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AN ELEGY FOR SEAÁN ÓG Ó DOCHARTAIGH

THE poem edited here was composed by Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird to commemorate the death in January 1601 (New Style) of Ó Dochartaigh of Inis Eóghain, Seaán Óg mac Seaáin. His death was noticed by the Four Masters as follows:

O dochartaigh Seon ócc, mac Seaain, mic Feilim, mic concobair carraigh decc, 27. Ianuary ticchearna triochait chéd innsi heóghain eisdhe, ní baí eimh tighearna tríochait céd do ghaidhelaibh ba fearr lámh 7 einech, 7 ro ba crodha comhairle inás. O domhnaill do ghairm í docartaigh dfeilim ócc .i. dearbrathair Sheaaín. Clann Ailin, 7 clann ndaibeitt do breith chathaoir mic Seaain oicc hi cceann gall go doire, 7 an general Sir Henry docura do ghairm í dochartaigh dhe ar ulca la hua ndomhnaill.¹

In *Beatha Aodha Ruaidh Uí Dhomhnaill*, to which the annal entry is partly indebted, Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh recounts how Ó Dochartaigh fell ill and died some time after repulsing an attack from the Derry garrison led by Sir John Chamberlain.² Henry Docwra's account makes it clear that there was a seven-month period between the encounter with Chamberlain at Oileach on 28 June 1600, and the death of Ó Dochartaigh in Tír Conaill in the New Year.³

As noted by the annalists and by Docwra, Seaán Óg's death gave rise to a succession dispute, and such a dispute had also been a feature of his own election, following the death of his father Seaán mac Féilim in 1582. On that occasion the dissension that ensued led to much destruction in Inis Eóghain.⁴ Internecine disagreements such as these are part of the background to the elegy composed by Fearghal Óg, where, as noted below, death caused by *tnúth*—envy betokening disunity—is a major theme.

In addition to problems emanating from within the wider family of the Í Dhochartaigh of Inis Eóghain, the career of Seaán Óg was marked by pressure on him from a number of external sources. Much of what this involved was encapsulated in a description of the state of Ulster dating to 1586.

O'Doghertie's country is a promontory almost environed with the sea, namely, with Lough Swyly on the south, and Lough Foyle on the north. O'Doghertie is forced to contribute both to O'Neyle and O'Doonelle. His country, lying upon the sea and open to the isles of Ila and Jura in Scotland, is almost yearly invaded by the Scots, who take the spoil of it at their

¹AFM vi, 2236.

²Pól Breathnach, *Beatha Aodha Ruaidh Uí Dhomhnaill* i–ii (ed. Colm Ó Lochlainn, London 1948, 1957) i, 286–8.

³Misc. Celt. Soc., 240–41, 248.

⁴AFM v, 1788–90.

pleasures, whereby O'Doghertie is forced always to be at their devotions. He is able to make 60 horsemen and 300 footmen.⁵

Depredations carried out in Inis Eóghain by various groupings of Scots are as much a feature of the nineteen-year tenure of Seaán Óg as Ó Dochartaigh, as they were of his father's reign. In 1581, the year before Seaán Óg's inauguration, Inis Eóghain was reported to have been cessed with Scots.⁶ Five years later the territory was despoiled by a combination of Scots from the Isles and their cousins from the Glynnns,⁷ at a time when Ó Dochartaigh was among those in Dublin submitting to Sir John Perrot and having their lands regranted to them.⁸

In 1588 Seaán Óg had to deal with a different set of visiting seafarers when one of the Armada fleet, *La Trinidad Valencera*, was wrecked off Inis Eóghain in the autumn, and his people were involved in rescuing many of the crew.⁹ Ó Dochartaigh's complicity in the subsequent massacre by the Hovendons of many of the survivors is uncertain, but the Spaniards held a grudge against him and in October he wrote in Latin to the Lord Deputy complaining that his neighbour Mac Suibhne had billeted 3,000 Spaniards on his country.¹⁰

Up to the Nine Years War, the rival claims of Ó Domhnaill and Ó Néill on Ó Dochartaigh required a balancing act that was exploited by the English as they sought to 'bring in' Seaán Óg. In his father's time the Crown had been prepared to allow Toirdhealbhach Luineach Ó Néill to continue his exactions from Ó Dochartaigh as long as Ó Néill could prove that they were established by custom.¹¹ Among the articles propounded to Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill by the Queen's Commissioners in January 1596 (New Style)—articles which he duly ignored—was one insisting that he allow Ó Dochartaigh 'to enjoy his country and lands, according to his letters patent'.¹² Such treatment was designed to win over Ó Dochartaigh, and there are many references in the English sources to the belief in his willingness to co-operate if protection could be guaranteed.¹³

The two- and three-way diplomacy engaged in by Ó Dochartaigh was fraught with peril. An indication of this is that at different times he found himself imprisoned by Ó Domhnaill, and Ó Néill, and the English. In late 1588, in the wake of the Armada affair, the Lord Deputy, Fitzwilliam, took him into custody and he was imprisoned in Dublin Castle, only to be released when the Lord Chancellor, Archbishop Loftus, was bribed with 'certain hogsheads

⁵ *Cal. Carew MSS 1575–1588*, 435.

⁶ *Cal. SP Ire. 1574–1585*, 333.

⁷ *Cal. SP Ire. 1586–1588*, 96, 136, 144, 181; *AFM* v, 1848–50.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 523, 548; *Cal. Carew MSS 1589–1600*, 28; *Fiantis Elizabeth* §§ 5190, 5207. Ó Dochartaigh had gone to Dublin the previous year (1585) to attend Perrot's parliament (*AFM* v, 1828).

⁹ *Cal. SP Ire. 1588–1592*, 35–6; Niall Fallon, *The Armada in Ireland* (London 1978) 129.

¹⁰ *Cal. SP Ire. 1588–1592*, 64, 453.

¹¹ Mary O'Dowd (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Ireland: Tudor period: 1571–1575* (Dublin and London 2000) § 1463 (xvii).

¹² *Cal. Carew MSS 1589–1600*, 161.

¹³ E.g. *Cal. SP Ire. 1592–1596*, 365; *Cal. SP Ire. 1598–1599*, 165, 231, 412–13.

of salmon'.¹⁴ His dealings and correspondence with Fitzwilliam subsequently earned him the displeasure of Ó Domhnaill who kept Seaán Óg captive from 1594–5 'for his too much loyalty to Her Majesty'.¹⁵ Three years later it was Ó Néill's turn to imprison Ó Dochartaigh until he could assure him of his loyalty.¹⁶ Towards the end of the nineties Seaán Óg appears to have attained to a position of trust within Ó Domhnaill's command.¹⁷ Even after he had retreated into Tír Conaill, however, having partly destroyed his chief castle at Oileach by knocking down one of its walls, he continued to parley with the English. It was suggested that he would 'come in' on condition that he could retain his castles and land at a yearly rent, and that he could enjoy 'liberty of conscience'.¹⁸

Learning and Patronage

That the art of bardic poetry could continue to be practised and to receive patronage during the tumult and chaos of the closing decades of the sixteenth century is one of the enigmas of Irish literary history.¹⁹ Such was the case in Inis Eógain where, in addition to sponsorship of poetry and entertainment of poets, commentators have noted a survival of the commonplace phenomenon of manuscript production and circulation. The evidence for this is the Ó Dochartaigh presence in filler items towards the end of the important sixteenth-century Donegal manuscript, Bodleian ms Laud Misc. 615.²⁰ A *comórtas* by 'Ó Dochartaigh' occurs on the lower margin of p. 138, and facing this, on the lower half of p. 139 is a eulogy of, and prayer to, God the Father, inscribed for Ó Dochartaigh by Brian Ó Siaghail, as the latter tells us in a colophon.²¹ On the following page (p. 140) there is a prayer to God the Son, in a similar style, presumably also written for Ó Dochartaigh. This prayer is followed by jottings in different hands, one jotting consisting of part of a quatrain from a poem composed for Aodh Mág Aonghusa (+ 1596 (New Style)) by Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaire.²² The context suggests that the Ó Dochartaigh in question may well have been Seaán Óg.

