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A CROSÁNTACHT FOR UILLIAM BÚRC

THE following is an edition of a *crosántacht* composed by Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird. It is addressed to Uilliam mac Seaáin mheic Oilbh Éarus Búrc, of Clann Uilliam Íochtair, in Tír Amhalghaidh in present-day Co. Mayo.

In the poem, Fearghal Óg reproaches Uilliam with rejecting his *comann*, after a formal relationship had been agreed between them. The poet's anger and enmity (qq. 8, 18–19) having been thus aroused, Uilliam is threatened with the concealment of his fame through the poet refusing to praise him (qq. 13, 15), and with satire (qq. 18–23). These threats are interspersed with praise of Uilliam, and suggestions that a reconciliation is likely (q. 17). In addition to containing the usual humour, the prose is used in places (§§ 8–11, 13–14) to reinforce and restate the burden of the verses, and to emphasise the two interdependent constants of bardic praise-poetry, the subject's valour and his generosity, *cruas* and *buga*.¹

Uilliam Búrc

Uilliam Búrc's father, Seaán mac Oilbh Éarus, had been Mac Uilliam from 1571² until his death in 1580.³ He was the subject of lengthy genealogical poems by Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn⁴ and by Ruaidhrí mac Domhnaill Í Uiginn,⁵ and for him was written the illuminated manuscript known as 'The Book of the Burkes'.⁶ He was considered a loyal and an obedient servant of the crown.⁷

The death of Seaán mac Oilbh Éarus gave rise to a succession dispute between his brother Risdeard and Risdeard an Iarainn mac Dáibhídh, the *tánaiste*, with the latter winning out.⁸ On the death of Risdeard an Iarainn in 1582/3, he was succeeded by his adversary, Risdeard mac Oilbh Éarus.⁹ It would appear that there was no expectation among Clann Uilliam that Seaán's son, Uilliam,

¹Fearghal Óg's address to Brian Ó Ruairc ('Brian Ó Ruairc mo rogha leannán', *Ir. Syll. Poetry*, 23, q. 1) remains a most concise statement of these constants. For this poet's work in general see Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'Poems by Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird', *Celtica* 24 (2003) 252–63. In that article, the bibliographical details of *Díomhaoin gach dán acht dán Dé* (p. 261, § 10) disappeared after proofing; they should read: '(P). *Aith.D.* 90 (pp. 331–2; vol. ii, 206)'.

²*Cal. SP Ire. 1509–1573*, 437.

³*AFM* v, 1724.

⁴*TD* 17.

⁵Tomás Ó Raghallaigh, *Filí agus filidheacht Chonnacht* (Baile Átha Cliath 1938) 147–63.

⁶TCD ms 1440. The commissioning of this manuscript is viewed by Dr Katharine Simms in the context of the interest shown by lords of English and Norman extraction in Gaelic pseudo-history and genealogy ('Bards and barons: the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and native culture', in Robert Bartlett and Angus MacKay (ed.), *Medieval frontier societies* (Oxford 1989) 177–97, at 192–3).

⁷*Cal. SP Ire. 1509–1573*, 489; *Cal. SP Ire. 1574–1585*, 92, 99, 211, 227; James Hogan and N. McNeill O'Farrell, *The Walsingham letter-book or register of Ireland May, 1578 to December, 1579* (Dublin 1959) 150–151.

⁸*Cal. SP Ire. 1574–1585*, 270, 272, 284, 291, 294.

⁹*Ibid.* 441, 443. *AFM* v, 1804.

would succeed to the title of Mac Uilliam, and this is borne out by the use of the expression *mac ríogh* in the poem edited here (q. 7, Prose 9).¹⁰ Nevertheless, the English administration, and perhaps even his father, may have had other ideas, as in July 1579, the year prior to Seaán's death, Sir Nicholas Malby, Governor of Connacht, sent Uilliam to Sir Francis Walsingham, Secretary of State, in London. Uilliam bore a letter requesting 'that the bearer may live with Walsyngham. He is the only legitimate son of M'William Eigher, an honest gentleman and faithful subject, who will allow him largely for his charges'.¹¹

Shortly before his death, Seaán wrote in Latin to Walsingham, informing him of how his son had written to him telling him 'with what fatherly affection Walsyngham treats him', and requested that at Uilliam's return 'he may be allowed certain in pay to serve Her Majesty'.¹² If indeed the English were grooming Uilliam to be Mac Uilliam, the succession dispute that followed Seaán's death persuaded them of the futility of such expectations.¹³ Uilliam remained in London, and one year later Malby wrote to Walsingham suggesting that Uilliam might return to Ireland, 'to receive the goods left him by his father'.¹⁴ Uilliam returned, and the following year, 1582, was made Sheriff in Co. Sligo.¹⁵ Meeting with opposition from his brothers, Uilliam persevered, and, when Sir Richard Bingham succeeded Malby as Governor of Connacht in 1584, Uilliam wrote to Walsingham asking him to use his influence with Bingham 'to continue him in the pay of 12 horse in the county of Mayo'.¹⁶

Uilliam was by now in possession of the town and castle of Ard na Riagh (Ardnaree). Though part of Ballina today, it was then an independent settlement on the eastern side of the river Moy.¹⁷ He also held Castlelackan, near Killala. His holdings at this time are outlined in the Composition of Connacht of 1585.¹⁸ It would seem, however, that he had hoped for greater advancement but, despite his professed friendship with Bingham, that he found the Lord Deputy, Sir John Perrot, unforthcoming. For this reason, in January 1586 he again wrote to Walsingham asking that he might have a greater share of the country of Mac Uilliam Íochtair, and mentioning that he had given some thought to quitting Ireland altogether to offer himself for service with the English in Flanders.¹⁹

Later in 1586, on the death of his uncle, Risdeard mac Oilbh Éaruis, many of Clann Uilliam Íochtair went into rebellion protesting that Uilliam—'the

¹⁰See Katharine Simms, *From kings to warlords: the changing political structure of Gaelic Ireland in the later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge and Wolfeboro 1987) 57–8.

¹¹*Cal. SP Ire. 1574–1585*, 175.

¹²*Ibid.* 231.

¹³*Ibid.* 284.

¹⁴*Ibid.* 320.

¹⁵*Ibid.* 414–15; see Mary O'Dowd, *Power, politics and land: Early Modern Sligo 1568–1688* (Belfast 1991) 56.

¹⁶*Cal. SP Ire. 1574–1585*, 516.

¹⁷Cf. John O'Donovan, *The genealogies, tribes, and customs of Hy Fiachrach* (Dublin 1844) 34n.

¹⁸A. Martin Freeman, *The composition booke of Conought* (Dublin 1936) 111–12.

