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1NOTES FOR TYPESETTING

Recto running head: VARIA ??; Verso running head: MÍCHEÁL HOYNE

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VARIA ??

Early Modern Irish miscellanea<sup>1</sup>

1 CORRIGENDUM (AD *ÉRIU* LXVI 72–3) AND A NOTE ON *COMPARATIO COMPENDIARIA*

In the course of a discussion of constructions used to express lesser degree in Modern Irish (Hoyne 2016a, 72–3), I made reference to some examples given in *Graiméar Gaeilge na mBráithre Críostaí* of what are in origin possessive copular relative clauses with a comparative/superlative adjective as predicate, such as *an duine ba lú eagla* ‘the person whose fear was least’, that is ‘the least fearful person’. All of the examples given in the *Graiméar* have definite headwords. I remarked, ‘It should be noted that, to my knowledge, sentences of this type cannot contain an object of comparison: \**an duine ba lú eagla ná mé* “the person less fearful than me” is not found’. The statement of this restriction is probably accurate, as far as it goes, but applies only where the headword of such a relative clause is definite. I should have added that *duine ba lú eagla ná mé* ‘a person less fearful than me’ is certainly grammatical. A few examples from authentic texts will suffice to illustrate the grammaticality of such a construction:

- (1) *Do cheanglófaí fear dob fhearr ciall ná é*, ‘It would have enraged a more restrained man than him [more lit. ‘a man whose sense was better than him would have been tied up’]’ (Ó Gaoithín 1970, 35)
- (2) *Ceanglóchthaidhe fear ab fhearr ciall ná ’n t-athair*, ‘It would have enraged a more restrained man than the father’ (Ó Cadhain 1939, 160)
- (3) ... *an bhfaca Sé ina dhúiche féin fear ab fhearr ciall ná Fionn?* ‘... whether He had seen in His own kingdom a wiser man than Fionn?’ (Ó Dónaill 1996, 77–8)
- (4) ...*ná soillseochaidh an ghrian, i gcaitheamh a mhórchúrsa laethamhla indiu, ar thigh is mó leun ná an tigh seo* (Ó Cuirín 1933, 339), translating ‘The sun rises to-day on no more miserable house [here ‘on a house the misery of which is greater than this house’] in all the great round of its daily course’ (Stoker 1897, 288)
- (5) *Ach cé ab fhearr eolas ná é a raibh cáil ó thaobh saighneoireachta dhe bainte amach aige*, ‘But who was more knowledgeable [more lit. ‘whose knowledge was

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Damian McManus, Liam Breatnach and the anonymous reader for *Ériu* for comments and corrections on this article. For comments on the first section, I am grateful to Christina Cleary. My thanks to Seán Ó Coileáin, who pointed out the error in my 2016 paper to me, discussed the matter with me and kindly provided me with Example 1. I thank Eoin Mac Cárthaigh for reading a draft of the second section and making helpful comments. My thanks also to Christopher Lewin for discussing the history of *áo(i)* with me. Translations of all material published without a rendering into English are my own.

better'] than him, who had earned a reputation for seign-fishing?' (Ua Ciarmhaic 2000, 70)

(6) *Ní raibh aon chomhlúadar i mBaile na gCraobh, sea, ná sna seacht mbaile ba ghairé dó, ab fhearr maireachtáil agus ba lú imní ná Máire Uí Riain agus a hiníon*, 'There was no household in Baile na gCraobh, indeed, or in the seven townlands nearest to it, that lived better or had fewer worries [more lit. 'whose living was better and whose worry was less'] than Máire Uí Riain and her daughter' (Ó Concheanainn 1992, 123).

This construction is also well attested in Early Modern Irish:

(7) *go nach raibhe dúil duine ar talmhuin i bhféugmhais Sir Uilliam do b'fhearr inneall ⁊ éuccosg inās*, 'And there was no creature on earth, save only Sir Uilliam, fairer in appearance [more lit. 'whose aspect and appearance was better'] than he' (O'Rahilly 1949, ll 4055–6)

(8) *do chuala mé nach fhuil sa doman mór duine is ferr lámh ná sé*, 'I have heard that there is no-one in the world who is a better fighter [lit. 'that there is no-one in the world whose hand is better'] than him' (O'Rahilly 1962, ll 402–3)<sup>2</sup>

(9) *ní roibh fon chruinne cheathardha ina chomhairsir féin duine ba mó adhmhilleadh agus aimsiughadh draoidheachta agus diabhlaidheachta iná é*, 'there was not in the whole world in his time anyone whose magical and diabolical destructive power and attack was greater than his [lit. 'him']' (Mhac an tSaoi 1946, ll 210–12)