This interest in learning had been inherited from his father, Seaán mac Féilim. The latter was sufficiently regarded in the matter of patronage to attract

¹⁴AFM v, 1872; *Cal. SP Ire. 1588–1592*, 94, 309.

¹⁵*Cal. SP Ire. 1592–1596*, 246, 308, 342. Seaán Óg had ignored Aodh Ruadh's general summons to a great assembly in 1592 (AFM vi, 1928).

¹⁶*Cal. SP Ire. 1598–1599*, 139.

¹⁷AFM vi, 2084, 2194.

¹⁸*Cal. SP Ire. 1600*, 535.

¹⁹Compare the work of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn produced amid the conflicts in North Connacht, or that of Tuileagna Ó Maoil Chonaire in a similar situation in Laoighis (Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'The hand of Conall Ó Mórdha', *Ossory, Laois and Leinster* 3 (2008) 54–72, at 62).

²⁰Anne O'Sullivan and Máire Herbert, 'The provenance of Laud Misc. 615', *Celtica* 10 (1973) 174–92, at 176. Brian Ó Cuív, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College libraries* i–ii (Dublin 2001) i, 90–92.

²¹'Brian O'Sheyle' is mentioned in a pardon for Niall Garbh Ó Domhnaill in March 1601 (New Style) (*Fiants Elizabeth* § 6483).

²²The only definite instance of Fearghal Óg's hand survives in a *comórtas* in National Library of Scotland ms Adv. 72.1.1, f. 25v, but while not enough of the writing survives to form a worthwhile comparison, superficially at least that entry and the one in Laud Misc. 615 appear to be in different hands.

the attention of the master-poet Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn. A single poem composed by him for Seaán mac Féilim survives. In it Tadhg Dall engages Oileach in a dialogue in which Ó Dochartaigh is identified as the best of his line, Inis Eóghain (*Parthas Éireann* q. 31) as a superlative country, and Oileach itself as a much-frequented resort of visiting poets, where ‘all the delight of Ireland’ (*aoibhnios Éireann* q. 41) is to be found.²³

Tadhg Dall was one such visiting poet, and another was his contemporary Eochaidh Ó hEódhusa, who, possibly trading on Mág Uidhir connections (see note to q. 59b below), composed two surviving poems—still unpublished—in honour of Seaán mac Seaáin. One of these, referred to by James Carney as ‘a formal poem of praise’,²⁴ is of great interest in that, just like Fearghal Óg’s later elegy, it uses the theme of *tnúth* as its premise. The poem begins ‘Díol tnúithe Inis Eóghain’,²⁵ and it describes how that territory has always been the subject of contention ever since Íoth was killed by the three sons of Cearmad who were consumed with *iomthnúdh* ‘jealousy’ (qq. 3–11). Now, however, Seaán mac Seaáin successfully defends it against all attempted incursions (qq. 12–20). Though Inis Eóghain is ostensibly vulnerable because of its border location, in reality, under the protection of Ó Dochartaigh, it is the most secure of territories (qq. 21–9): *creacha* are carried into it and none are taken out of it. His enemies are like the doves who died of terror when they saw the lion’s den (qq. 30–41), so that fear keeps his enemies at bay:

Sgáth fiadha ré bhfaigsin gcon
sgáth ealtan ré n-uaimh leómhan
ré gcrích ráidghil na ggraobh gcuir
’ga náimhdibh san taobh thallain. [q. 41]²⁶

In addition to his fearsome defence of his territory, Ó Dochartaigh’s more refined traits of *báidh deighreachda*, of *fíor flatha*, and of peacefulness unless provoked, also ensure the integrity of Inis Eóghain (qq. 42–9).²⁷ A litany of martial epithets brings the poem to its conclusion.

As so often happens in bardic verse, a less than ideal reality—indicated in this case through the codeword *tnúth*—forms the basis for an ideal portrait of the subject of the poem. In his other surviving poem addressed to Ó Dochartaigh, the poet—styling himself Ó Dochartaigh’s *leathollamh*²⁸ ‘half ollav’—sends what Carney called a ‘thank-you letter’ in appreciation of a visit to Inis Eóghain. The poem begins ‘Maircc fhágghas aighthe carad’,²⁹ and it

²³TD Poem 28.

²⁴James Carney, *The Irish bardic poet* (Dublin 1967) 28.

²⁵National Library of Scotland ms Adv. 72.1.44, ff. 48v–51v; Maynooth ms B 8, pp. 93–6; and TCD ms 1356 (H.4.15), pp. 102–6.

²⁶For this use of *thall* see Pádraig Ó Macháin, ‘The iconography of exile: Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird in Louvain’, in P. Breatnach et al. (ed.), *Léann lámhscríbhinní Lobháin: the Louvain manuscript heritage* (Dublin 2007) 76–111, at 79 n. 12; cf. qq. 9c, 32c and 48a in the edition below.

²⁷Compare Fearghal Óg’s emphasis on the loss of Seaán Óg’s counsel, below qq. 36–7.

²⁸MS *leatholl-*

²⁹RIA ms 90 (24 P 12), pp. 135–40.

mixes loneliness for his patron with a description of the delights that he experienced on his visit. That description accords with the usual summary of activities and hospitalities practiced in Irish houses of the time. To this is added the local detail of sailing and of the views to be seen from the shores and hills of Inis Eóghain. The poem has been eloquently paraphrased by Carney.³⁰

Fearghal Óg's elegy for Seaán Óg mac Seaáin

The historical and literary backgrounds provide a context for Fearghal Óg's elegy, edited below. The argument of the poem is that, following the death of Ó Dochartaigh, *gaisgeadh* 'martial heroism' is no more, and that Seaán Óg's death is due to the envy (*formad, tnúth, iomthnúdh*) of those whom he had surpassed. As a consequence, the people have been dispossessed, the *fian eachtrann* (q. 48) are threatening Ireland, and nature is disturbed following the death of the rightful ruler. The only hope is for the Irish to use the memory of Ó Dochartaigh as an inspiration to revive their fortunes.

I have discussed elsewhere how disunity, dispossession, and the end of heroism form recurring themes in the poetry of Fearghal Óg after 1600.³¹ Disunity is signified by references to envy, this being the only way that a superlative warrior can be brought down. For instance, in his poem addressed to Máire and Mairghréag, daughters (by An Inghean Dubh) of Aodh mac Maghnusa Í Dhomhnaill, dating to c. 1608–11,³² Fearghal Óg refers in the following manner to the four deceased brothers of the women:

Ceithre héigheadha ón Bhóinn bhrais,
ceithre mic d'Aodh mac Maghnais,
cuan dreagan nár dháil a rún,
dháibh nír bh'eagal acht iomthnúdh.³³

The men, according to the poet, remained united in their purpose (*nár dháil a rún*) and therefore only envy could be a threat to them. In the immediate aftermath of Ó Dochartaigh's death, disunity was a particularly topical issue in Tír Conaill and Inis Eóghain, in light of the rivalries between Aodh Ruadh and Niall Garbh Ó Domhnaill, and between Seaán Óg's son and brother, Cathaoir and Féilim Óg, both rivalries encouraged by Docwra's garrison at Derry.