¹⁹*Cal. SP Ire. 1586–1588*, 13.

most unworthy and unfittest of us all’—was to be favoured with the best part of the territory.²⁰ After this date we lose sight of Uilliam Búrc, except for a brief glimpse in 1588, when ‘William Burke of Ardnary’ is said to have captured seventy-two Spaniards from an Armada wreck.²¹ In May 1591 a rumour circulated ‘of a combat to be performed between one William Burke, of Terawly, and one Alexander M’Hugh Boy M’Donnell, a gallowglass of that barony’.²² Under that year the Four Masters record the following:

Uilliam Búrc mac Seaain, mic Oiluerais, mhic Seaain do mharbhadh le duine uasal dá lucht leanamhna fein .i. lé hAlastrann mac Aodha Buidhe Mhec Domhnaill.²³

Tadhg Dall

Uilliam’s death at the hands of a Clann Domhnaill *gallóglach* recalls the state of turmoil in Sligo and Mayo reported and complained of in his poetry by Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn. Tadhg complained of the depredations of ‘Fir Lonndain, laochruidh Alban’ in an appeal for help to An Calbhach Ó Conchubhair.²⁴ In another poem, a direct address to these ‘laochruidh Alban’, he complains to Clann Domhnaill of excessive and unjust exactions being made on him by the seven septs of ‘síol gColla’ enumerated by him as being in his territory; one of these septs is ‘síol . . . Aoda Buide’, who were to be responsible for Uilliam’s death.²⁵

Clann Uilliam were an important source of patronage for Tadhg Dall, patronage that he attributed to the influence of Cathal Ó Conchobhair.²⁶ Of the eight²⁷ surviving poems composed by him to members of this sept, one is addressed to Uilliam Búrc’s father, Seaán, and one to his uncle Risdeard.²⁸ Tadhg Dall also composed at least one poem to Éamonn Búrc, son of Risdeard an Iarainn, Risdeard mac Oilbh Éarus’s sometime rival.²⁹

Two poems survive that are addressed by Tadhg Dall to Uilliam Búrc. The first, breathless in style and content, urgently seeks Uilliam’s help against the

²⁰Ibid. 201.

²¹Ibid. 221. *Cal. SP Ire. 1588–1592*, 40.

²²*Cal. SP Ire. 1588–1592*, 561.

²³*AFM* vi, 1908. It should be noted, however, that Irish Record Commission transcripts of Mayo inquisitions give his date of death as 24 July 1595 (National Archives of Ireland, RC 9/16/73–6). In this source, to which I was directed by Kenneth Nicholls, it is stated that Uilliam was seized, upon his death, of the bawn and villa of Castlelackan (*al.* Castlelecken), no mention being made of Ardnarea.

²⁴*TD* 41.4–5.

²⁵The complaint begins ‘Oraoid sunn go síol gColla’, six and a half quatrains of which were published by Knott in *TD* 42, and a further seventeen, with two half-quatrains, in Pádraig Ó Macháin, ‘Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn: foinsé dá shaothar’, in Pádraig Ó Fiannachta (ed.), *An Dán Díreach Léachtaí Cholm Cille* 24 (Maigh Nuad 1994) 77–113, at 96–8.

²⁶*TD* 14.20ab; cf. *TD* i, p. xxx.

²⁷Seven, if we exclude *TD* 22a, also ascribed to Brian Ó Domhnailláin.

²⁸*TD* 17 and 20 respectively.

²⁹*TD* 18; for the identification see Pádraig Ó Macháin, ‘Additional readings to some poems by Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn’, *Celtica* 18 (1986) 69–76, at 75.

excessive exactions already complained of to An Calbhach Ó Conchobhair.³⁰ His complaint is particularly bitter in that he has, he says, explored the various avenues of English law that are available to him, but with no result.³¹ This poem can be dated with reasonable accuracy because Tadhg Dall remarks that he has been waiting three years³² for Uilliam's return, a period that corresponds to his absence in England, 1579–81.

Tadhg Dall's second poem to Uilliam also concerns unlawful depredations carried out upon him, this time by Uilliam himself, or more likely the Clann Domhnaill nominally under Uilliam's control.³³ An interesting aspect of this poem is Tadhg Dall's description of himself as Uilliam's *ollamh* (q. 5), and of the mutual pupil-teacher relationship between himself and Uilliam. Tadhg Dall would go through 'An rolla foghlama ar fad' (q. 7) with Uilliam, while the latter would read for Tadhg 'An leabhar nach léighinn féin' (q. 8).

Lament for Uilliam Búrc

Uilliam's patronage of poetry, and his interest in learning, provide the context for Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaire's *crossántacht* addressed to him. Tadhg Dall's record of being Uilliam's *ollamh*, and Fearghal Óg's discomfiture at his rejected *comann*, are not at variance with a date for the latter's composition of the first half of the 1580s.

Uilliam's interest in learning, and his violent death, suggest that it is he who is the subject of a short poem preserved in a manuscript by Seán na Ráithíneach, RIA ms 3 (23 L 17), f. 148r6–21; both details of learning and violent death are referred to in qq. 6–7.³⁴ Of possible significance to us is the verbal echo of Fearghal Óg's *crossántacht* in q. 2b. For this reason, and to elaborate on the context for Fearghal Óg's poem, I reproduce this short composition here diplomatically, except for line division and capitalisation of proper nouns.

Beannocht ar anmuin Uilliam
gnúis tséimhídhe sheanguinfhial
fear re mbocht dob uaisle dfuil
beannocht uaim air anmuin.

Ré Uilliam Búrc branán gall
fá raoir do cheanglas cumann
briste uaidh mo chroidhe am chliabh
tre loighe san uaig dUilliam.

³⁰'A theachtair theíd ar sliabh', *TD* 22.

³¹For the painful transition from one legal system to another in this area at the time see Bernadette Cunningham, 'Natives and newcomers in Mayo, 1560–1603' in Raymond Gillespie and Gerard Moran (ed.), 'A various country': *essays in Mayo history 1500–1900* (Westport 1987) 24–43, at 35–6.

³²*TD* 22.19.

³³'Cóir Dé eadram is Uilliam', *TD* 23.

³⁴There is no ascription. Tadhg Dall's 'Mairg fhéagas ar Inis Ceithleann' precedes; Gofraidh Mac an Bhaire's 'A fhir shealbhas duit an dán' follows.

Miste sinn ar neólas air
 móide ar ndobrón na dheaghaidh
 rug geall aigne ó gach fíor
 re caidreamh dob fhearr eision.

A chaidreamh do mheall mise
 uch mo thighearna tairise
 ní a ndiaig a tharbha atáim
 ó tharla a ccraidh mo chompáin.

Ba file é budh fear dána
 budh fear bréagtha bandála
 do thuill gnaoi dhá ghné roghluin
 budh saoi é sna healadhnaibh.

Budh léagthóir leabhar ndorcha
 ag sin cuid dá chomhortha
 rug an fithleóir geall an ghrinn
 sgríbhneóir dob fhearr a nÉirinn.

Aoincheard mhaith budh misde neach
 acht amháin gan bheith suirgheach
 mairg do chneasghoin a chneas fhial
 níorbh feas deasboidh air Uilliam.

Braon do ghraosaibh an té as triar
 go bhfaghaidh hanam a Uilliam
 Amen ós a ccraidh dhá chorp
 na dhiaig do bhear mo bheannocht. Beannocht

Textual tradition

The manuscript tradition shows that the *croisantacht* enjoyed a wide distribution over time and space. The text survives in seven manuscripts.

C: RIA ms 672 (23 C 21), pp. 107–12; by Eoghan Caomhánach, 1816–17.

D: Dunnington ms 2, pp. 197–202; by Tomás Ó Iceadha, c. 1819.³⁵

F: UCD Department of Archives, Franciscan ms A 25, pp. 120–122 (breaks off); scribe unknown, early seventeenth century.

L: RIA ms 111 (23 L 32), pp. 48–51; by Richard Tipper, 1716–17.

M: NUI Maynooth ms B 8, pp. 89–92; by Heintí Ó Carraic, 1701–8.