(10) *Ad-bheart an fear don rann thoir nach raibhe rīgh nā ró-fhlaith isin domhan budh fearr dúnadh ⁊ deagh-chathair, budh fearr gal ⁊ gaisgeadh, budh líonmhaire laochradh ⁊ budh lía teaghlach ⁊ trom-thionól ... inā Cuilleann Crúadh-armach*, 'The man of the East said that there wasn't a king or great lord on earth whose compound and noble citadel were better, whose valour and prowess were greater, whose band of warriors was more numerous and whose household and burdensome assembly were more populous ... than Cuilleann Cruadharmach' (Ní Mhuirgheasa 1954, ll 327–35)

(11) *'Is iongnadh duit-si an grá sin do thabhairt damh-sa,' ar Diarmaid, 'tar ceann Fhinn, ⁊ nach bhfuil a nÉirinn fear is mó inmhe mná ná é'* "'It is a wonder that you should give that love to me", said Diarmaid, "instead of to Fionn since there is not in Ireland a man more worthy of a woman [more lit. 'a man whose success with women is greater'] than he"' (Ní Shéaghdha 1976, ll 189–91)

(12) *ni raibe do Ghallaibh na do Ghaidhealaibh do'nd da thaobh-sin en lámh bud mó clú an la-sin aná O Domnaill*, 'there was not of Foreigners or of Gaidhil of the two sides any arm that was of more fame that day than [that of] O'Domnaill' (Hennessy and Mac Carthy 1887–1901, iii, 494–5).

The construction was also available in Middle Irish and probably earlier:

<sup>2</sup> This example is cited in Mac Cana (1966 at 112–13). My thanks to Liam Breatnach for this reference.

(13) *ní fíl nech is lia seóit 7 moíne 7 indmassa andú-sa*, ‘there is no-one who has greater possessions and riches and wealth [more lit. ‘whose possession and riches and wealth is greater’] than I’ (*TBC LL* ll 53–4).

As in Modern Irish, it appears that the earlier language normally allowed an object of comparison in these constructions only when the headword was indefinite.

(14) *Geróit, Iarla Cilli Dara, .i. fer inaid an rígh, an t-en mac goill dob’ ferr 7 bud mó nert 7 clú 7 oirrdercus ... 7 dob’ ferr recht 7 riagail ... d’fhagáil báis Ongtha 7 aithrige a Cill Dara*, ‘Gerald, Earl of Kildare, namely, deputy of the king, the unique Foreigner who was the best and was of most power and fame and estimation ... and was of best right and rule ... died a death of Unction and penance in Kildare’ (Hennessy and Mac Carthy 1887–1901, iii, 506–7).

In Example 14, the headword of *an t-éanmhac Goill budh mó neart* ‘the single Gall whose strength was greatest’ is a definite noun phrase. In keeping with the syntax of comparison by means of copular clauses in Modern Irish, we do not expect an object of comparison here: while *mac is sine ná é* ‘a son who is older than him’ is grammatical, *\*an mac is sine ná é* is not.<sup>3</sup> Once the headword is definite, we are dealing with a superlative clause which does not admit any further comparison. I have, however, one counter example of a definite headword in a construction of this type in Early Modern Irish:

(15) *cuir tu féin go furus le fonn agus le claontaibh na muinntire is lugha céim ioná tu féin*, ‘accommodate yourself to the will and desires of those who are inferior to you [more lit. ‘the people whose rank is less than yours’]’ (Ó Domhnaill 1938, 171).

This example may suggest that it was, indeed, possible for constructions of this type with a definite headword to take an object of comparison. It should be noted that the text in question is a translation, made in 1670, of Francis de Sales’s *L’introduction à la vie dévote*. While the preface claims that the translator, Pilib Ó Raghallaigh, was working from a Latin version of the French original, Robin Flower (1926, 591–2) advances good reasons for believing that Ó Raghallaigh was, in fact, translating from a copy of a now lost English version of *L’introduction* similar to that of the extant 1675 English edition. The phrase corresponding to Ó Raghallaigh’s *an mhuintir is lugha céim ioná tú* is rendered ‘thy inferiours’ in the 1675 edition.<sup>4</sup> We might note earlier in this section of the text, Ó Raghallaigh has *h’uachtaráin* ‘thy superiours’ and (gen.) *na muinntire atá a n-aon chéim leat féin* ‘thy equals’ (both of which are definite noun phrases); he may have been influenced by the latter phrase in particular and felt compelled to stretch the rules of Irish syntax here to capture the definiteness that his original required.<sup>5</sup> An alternative and more convincing explanation has been suggested to me by Damian McManus. *An mhuintear* can sometimes function like a pronoun meaning ‘those who’, ‘they that’, ‘whosoever (pl.)’ or even ‘any who (pl.)’ (*DIL* s.v.