The elegy is also noteworthy for the amount of precedent from tradition (native and foreign) that is adduced throughout in support of every step in the argument. Nearly half of the poem is occupied with supplying examples from history and mythology for the death of *gaisgeadh* (qq. 2–4), for overwhelming grief (qq. 8–11), for death caused by envy (qq. 17–22), and for the use of a dead leader to defeat the enemy (qq. 39–47, 50–51). This display of learning may be construed as a conscious tribute to the learning of Ó Dochartaigh himself and to the learned environment cultivated by him during his lifetime. The poem

³⁰*The Irish bardic poet*, 28–30.

³¹'The iconography of exile', 77–81.

³²Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'The flight of the poets: Eóghan Ruadh and Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird in exile', *Seanchas Ard Mhacha* 21/2–22/1 (2007–2008) 39–58, at 49–50.

³³*Bard. P.* Poem 8.9.

therefore succeeds in bringing together both aspects—*cruas is buga* (q. 36)—of Seaán Óg's rule in Inis Eóghain as testified to by the records of the time, literary and historical.

Caithréim for Seaán Óg: an appendix-poem

The picture, drawn largely from English sources, of Seaán Óg Ó Dochartaigh's career as one of constant pressure from native and foreigner, by land and sea, is balanced by the evidence of a *caithréim* that was composed for him post mortem. The poem begins 'Mór re cuma caithréim ríogh' and survives, unascrbed, in two primary witnesses: British Library Additional ms 40766, ff. 74r–79r, a late seventeenth-century Fermanagh manuscript with Mág Uidhir and Ó Raghallaigh associations;³⁴ and TCD ms 1381 (H.5.9), pp. 55.5–47 (written in reverse), which also has Mág Uidhir and Ó Raghallaigh connections and is of similar date.³⁵ In the latter book the *caithréim* precedes the only surviving copy of Fearghal Óg's elegy. Such is the bareness of the *caithréim*—a list of Ó Dochartaigh's martial accomplishments over fifty-four quatrains without preamble, argument, or other structural ornament—that one must conclude that it and Fearghal Óg's elegy were intended to be complementary poems.

We are accustomed to *caithréime* integrated within poems, as components of elegies or panegyrics. Occasionally, however, such battle-rolls—specialist poems which required much time and effort to compose—occur as an appendix to a poem, sometimes by the same author, sometimes by a collaborator, and invariably characterized by an unadorned functionality such as is in evidence in the Ó Dochartaigh *caithréim*. I have discussed elsewhere the case of one such poem in the Book of Fermoy, that beginning 'Dleaghar cundradh do chomhall'.³⁶ A similar example occurs in the O'Gara Manuscript, the poem beginning 'Rucc an bás báire an einigh', ascribed to Seaán Mac Con Midhe.³⁷ This sixteenth-century elegy has a *dúnadh* after q. 35, and the poem continues thereafter with a *caithréim* which extends for a further 38 quatrains after which, as in the Fermoy text, the *dúnadh* echoes the first line of the poem proper. Another case is the elegy and *caithréim* for Ó Broin, Aodh mac Seaáin († 1579) that are found as poems 17 and 18 in the *Leabhar Branach*, both composed by Fear gan Ainm Mac Eochadha, but both having a separate *dúnadh*.

³⁴*Br. Lib. Cat.* ii, 161–73.

³⁵The poem was copied from ms 1381 by Aodh Ó Dálaigh (TCD ms 1291 (H.1.17) ff. 111–15); he also copied the preceding poem, beginning 'Leachta carad i gCath Briain' (ms 1381, pp. 60–55.4) and mistakenly attributed it to Fearghal Óg (ms 1291, f. 109r). See Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'Poems by Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird', *Celtica* 24 (2003) 252–63, at 260.

³⁶Pádraig Ó Macháin, *Téacs agus údar i bhfilíocht na scol* (Dublin 1998) 12, 36–42. Note also the case of Eochaidh Ó hEódhusa's unpublished elegy on Aodh Mág Uidhir which, in the copies preserved in the Book of the O'Conor Don (ff. 248v–250v) and in the O'Gara Manuscript (pp. 27–9), comes to an end at a point where in other versions a *caithréim* is included (RIA ms 743 (A iv 3) pp. 637–44, and ms 540 (C iv 1) ff. 132v–134v). One presumes that a sixteenth-century *caithréim*, preserved uniquely by Seosamh Ó Longáin, originally accompanied a second, more elaborate poem: Éamonn de hÓir, 'Caithréim Dhonnchaidh mhic Thaidhg Rua Uí Cheallacháin', in Etienne Rynne (ed.), *North Munster Studies: essays in commemoration of Monsignor Michael Moloney* (Limerick 1967) 505–25.

³⁷RIA ms 2 (23 F 16), pp. 73–5.

Much closer to Inis Eóghain, two such pairs of poems occur in RIA ms 475 (24 P 25), the *duanaire* section of which was compiled for Ó Dochartaigh's neighbour, Domhnall Mac Suibhne Fánad, this being a manuscript with strong Ó Maoil Chonaire and Mac an Bhaird connections.³⁸ On p. 141 is the unascribed poem beginning 'Sealbh gan urraidh oighreacht Fhind', an elegy on Mac Suibhne Fánad, Ruaidhrí (+ 1518). This is followed (p. 142a21) by Ruaidhrí's *caithréim*, beginning '[R]achad a ceann sgailti sgél', also unascribed.

On p. 144 occurs a poem ascribed to Fearghal Óg's kinsman, Cú Uladh mac Conchubhair Ruaidh Mheic an Bhaird. This is an elegy for Toirdhealbhach Mac Suibhne and Maolmhuire mac Toirdhealbhaigh, which begins 'Rugadh dá chluithi ar Chloinn tSuibhni'. Immediately following this poem (p. 144b30) is an unascribed *caithréim* for the two men, beginning 'Mór ré chuma caithréim deisi', an opening line that finds an obvious echo in the Ó Dochartaigh *caithréim*. The complementary connection between these two Mac Suibhne poems, and also perhaps the identity of authorship, is indicated by the fact that the *caithréim* has a *dúnadh* which repeats, not its own opening word, but that of the preceding elegy.

