’ from *dlighsin* (*IGT* iii, §35). *Dleachtain*, a verbal noun of *dlighidh* inherited from the earlier language, is reserved as the derivational basis for the defective compound verb of which the past tense is 1 sing. *a-dléas*, neg. *ní dléas* and 3 sing. *a-dlé*, neg. *ní dlé*. The statement that this verb only has three tenses (*ní huil acht ar thrí haimseraibh*), namely the past tense (the forms are given) and the future and secondary future (which are merely mentioned), does not mean that it has no present subjunctive: the subjunctive forms of this verb, like those of (xvi), (xix) and (xxvii), are identical with its future forms; as the future and conditional forms of this verb are said to behave the same way as *béarla na héirghe* (xix), this verb has future (and rel. pres. subj.) 1 sing. *a-dléisear* (optative *go ndléisear*) and 3 sing. *a-dlé* (optative *go ndlé*). I have no examples of the optative from verse.

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77 *liobhair* to have counterparts of them [i.e. of these forms]’ (*IGT* III, §19). A genitive noun governed by a verbal noun is normally its logical object in Early Modern Irish (see O’Rahilly 1941, 262–5). The point seems to be that *do-roigh* cannot be used transitively in the sense ‘comes to’ (*teacht an tshrotha*) nor in the sense ‘brings’ (*teacht an liobhair*). Though *do-roich* was used transitively in the earlier language, by Middle Irish it is found in intransitive use (see *DIL* s.v.). The transitive use of *tig* ‘comes to’ is alluded to in *IGT* III, §5 (the paradigm of *tig*): *As fear teachta srotha mhé c. ón teacht. Is fear teachta srotha mhé ón teachta c. Ní persa innsne láín in teacht sin, c. liobhair aici, ‘As *teacht* a *srotha* mhé “I am a man who comes to a stream” correct from *teacht*. *As fear teachta srotha mhé* “I am a man who comes to a stream” correct from *teacht*. *That teacht* is a defective verb, and it is faulty for it to have suppletive forms*. The prohibition on *a-droigh* taking a direct object is also mentioned in BST; see 226.1–15, 242.14–15 and 67b28–30, and note in particular *Teacht an leabhair c. beirle aige agus (?) torachtain an leabhair* (1bb21). According to *IGT* III, §14 (the paradigm of *do-bheir*), *tig* can be used in the historical present to mean ‘gives, brings’ (*tic ní dam: ní thuc a d.*, ‘“He/she gives something to me”: “he/she has not given” is its negative’); this is to be connected with *teacht an liobhair* etc.

78 *Dligheadh* is evidently felt to be an ordinary noun by this period without any verbal function.

79 This cross-reference to *béarla na héirghe* seems to have been missed by Bergin (1949–50, 188), who refers to ‘a late form, *adlé, ní dlé, IGT*, III, §18, but this is used as pret. or perf. ind.’

80 Note that *IGT* III 217 in this section illustrates the adj. *dleacht* (: *seacht*) with the gloss *c. d*focal leis féin as *c. hé* ‘correct and it is as a word by itself that it is correct’. This seems to mean that the verbal adjective
(xxiii) **fionnachtain** (§20): verbal noun to the compound verb *do-fhionnan* ‘knows, discovers’; past tense *do-fhidir*, neg. *ní fhidir*; rel. pres. subj. *do-fhionna*, optative *go bhfionna*. See 2 sing. *go bhfionna* (ABM 99.21) and 1 pl. *go bhfionnam* (DiD 67.29), neither of which is in alliterating position. I have no examples with *gur* or *nár*.

(xxiv) **fagháil** (§22): verbal noun to the compound verb *do-gheibh* ‘gets’; past tense (*f*)uair / *do-uair*, neg. *ní* (*f*)uair; rel. pres. subj. *do-ghabha*, optative *go bhfagh(bh)a / bhfogh(bh)a / n-agh(gh)bha / n-ogh(gh)bha*. For an example of the optative with *go* confirmed by alliteration, see *ceannsa Dé go “bhfagha an “fear, ‘may that hero get gentle treatment from God’* (Magauran 4.42). Examples with *nár fh-* are common, but as these could (in theory at least) be emended to *ná h-*, they cannot be confirmed by alliteration. See, for example, *D’ábhaithbhé narr “fagha sinn “May I have no requital of it’ and Mást “é mh””olc nar “fagha sinn / saoghal is sia ná a bhfuaírsi[O]m, ‘Should it be bad for me, may I not live any longer’* (DBM 15.5a and 6a) alongside *Go “bhfaghbhphar mar *fuaras air (which could be emended to *Go n-aghbhar mar varas air*), ‘May I obtain as I have obtained’ (7a).