<sup>3</sup> This can be made grammatical by use of a relative clause with the substantive verb, as in *an mac atá níos sine ná é*.

<sup>4</sup> *An introduction to a devout life by Francis Sales; together with a summary of his life, and a collection of his choicest maxims, now added to this last edition* (1675). The English text can be consulted on Early English Books Online at: [http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:image:204214:113](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:204214:113) (accessed 10 October 2017).

<sup>5</sup> The phrase corresponding to *an mhuintir is lugha céim ioná tú* in Ó Raghallaigh’s translation is rendered *d’íochtaráin* in another, independent translation of *L’introduction* probably based on a similar English edition (British Library Egerton 120, p. 161; Flower (1926, 593)). Elsewhere in his translation, Ó Raghallaigh himself has the word *íochtarán* (see, for example, Ó Domhnaill (1938, 258)).

*muintir* (e) and Ó Dónaill 1977, s.v. *muintir*). Despite its grammatical definiteness, *an mhuintear*, when used as a quasi-relative pronoun, may be semantically indefinite, rather like the deictic particle *an té / tí* ‘he who’, ‘whosoever’. If this interpretation is accepted, Example 15 is not, in fact, a genuine counter example to the definiteness restriction set out above.

It will be noted that there is a formal asymmetry in these constructions. In Example 1, for instance, the sense (*ciall*) of one person is being compared, at least formally, to another person rather than to another person’s sense. In Example 1, if we were to re-phrase as a main clause what is historically a relative clause, it would read *\*dob fhearr a chiall ná é*, lit. ‘his sense would be better than **him**’. Similarly, in Example 7, on a formal level, the appearance of a hypothetical person (*dúil duine*) is compared not with the appearance of another person but with the person himself. Again, if we were to rephrase the relative clause in this example as a main clause, we would have *\*dob fhearr a inneall agus a éagosc ionás*, lit. ‘his aspect and appearance were better than **him**’. This form of brachylogy, *comparatio compendiaria*, is easily explicable by the well-attested cross linguistic tendency to avoid repetition. In Example 1, *comparatio compendiaria* avoids the need for a repetitious construction such as *\*fear dob fhearr ciall ná a chiall-san*, and in Example 7, it avoids the iterative *\*dúil duine dob fhearr inneall agus éagosc ioná a inneall agus a éagosc-san*.<sup>6</sup> This syntactical ellipsis, whereby the attribute of the head of the relative clause is compared not with another instance of that attribute but with the possessor(s) of that attribute, obviously does not interfere with the intended meaning in any of these examples. *Comparatio compendiaria* is not confined exclusively to the construction discussed in this note,<sup>7</sup> though it evidently became obligatory in sentences of that type.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> English avoids repetition here by the use of possessive pronouns, for example ‘whose appearance is better than his’. Though Old Irish had a set of stressed possessive pronouns (*muí* ‘mine’, *tuí* ‘yours’, *aí* ‘his, hers, theirs’), these do not survive into Middle Irish, so far as I know, and are rare even in Old Irish (GOI §§443–4). In some circumstances at least, this lack is made up for in Modern Irish by the grammaticalised use of *ceann* (for a singular referent) and *cinn* or *cuid* (for a pl. referent), (as in *mo cheannsa, mo cheann féin*; see *An Foclóir Nua Béarla-Gaeilge* s.v. *mine*<sup>1</sup>, available at: [foclóir.ie/ga/dictionary/ei/mine](http://foclóir.ie/ga/dictionary/ei/mine); accessed 10 October 2017).

<sup>7</sup> For a collection of instances of *comparatio compendiaria* from the Old Irish glosses, see *Thes* i, p. 613 note c, and Havers (1956, 260–1). For some examples of *comparatio compendiaria* outside the Glosses, see ‘*Ní móo mo éolas in-dáthe-si*’ “‘Meine Weisheit ist nicht größer als die eure’” (Meid 2017, ll 52–3) and ‘*Ní-cumcaim*’, *olse* [recte *olsé*]. ‘*Is móo a cumachtae in-dó*.’ “‘Ich kann es nicht’, sagte der. “Ihre Macht ist größer als die meine’” (Meid 2017, l. 140). For an additional Middle Irish example (note also Example 13 above), see *ár is uaisli a hairilliudh fiadh Dia innámne*, ‘for her merit before God is higher than ours’ (Stokes 1890, ll 1329–30). The following example from Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh’s life of Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill is cited (from an earlier edition) in *DIL* s.v. 3 *ol: Ara aoi sin niruo lugha mioscais na nGaidel lasna Gallaibh olltáitte*, ‘yet they [the Burkes] were hated by the English no less than the Irish were’ (Walsh 1948, i, 114–15). *DIL* opines ‘the construction is confused’. In fact, it is perfectly grammatical.