There can be little doubt that the *caithréim* that accompanies Fearghal Óg's elegy for Seaán Óg Ó Dochartaigh in TCD ms 1381 is an appendix to that elegy. It is not clear, however, that Fearghal Óg is to be considered the author of the *caithréim*, which has its own *dúnadh* and has no ascription. Nevertheless it bears the same relation to the elegy as do the *caithréime* mentioned above to their accompanying poems.³⁹

Despite its historical and onomastic value, publication of 'Mór re cuma caithréim ríogh' must await a future occasion, as it is too lengthy a piece to be accommodated in this article. Listed in the fifty-four quatrains are raids and escapades extending across Ulster and into Íochtar Connacht. Ó Dochartaigh's vanquished antagonists include Ó Néill, Mac Suibhne, Mac Uibhilín, Ó Conchubhair, Ó hEadhra, Mac Uilliam, and Ó Máille. As is to be expected, the author depicts Ó Dochartaigh as an autonomous and fearless warrior who was prominent in events—such as the killing of Domhnall Ó Domhnaill (1590, q. 17),⁴⁰ the killing of Captain Martin (1595, q. 42),⁴¹ and the killing of Sir Conyers Clifford at Bealach Buidhe during the Battle of the Curlews (1599, qq. 36–7)⁴²—where, according to other sources, his role was not necessarily that of protagonist.

³⁸It contains (p. 152) a short poem by Fearghal Óg for Domhnall Mac Suibhne, beginning 'Ní thréicfe mé Mac Suibhne', the ascription to which (Fearghal Óg mac Fearghail mheic Dhomhnaill Ruaidh Mheic an Bhaird) is the most detailed of all surviving patronymic references to the poet (Ó Macháin, 'Poems by Fearghal Óg', 252).

³⁹Most of the other examples of appendix-poems cited here are found in *duanaireadha*, and perhaps this is an indication that Ó Dochartaigh's elegy and *caithréim* also originated in such a source.

⁴⁰AFM vi, 1890.

⁴¹Breathnach, *Beatha Aodha Ruaidh* i, 104–108.

⁴²Ibid. i, 230.

Editorial remarks

The poem is preserved in a single witness, TCD MS 1381 (H.5.9), pp. 46–38,⁴³ dated to the late seventeenth century. It was written by members of the Ó Raghallaigh family, and the section in question is signed by Seaán Ó Raghallaigh.⁴⁴ Metrical analysis of the tradition represented by the manuscript text reveals six instances of lines wanting syllables (2b, 37c, 50a, 55b, 58ac), five hypermetric lines (11ab, 14d, 23a, 44c), four lines where alliteration is absent (26a, 40a, 43c, 50a), and one case of imperfect rime (40c). The requirement for editorial intrusion in these areas makes it probable that, in addition to the usual orthographical adjustments, intervention is also warranted in other aspects of the text, such as, for example, the area of initial mutations (1d, 2a, 7d, 9b, 21d, 25a, 26c, 30a, 32d, 39a). Square brackets in q. 2ac indicate restoration of words obscured by staining.

Fearghal Óg Mac a[n] Bhaird cct

1. Sgol gan oide an t-ord gaisgidh,
an ríoghraidh ò ríomhaisdin:
fear a n-ollmhaighthi ní fhuil
um theagh gconghairthi gCríomhthain.
2. Mar táid an [sluaghsa um] chríoch gCuinn
do bhádar d'éis Chon gCulainn
ursain [troide] Beann mBoirche
treall gan oide a n-ullmhaighthe.
3. Cú Rí na ruathar mbaoghlach,
do bhí an gaisgeadh géarfhaobhrach,
ar n-éag flatha beann mBearbha,
treall i dtacha a thighearna.

1. The warrior class, the regal company from royal Maisde, are a school without a teacher: the man who trained them is no more about the house of Críomhthan of the warm goblets.

2. As is this host about the land of Conn, [so] were the battle-props of Beanna Boirche without a teacher to train them for some time after the death of Cú Chulainn.

3. After the death of the prince of the hills of Bearbha, Cú Rí of the perilous forays, sharp-edged heroism was for some time in need of its lord.

Heading: author's name preceded by Maltese cross.

1. *c* nullmaighthi; *d* críomhthain

2. *a* chuinn; *b* do] *om*.

⁴³Text written transversely and in reverse. This is a machined pagination. A pencil foliation—17v, 16–15, 14a–14—also occurs.

⁴⁴Described in T. K. Abbott and E. J. Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish manuscripts in the library of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin and London 1921) 236–40.

4. Murchadh mac Briain, bruinne seang,
gaisgeadh Gaoidheal i ngēibheann
do fhágaibh badhbh bionnchuain Bhreagh:
i bhfionnChluain Tarbh do thuitsean.

5. Biaidh, do bhreith cháich leith ar leath,
an gaisgeadh céadna i gcuibhreach
i gcrích fhoirfe an fheóir bhratghloin
choidhche i ndeóidh Í Dhochartaigh.

6. Gaisgeadh Gaoidheal ghuirt na bhFionn
coll gan chnaoi, cairt gan sgríbhionn,
nō is tréad gan bhuachail 'na bhun,
éag í Thuathail dā thurnamh.

7. Airleagadh nach íocfa féin:
rugadh dhínn, dia do thoibhéim,
gach éineang thíre dār thil
le ríge a ghēireann ngaisgidh.

8. Do nós na dTroigheanach thoir—
do bhí an Traoi, iar n-éag Eachtoir,
mar do bhí i ndán fa dheireadh—
clár Dhá Thí do toirbheireadh.

4. Murchadh son of Brian, slender breast, the warrior of the sweet shore of Breagha left the heroism of the Gaoidhil in bondage: he fell in fair Cluain Tarbh.

5. By the unanimous judgement of all, after Ó Dochartaigh that same heroism will be forever in bondage in the mature land of the bright-mantled grass.

6. The heroism of the Gaoidhil of the field of the Finn is a fruitless hazel, a blank manuscript, or a herd untended by a herdsman; the death of Tuathal's heir brings it down.

7. An exaction that he himself will not avenge: every single piece of land that he governed by the rule of his sharp, martial spears has been taken from us—what an injury.

8. As was the case of the Trojans in the east—[when] after the death of Hector, Troy met its fated end—the plain of Dá Thí has been surrendered.

4. *a* sheang

6. *a* ffhionn; *b* chairt; sgríbhinn; *c* bhuachaill; *d* thurniomh

7. *c* thil-; *d* gherreann gaiscidh

8. *d* do thoirbheiredh

9. Conuill Bhreagh mar do bhí an Róimh
d'éis Phoimp, fa pheannaid dobróin;
gan *chomairche* 'gan trian thall
do mhian donnaighthi a ndearnann.

10. Ar an gcorsoin do bhí an bioth
ar ndul d'Alasdair uaibhreach:
lucht ar n-eóil ní hiontaoibh linn
i ndeóidh iompaidh ar Éirinn.

11. Mar do bhí d'éis Eoghain Mhóir
Mumha a-niar fa néall dhobróin,
Leath Cuinn fa néalltuirsí a-noir
mun réaltuirsí fhuinn Fhiachaidh.

12. Abhla croma críche Fáil,
is dhí tanaig a dtogbháil,
tanaig dhí an cuisne do chur,
ní tuirsí í gan adhbhur.

13. Do-bheir don fhuacht a earnach,
oighidh fleisgi fíonTeamhrach:
an *ghoil* i ngiallghlas do gheabh,
fiabhras ar nach foil faoiseamh.

9. The descendants of Conall of Breagha are as Rome was after Pompey: under the torment of grief; yonder territory is without protection due to their bloody hands.

10. Thus was the world after the death of proud Alexander: having turned against Ireland those who guide us are not to be trusted by us.

11. As was Mumha in a haze of grief from west to east after the death of Eóghan Mór, [so] Leath Cuinn is in a gloomy haze from east to west because of this glorious chief of the land of Fiachaidh.