O: RIA ms 1382 (23 O 73), pp. 217–21; by Tomás Ó Iceadha, 1814–30.

R: Museum of Scotland³⁶ ms MCR 39 ('The Red Book of Clanranald'), pp. 282–92; by Niall Mac Mhuirich,³⁷ late seventeenth to early eighteenth century.

³⁵Edgar M. Slotkin, 'Two Irish literary manuscripts in the Mid-West', *Éigse* 25 (1991) 56–80, at 69.

³⁶Formerly the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.

³⁷Derick S. Thomson, 'The poetry of Niall MacMhuirich', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 46 (1969–70) 281–307, at 294–5.

The tradition consists of two distinct families, with notable variations within both. CDLOR form one family,³⁸ and FM the other. Within the first family, separative readings show that R is relatively autonomous,³⁹ while conjunctive readings unite CDLO.⁴⁰ Variants in Prose 8, 12 and 17, as well as the omission of qq. 8c and 22ab, give L an independence within this latter sub-group.⁴¹ L and R have a conjunctive reading in Prose 9. A small number of separative readings distinguishes F—which breaks off in the middle of Prose 12—at q. 2c and in Prose 11.

The relation between the witnesses may be summarized stemmatically as follows:

R L C D O F M

The FM family is, on the whole, the more stable of the two. I have chosen M to represent this family, and as the basis for the text established here. Significant variants are supplied from all witnesses.⁴²

Editorial method

The metre of the poem is *snéadhbhairdne*—commonly used in *crosántachta*—with alternating octosyllabic and quadrasyllabic lines ending in disyllables, linked by rime, alliteration and consonance, groups of quatrains being interspersed with passages of prose. Capitalisation, punctuation and line-division are all editorial. The usual editorial modifications to the orthography have been effected silently. Intrusions in the matters of vowel-length and lenition are indicated with macrons and italics respectively. Substitution of variant forms, permitted by the tracts and required by the

³⁸E.g. *om.* q. 4; variants in 6d, 17a, 23c, 24a, 29a, 30a, Prose 8, 13.

³⁹E.g.: 2a, 2c, 5c, 13d, 25c, 26a, 30d, *om.* q. 27.

⁴⁰E.g.: 17b, 23a, 25c, 26a, 26d, and variants in Prose 12, 13 and 15. Prose 5 presents a curious situation, where a separative reading occurs in D that contradicts the close conjunctive evidence for CDO: *an chuisle do ghearraidh tarsna chum fola do tharraint* is substituted for *an mhagarll do bhuain amach i riocht na cloiche fuail*. This prompts the extra-textual consideration that, being a patron's manuscript—probably written for Fr Símeon Breathnach—it may be that D's reading represents a scribal expurgation and substitution on the part of Tomás Ó Icedha.

⁴¹For the close relationship between C and O see Ó Macháin, 'Tadhg Dall', 90.

⁴²A text of this poem, without translation, was included in an unpublished thesis by the late Alan Harrison ('An chrosántacht', Ph.D thesis, University of Dublin, 1971, pp. 230–44). This text was established from mss L and C, and incorporated the flawed readings of those witnesses.

metre, is generally allowed to pass without annotation—though deducible from the apparatus—except in qq. 7 and 20, where matters of consonance are involved. In the prose passages, the ampersand 7 is represented by *agus*, and *Et* is allowed to stand when used; square brackets are employed in sections 3 and 11 to indicate letters obscured by staining in M, and in 15 to supply a word missing from that source.

Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird .cc.⁴³

1 Mairg im dheaghaidh cheanglas comann:

is cúis tñuidhe;

orm fa choill do-chóidh mo chéile,

gēr dhóigh dhūinne.

2 An fear comuinn do chaill orum,

d'íúil na bhfáidheadh,

dob é ar ngrádh é tar gach n-éinfhear,

cré nár cáineadh.

3 Comann tar ais d'éis a dhéanta

do nōrbh ionchuir,

mo bhile cnuais, mo thrágh thorchuir,

tar chlár gCriomhthuin.

4 Muna bheith ar éirigh eadruinn—

ní hiúil céillidh—

ní thréigfinn choidhche an fial faoilidh

ar fhiadh nĒibhir.

1 Woe to him who, after my experience, forms a bond of friendship: it is a cause of resentment; my spouse has avoided me to my disadvantage, though we had hope of him.

2 The lover who failed me, according to the information of the poets, he was our love above every man, one who [never] was faulted.

3 It was not proper for him to reject a friendship after it had been formed, my fruit-tree, my beach [rich in] produce above [everyone in] the plain of Criomhthan.

4 Were it not for what arose between us—a ridiculous tale—I would never leave the cheerful, generous one [not even] for the land of Éibhear.

1 *a* dhiaigh LR; cheanglann D, do cheanglas R; cumann FDO, cumuinn L, cuman C; *c* orm] RCDO, orum MFL; do chóidh] R, do chuaidh MLCD.

2 *a* cummuin F, cumainn LDO, cuman C; do coi]l F; orm FDO, oruinn R; *b* d'íúil] iul R; ffáighe D; *c* dob] budh L; ar ngrádh] F, mo ghrádh MLCD, mo chen R; *second é om.* C; aoinfher RD.

3 *a* Cumann FCDO, Cumainn L; ais] *om.* F; d'éis] *repeated* D, eis F; *b* bfioncoir R; *c* mbhile R; tráigh mss; *d* criomhthain(n) LR.

4 *om.* LRCDO; *a* beith F; *b* céilligh M; *d* iath F; neimhir MF.

⁴³D adds 'da charaid Uilliam Búrc'; no ascription in F.

5 Mo chomann do chur ar gcūla
do chleith Mhuaidhe
is clódh meanman, nō claon céille,
nō is taom truaighe.

Prose 1 Et is truagh don mharcach do mhuintir Í Dhomhnuill do leag a each do chur craoithe uirre, oir níorbh fhēidir craoithe do chor ina seasamh uirre le a doirbhe agus re a dofhulang. Et tar ēis cheithre gcrú do chor 'na luidhe uirre, a raibhe i nUlltuibh uile do theacht 'na timcheall. Níorbh ēidir leō a cur 'na seasamh nō gor beanadh na ceithre craoithe cēadna uaithe arīs.

Prose 2 Agus giodh ait sin, ní haite leam féin é iná mar deireadh óglach Í Fhialáin, agus é aga bhāthadh: 'Neamhchaint! Neamhchaint!'

Prose 3 Et giodh ait gach ní dhōbh sin, ní haite liom féin é iná mar do tachtadh in b[hean] roimhe le méad a greama ar tórramh a fir.

5 The rejection of my friendship by the tree of the Muadh is a weakening of spirit, or a perversion of reason, or a pitiful tantrum.

Prose 1 And it is pitiful about the horseman of Ó Domhnaill's people, who felled his mare to put shoes on her, as it was impossible to shoe her when she was standing because of her contrariness and her irritability. And after four shoes had been put on her when she was lying down, everyone in all of Ulster gathered round her. They were unable to stand her up until the same four shoes had been removed from her again.

Prose 2 And though that is amusing, I myself do not think it more amusing than how Ó Fialáin's servant was saying, when he was drowning, 'No speech! No speech!'

Prose 3 And though each one of those [stories] is amusing, I myself do not think it more amusing than how, previously, the woman was choked by the size of the piece of food [that she was eating] at her husband's wake.