In the following quatrain, we have a particularly interesting Classical Modern Irish example of *comparatio compendiaria*: ‘*Inghean do Choin an chleasraidh / mé, is d’Aoife*, *ar an inghean-soin / ‘Bé Thuinne rinne ‘gá rádh, / sinne, gá truime tochrádh?’* “‘I am the daughter of Cú Chulainn of the feats, and of Aoife,” said the girl; “Bé Thuinne I [more lit. ‘we’] am called; what greater misery [than] I [more lit. ‘we’]?”’ (McManus 2014, 222 = ABM 128.33). As McManus (2014, 222–5) points out, *ioná* ‘could be dropped [in Classical Modern Irish] when the word which would normally follow it is placed first in the phrase’. We could re-phrase the final line of this quatrain as *gá truime tochrádh [ioná] sinne*. Rather than ‘what greater misery than I’, I would suggest the translation ‘what misery is greater than mine?’. Bé Thuinne’s misery is the death of her father; she herself is not the cause of a personal tragedy but one of its victims. Translating ‘mine’ rather than ‘I’ here gives better sense. Formally speaking, a hypothetical misery is here compared with Bé Thuinne, rather than with her misery, but the first person pronoun with *nota augens* (*sinne*) has the sense of *ar dtocráidh-ne* ‘my misery’ or simply ‘mine’. For another Classical Modern Irish example of *comparatio compendiaria* without *ioná*, see *Ní lugha mo bhrón tré Bhrian / Nuadha file meic Mhaicniadh*, ‘My sadness because of the death of Brian is no less than that of Nuadha, poet of the son of Maicnia’ (Hoyne forthcoming, poem 9.47ab).

<sup>8</sup> It may be worth noting here that the conjunction *agus* is associated with the same kind of syntactical brachylogy that we find in *ioná*-clauses such as those discussed in this note. For example, see *isinunn arnét et*

## 2 A DETAIL OF VOWEL SHORTENING IN HIATUS IN CLASSICAL MODERN IRISH

In Giolla Brighde Ó hEódhasa's account of Irish prosody, we find the following rule for vowel shortening in hiatus: *Guthaidhe re nguthaidhe, gearr bhíos murab treff[h]oghrach nō deafhoghrach bhíos fada do shīor é*, 'A vowel in hiatus, it becomes short unless it is a trigraph or digraph that is always long' (GGBM ll 2421–3).<sup>9</sup> As to which digraphs and trigraphs are always long, that is have no short equivalents, Ó hEódhasa has the following: *Bíd na trefhoghraigh uile fada dho shīor, aoi, uai, iai, iu[i], eoi. Atāid deafhoghraigh āirridhe ann bhíos fada do shīor mar tāid so, ao, ua, eu, ia*, 'All the trigraphs are always long (aoi, uai, iai, iui, eói). There are certain digraphs that are always long, viz. ao, ua, eu, ia' (ll 2413–16). Ó hEódhasa then discusses the digraph *ae*: *Mar sin ae, achd ar chuid insgne thú ar an aimsir do lāthair a bpearsain, 'gonae', nō a leithēid*, 'ae is the same [i.e. it is always long], except in the 2 sing. verbal ending in the present tense of a synthetic verbal form, *gonae*, or the like' (ll 2416–17). We can compare the treatment of vowel length in the *Rudimenta Grammaticae Hibernicae*, to which Ó hEódhasa's prosody has become attached:<sup>10</sup> having listed digraphs and trigraphs, the unknown author of this work observes, *Ex diphtongis quatuor, ao, ua, eo [read eu], ia, et triphthongi omnes natura longae sunt; reliquae vero ancipites*, 'Of the digraphs four (ao, ua, eu, ia) are always long, as are all the trigraphs; the remaining [digraphs], however, vary [in length]' (ll 49–50). The *Rudimenta* lists *ae* among the remaining digraphs (ll 41–5).<sup>11</sup>

We are justified in concluding from the foregoing that the authorities cited above were of the opinion that the short *ae* found in the 2nd sing. present indicative verbal ending had a long counterpart *áe*. The latter would be shortened in hiatus following the rule formulated by Ó hEódhasa. Short *-ae* (sometimes spelt *-ai*) was of course pronounced as a schwa in unstressed final position. In the 2nd sing. present indicative verbal ending, it had slender offset and so was followed by the palatal form of the 2nd sing. *nota augens -se/-sa*. Cf. also nom. sing., gen. sing. and nom. pl. of *giollae* (a variant of *giolla*) and *madrae* (a variant of *madra*), where *-ae* / *-ai* clearly has slender offset to judge by following enclitics