12. It is not a grief without substance: on account of it the drooping apple-trees of the land of Fál have straightened, on account of it frost has settled.

13. The death of the scion of wine-abounding Teamhair gives to the cold its cutting-edge; it has seized the heat [of heroism] in hostage fetters, a fever for which there is no relief.

9. *a bhredh; b ndobróin*

10. *a ccorsin; b alasdair; c neoill; haontaobh; d iompóidh*

11. *a tair éis; b an mhumha; c leith*

12. *b a togbháil; d ádpbur*

13. *c goill; d bfoil*

14. Mar do sgaoil ēagcóir oile
sgotha bruaich na Bóroimhe,
is tōronna thoighe Cuinn,
's doire chnōdhonna ó gConuill,

15. a bhfaighthi, a bhfearoinn chairti,
a gcūirti 's a gclainnmhaicne,
agus sealbh gach aoin d'Ultaibh
do sgaoil dearbh Í Dhochartaigh.

16. Banbha do bheith 'na codchaibh
tug deimhin Í Dhochartaigh,
críoch linnte ar nach luighiodh troid;
gan innte acht fuighiol formoid.

17. Do dhruim fhormaid, amhlaidh so,
do sgaradh clár na Cruachno—
fonn síothmhālla na slat gcuir—
le mac fíochdhāna Fiodhaigh.

18. Fraoch mīleata mac Fiodhaigh,
méad a ghnaoi idir Ghaoidhealaibh—
téid fān réaltain san mBúill mbuig—
a chréachtghuin don tnúidh tānaig.

14, 15. Just as another injustice dispersed the flowers of the banks of the Bóroimhe and the boundaries of the house of Conn and the nut-dark oak-woods of the descendants of Conall, the fate of Ó Dochartaigh has dispersed their meadows, their chartered lands, their courts and their families, and the property of every Ulster person.

16. Ó Dochartaigh's fate has caused Banbha to be fragmented, warm-watered land which strife was not wont to oppress, she is now but jealousy's remnant.

17. In like manner, because of jealousy, the plain of Cruacha—peaceful and splendid land of the planted trees—was divided by the brave and angry son of Fiodhach.

18. Warlike Fraoch son of Fiodhach, such was his fame among the Gaoidhil his death-wound was caused by jealousy, he entered the Búill on account of the jewel.

14. *d* 's] is

15. *b* ccuirthi; 's *a*] *san*

16. *a* cotchaiph; *c* luidhiodh; *d* fuighioll

18. *b* itir ghaoidl-; *c* fon; *san*] *an*

19. Ar aonach Caisil, cian uadh,
mac ríogh Uladh, iúl fionnfhuar—
níor éacht é nārbh eagal dúnn—
do leagadh é tre iomthnúdh.
20. Cormac Con Loingios, laoch Cuilt,
Meadhbh Chruachan na gcreach n-orrdhairc,
mairg fā ráinig rún a fill,
ar thnúdh tāinig a *th*uitim.
21. Bás Conlaoich na gcleas ngoile
tug tnúth sgoile Sgāthuighe;
an ghein shochair ó Bhōinn Bhreagh
do rochair tar dhōigh ndraoidheadh.
22. Ó thús dhomhain, gā dtām dhó,
ar leag an tnúth—tuar iargnó—
riamh san chruine ghéagthruim ghil
ní fhéadfuinn uile a n-áirimh.
23. Ní saoghlach riamh gach ré lán:
do beanadh mar so Sēaán
d'Ēirinn choillghil an chlūimh laig,
a dtoirnimh don tnúidh tānaig.

19. At the assembly of Caiseal, long ago, the son of the King of Ulster, a sobering story, was slain through great jealousy: it was not a deed we should not fear.

20. Meadhbh of Cruacha of the renowned raids, woe to him who was the object of her treacherous design: Cormac Con Loingias, warrior of Colt, his fall was caused by jealousy.

21. The jealousy of Sgáthach's school caused the death of Conlaoch of the heroic feats; the benefactor from the Bóinn of Breagha fell despite the expectation of poets.

22. In summary, I could not fully enumerate all that jealousy (omen of grief) has ever laid low since the earth began, in the bright, heavy-branched world.

23. No full moon ever lasts for long: thus was Seaán taken from bright-wooded Éire of the soft vegetation; their fall was brought about through jealousy.

19. *a* Air; *b* rí; *c* eagail dún

20. *a* *conloingis*; *b* *chruachain*; *noirdhearcc*; *d* *thnúth*

21. *b* *sgathuidhe*; *c* *tshochair*; *d* *do róchar*; *dhraoidheadh*

22. *c* *chruinne*; *d* *fhédfuin*; *anaireamh*

23. *a* *ariamh*; *b* *do bainedh*; *c* *deir*

24. Do bháith a ghaisgeadh gníomh cáigh,
mar bháitheas troimchíoth teannáil;
níor ghuais dā ré acht silleadh súl:
do lingeadh é tre iomthnúdh.

25. Faoi do bhídís ag cur *chath*,
mar thamhna re taobh ndarach;
do dhíoghail síorthnúdh sluagh mBreagh
tre fhíochrún *fhuar* a aithbhear.

26. Ar formad Gaoidheal mbruaigh *Bhreagh*
níor shaor a cholg nā a chaoilshleagh
Ó Dochartaigh do dhún Fhloinn,
nā a rocharcair úr iaroinn;

27. Ó Dochartaigh, díoghbhadh sluaigh,
níor chaillsead air acht éanúair:
níor shaor badhbh airmghéar Uisnigh
saighnéan na n-arm n-éachtaighsin.

28. Níor bheag, muna bheith an t-éag,
a shleagh chorcra 's a chaoilsdéad,
's a bheirt ghliadh d'imdhíon air,
ar fhiadh bhfinnligeal bhFiachaidh.

24. His heroism eclipsed the achievement of everyone else, as a heavy shower extinguishes a fire; the only threat to his reign was jealous eyes: great envy caused his defeat.

25. Under him—like shoots beside an oak-tree—they used to prosecute war; through cold, hostile intent the perpetual envy of the hosts of Breagha avenged his reproach [of them].

26. From the jealousy of the Gaoidhil of the shore of Breagha his sword, or his slender spear, or his cold, iron prison did not save Ó Dochartaigh of Flann's fort;

27. Ó Dochartaigh, destroyer of a host, they only failed him once: the flash of those deadly weapons did not save the sharp-weaponed hero of Uisneach [from jealousy].

28. Were it not for Death, his purple spear and his slender steed and his battle armour would not have been insignificant as protection for him throughout the fair, bright-coloured land of Fiachaidh.

24. *d iomthnúth*

25. *c [sl- cancelled] síorthnuth shl-*

26. *a gaodh-; mbruaigh] sluaigh; bd ná] no; c bhfloinn*

27. *a dioghbha; d néchtachsin*

28. *b shleadh; d bhfinnligeal*

29. Do dheimhnigh airde an fheadha,
do dhearbh muir gan mhaighreadha,
mon-uar do fhaillsigh an t-úr
buadh na n-airmsin ar n-iompūd̃h.

30. I n-ionadh na n-arm n-oile,
a-táid feadh fhóid Iūghoine
airm theinntighe ag tuar gach uilc,
deirgtheine uadh ar adhaint.

31. Airm fhūigfeas an úir gan ioth
lear soillsiodh saighnēan neimhneach;
bheas do nochtdair na neóill
cneas ochtabaidh an aēōir.