(xxv) **ithe** (§31): verbal noun to *ithidh* ‘eats’. The past tense forms are as follows: *do ith*, neg. *níor ith*; *do uaidh*, neg. *níor uaidh*; *do-uaidh*, neg. *ní duaidh*. The rel. pres. subj. is *itheas / eathas*. The copy of *IGT* III–IV in E has the additional note *Gach pearsa ar nach bia .r. ar .d. a choda so, do ghan, ní .c. r. ar a hitche, * an pearsa ar a mbia as .c. r. ar a hitche,* ‘Every verb which does not have *r* on the negative of what corresponds to this, *do ghan* [i.e. the past tense], it should not have an *r* on its optative, and the verb which does, it should have *r* on its optative’. Following this rule (discussed above) and our poem, *ithidh* takes both *go* and *gur* in the optative subjunctive, as it has two sets of past tense forms – one which takes *níor* and another which takes *ní*. We would therefore expect the optative to be *go n-ithe / n-eatha* and *gur ithe / eatha*. I have no examples of the optative in verse.

Though our poem is incomplete, as it is most likely based on *IGT* III–IV, it can safely be assumed that the two missing verbs will also be found in the tract and probably later than (xxv) *ithe*. I therefore give below the relevant information on the two missing verbs in the same way as for verbs (i)–(xxv).

dleacht can be regarded as being entirely independent from *dleachtain*.

81 *Do-fhinn* is given as faulty.

82 1 sing. *nír fhinnas* is faulted in *IGT* III 240. (Cf. 3 pl. past *nír fhionnadar* in *DMU* 20.4f.) E adds that it is said *do-fheidir* is also correct.
(xxvi) *ibhe* (§31): verbal noun to *ibhidh* ‘drinks’. This verb is treated as part of the section on *ithe* in the tract: *An ithe* γ *an ibhe inand, acht do itheas, do-úadhas [read do uadhas], ad-úadhas .c., γ gan acht do itheas > atibheas and, ‘Ithe and ibhe are [inflected] the same way, except whereas do-itheas, do uadhas and ad-uadhas are correct [for 1 sing. past of *ithe*], there is only do ibheas and a-tibheas [for 1 sing. past of *ibhe*]. The 3 sing. past tense forms are do *ibh* and a-tibh (see Ó Cuív 1971–2, 63–5). The rel. pres. subjunctive is *ibheas / eabhas*, while the optative will be go *n-ibhe / n-eabha* and *gur ibhe / eabha*. I note only one example of the optative: 1 pl. *go n-ibheam* (AiD 92.17).83

(xxvii) *béarla na buana* (§32): To E has been added the remark that this *béarla* should not have a proper verbal noun (*l. pearsa aige*), though a verbal noun *tallad* (tellad) from the simple verb *tallaid* (tellaid) ‘takes away, steals; cuts off’ – glossed as *buain* in the Stowe and Lecan Glossaries (*DIL* s.v. *tellad*) – is attested in the earlier language. The present tense of this (compound) verb is not given in *IGT*, but the 1 sing. future is given as *tallfad / do-allabh* and it is further remarked that the verb has a complete paradigm of finite forms (*láindénmhas neith aigi*). The 3 sing. past tense is *tall*, neg. *ní thall*; the expected rel. pres. subj. would be *thallas*, optative *go dtalla*. The tract explicitly states that it takes *go (ná)* rather than *gur (nár)* in the optative: *l. ruis ar a hitche*. I have no examples of the optative of this verb.