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*dia* circa uós 'our jealousy concerning you is the same as God's' (Wb. 17b26), where *ar n-ét ocus Día* represents 'our jealousy and God's' and avoids the repetition entailed in *\*ar n-ét ocus ét Dé*. (*\*ar n-ét ocus Dé* may have been possible in Old Irish also; see O'Brien (1934–8, 241–2)). For Classical Modern Irish examples of brachylogy with *agus* (the first two are cited in *DIL* s.v. 2 *ocus* under 'idiomatic uses' (a), and the fourth I owe to Damian McManus), see *mo dheala agus Rí (: tí) na ríogh* 'my breach with the Lord', lit. 'my breach and the King of Kings' that is, 'mine and the King of Kings' breach'); *mo shíoth agus Rí (: dtí) an ríchidh* 'my peace with the Lord', lit. 'my peace and the King of Heaven' (that is, 'mine and the King of Heaven's peace'); *do chomhthroid 's a gcuraidh* 'the contest between you and their champions', lit. 'your fight and their champions' (that is 'your and their champions' fight'; here end-rhyme confirms nom. pl. *curaidh* rather than gen. *curadh*; see Hoyne forthcoming, poem 3, l. 106 = *ABM* 182, l. 24); *ó ar dteagmháil agus tu-sa*, 'from your and my encounter', lit. 'from our encounter and you' (Mac Cionnaith 1938, poem 80.15c).

<sup>9</sup> Though we might translate *deafhoghrach* as 'diphthong' and *treafhoghrach* as 'triphthong', this is not the sense in which Ó hEódhasa uses these terms. It is important to stress at this point that in discussing particular graphs, I am concerned here with the value assigned to them in the grammatical works under discussion and not with the general usage in manuscripts.

For *IGT* i's teaching on vowel shortening in hiatus, see below. Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn's primer (commonly called *Graiméar í Mhaoil Chonaire*) formulates the rule as follows: *An uair theagmhaid dhá ghuthaidhe re cneas aroile géarr as cóir an cédghuthaidhe dhíbh mās guthaidhe do bhí géarr ariamh íad ...* (GGBM ll 3801–5), 'When two vowels meet, the first of those vowels should be short if they (?) were vowels which were ever short [that is, if the short form of the vowel already existed outside of the context of hiatus]'. This could be taken to mean that vowel shortening will only occur when both vowels in hiatus have short counterparts (see notes to *ABP* ll 875–9). I think it unlikely that this represents Bardic teaching on the matter; such a restriction is not expressed in *IGT* i, the *Rudimenta* or Ó hEódhasa's primer.

<sup>10</sup> See Breatnach (2017).

<sup>11</sup> *Eu* is included in these lists as that digraph is only used to indicate long *é* with broad offset and not short *ea*.

(*IGT* ii, §80 and *SNG* iv, §2.3). More significantly, we may have short *ae* in stressed position in a variant of the noun *ga* ‘spear’, as indicated by the following citation in *deachnadh mhór (brúilingeacht)*: *Mairg do-rinni an gai do ghaibhneacht / do sgailt cridhe an Choimheadh (gai : sgailt)*, ‘Woe to him who forged the spear that pierced the Lord’s heart’ (*ABP* ll 825–8 and notes), where *gai* is apparently another spelling for short *gae*.<sup>12</sup> Presumably then the long equivalent of *ae* also had slender offset.

The modern editorial convention is to normalise *áe* with broad offset to *ao*, *áe(i)* with slender offset and *aí* with slender offset to *aoi*. The graph *ao(i)* first appears in the fifteenth century, but Ó hEódhasa and the author of the *Rudimenta* clearly conceived of *áe* with slender offset in their didactic works as being distinct from *aoi*.<sup>13</sup> It is uncontroversial that *ao(i)* cannot be shortened in hiatus, as it has no short equivalent, but *áe* with slender offset does indeed have a short equivalent and should therefore be subject to shortening in hiatus. This explains why the paradigms of *ga* and *lá* in *IGT* ii, §§81–2 include the variants nom. pl. *gaí* (normalised *gaoi*) / *gáe* and nom. pl./gen. sing. *laí* (normalised *laoi*)/*láe* (see fn. 11). It appears that we have alternation between *áe* and *aoi* in final position in Classical Modern Irish, at least in some words.<sup>14</sup> The *Tracts* do not normally concern themselves with mere differences in spelling; here there is clearly a difference in phonology,<sup>15</sup> which has a bearing on metre. In hiatus, following the rule set out by Ó hEódhasa, the stressed vowel in nom. pl. *na gáe-eód*, for example, would be subject to shortening, while the variant *na gaoi-eód* would not.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, in *IGT* ii, §99, we have the variants *cunntaí* (*cunntaoi*) and *cunntae* ‘county’; this variation is significant as this word has hiatus in oblique case forms.