32. Na géillsin, mar ghialla cāigh,
ag caoi Sēaáin Óig d'ēanláimh:
a-táid fraisneóill san tír thall
ag sīn an ghlaisreōidh ghobhang.

33. Na hēigneadha is na healta
ag caoi flatha finnBhearta:
nēallchuisne ar gach cuan do chuir
nuall gēarthuirsi ag na gaothaibh.

29. The height of the wood has confirmed, a salmonless sea has asserted, [and] alas the earth has revealed that the power of those weapons has been reversed.

30. Instead of the other weapons, throughout the land of Iúghoine weapons of lightning are presaging every evil: red-hot fire is kindled because of him.

31. Weapons that will leave the soil without grain [are] the multitude of flashes of deadly lightning; the clouds have manifestly revealed the mature-bosomed skin of the sky.

32. Those hostages, like everyone's hostages, are mourning Sēaán Óg in unison: rain-clouds [are held] in yonder territory by weather of imprisoning, fettering-frost.

33. The salmon and the bird-flocks mourn the prince of fair Beart: the winds' cry of bitter grief has driven a freezing fog onto every harbour.

29. *b* gan] ġ; *c* do fhoillsidh an úir; *d* narmsin; niompuidh

30. *a* oile; *b* atá ā feadh; *c* thinntighe; *d* deirgthine; adhairt

31. *b* nimhneach; *c* donochtadar

32. *a* ghiall-; *c* frasneóill; *d* ngobhang

33. *d* gherthuirsi

34. Níor shaoil a chonāch catha,
nīor smuain a reacht ríofhlatha
teacht do re caoileabaidh gclár;
do chaoineaduir so Sëaán.
35. Nī hiongnadh cách dá chaoineadh,
feart seabhuic fhóid fhionnGhaoidheal;
nī lucht aoinfhearta fhuil ann:
an fhuil Ghaoidhealta i ngobhang.
36. Teagasg sīodh, comhuirle chean,
cruas is buga mac Míleadh—
mōr le clár naoighreanta Nēill—
mar lán aoinleabtha iadséin.
37. Nī hē fēin dóibh is doilghe,
do-chuaidh críoch a chomhairle
le láimh ndeirg mbraoinnnsi mBreagh,
na Gaoidhilsí ó leirg Lighean.
38. Each uaibhreach i n-easbhuidh shréin,
nō is táin gan ionnramh iadséin;
dā dhamhna i ndeōir gach Ultaigh
tarla i ndeōidh Í Dhochartaigh.

34. His success in battle never imagined, his royal and princely rule never thought that a slender wooden bed would be his fate; these mourned for Sëaán.

35. No wonder it is lamented by all, the grave of the hawk of the land of the fair Gaoidhil; it is not the contents of a single grave that are in it: the Gaelic race is imprisoned.

36. Teaching peace, advising war, the toughness and gentleness of the sons of Míl: those fill one bed; the bright and beautiful plain of Niall deems it a calamity.

37. It is not he himself who is most grievous to them, these Gaoidhil from the slope of Lighe, [but that] the fulfilling of his counsel has ended with the red hand of the damp isle of Breagha.

38. They are like a highly-strung horse without a bridle, or a herd wandering without direction; after Ó Dochartaigh there are two motives in the tear of every Ulsterman.

34. *c caoilleab- cclair*

36. *a Teaghascc; c chomhuirle; c naoinghreanta; d aonleabtha iadséin*

37. *c ndeirg] om.*

38. *a sraéin; b ionnramh íadsean; d uí*

39. Fa bhrut *chumhadh*, cian ó shoin,
do bhí, treall, mar táid Ultaigh,
tre Shéarlas na dtachar dte,
achadh fēarghlas na Fraingce.
40. Sēarlas Mōr, flaith na bhFrangcach,
airsidh doiligh dīoghaltach,
tug ris ghairm gach fine faoi;
righe re a ainm nī ēadfaoi.
41. Cing Sēarlas, fa saidhbhre i ngart,
fa dheóidh, tar cheann a chumhacht,
do bhearbh an t-éag a anáir,
dearbh nār fhéad a iongabháil.
42. Na hEasbáinnigh, anba an rath,
cinnid ar an gcath bhFrangcach,
déad tirmcheart fār ghēarlas goil,
Sēarlas ar n-imtheacht uathaibh.
43. A séan catha ar gcúl do-chóidh:
do líonadh rē dhoigh ndobróin
Fraingc fhleasgháinneach na dtonn dte,
tre throm Easbáinneach uirthé.

39. A long time ago the grass-green field of France was, for a while, as are the Ulstermen [now], under a mantle of grief because of Charlemagne of the heated battles.

40. Charlemagne, prince of the French, a harsh, avenging veteran, every tribe beneath him summoned his help: his reputation could not be challenged.

41. King Charlemagne, who was richest in generosity, despite his powers Death dissolved his honour in the end, a fate that he could not avoid.

42. The Spaniards—great [their] good fortune—they defeat the French army after Charlemagne has gone from them, perfect dry tooth about which the heat of battle intensely blazed.

43. Her success in battle vanished: beautiful France of the warm waves was filled with pain of grief for him on account of her oppression by Spain.

39. *a bhrat*

40. *a morfhlaithe; c righairm; d fhedfaoi*

41. *a Cinn; ingairt; c do bhear; d ionghabháil*

42. *a heasbainnidh; b fhfrangcach*

43. *b dhoidh; c an fhraingc fhleasgháinneach donn tte*

44. ‘Ó’s ar Shéarlas do bhí ar mbuadh
cuiream,’ ar drong dā dheaghshluagh,
‘röinn a ghealchnámha i gceann chath,
an seang creachmhälla créachtach.’

45. Cinnid Frangcaigh, fíor an dáil,
taisi a dtriatha do thógbháil
is cath do char as a n-ucht:
nīor rath nār ghabh an gríosacht.

46. Do chuirsead i gcomhruidh óir
taisi an airdríogh tre onóir;
brisdior leō ar a lucht cogaidh,
gleó as a n-ucht do fhōgraduir.

47. Na hEasbāinnigh tar a n-ais,
gā dū, acht fillid sluagh Séarlais;
cuirid i ngnáth ortha ar-ís
na comhtha ar chách do chuidrís.

48. Taisi Shēaáin tarla thall,
Easbāinnigh an fhian eachtrann,
gēaga caoimillsi ó chuan Rois,
na Gaoidhilsli sluagh Sēarlais.

44. ‘Since on Charlemagne depended our supremacy,’ said some of his goodly host, ‘let us put his white bones before us at the head of [the] battalions, the slender, deadly one of the noble raids.’

45. The French decide—a matter of record—to exhume the remains of their prince and to do battle relying on them: it was not success that did not take fire.

46. In reverence they placed the remains of the supreme king in a golden coffin; they declared war relying on them, their opponents in war are defeated by them.

47. In short, Charlemagne’s host turn back the Spanish; they impose on them again the conditions they were wont to impose on all.

48. Seaán’s remains lie yonder, [the] Spaniards are the foreign soldiery, Charlemagne’s host are these Gaoidhil, sweet and pleasant scions from the sea of Ros.