There may be a degree of artificiality about the list of verbs in this poem: it has been noted that some of them are not found in the optative subjunctive at all (at least in the extant corpus of poetry) despite their appearance in our poem. Be that as it may, it will be clear from the foregoing that our poet had in mind a general rule such as that added to the discussion of (xxvi) in E and discussed above: that verbs which take *nar, nár, gur* etc. in the past tense, take *gur* and *nár* in the optative, while verbs that take *an, nach, go* etc. in the past tense take *go* and *ná* in the optative. The usage of scribes (and possibly also of poets; see (iii) above) shows the spread of *nár* to this second group of verbs. Despite the penetration of *nár* to verbs which historically should take *ná, gur* is not found for historical *go*; this is hardly to be expected, as *itche chanamhna* (as well as the usage of Modern Irish) shows that it was the optative particle *go* that was ousted *gur* in all environments in this period. The development is thus *go – gur* (neg. *ná – nár*) → *go* (neg. *nár*). The spread of *nár*, which on the surface is

83 *IGT* III 13 is ambiguous, as *-eabhar* might be pres. subj. or imperative passive there, though I am more inclined to take it as imperative: *Maith dleaghar dorn ós an dál. ná heabar corn na copán*, ‘There is one who well deserves drink first [lit. ‘a fist above the gathering is well deserved’]; let no-one else drink from goblet or cup’. 26
rather surprising given the retreat of gur, is probably due to its utility: owing to a degree of formal overlap between imperative and subjunctive, negative optative subjunctive clauses with ná are often potentially ambiguous (e.g. ná cluineam ‘may we not hear’ or ‘let us not hear!’), while nár unambiguously marks such sentences as optative (e.g. nár chluineam ‘may we not hear’). In all of the verbs listed in our poem where neg. optative ná rather than nár is actually attested, the subjunctive form is quite distinct from the imperative, though optative nár is still sometimes found with these verbs nonetheless, as noted above.

The 27 verbs: diachronic analysis

Viewed synchronically, all these 27 verbs are highly irregular; analogues of some are found in the living language today, but many represent artificial forms that were maintained in literary Early Modern Irish and were most likely not found in contemporary speech. The complexity and frequency of use is reflected in their placement near the beginning of IGT III–IV. We have already reviewed the contemporary understanding of the variation in the use of verbal particles in the optative subjunctive in these verbs. In this section the issue will be viewed diachronically. Why do the 27 verbs listed in this poem take go rather than gur in Classical Modern Irish?

It has already been mentioned that some verbs did not combine with modal ro in Old Irish (see GOI §§535–7 and McCone 1997, 144–7). Verbs (i), (iv), (x), (xiii) and (xiv) are the Classical Modern Irish outcomes of verbs in -ic (do-ecmaing, do-ic, do-airicc and ro-ic (twice) respectively), which resisted ro-augmentation in the earlier language. To this category belongs also (xxiv) fo-gaib. I have no evidence of ro-forms of (xviii) do-airret, which in its subjunctive had in any event already fallen together with do-airicc (cf. (x)) and do-roich at an earlier stage (see DIL s.vv). Verbs (ii), (iii) and (viii) (OIr ro-cluinethar, ad-ci and téit) formed their perfect and optative subjunctives on a separate stem without modal ro. In Old Irish, the verb gataid ‘takes away, steals’ too had suppletive forms corresponding to the modal ro-forms of other verbs (VKG ii, 510; cf. GOI §764); these eventually formed the basis for a new (defective) simple verb tallaid (xxvii).

84 All forms in this footnote are neg. 2 sing. See (iv) optative ná tíis, imperative tar(r)(a) etc.; (vi) optative ná rabha etc., imperative ná bí; (vii) optative ná dearnar, imperative ná déana/déine; (viii) optative ná deach etc., imperative ná heirg; (x) optative ná táire, imperative ná tairge; (xvi) optative ná ría, imperative roich/reich etc.

85 Note that the ro- of preterite/perfect ro-cúalae is not the modal ro but part of the lexical compound.
Some compound verbs already contained a preverb *ro* and so did not normally combine with a modal *ro*. To this category belong (ii) *ro-cluinethar* and (xxiii) *ro-fitir*. OIr *targaid* (ix) is etymologised as *to-ro-ad-guid* by (Bergin 1932, 139–40), while for (xii) *do-érni*, Pedersen proposes *to-ess-ro-sní* (VKG ii, 635). Verb (xvi) is descended from OIr *ro-saig* (and should therefore resist *ro*-augmentation), and in addition the Classical Modern Irish forms show contamination with *ro-ic* and *do-saig* (the *ro*-forms of which would overlap with forms of (xxi) *do-roich* (< *to-ro-saig*; VKG ii, 610)).