Unfortunately, I know of no rhyming examples that could confirm my interpretation of the phonology of *aoi* / *áe* variation in Classical Modern Irish,<sup>17</sup> and I acknowledge that, unless a rhyming example comes to light, it cannot be proven. Nonetheless, the rule for vowel shortening in hiatus is readily explicable under my interpretation. *Ao* presumably represents / ə:/ or more probably /e:/ with broad onset and offset in this period, while *aoi* was presumably rendered /i:/ with broad onset and slender offset (*SNG* iv, §2.7). The phonological inventory of Irish in the early modern period did not have a short equivalent of these sounds (in stressed

<sup>12</sup> See Armstrong 1981, 712–13. Armstrong’s objections to the form *sgailt* are moot, as *sgailtidh* is a recognised variant of *sgoiltidh* (*IGT* iii, §71).

*IGT* ii, §81 in 24 P 8 gives nom. sing. *ga, gai*, nom. pl. *ga, gai, gáoi, gáe*, where the spelling *gai* is clearly not for *gaí* (*gaoi*). The version of the same paradigm in C ii 3 gives nom. pl. *ga, gae, gaí, gáe*, where *gae* is clearly a short counterpart to *gáe*. Another copy of the paradigm in the same MS has nom. pl. *ga, gae, gaoi* and *gaí*, where *gaí* is apparently another spelling for *gáe*.

Short *gae/gai* can only have developed after the emergence of stressed monosyllables ending in a short vowel in Irish (Hoynes 2016b, 197). With the loss of final *-th*, Irish acquired a number of monosyllables (such as *caith, flaith, maith*, etc.) ending in *a* + slender offset (see below for the pronunciation of *ae* / *ai* here).

<sup>13</sup> See Ó Riain 2013, 71–6 for a study of relevant spelling conventions.

<sup>14</sup> For the variation *láe/laoi* see also *ABP* ll 207–9 and *GGBM* ll 816–17.

In *IGT* ii, §87, the declension of *cró* has a number of declensional forms in *aí* with hiatus (for example gen. pl. *craíeadh*) but no variants in *áe* are given. The comment *gach inadh a teagaimh dá ghuthaidhe dá chéile and gu gearr as .c. é* ‘every place where two vowels come into contact, it [the stressed vowel] should be short’ appears to suggest *aí* not only can, but should, be shortened (Ó Cuív 1990, 102; McManus 1996, 183 n. 65). See, however, *ABP* note on ll 875–9, where it is suggested that vowel shortening in this paradigm only applies to acc. pl. *crúá* and that the statement in question may be no more than a general rule in which we should perhaps understand a qualification like *bhíos gearr ríamh* after *dá ghuthaidhe*.

<sup>15</sup> One is naturally reminded of the contrast between the modern-day Connacht/Ulster pronunciation of *caoi* ‘way’ and *naoi* ‘nine’ (where the vowel is realised /i:/) and the Munster pronunciation (where the vowel is realised /e:/) (*SNG* vi, §2.9), but it is hazardous to project the precise details of such distinctions onto an earlier period of the language.

<sup>16</sup> That *áe* in *IGT* ii, §§81–2 has slender offset is clear from spellings such as dat. pl. *gáethibh* and *láethibh*.

<sup>17</sup> In a poem of 1165, *Troí* is shortened to *Troi-* in the rhyme *ro-fhial : Tro-fhian* (Ó Cuív 1990, 102; McManus 1996, 183 n. 65).

position) and as such they could not be shortened in hiatus. *IGT* i's comment *Dā mbeath feidhm ar .ae. do leathnug[h]adh, as a n-.a. do rachadh*, 'If there were a need to broaden *ae*, it would become *a'* (*ABP* II 236–7) and the rhyme between *gai* and *sgailt* cited above would suggest a pronunciation /a/ with slender offset for short *ae* in stressed position and /a:/ with slender offset for *áe*.<sup>18</sup> Short *ae* (itself sometimes written *ai*) is apparently distinguished from the digraph *ai* (in the first syllable of *caibidil*, for example) by occurring in absolute final position; long *áe* is normally distinguished from *ái* in the same way. *Áe* (/a:/ with slender offset) does have a short equivalent in the phonological inventory and there is therefore no impediment to its being shortened in hiatus.