44. *a* thserlas; mbúaidh; *c* chatha; *d* an seang

45. *c* chur

46. *a* Do chuirset; *b* airdri

47. *a* Na heaspainnidh tair

48. *b* easpainnidh; *c* coimhmhillsi [*sic*]; *d* shl-

49. Re taisibh Sëaáin, mar soin,
is gluaisde don fhóir Ultóigh
do bhuain fhoghloidheadh tar ais
ó ghormoirear bhruaigh Bhearnois.
50. Do cuireadh sin re séan ngníomh,
deich gcatha um chorp an airdríogh,
mac Fiachrach lēr foibhreadh sleagh,
fā dtoirneadh giallchath Gaoidheal.
51. Tug a m/huintear, meabhair leann,
corp Dhá Thí go hiath Éireann
ó Shliabh chíochdhonn úr Ealpa
na múr síothchorr suaitheanta.
52. Corp Sëaáin Óig, do bhreith bhuaidh,
dob iníomchuir é an athuair;
fān tí do iomchradar ann
do bhí fionnphobal Fréamhann.
53. Néall Sëaáin Óig re hucht gcath
dā bhfaicdís an fhian Ultach,
do budh leó an tsealbh dh'uaim ar-ís:
dearbh nach gan bhuaidh do bheidís.

49. The Ulster troop, therefore, should hurry with Seaán's remains to repel raiders from the green border of the edge of Bearnas.

50. That was successfully prosecuted: ten battles around the corpse of the supreme king, Fiachra's son by whom a spear was tempered, around whom the hostage-host of the Gaoidhil used to bend.

51. His people, we recall, carried Dá Thí's body to the land of Ireland from the fair, dark-peaked Alps of the remarkable, gently-pointed cliffs.

52. To achieve victory, Seaán Óg's corpse should be carried again; the fair people of Fréamhann were subject to the one they carried there.

53. Were the Ulster warriors to behold the vision of Seaán Óg before battle, the property would be theirs to unite again: certainly they would not be without victory.

49. *a* taisi; *c* fhoghloigheadh; *d* bhruaich

50. *a* sin] *om.*; *b* airdríogh; *c* sleadh

51. *a* meaphair linn; *c* shlíaph

52. *a* seáin; *b* iníomchuir; *d* fionnphobal

53. *d* do bhedhdís

54. Féachain annálaidh an fhir,
nō smuaineadh air tre fhísibh,
feirde síol airmghéar na nArt,
nō a mhairbhneall, far-íor, d'amharc.
55. Ar easgcairdibh, re hucht ngleóidh,
beith ag maoidheamh a mhairbhneóill,
tuar aithchēime d'fhuil na nArt,
tuir dār chaithchēile an chrōdhacht.
56. Ursa cothaidh chríche Breagh,
deireadh cogaidh mhac Míleadh,
tús loighe finnsheachta Floinn,
tingheallta Chloinne Conaill;
57. bile cogaidh mhac Míleadh,
barr cumhra chóig ríghthíreadh,
tréanursa gach ghleóidh trēr gheabh,
géarosna 'na dheóidh dáiltéar.
58. Sé céad déag bliadhain beacht linn,
bliadhain oile d'iúl sgríbhinn,
ó ghein Dé go dola í Chuinn;
gan rogha mar é aguinn.

54. The weapon-sharp descendants of the Arts would benefit from examining the man's record, or from meditating on him in dreams, or, alas, from beholding his deathly apparition.

55. It is an omen of revival for the stock of the Arts to be threatening enemies, before battle, with his deathly apparition, pillar to whom bravery was a battle-companion.

56. Supporting pillar of the land of Breagha, rearguard of the sons of Míl, cynosure of the fair line of Flann, prophesied one of Clann Chonaill;

57. battle-tree of the sons of Míl, fragrant blossom of five royal territories, strong pillar of every conflict through which he went, a sharp sigh is released after him.

58. On written evidence we consider that it is precisely sixteen hundred years plus one since the birth of God to the death of the heir of Conn; there is no one like him whom we can choose.

54. *a* andal-; *d* faraor

55. *b* maoidheamhairbhneóill

56. *c* luidhe; *d* tinnghéalta

57. *d* deoigh

58. *a* déag] *om.*; linn] liom; *c* go] *om.*; uí

59. Rí Oiligh na n-eathar noch
 mac Sëaáin, ua Con Chonnacht;
 ar camháir do sgaoidleadh sgor:
 radháigh dhraoidheadh is dhámhsgol. SGOL

59. King of Oileach of the open boats, son of Seaán, grandson of Cú Chonnacht; at dawn a company was dispersed: great hope of poets and poetic schools.

59. *a* Righ; *c* [sgol expuncted] sgor; *d* dhraoidheadh. Followed by scribal signature: Seaan Ó Raghall^a

NOTES

- 2 The manuscript is badly rubbed at this point, and the restoration is speculative.
- 2b Line wants a syllable in manuscript. *gCulainn* instead of *C(h)ulainn* is common in manuscripts, though generally not shown in editions; e.g. ‘ar cháil Con Culainn’ (*TD* 6.16d see *v.l.*), and cf. ‘Cealg Chon cCulainn’ (*Studies* 37 (1948) 319.20a).
- 3 Death of Cú Ruí: R. I. Best, ‘The tragic death of Cúrói mac Dáirí’, *Ériu* 2 (1905) 18–35.
- 4 Death of Murchadh mac Briain: James H. Todd, *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* (London 1867) 195–6.
- 4b Cf. ‘gaisgidh Ghaoideal i ngéibhionn’ in R. B. Breatnach, ‘Elegy on Donal O’Sullivan Beare (+ 1618)’, *Éigse* 7 (1953–4) 162–81, q. 37d.
- 6a *ghuirt*. On the absence of eclipsis cf. ‘scoth Gaoideal Fhóid fhinnFhuinidh’ (*Duanaire Mhéig Uidhir* 22.1b); ‘Imtheacht Gaoideal fhuinn Fhódla’ (*L. Cl. A. Buidhe* Poem 12 line 21); and see *TD* i, p. cv.
- 9a For a note on the use of *Conuill* see Ó Macháin, ‘The iconography of exile’, 110 (24c n.).
- 9d The reference is to the hands of the mourners bleeding through constant clapping in grief; *donnaighthi* may be gen. sg. of unattested *donnughadh*, or a compound of *donn* and *aghaidh* ‘palm of hand’.
- 10c *lucht ar n-eóil*. Or ‘our acquaintances’, perhaps a deliberate ambiguity.
- 10d *iompaoidh* is required for rime: cf. *DDána* 88.10d, *Bard. Synt. Tr.* § 206.20.
- 11ab Both lines hypermetric in manuscript.
- 11a Death of Eóghan Mór: Kenneth Jackson (ed.), *Cath Maighe Léna* (Dublin 1938) 72–3.
- 13a *earnach*. Literally ‘iron’, ‘coulter’ etc. The play on heat and cold in this quatrain is notable.
- 13b *oighidh* could be emended to its masculine variant, *oigheadh*, but the necessary non-lenition following it can be taken as an example of *sléagar* (cf. q. 57a).
- 14a *éagcóir oile*. This may be an allusion to the burning of the Friary of Donegal, 19 September 1601—eight months after Ó Dochartaigh’s death—a casualty of the conflict between Niall Garbh and Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill. In his poem beginning ‘Do bháidh teine Tír Chonaill’ (*DDána* Poem 81) Fearghal Óg addressed this event, depicting it as causing a deluge of grief which overwhelmed Tír Conaill. Note that in a *croisantacht* for Maol Mórdha Mac Suibhne (+ 1581) the settling of the English in Munster is depicted as causing a great flood in the river Maigue (Alan Harrison, *An chrosántacht* (Baile Átha Cliath 1979) 105).