In the case of (vii) *déanamh*, the optative (and perfect) forms do contain a modal *ro*, but this was a fixed *ro* found invariably after the preverb (*do-*, in prototonic forms *de-*) and before the verbal stem, so that the optative forms were preceded by *co* (later *go*) rather than *coro* etc. This is also the case in (xv), where *ruca* (OIr *ruca*) contains a reduced modal *ro* combined with the suppletive stem *-uc*. Cf. the augmented subjunctive of the substantive verb (vi). There has clearly been a breakdown in the distinction between the suppletive *ro*-subjunctive forms and the standard subjunctive forms based on *ber-*, however, as there is no indication of a distinction in usage between the two sets of forms in Classical Modern Irish. Similarly, there is vacillation in the optative present subjunctive of the substantive verb (vi) between forms which contain a fixed modal *ro* (*ro*(i)*bh* < OIr *-roib*) and forms without (*bé*) in Classical Modern Irish. However, this vacillation can be traced back to Old Irish, where we find examples of the optative subjunctive with and without *ro*: contrast the likes of *Slán bee* (glossing Latin *sana sis*) (Stern 1910, 494) and *ro-bé amail chroebnatain / do-thuit re n-a mes*, ‘may you be as a little branch that falls before its fruit’ (Carney 1964, 93, quatrain 9cd) or *bethumsa mogude ‘may I have what I pray for’* (Fél Ep. 384 n. 14) and *rom bé nem co soillsi snéide*, ‘may I have luminous Heaven’ (Van Hamel 1941, 14, quatrain 76d).

In Old Irish (v) *as-beir* could combine with modal *ro*, but this fixed *ro* occurred after the preverb. CModIr simple past *a-dubhairt / a-dobhairt / a-dóbhairt* are descended ultimately from OIr deuterotonic perfect *as-rubart* with a petrified infixed pronoun (where *ru-* is the fixed modal particle), while the forms *a-déabhairt / ad-éabhairt* descend from the prototonic form *érbart* with contamination from the independent forms. Classical Modern Irish has no traces, however, of present subjunctive forms with fixed *ro*, e.g. *-érbara* (< *as-ro-bera*); even had such forms survived, however, they would regularly have taken *go* in the optative subjunctive. Likewise, there is no trace in the subjunctive in Classical Modern Irish of the suppletive augmented forms of OIr *do-beir* in the sense ‘gives’ (xvii), though past tense *do-rad / tard* is descended from OIr perfect *do-rat* ‘has given’; the suppletive stem *-uc*
was used in OIr to supply the ro-forms only in the sense ‘brings’ (GOI §789). Had Classical Modern Irish retained a pres. subjunctive form *tarda, it would regularly have been preceded by go. In Old Irish, do-esta (xi) ‘is wanting, dies’, which is a compound of the substantive verb, could form a perfect with infixed ro (tesarbae) by means of a suppletive stem – the same stem in b- with which atá formed its perfect (and subjunctive) (GOI §834; McCone 1997, 145) – but these suppletive perfect forms of do-esta do not survive into Early Modern Irish. By Early Modern Irish the function of the historical preterite/perfect forms had been taken over by forms that are in origin present tense (OIr do-esta ‘is wanting, dies’ > EModIr teasta etc. ‘(has) died’). Once again, however, even had suppletive subjunctive forms survived into the later language they would regularly have taken go. Similarly, at-reig (xix) did have ro-forms in the earlier language, but these ro-forms regularly took co rather than coro in the perfect (and optative subjunctive).