Unfortunately, the discussion of vowel shortening in hiatus above does nothing to clear up confusion in our understanding of *IGT* i, §91, a passage which has been discussed thoroughly by Eoin Mac Cárthaigh in *ABP*.

*An tan teagmhuid dā g[h]uthaidhe re cneas a chéile gan c[h]onnsaine eatarra, gearr as cōir an cédghuthaidhe dhíobh mās guthaidhi do b[h]í gearr ríamh é, mur so: 'an la-úd' 7 'an ga-úd'; cōir do chomhardadh; 'an dia-úd' 7 'an t-úa-úd': lochtach d'úathne riú o nach rabhadur gearr ríamh*

'When two vowels meet without a consonant between them, the first of them should be short if it is a vowel that was ever short; for instance, *an la-úd* and *an ga-úd* rhyme correctly [but it would be] incorrect to consonate *an dia-úd* and *an t-úa-úd* with them, since they [i.e. *ía* and *úa*] were never short' (*ABP* II 875–9).

This passage is followed by two metrical examples. The second is unproblematic (883–5):

*Beanfaidh mē siobhal a Seaān  
mun Mac nDé-úd [cōir];  
mun Día-úd lochtach*

'I will make Seaán move  
as regards that Son of God correct;  
as regards that God incorrect'

*Dé-úd* can make *uathne* rhyme with *Seaán* as the *é* of *Dé* is shortened in hiatus; *é* has a short equivalent. *Dia-úd* cannot make *uathne* rhyme, as *ia* has no short equivalent and cannot be shortened in hiatus.

The citation preceding that just discussed (880–2) is more difficult and has been the subject of considerable discussion (see the relevant notes in *ABP*). Two versions of the half-quatrains in question are given, one marked as correct and the other as faulty.

*Bean shídh go ngrúaidh ngnéfháoilidh  
ar chīgh chúain dā cháoi fhēchuin cōir.  
Bean shídh go ngrúaidh ngnéidigh lochtach.*

'A fairy woman with a pretty face  
on a promontory (?) tearfully watching him correct.  
A fairy woman with an ugly face incorrect'

<sup>18</sup> For variation of *aoi* and *ái*, see *faoilidh* / *fáilidh* and *forraoin* / *forráin*. Note also nom. sing. *macáimh* / *macáeimh* (also spelt *macáimh*, that is, normalised *macaoimh*) in *IGT* ii, §112.



In the first version, the *é* of *gnéfháoilidh* will be shortened in hiatus; for *uathne* rhyme, the *áoi* of *cháoi fhéchuin* must also be shortened. *Aoi*, however, has no short equivalent and should resist shortening here. Despite this the citation is marked as correct. We have seen that normalised *aoi* in final position can (under certain circumstances, at least) undergo shortening in hiatus. If, to use the orthographical distinction employed elsewhere in *IGT* i, *caoi* had a variant *cáe*, this example would indeed be metrical.<sup>19</sup> This explanation would account for the use of the label *.c.* here.<sup>20</sup> However, only *caí* is given in *IGT* ii, §99, though the same section distinguishes between *cunntaí* (*cunntaoi*) and *cunntae*.<sup>21</sup> There is an additional difficulty with this explanation of the use of the label *.c.* here: if the vowel of *caoi* can be shortened in hiatus in the first version of the half-quatrain for rhyme, there is no reason why it could not be shortened in the second. In that case, the *uathne bhrisde* rhyme *ngnéidigh : cháoi fhéchuin* should be perfectly acceptable.<sup>22</sup>

I can offer no solution to these problems. Mac Cárthaigh suggests that the fact that the use of the adj. *éidigh* ‘ugly’ here indicates that the second version of this half-quatrain was indeed designed to indicate faulty usage (and that we cannot, therefore, emend away the label *.l.*), as we might expect a fairy woman to be fair-faced rather than ugly.<sup>23</sup> As Mac Cárthaigh observes (see especially *ABP* note on l. 243), absurdity is often used to underline the rejection of a given citation on more material grounds. Given that the woman is crying, however, it is perhaps to be expected that her countenance should be distorted. In fact, the first version of the quatrain may be the more absurd iteration as there the fairy woman is described as *gnéfháoilidh*, which Mac Cárthaigh renders ‘pretty’, though *fáoilidh* normally means ‘joyful’. There seems to be some absurdity about a weeping woman being described as ‘joyful of face’. While I hope to have clarified a detail of vowel shortening in hiatus in this note, the difficulties of this passage in *IGT* i remain.