5 a c(h)umann FLCDO; chuir L; c clo FLCD; nō] is F, no is LCD; as clódh ceille no as maoth meanma R.

Prose 1 truagh] a tarla add F; chur] cheithre add R; uirre] uirthe FCDO, urrtha R, fúithe L; óir ... uirre] om. R; craoithe do chor] a ccur LCDO; uirre] uirthe FCDO, fuithe L; doirbhe] doilbhe L; re a dofhulang] uile do fhulang F; Et] is add L; cheithre] na ceithredh R; gcrú] ccraoitid R gcraoithe LCDO; do chor] om. F; 'na] as a R; uirre] urthe F, uirthe LCDO, urrtha R; a raibhe] an rabh R (roimh F, raibh LCDO); uile] om. F; Nírbh ēidir leō a cur 'na seasamh] ní chuirfedh na sesamh í R; leó] uile add L; craoithe] cru F; uaithe] dhi R

Prose 2 deireadh] deirghe L, adeire C, adeir DO; Í Fhaoláin L. inā etc] R reads: na mar a deireadh o óglách ris O Bhladhólain 7 e ag dol le fanuidh caisil abhann deirgthuille 7 do iar ar a oglách a chabhair no éimhghe ar dhaoinibh oile da chabhair neamhchaint neamhchaint Í Fhaghláin a déradh seisean.

Prose 3 ait gach ní dhōbh] om. F; féin] om. LRCO; roimhe] om. F, roimheso L, roimhesi CDO; le méad a greama] om. R; torughadh R.

6 Fir Chonnacht uile dhá n-áirmhinn,
is ē thoghuim;
annamh fear a chlú do-chluinim,
cnú dhár gcrobhuing.

7 Tearc mac ríogh eile mar Uilliam,
urra ar gcabhra,
fear 'ga bhfuil cridhe gan chumhnga,
bile Banbha.

8 Gē a-tám buidhioch do bhaidhbh Thailtean,
is tuar pudhair:
do thuill uaim fheirg agus fholuidh,
níor *cheird* chubhaidh.

Prose 4 Agus níor chubhaidh don ollamh re dán, dán Mēig Amhalghuidh Bhaile Locha Luatha do bhreith d'ionnsoighe Í Dhubhda.

Prose 5 Et níor chubhaidh don ollamh re leigheas an mhagarll do bhuain amach i riocht na cloiche fuail.

Prose 6 Agus níor chubhaidh don ollamh re seanchas a rádh gorbh ē Goll mhac Morna athair Conchobhair mheic Neasa.

6 [Though] I consider the men of all Connacht, it is he I choose; seldom do I hear of a man of his reputation, [choice] fruit of our cluster.

7 Few other princes are like Uilliam, one who is sure to help us, a man who has an expansive heart, tree of Banbha.

8 Though I am grateful to the warrior of Tailte, it is an omen of sorrow: he has earned anger and resentment from me, it was not proper behaviour.

Prose 4 And it was not proper for the professor of poetry to bring the poem composed for Mág Amhalghuidh of Baile Locha Luatha to Ó Dubhda.

Prose 5 And it was not proper for the professor of medicine to extract the testicle instead of the bladder-stone.

Prose 6 And it was not proper for the professor of history to proclaim that Goll mac Morna was the father of Conchubhar mac Neasa.

6 *d* os crobhuing LRCDO.

7 *a* eile] oile FR, *a* bhfoghlum mar CDO; *c* croidhe MLCDO; *c*umhnga MFCDO, *c*umhdha L, *c*huimge R.

8 *a* Gidh L; *tám* FLRCDO; Thailtean] FRO, thailtin M, tailltenn LCD; *c om.* L; *uaim*] orm R; *fholuidh*] fhaluigh R, *foghla(idh)* CDO; *d* cear(r)d CDO.

Prose 4 *Order of sections in F:* 6, 5, 4, 7. *don*] ó D; *ollaimh* R; *amalgaih* C; *Bhaile*] *om.* F; *Luatha*] Lua FLOD, *luain* R, *luadh* C.

Prose 5 *ollaimh* R; *liaighios* DO; *magairle* R; *an chuisle do ghearraidh tarsna chum fola do tharraint* D.

Prose 6 *ollaimh* R; *a rádh . . . Neasa*] *om.* LCDO; *chonnchuir* R.

Prose 7 Agus nīor chubhaidh don ollamh re breithiomhnas breath do bhreith gor ghoire Mac Con Shnámha Chorra Boiginnsi do ríoghdhacht Éireann inā Ó Néill.

Prose 8 Agus mās tnūthach le huaislibh agus le hardmhaithibh Éireann ar chuireas féin d'allamh agus d'ardoirrdhearcas ar Uilliam Búrc, muna bheith beagán oirbhíre agum air, adéaruinn go madh tuarguin darach do dhornuibh, nó snámh i n-aighidh an easa, nó lámh i nead nathrach, nō ríomh réaltan, coimeas nó comórtas do dhéanamh ris do chloinn ríogh nó roithighearnadh ar oiread inmhe agus acfuinne ris féin.

9 Ó Néill ar oineach 's ar eangnamh
oighre Máire;
fear ré leantar do ghníomh Ghuaire
ar dhíol dáimhe.

10 Tar ceann m'fheirge re hua Ruaidhrí,
ré gan teimheal,
do-bhēar geall, tar chró na gcuradh,
dhó fa dheireadh.

11 Tuilleamh m'fheirge is iongnadh liomsa
dom lán súla,
's nach téid file uadh fa éara;
is tuar tnūdha.

Prose 7 And it was not proper for the professor of law to deliver a judgement that Mac Con Shnámha of Corr Boiginnsi had a closer claim to the kingship of Éire than Ó Néill.

Prose 8 And if the nobility and elite of Éire are jealous of the fame and pre-eminence that I have bestowed on Uilliam Búrc, I would say [in reply]—were it not for the little grievance I have against him—that for the sons of kings or great lords to contend with or oppose him would be like chopping an oak with [bare] hands, or swimming against the waterfall, or putting one's hand in a snake's nest, or counting stars, such is the prosperity and power he possesses.

9 In the matter of honour and valour Máire's heir is as Ó Néill; [he is] a man who follows Guaire's practice in the payment of poets.

10 Despite my anger towards Ruaidhrí's grandson, a moon not darkened, I will, after all, give [my] pledge to him above [all in] the land of the warriors.

11 That he who is the focus of my affection should incur my wrath amazes me, seeing as how no poet leaves him with a refusal; it is an omen of jealousy.

Prose 7 Agus nīor chubhaidh] no LCDO; chubhaidh] chosmuil F; do bhreith] do thabhairt O; mac anamha F, mac con(n)ámha RCDO; beiginnsi CDO; ríoghdhacht *om.* C, ríoghacht FLR, righecht DO.

Prose 8 mās] is O, is tuar tnūthach D; le] re le M; d'allamh] dalla FLR, dallan CDO; ardoirrdhearcas] ordhearcas FLR; Búrc] Buirc M; bheith] mbiadh L, mbeith RDO, mbeid C; go madh] gurab L; an easa] an *om.* FLRCDO; nō ríomh réaltan] *om.* CDO, no gad um gainiomh L; ris] re/le hUilliam Bu(i)rc LRCDO; chloinn] chlannaibh LCDO.

9 a Ua LCDO; eagnamh R, eagnamh CDO; ar eangnamh sar einech F; c ré] le FLR, le a CDO; d ar] tar F, ag R, a ndíol DO.