(xxii) is a curious case: dligid was a simple verb in Old Irish; by Early Modern Irish, however, it had acquired (modelled on the surviving archaic forms of at-reig) some compound verbal forms. The development of compound forms of dligid by analogy with at-reig poses no difficulty: in the subjunctive, CModIr béarla na héirghe has a-dré, -dré; the new compound verbal form a-dlé was back-formed from dependent -dlé on this model.87

Ithid (xxv) has retained into Classical Modern Irish the perfect forms in de-fo- (GOI §766) alongside the new regular past tense do ith, though the former have undergone partial reanalysis with the preverb do- in OIr do-fúaid (CModIr do-uaidh, ní duaidh)88 being understood also as a positive tense-marking verbal particle do (from earlier ro) in do uaidh, níor uaidh.89 There are no longer any traces of ‘perfective’ subjunctive forms in de-fo-, the corresponding forms now being supplied by the same stem as the present indicative with i/ea (for which see SNG iv, §7.14). Historically, ithid would take co rather than coro in the earlier language, but by Classical Modern Irish it could take both sets of particles in the simple past. Though the subjunctive in isolation is morphologically ‘regular’ when viewed synchronically

86 For one explanation of the Mid. Ir. perfect form at-raacht < at-raracht, see VKG ii, 595.
87 For -dlé, itself quite irregular in Classical Modern Irish when viewed synchronically, see GOI §§613, 625.
88 As a pre-verb as opposed to a tense-marking verbal particle, do was known to Bardic grammarians (including the individual or school behind IGT III–IV) as duir ailm coimhleanamhna ‘adhering do’ (McManus 2012, 189–90).
89 As simple past to itheann ‘eats’, d’uaidh, níor uaidh, survived alongside d’ith, níor ith, into the twentieth century in the Irish of Co. Clare (Holmer 1962, 151). The anonymous reader and Prof. Ó hUiginn also draw my attention to its survival in the Irish of East Galway and Ossory (SNG vii, §5.21, and v, §4.10).
in the approved paradigm and though there is no impediment to its taking gur, the past form do-uaidh (as opposed to do uaidh) ensured the survival of go alongside gur in the optative subjunctive, as the optative subjunctive and past pattern together in their use of verbal particles.

By Classical Modern Irish, the past tense forms of (xxvi) ibid are do ibh and a-tibh, the latter of which arose from a-dibh, a re-division of ad-ibh (at-ib < as-ib + petrified infix) (see DIL s.v. ibid and GOI §§765, 822B; cf. Ó Cuív 1971–2, 64). Though not immediately apparent, there is some trace, therefore, in the past tense of perfective ess for ro (a-tibh) beside a simple ‘ro’-past (do ibh). The subjunctive forms of this verb in Classical Modern Irish are formed on the same stem as the present and there is no trace of the ‘perfective’ subjunctive ess in these, but the patterning of verbal particle use in the past and optative subjunctive again ensured that there would be variation between go and gur in the optative.

Another curious case is that of (xx) do-tuit, where the OIr reduplicated future do-tóeth (where we would not, of course, except a modal ro) has taken over the role of the earlier subjunctive forms (which could combine with a fixed modal ro) (GOI §§626, 660); the Early Modern Irish past forms continue the earlier perfect do-rochair (a suppletive stem do- cer combined with fixed modal ro) (GOI §773).

To sum up the diachronic background: all of these 27 verbs regularly took co rather than coro in the optative subjunctive in Old Irish, except the innovative compound forms of dligid, which arose under the influence of another of these verbs. In some cases, the actual forms employed in the optative subjunctive do not survive (the regular subjunctive forms have assumed this function or, in the case of do-tuit, future tense forms) or these alternate even in the optative with the later analogues of standard subjunctive forms. It has already

90 My thanks to Liam Breathnach for discussing the development of these forms with me.
91 Cf. Mod. Ir. future indicative beidh, originally a subjunctive form. There is, of course, a great deal of overlap between the present subjunctive and future both morphologically and semantically (see GOI §§661–2, McQuillan 2002, 32–3 and the discussion of the subjunctive forms of (xxii) above).
92 For do-tuit in general, see Wagner 1966.
93 There are, of course, other verbs which in Old Irish would have taken co in the perfect and optative subjunctive but which by Early Modern Irish had been simplified to the point that they should regularly take gur. OIr ad-fét, for example, formed its perfect (and the corresponding subjunctive) with com rather than ro (perfect ad-cu(a)id), but this leaves no trace in Classical Modern Irish. CModIr innisidh is so unremarkable it is listed in eighth place in IGT III §65 and it receives no special comment whatsoever.
been noted too that some of these verbs were rarely (if ever) used in the optative – at least as far as we can reconstruct on the basis of the evidence now extant.