- 15d As Dr Gordon Ó Riain suggests to me, the literal meaning of *dearbh* here (and also possibly in q. 41d), and of *deimhin* in q. 16b, is probably ‘the certainty [of the death] of Ó Dochartaigh’.
- 16d *fuighiol formoid*. See TD ii, 220.
- 17–18 A variant of the legend of the death of Fraoch mac Fiodhaigh (Fréech mac Idaith) is referred to here; the earlier versions are discussed by James Carney (*Studies in Irish literature and history* (Dublin 1955) 1–76) and Donald Meek (‘*Táin Bó Fraíech* and other “Fráech” texts: a study in thematic relationships. Part I’, *CMCS* 7 (Summer 1984) 1–37, and ‘Part II’, 8 (Winter 1984) 65–85). Apart from combining elements of the different versions to represent Fraoch as having died as a result of pursuing a jewel under water, the location of the river Boyle for this episode appears unique to this poem, though sources agree on Roscommon as the general setting.
- 19a *cian uadh*. See R. A. Breatnach, ‘Fadó; Deáthach’, *Éigse* 6 (1948–52) 241–3, at 242, and R. A. Breatnach, ‘Varia etymologica’, *Éigse* 7 (1953–4) 156–61, at 156.
- 19b *mac ríogh Uladh* This suggests Cormac (Con(n) Loingeas) mac Conchubhair, and that this quatrain and q. 20 are to be taken together. The reference to *aonach Caisil* in line *a* goes against this, however, as Cormac died at Bruiden Dá Choca in Westmeath, but perhaps this poem reflects a variant tradition.
- 20 Death of Cormac Con(n) Loingeas: Whitley Stokes, ‘Da Choca’s hostel’, *RC* 21 (1900) 149–65, 312–27, 388–402. The *feall* attributed to Meadhbh consisted of delaying the arrival at the Bruidhean of Cormac’s foster-brother, Fearghus mac Róigh, until it was too late to save Cormac.
- 21 Death of Conlaach: Kuno Meyer, ‘The death of Conla’, *Ériu* 1 (1904) 113–21; J. G. O’Keeffe, ‘Cuchulinn and Conlaech’, *Ériu* 1 (1904) 123–7; A. G. Van Hamel (ed), *Compert Con Culainn and other stories* (Dublin 1933) 11–15.
- 23d *a dtóirnimh* must refer to the demise of both of Ó Dochartaigh and of Ireland.
- 24c *ré*. A deliberate pun, cf. 23a.
- 25d Ó Dochartaigh’s supremacy was seen as a reproach to those beneath him.
- 26a Due to dittography, this line lacks alliteration in the manuscript text; the emendation is speculative.
- 27c Assuming *níor shaor* here and in 26b to be parallel constructions, I take *badhbh*, in its usual, extended sense (cf. q. 4c), as referring to Ó Dochartaigh, and its occurrence in its nominative form as being an instance of *cosg réime* in the context of a prepositional expression (‘ar formad’) implicitly carried forward from q. 26.
29. The theme of the infertility of the earth, and other disturbances of nature, caused by the death of the rightful king, introduced at qq. 12–13, is reprised here. As in q. 12ab, the meaning of the present line is that trees are growing tall, unburdened by the fruit that they would be bearing were Ó Dochartaigh still alive.
- 30d ms ‘adhairt’ possibly represents ‘fhaghairt’, but the context suggests that *adhaint* is what is intended.
- 32 Rain-clouds are envisaged as hostages, held in place by the freezing weather.
- 33b *finnBhearta*. Ó Dochartaigh’s castle at Burt (tld Grange, par. Burt, bar. Inishowen West). See O. Davies and H. P. Swan, ‘The castles of Inishowen’, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 3rd Series, 2 (1939) 178–208, at 188–93.
- 36a More literally: ‘instruction regarding peace-agreements, advice concerning depredations’.
- 37c *ndeirg*. This line wants a syllable in the manuscript, and the supplied word is speculative. The eclipsis on *mBreagh* may be scribal, or it may be an example of ‘dynamic eclipsis’ as exemplified in *IGT* i.81 (‘Ní ghríosfuinn aghaidh mhuinn mbáin’).

- 38c *dá dhamhna*. Ó Dochartaigh's death and the absence of his counsel.
- 39 To date, an exact parallel for this Charlemagne apologue has not been found. The story related here may represent a conflation of elements from the historic exhumation of his remains and their preservation in Aachen Cathedral, and the later tradition of his resurrection that he might take part in the Crusades: see Gaston Paris, *Histoire poétique de Charlemagne* (Paris 1905) 60–63, 427–8; Donald A. Bullough, 'Recycling Charlemagne in the fifteenth century, north and south', *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2003) 389–97, at 391–2. Miracles associated with Charlemagne are detailed in Robert Folz, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'empire germanique médiéval* (Paris 1950) 220, 225.
- 40c Some modification of ms *righairm* is required for internal rime.
- 41a Recte *fa saidhbhre ngart*?
- 41c The suspicion here must be that ms 'do bhearu' is a mistranscription of 'do bhearn', commonly used in the sense of damage or reduction (e.g. *Aith. D* 67.37, *TD* 3.4).
- 41d Or '[it is] certain that he could not avoid it'; see 15d n. above, and cf. 53d.
- 43c Alliteration wanting in manuscript.
- 44c Line hypermetric in manuscript.
- 45d A possible pun here on *ra(i)th* 'fern, bracken'.
- 50a Wants a syllable and alliteration; emendation conjectural.
- 50b Fearghal Óg adduces a native example of the use of royal relics to gain victory in battle. Versions of *Aided Nath Í* vary in the number of battles (nine or ten) won when Nath Í's body was brought back from the Alps (V. Bănăţeanu, 'Die Legende von König Dathí', *ZCP* 18 (1930) 160–88, at 168, 178–80, 184). An Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh states that nine were won on sea and ten on land (Nollaig Ó Muraíle, *Leabhar mór na ngenealach* i–v (Dublin 2003) i, 572 (§ 250.4)).
- 50c *foibhreadh* a form of the verb *fo-beir*, though the related *foighreadh/faighreadh* (< *fo-geir*) is more usual.
- 52c Pun on *fa* 'beneath' and 'subject to'.
- 55b Line wants a syllable in manuscript.
- 58ac Both lines want a syllable in manuscript.
- 59a *Oiligh*. Ó Dochartaigh's principal residence at Elaghmore; see Davies and Swan, 'Castles of Inishowen', 202–4.
- 59b *ua Con Chonnacht*. Cú Chonnacht Comharba Mág Uidhir († 1538), whose daughter Aibhilín was Seaán (mac Féilim) Ó Dochartaigh's second wife, and mother of Seaán Óg (Séamus Pender, 'The O'Clery Book of Genealogies', *Analecta Hibernica* 18 (1951) 17; *Cal. SP Ire. 1600*, 478). Aibhilín was a sister of one of Fearghal Óg's major patrons, Cú Chonnacht Óg Mág Uidhir († 1589), and an aunt of Eochaidh Ó hEódhusa's patron, Aodh Mág Uidhir († 1600).

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