10 a chionn L; c do bheir LCDO, dobferr R; tar [clo *expuncted*] chró M.

11 a bfeirge CO, ffeirge D; liumsa F; b súla D; c *om.* C; téid] LR tteid MFO; uadh] FR uaidh MLDO; d tnuidhe D.

Prose 9 Agus mar thēid an ré ós na réalltannuibh, agus an mhuir mhór ós na mionshreabhuibh, agus Sliabh Sión ós na slēibhtibh, is mar sin do-chuaidh mac Seaáin mheic Oiluēarus tar a bhfoil i gcoimhré agus i gcomhairsir ris do mhacuibh ríogh gan fhreasabhra.

Prose 10 Agus do thuig Uilliam Būrc gor buaine bladh inā cise, agus gorbh ē coigill an chonāich a chaitheamh; agus, ō tá a theisd mar a thuarasgbhāil, do mholuinn féin don tseabhadh uasal éachtach gan oirbhire nō easaonta do thuilleamh ó dheighfhear dhána, ná uaim féin d'áiridhe.

Prose 11 Agus gē adeirim sin, fós is urusa d'Uilliam Būrc éirghe ó dhiomdha [éa]nduine amháin re healadhuin ōir nī slugh neach 'na aonar ōir, dā dtairginn féin cor i n-aghaidh Uilliam Būrc, do rachdaois éigsi agus ollamhuin Éireann im aghaidhsi i n-aoineacht; agus ní hiongnadh dhóibh cur re hUilliam Būrc ar na hadhbharaibhsin: ōir is ē is láidre lámh agus is cródha croidhe agus is mire inntinn agus is mó eineach.

12 Oineach cáich do chor do mheabhair,
mór dā m/haoidheamh,
oighre Seaáin, nār éar einfhear;
sgéal do sgaoileadh.

Prose 9 And as the moon surpasses the stars, and the great ocean the little streams, and Mount Sion the mountains, so has the son of Seaán son of Oilbh Éarus surpassed those of his contemporaries who are sons of unopposed kings.

Prose 10 And Uilliam Būrc has understood that fame is more lasting than treasure, and that to distribute wealth is to amass it; and, since his reputation is as is reported, I myself would advise the noble, valorous hawk not to earn reproach or dissent from a goodly poet, nor especially from myself.

Prose 11 And though I say that, yet it is easy for Uilliam Būrc to escape the dissatisfaction of a single poet, since no solitary person is an army, [and] because if I myself attempted to oppose Uilliam Būrc, the poets and professors of Éire would unite against me; and it is no wonder that they should support Uilliam Būrc for those reasons: since it is he whose hand is strongest, whose heart is bravest, whose mind is most active, and whose honour is greatest.

12 Many proclaim that the heir of Seaán, who refused no man, remembers the honour due to everyone; it is a report that has been circulated.

Prose 9 Agus] oir R; an mhuir . . . *precedes* an ré . . . F; mion(th)strothaibh LR; Oiliberas F; bhfoil] bfuil FLRC; ris] ris fein LDO; gan fhreasabhra] 7 roflath R.

Prose 10 Agus] mar sin R; do mholfuinn FLRCDO; tsheabhach M; dairighthe L, go hairighthe R, go hairidhe DO.

Prose 11 urusda R, furasta OD, furasa C; éirghe] techt R; dhiomdha] oirbire F; ttairginn L, ttairginnsi R; féin] *om.* FR; ollamna R; agus] óir LCDO; dhóibh] sin *add* F; hadhbursi R; cródha] cruaidhe R; is mire inntinn] *om.* R; inntinn] menma F; eineach] *om.* F, conach 7c L, oineach RCDO.

12 a eíneac cáigh F; do chur RCDO, do chuir FL; do] a O; c seain FR, shein L, sheaghain CDO; einfhear] aoinfhear MR, oíneach L, aoineach CDO.

13 Níor sgaoileadh fós d'eineach Uilliam
fa iath nÉireann;
tíocfa dom dhiomdha ar chleith Chualann
cleith a *ch*éimeann.

14 D'éis mo dhiomdha ar mhac Mheic Uilliam
is é a-déaruinn:
'fear a aoisi is *fh*earr i n-aoineing,
an seang séaghuinn'.

15 Ní mholfa meisi barr Baoille
go mbiam roiréidh,
plannda toruidh do choill cheiníl
nár *tho*ill toibhēim.

16 Níor dhiúlt mac mheic Oilibh Éaróis
*fh*ear dhā bhfacaidh;
tearc i nÉirinn aon do eitigh,
is taom tapaidh.

13 Uilliam's honour has not yet been broadcast throughout Éire; from my displeasure with the hero of Cuala will come the concealing of his exploits.

14 After [the assuagement of] my dissatisfaction with Mac Uilliam's son I would say: 'he is the best man of his age in any territory, the slender, distinguished one'.

15 I will not praise the chief of the Baoill until I am quite ready, fruitful plant from his race's wood, who has not [previously] earned reproach.

16 The son of Oilibh Éarus's son has not refused any man whom he has seen; there is hardly any one in Éire whom he has refused, it is a fortunate impulse.

13 *a* Ni F; sgaoil CDO; oinech LDO, aoineach C; *b* eirionn L; *d* chleith R, ceilt MFLCDO; chéimeann] choimheud DO.

14 *b* déaruinn FL; *c* áoineing M, aoneing F, eineing R, einnigh L, eining CDO; *d* saoguin CDO.

15 *a* bar buille F; *b* mbem F, mbim R; *c* chiníl MLRCDO, cineoil F; *d* thuill FLCDO.

16 *a* oiluérois M, oileberuis F, oilberus L, oillbheruis R, oilbheuras C, oilbeurais O, oilbhéiris D; *b* fear FLRCDO.

Prose 12 Et ní tapuidh don cheithearnach do ghoid a mhart ó shagart Fiodhnach: agus mar fríth fios agus faisnéis air, seacht mionna Fiodhnach do thabhairt innte go dtáinig do mhíorbhuilbh Dé agus Caillín naoimh, an tan do bhí sé ag marbhadh in mhairt ina dtug sé na mionna ēithigh, an tráth do chuir sé an tuagh thairis a mhac do bhí aga connmháil dó, gor bhuail sé a gceartlár a aighthe agus a éadain é, gor leig a inchinn ina caobuibh cró tre shinisdribh a chinn agus a cheannmhullaigh, agus do léig in mart amach.

Prose 13 Et ní hamhlaidh so theagmhas don airsigh iorghaile agus don bheithir bheódha bhithaigmhēil .i. Uilliam Būrc an uair théid fa thír a fhoghladh agus a easgarad: acht a gcruidh agus a gceathra, a mbuar agus a mbótháinte do thabhairt leis dá thír agus dá thalamh. Agus tar éis na n-airgtheadh agus na n-éadáladhsó do thabhairt don bhaile, is amhluidh so sgaoileas iad ó chéile .i. a dtabhairt ar eachaibh seanga siobhlacha, agus ar lúireachaibh leabhra lán-daingne, agus ar fhíontaibh daora doicheannaigh, agus ar dhántuibh diamhra doidhéanta.

Prose 12 And it was not fortunate for the soldier who stole his cow from the priest of Fiodhnach; and when he was discovered, he swore the seven oaths of Fiodhnach regarding her so that it came about through the miracles of God and St Caillín, when he was about to kill the cow regarding which he had sworn the false oaths, that, when he raised the axe above his son who was holding her for him, he struck him in the centre of his face and forehead so that he released his brain in bloody lumps through his ears, and he let the cow go.