Editorial policy

In editing the poem, I have silently expanded all manuscript contractions, supplied punctuation and capital letters, as well as glide vowels, length-marks and lenition wanting in the manuscript. I have also normalised -chd(-) to -cht(-). Where necessary for rinn : airdrinn, I have emended unstressed vowels to reflect the rhyme (e.g. in 1b, I normalise MS itchi to itche to indicate the rhyme with mé).

EDITION

1 Seacht bpearsain fhichead uair mé

rus ní uil ara n-itche:

teagmháil, claisdin is cluinsin,

faicsin isna foclúibh-sin.

2 Teacht, abairt, beith, déanamh, dol,

dá thairgsin, teasdáil, téarnomh,

dá ríochtain, rugadh, rochtain,

tugadh agus tárrochtain.

3 Béarla ón éirghe (as eadh cantair),

béarla ón tuitim, torachtain,

(cóir iomarcaidh deachtaidh dáibh)

dleachtain, fionnachtain, fagháil.
4 Rus ara hitche as dual di
’s a beith gan ruis uair eili;
noch an fhágbhaim an ithe –
dá bhfágbhainn ní fúigfithe!

MANUSCRIPT READINGS
1a fithc; 1b rus] rur
2b taircsin; 2d agus] et symbol
3c cóir followed by coir which is marked for deletion; iomarcaidh
4c agbaim
4d fuicfithe

TRANSLATION
1 I have found 27 verbs which do not have an r in their optative subjunctive: teagmháil, claisdin and cluinsin, faicsin are among those words.
2 Teacht, abairt, beith, déanamh, dol, two tairgsin, teasdáil, téarnamh, two ríochtain, rugadh, rochtain, tugadh and tárrachtain.
3 The suppletive to éirghe (so it is said), the suppletive to tuitim, torachtain, (it would be proper to compose more about them) dleachtain, fionnachtain, fagháil.
4 It [ithe] is wont to have an r in the optative subjunctive and at other times to be without an r; I am not forgetting ithe – if I were to omit it, it would not be noted!

NOTES TO THE EDITION
1b MS rur must be a mistake for rus (cf. 4a). The usual form of the letter-name is ruis, which is apparently indeclinable: in another didactic poem, in deibhidhe (ógláchas), we find i ndiaidh ruis is i ndiaidh nion – where, however, emendation to ruise is possible – and in
glossing on that line tinne i ndiaidh ruis ‘fearta’ (Bretnach 1941–2: quatrain 20). In our poem rus appears to be a feminine noun: note that the final consonant is palatalised after the preposition gan in 4b.

1d Focal could more accurately be translated ‘stressed word’. For various uses of the term, see ABP pp 166–7. For focal as ‘verbal form’, see fn. 4 above.

3a For the use of the article with the verbal noun as lemma here (ón eirge) and in 4c (an ithe), cf. respectively bérla na héirghe (IGT iii, §17) and An ithe ; an ibhe inand [iad] (§31), and note the not infrequent use of the article when referring to other verbal nouns in IGT III–IV (don dénam, §1; ag in richtain a leasa, §12; inann gabas ; an techt, ibid.; in rucadh, §13; g. ón tabairt, ibid.; bérla in techta iad, §19). For the use of the article to mark a citation (or citation-form) in the earlier language, see Bretnach 1990 and also Kelly 2014, 21–2.

4d I take it that we have to do with two different senses of the verb fágbhaidh here: in the first case it has the sense ‘leaves (out), omits’ and the second ‘leaves on record, hands down’ (see DIL s.v. fo-ácaib I (j) and Ó Dónaill 1977, s.v. fág 2). Alternatively, Damian McManus has suggested to me that we might take this line to mean ‘If I were to omit it [on the grounds that it sometimes has an r], it would not be omitted [by another]’.

ABBREVIATIONS


DBM = C. Mhág Craith, Dán na mBráthar Mionúr, Scribhinní Gaeilge na mBráthar Mionúr 8 (Dublin, 1967 and 1980).

DiD = L. Mac Cionnaith, Dioghluim Dána (Dublin, 1938).


\textit{Magauran} = L. McKenna, \textit{The Book of Magauran} (Dublin, 1947).


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