Prose 13 And not so does it befall the battle veteran and the agile, ever-terrible bear, i.e. Uilliam Būrc, when he goes through the land of his enemies and those hostile to him: rather he takes their herds and their cattle, their stock and their droves of cows to his [own] land and territory. And having taken these plunderings and spoils home, he disperses them in this way: i.e. he exchanges them for slender, swift horses, and for smooth, extremely secure breastplates, and for expensive wines, difficult to buy, and for esoteric poems, difficult to make.

Prose 12 ní tapuidh] is mithapaidh LCDO; cheithearnach] do mhuintir (hu)í mao(i)lghuthairne *add*. LCDO; fríth] do fríthedh L; air] an mhairt R; seacht] 7 seacht LRCDO; mhíorbhuile L, miorbhuilledhuibh CDO; in mhairt] sin *add* F; ina] F *breaks off here*; na mionna] na seacht mionna R; in tráth do chuir sé in tuagh] an tan thuig sé ionnsoigh ag cuir na tuaidhe L, ag cor na tuaighe R; a mhac] amach an tí *add* CDO; aga] ag R; dó] an mhairt ris R; sé ... é] *om*. CDO; gceartlár] cceart clár R; tre] tar R; amach] as R, iar sin *add* L.

Prose 13 ní hamhlaidh so] ní mar sin/so LRCDO; arsig] arsaigh DO, arsoighe C; a ... a] *om*. LR-CDO; gcruidh] ccuid C, ccrodha D, ccro O; mbuar] mbá L; thalamh] féin *add* LRCDO; éis] éais M; nairg(th)e LCDO, an airned R; nédala(cha) sin/so LRCDO; chéile] uile *add* L; a dtabhairt] an tabhair R; seanga] *om*. DO; ar fhíontaibh ... ar dhántaibh *in reverse order* LCDO; lán-daingne M; fionnaibh R.

Prose 14 Et is iongnadh dhamh féin a dtabhraim do theisd agus do t/uarasgbháil ar Uilliam Búrc, agus dar liom féin go bhfuilim diomd/hach dhe; agus is baoghlach do go madh é súgradh in chait ris an lochaidh ar ndála fa dheireadh.

17 Budh í sin ar ndáil fa dheireadh:

dul i rēidhe;

déanta dhúinn, do thol gach taoibhe,

cor re chéile.

18 Fiodh catha do chosg a bhiodhbhadh,

gi bé thíosadh;

tuilleamh m'fheirge nīor dhual dósan,

gruadh nār gríosadh.

19 Uaim, a dh'reagain dhúin na Teamhrach,

nā tuill fhalaidh:

guais duit sgol Éirne agus Oiligh

d'éirge it aghaidh.

20 Mē féin ort i ndiaidh mo dhíomdha

daor an t-urradh;

nā tuill do ghruaidh dhearg do dhonnadh:

m'fhearg go h-ullamh.

Prose 14 And it surprises myself all the praise and [good] repute I give to Uilliam Búrc, when I myself consider that I am dissatisfied with him; and he should beware lest, in the end, our relationship be as the toying of the cat with the mouse.

17 That will be our position in the end: to arrive at an accommodation; with the good will of each party, we should co-operate.

18 Battle-wood for spurning his enemies, whoever should come; it was not natural for him to earn my anger, [he of the] cheek that was not caused to redden.

19 O dragon of the fort of Teamhair, do not earn resentment from me: you are in danger of provoking the poets of Éirne and Oileach against you.

20 In the wake of my dissatisfaction it would be costly for you to obtain me as a guarantor; do not earn the reddening of your rosy cheek: my anger is primed.

Prose 14 dhamh] liom D; ttabhair DO, thugam L; féin] om. R; diomghach] diombuidhech DO; go madh] gurab O; chaitín LCDO; na lochuibh LRCD; ndála] ndáil R.

17 a í] LRCDO, om. M; ndáil] R, ndála MLCDO; b repeated LCDO; dol M; c thoil MLRCO, toil (do om.) D; d repeated CDO; cur LCDO.

18 a Fiodh] DL, Fhedh M, Fedh R, Fiogh CO; do choisg LCDO; a] ar C, air O; bhiodhbha L, biodhbhuidh CO, mbiodhbha D; b gíodh bé LCDO, ge be R; c dosa L; d gruadh] CO, gruaidh MLRD.

19 a dún R; b nā] nír L; c scoil L; d déairge M.

20 Qq. 20 and 21 in reverse order R; b om. D; daor] dion R; an toradh MLCO, an torrath R; c om. D; dhonna LCO; d om. D; go hollamh MLRCO.

21 Muna fhaghar íoc mo dhiomdha
 ód dreich *shaidhbhir*,
 gríosfaidh meisi an súil nglais ngormghlain,
 's an mbais mbairrghil.

22 Íocfaidh béal na mbriathar gcumhra,
 nó an cneas fallán,
 dá raibh m'fhala úr re hUilliam,
 cúl na gcamán.

23 Gríosfuidh meisi, do mhúin fheirge—
 ní hiúl mearbhuil—
 an dtroighidh réidh, snasda, suirghigh,
 ngasda, ngreannmhúir.

Prose 15 Et [is] greannmhur do fhiarfaigh an sagart ó Ghleann Chon Chaidhin do phríomhfháidh na hÉireann an don dá asbal déag Fionn mhac Cumhaill. Et is sultmhar do fhiarfaigh an sagart céadna, agus é ar gceannach leabhuir aifrinn ó cheannuighe sa Srádbhaile, ‘Fa do mhionnuibh anois, a cheannuighe, an é an leabhar aifrinn féin do cheannchas uaid?’ Et ní ar na neithibh saobha sin do ba cóir damh féin aire do bheith

21 If I do not obtain recompense for my displeasure from your wealthy face, I will redden the bright, blue-grey eye and the white-topped hand.

22 If my new-found resentment be directed at Uilliam—hair of the curls—the sweet-worded mouth, or the healthy skin will pay [for it].

23 I will redden, out of anger—no false claim—the smooth, shining, pleasant, agile, gentle foot.

Prose 15 And amusingly did the priest from Gleann Chon Chaidhin enquire of the primate of Éire if Fionn mhac Cumhaill was one of the twelve apostles. And it is funny [how], having purchased a mass-book from a dealer in An Srádbhaile, the same priest asked, ‘On your oaths now, trader, is it really the mass-book that I have bought from you?’ And it is not on those foolish things that my attention should be

21 *a om. D; A muna R; bhaghar MLCO, abhfagham R; diomghuidh R; b d(h)eirc LCDO; c an tsúil LCDO; nglais] om. CDO, ghlas ghormghlan L; d sa bhas bharrgheal L.*

22 *a om. L; íocfa RCO; b om. L; chneas MDO; fallán M, fallan R, f(h)ulláin CDO; c rabh R; d cúil L; gcumann LD, ccomán CO.*

23 *a g(h)ríosfas LCDO; fheairghe M; b mearbhúil LR; c troigh LRCDO; roiréidh R; s(h)uirghe LCDO; d an gnás dá L; ngrean(n)mhar LCDO.*

Prose 15 na hÉireann] arda macha R, airdmhacha agus na heiriinn uile LCDO; don dá asbal déag] dona absdaíl L; do fhiarfaigh] adubhairt R; é] *om. R; ó cheannuighe] om. R; ó cheannuighe sa Srádbhaile] a sráidbhaile dhún(a) dealgain do/ó cheannaigh(th)e dairighthe LCDO; Fa ... uaid] dén air an leabhar a cheannuidhe ar an sagart gurab é an leabhar aifrinn an leabharsa do chennchuis uait R; a cheannuighe ... uaid] ó do cheannaigh me an leabharso uaid an leabhar aifrinn é dariribh LCDO; saobha] no sechránachsa *add R; do ba cóir] do om. RCDO.**

24 acht ar mhac Máire, ó mhúr Chruachan,
charas féile;
do-ghéan moladh do bharr Bhaioille
nach cam céille.

25 Ar Uilliam ní iarrann deōradh
duais dá ndāileann;
mo líog lóghmhar, mo dhéar dhíleann,
tréan nach tráigheann.

26 Mo ghéag chumhra, mo chloch bhuidhe,
gan bhéim mbloidhe;
sgaoiltear leis a chló fán gcruinne,
mo chnú chroidhe.

27 Ar n-éasga lán, ar lá samhraidh,
ar síon thuraidh,
ar gcoill fa bhláth, ar dtrágh thoraidh,
lámh mar Lughaidh.

28 Mh'Eóghan Mór mac Oilill Óluim,
m'Fhionn mac Cumhuill,
mh'ubhall óir, mo chnú ós chrobhuing,
mo Chú Chuluinn.

24 but on Máire's son, from the fort of Cruacha, who loves generosity; I will fashion praise for the chief of the Baoill which will not be perverse in meaning.

25 Uilliam bestows unsolicited gifts on a visiting poet; my precious stone, my flood-tear, warrior who does not fade.

26 My fragrant branch, my precious stone, with no reproach in the matter of renown; he spreads his fame around the world, the kernel of my heart.

27 Our full moon, our summer's day, our dry weather, our blossoming wood, our productive shore, hand like Lughaidh.

28 My Eoghan Mór son of Oilill Óluim, my Fionn son of Cumhall, my golden apple, my topmost nut, my Cú Chuluinn.

24 *a* mhúir L; chrua(i)chna LRCDO; *c* buille R.

25 *a* deóruigh LCDO; *b* dā] ná L, nach R; *c* mo líog lóghmhar] *om.* LCDO, mo bhile cnuais R; *d* dtráigheann M.

26 *a* Mo ghéag chumhra] *om.* LCDO, mo chnú chumhduigh R; buaidh L, bhudha DR, bhudhaigh CO; *c* bhan ccuirne R; *d* repeated LCDO.

27 *om.* R; *b* tuirigh L; *c* bhlaith CDO; tráigh MLCDO.

28 *a* Mh'Eóghan] Eóghain R, meogain L; mac] mhac M, *om.* C; oilioll LC; *b* mhac M; cuibhaill L; *c* criobhing L; *d* chuluinn] RCD, choluin(n) ML, chuluin O.

29 Ar gclár óir tar éis a thilte,
 tí dár dtíthibh;
 ar n-eagna lán ar gach láthair,
 ar ndán díchil.

Prose 16 Et is díthchiollach do mholfuinnsi Uilliam Búrc muna bheith mar tá: agus ní beag nod don eólach.

Prose 17 Agus ní ó eolas adubhairt comharba do chomharbuibh Choluim Chille .i. Māg Niallasaigh agus é ar dteagmháil ar cuairt agus ar cēilidhe i dtigh Í Chonchobhair Shligigh. An uair do iarr Ó Conchobhair airsiomh an t-altughadh do rádha, adubhairt seision, mar nach raibhe oiread an altuighthe do léigheann nō do Laidin aige: ‘Bheirim a bhuidhe re Dia nár fhágaibh Colum Cille an oiread sin d’angh/nāthughadh oruinn!’

30 Oruinn féin is fiacha dlighid
 dol dā mholadh:
 mo chrann seóil, mo bhārc nár blaghadh,
 trácht fa thoradh.

29 Our golden gaming-board after being occupied, one of our targets; our supreme wisdom in every situation, our highest art.

Prose 16 And I would diligently praise Uilliam Búrc were he not as he is: and a hint is sufficient for one in the know.

Prose 17 And it was not knowledgeably that one of the coarbs of Colum Cille, i.e. Māg Niallasaigh, spoke after coming on a visit to the house of Ó Conchubhair of Sligeach. When Ó Conchobhair asked him to say the thanksgiving, he said, because he did not have even enough learning or Latin to say the thanksgiving: ‘I thank God that Colum Cille did not bequeath that much bad custom to us!’

30 It is incumbent on us to proceed to praise him: my sailing-mast, my unsinkable ship, produce-laden shore.

29 *a* orda R; *deis* LRCDO; *b* tí] tigh LCDO; *dar* MLRCDO; *dtíghibh* MC, *ttighthibh* LO, *tithibh* R; *c* ar gach] R; ar *om.* MLCDO; *d* díthchil M, *dithchill* LCDO, *dichill* R.

Prose 16 *dicheallach* R; *do mholfuinnsi féin* LRCDO.

Prose 17 ó] hé LCDO; ní heolach R., *do chomharbuibh]* *om.* L; *Māg Niallasaigh]* *maig gniallasaigh* M, *mac niallgasa* L, *māg niallasa* R, *maig(h) niallusa* CDO; *ar dteagmháil]* *om.* L; *agus ar cēilidhe]* *om.* CDO; *Shligigh]* *om.* L; *airsiomh]* *om.* C, *a(i)r* DLO, *airsion* R; *raibhe]* *raibh* DLR; *altuighthe]* *ailltaigh* L, *altaighe féin* R; *Bheirim]* *beiriom* L, *do bheirim* DR; *bhuidhe]* *bhuigechas* R; *nár]* *nachar* L; *fhág]* *fhágaibh* R.

30 *a* Or(a)m LRCDO; *is]* *om.* L; *dlighidh* MK, *dlighe* LCO, *dligheadh* D; *b* *dul* LRCDO; *c* *blaghadh* MLRCDO; *d* *mo thrácht toraidh* R; *túragh* L, *truaidh* C, *truaigh* D, *thuraigh* O.

31 Déad mar gheilghéis, gruaidh mar dhoighir,
dearc mar bhugha;
sé do gach draoidh róm is rogha
m'ór gan umha.

32 Peadar, doirseóir dhúin na n-aingeal,
urra ar gcabhra,
an bile réidh, craobhlán, cumhra,
aonghrádh mh'anma.

33 Truagh gan Chonn do bheith 'na bheathaidh,
bile Teamhra,
fear ó bhfuighinn ól is umhla,
fa mór meanma. MAIRG

31 Tooth like a white swan, cheek like a flame, eye like a bluebell; he is the choice of every poet before me, my pure gold.

32 Peter, door-keeper of the angels' fortress, the one who is sure to help us, the smooth, fully-branched, fragrant tree, the only love of my soul.

33 Alas that Conn is not alive, tree of Teamhair, a man from whom I used to obtain hospitality and respect, who was large of spirit.

31 *a* gruadh LCO; *b* bhugha] bhudhair L; *c* draoi MLRCO, draoigh D; róm] riamh L, riom CDO; *d* umha Maigr R.

32 *a* doirseir R; dun CDO; *b* ccabhradh O; *c* an] *om*. LCDO; *d* manma mair R.

33 *a* Truaigh LDO; bheatha CO; *b* teamhraigh CDO; *c* bhfaghainn LR, bfagha(i)m CDO; ól] eol L, ór R.

NOTES

1 This quatrain has been printed from mss C and L by Alan Harrison, 'Snéadhbhairdne', *Éigse* 17 (1977–8) 181–96, at 187, and Alan Harrison, *An chrosántacht* (Dublin 1979) 17.

2d For this extended use of *cré* see *Dán na mBráthar Mionúr* ii, 365, and *DIL* C, 512.59–63.

Prose 1 The felling of a cross horse in order to shoe her is a common practice. The humour lies in her inability to rise again due to the weight of her shoes.

Prose 2 The *Í Fhialáin* were one of the families of professional poets associated with Fermanagh and elsewhere in the late medieval period; see Pádraig A. Breatnach, 'The chief's poet', *PRIA* 83 C 3 (1983) 74–6.

For *neamhchaint* cf. the single example cited in *DIL* N, 29.20–21, that occurring in the context of the praise of silence and discretion (*nemhlabhuirt* and *nemhchaint*) in *Ériu* 5 (1911) 130.

7c As ms chumhga (: bhurba *DMhéigUidhir* 18.21) fails to consonate with the finals of lines *b* and *d*, I have emended to a permitted variant (*IGT* iv.9); cf. *IGT* ex. 1004, and *DiD* 54.23.

Prose 4 Baile Locha Luatha is the parish of Ballyloughloe, barony of Clonlonan, Co. Westmeath, patrimony of Clann Amhalghaidh and site of their castle; see O'Donovan's letter in Paul Walsh, *The placenames of Westmeath* (Dublin 1957) 5–7. Ó Dubhda was lord of Tír Fhiachrach in Co. Sligo.

Prose 5 O'Grady (*BMusCat.* i, 113), referring to the present text, notes an apparently idiomatic use of 'an mhaghragall a richt na cloichi fuail' in a scribal comment in

ms Egerton 88, f. 16v; cf. also, from the same manuscript page, noted by O'Grady: 'gerrfa duine éigin in bod i richt na potóigi'.

Prose 7 Corr Boiginnisi is unidentified but must be in Muintear Chionaoith (barony of Drumahaire, Co. Leitrim), the territory of Clann Chon Snámha (cf. *Top. Poems*, line 646). In 1530, Ó Domhnaill is said to have burned the house of Mac Con Snámha—the best wooden house in Ireland—which was located on Loch Allen (*AFM* v, 1398–1400; *AConn.*, 672; *ALC* ii, 272). Corry Island (parish of Inishmagrath, barony of Drumahaire), near the western shore of Loch Allen, might be the place in question. Clann Chon Snámha were an offshoot of the Í Raghallaigh (*Anal. Hib.* 18 (1951) 110).

9b Máire, Uilliam's mother (cf. q. 24a), was daughter of Mac Diarmada, Ruaidhrí mac Taidhg; Nollaig Ó Muraíle, *Leabhar mór na ngenealach* i–v (Dublin 2003) iii, 122 (§ 806.1). Ruaidhrí, mentioned in q. 10a, died in 1568 (*ALC* ii, 396–404).

10a For Ruaidhrí see note to q. 9b.

Prose 8 The catalogue of futilities is a well-established feature in Irish literature. See, for example, those in Douglas Hyde, *Giolla an fhiughha ... Eachtra Cloinne Rígh na h-Ioruaidhe* ITS I (London 1899) 86, and note in Kenneth H. Jackson, *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne* (Dublin 1990) 62 § 53.

12b Note the extra alliteration in this line, and in q. 13b, together with the *conchlann* linking the two quatrains. Such alliteration is also present in qq. 25, 26 and 29, while *breacadh* is in evidence in qq. 27 and 29.

16a In common with other borrowed names, Oil(i)bhéarus can be divided into separately stressed components, and its genitive form can alternate between inflection (*TD* 20.6) and non-inflection (*TD* 17.50).

Prose 12 Fiodhnach is Fenagh, Co. Leitrim, associated with Leabhar Chaillín (RIA ms 479 (23 P 26)). Manuscripts LCDO add that the kern was 'do mhuintir Í Mhaoil Ghuthairne'; the surname O Mulgobery is recorded in the mid seventeenth century in the barony of Rosclogher, Co. Leitrim (Séamus Pender, *A census of Ireland circa 1659* (Dublin 1939) 569).

18ab 'F(h)eadh' M and R is a late representation of *fíodh* (cf. 'Feadh ós feadhaibh', *Butlers* 1865). Line *b* could also be taken as being in apposition to *cd*: 'whatever might happen'.

20b The restoration of *an t-urradh* from mss 'an tor(r)adh' is predicated on the *rudhrach uaitne* of *toradh* - *donnadh* - *ollamh* (*IGT* v.100–105; cf. q. 30c below). To avoid this, *ullamh* (*IGT* ii.118) has to be read in *d*, which in turn suggests that 'toradh' in *b* represents *orradh*, one of the variants of which is *urradh* (*IGT* ii.11), a reading supported by the syntax of *ab*.

21cd These two lines are quoted from L and C in Harrison, *Crosántacht*, 53.

22d Cf. *mar mhuine camán* 'like a cluster of curls', *IBP* 21.31b.

Prose 15 Gleann Chon Chaidhin is Glenconkeyne, a district comprising the parishes of Ballynascreen, Desertmartin and Kilcronaghan, barony of Loughinsholin, Co. Derry; see Gregory Toner, *County Derry I: the Moyola Valley* Place-names of Northern Ireland V (Belfast 1996) 2. Srádbhaile is Dundalk (Srádbhaile Dúna Dealgan).

27d A reference to Lugh Lámhfhada.

29ab The imagery is that of a board-game, for some discussion of which see *TD* ii, 198–9, Eóin MacWhite, 'Early Irish board games', *Éigse* 5 (1945–7) 25–35, H. J. R. Murray, *A history of board-games other than chess* (Oxford 1952) 34–5, 56, 63. For the use of *tilidh* in this context see *TD* ii, 236, and *Aith.D.* ii, 231. Perhaps we should read, against all witnesses, *tí tar títhibh*. For the notion of a

central, superlative position on the gaming-board cf. ‘tú, a rígh Bhredh, ar an tí thall / as fer ar gach tí ad thiomchall’ (*TD* ii, 198); ‘Téid síos go grinníol san ghliaidh / léim ré ttiltior an tí láir’ (*L.Branach* 2165–6).

d ‘dán díchil(l)’ is found elsewhere in Fearghal Óg’s work with the meaning ‘sincere poem’ (*DiD* 38.16). In a poem by Eochaidh Ó hEódhusa *duan díchill* (*DMhéigUidhir* 23.13) appears synonymous with *dán díreach*.

Prose 17 Mág Niallasa(igh) was coarb of Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal; see *AConn.* 674.17, *ALC* ii, 274, and Liam Price, ‘Glencolumbkille, County Donegal, and its early Christian cross-slabs’, *RSAILJn.* 71 (1941) 71–88, at 80–81.

31–3 There is *dúnadh* in these three quatrains.

32–3 Dedications to St Peter and to Conn Ó Ruairc bring the poem to a conclusion: see Ó Macháin, ‘Poems by Fearghal Óg’, 253.

32b Cf. q. 7b above.

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