### 3 ÁOI TRASGARTHA

*Áoi* (or *ai*) *trasgartha* (or *trasgairthe*) is mentioned three times in Classical Modern Irish didactic works—once in *BST* and twice in Bonaventura Ó hEódhasa’s treatise on Irish prosody.

*Áoi trasgartha* is introduced in *BST* 221.25–222.3 in the course of a discussion of *dúnadh* (metrical closure of a poem). As is clear from the discussion there, however, *áoi trasgartha* is of relevance not only to *dúnadh* but also to *rudhrach* (the fault of excessive rhyme).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> That normalised *aoi* could sometimes be shortened has already been suggested as a solution to this difficulty (McManus 1996, 183 n. 65). Incidentally, I do not believe that the shortening of normalised *aoi* has to do with *áoi trasgartha* (Armstrong 1981, 712–13), for which see the following varium.

<sup>20</sup> Another explanation, proposed by Eoin Mac Cárthaigh in *ABP*, is that, following Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn’s primer (see fn. 8), the vowel of *gné-* is not shortened here, as the following vowel (*aoi*) has no short equivalent. Following that interpretation, this example is correct as no vowel shortening occurs in either *ngnéfháoilidh* or *cháoi fhéchuin*.

<sup>21</sup> In MSS, the spellings *cáe(i)* and *caí* (from the fifteenth century also *caoi*) ‘weeping’ are found (see, for example, *IGT* iii, exx 121, 508, 852). Such orthographical variation may not be probative, however. Cf. *IGT* ii, §87 where alone it may be suggested that oblique forms of *cró* in *-aí(-)* are to be shortened in hiatus, though no variation with *-áe(-)* is noted (fn. 12 above).

<sup>22</sup> McManus (1996, 183 n. 65) suggested that the rhyme *ngnéidigh : cháoi fhéchuin* ‘is rejected presumably because of its second *é*, which would rhyme rather than consonate with the *é* of *cháoi fhéchuin*’. This correspondence, however, is only found in one syllable, and it is probably insufficient to render the consonance faulty here. Cf., for example, *uathne* between *tegmála* and *chopána* (v. 3), *gelPádraig* and *bannálaib[h]*, *corrshálaib[h]* and *glasánuigh* (v. 13) in a poem in the same metre (*brúilingeacht* of *casbhairdne*) (*ABM* poem 237).

<sup>23</sup> Gen. *sídh* functions as a vaguely laudatory adjective and need not mean literally ‘fairy’ here.

<sup>24</sup> For variants, see *BST* 12b and 42b. Most of this passage is translated by McKenna; I supply an English rendering of 221.25–6 and 221.31–3. I have also added letters (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) to ease reference

*Gach focal gearr bhías a n-óir, as ceart dó beith a n-amharcholl áoi trasgartha mur tá so: ‘coill’ nó ‘troigh’.*

- (a) *‘Ní ghoir fear dá bfoil a mBoirinn  
teagh do thoigh gan fhoirinn óir’ .c. ón rughrach*
- (b) *‘Treisi a Dhé mhóir ar Mhoire  
go mbé gun óigh m’athloidhe’ ‘Áoidhe mo chroidhe ceann Briain’ an tosach.*
- (c) *‘Ón bhróig áluinn as úr troigh.  
dún go lámhuinn óig an fhir  
créd ón aird do-chínn gá choin  
nach foil go sgín Taidhg um thigh’ .c. ón rughrach.*
- (d) *‘Rug ó Dáire Bhealaigh Broin  
dá choin áilli a ndeaghaidh doimh’ .c. mur sin.*
- (e) *‘Na Goill tar sál a n-airc úaidh  
clár dar fhúaigh níor sgailt nír sgáoil’ ‘Goill do chuir fhear d’fhécain néll’ an  
tosach.*

‘Every short stressed word in *oi*,<sup>25</sup> it may be *amharcholl*<sup>26</sup> *áoi trasgartha*, as in *coill* or *troigh*.

- (a) “No man in Boireann calls a house a house which has not a gold chess-set”  
correct as regards *rudhrach*<sup>27</sup>
- (b) “May my repose (?) with the Virgin have ever more influence on Mary, O great God”  
The poem begins *Áoidhe mo chroidhe ceann Briain*<sup>28</sup>
- (c) “[Everything] from the beautiful shoe of the swift foot to the new glove of the man [comes] to me; from the attentiveness I used to observe in his dog (?), what besides Tadhg’s knife is not to be found in my house?”  
correct as regards *rudhrach*<sup>29</sup>
- (d) “The scion of Dáire of Bealach Broin seized [read ‘brought’?] two beautiful hounds after an ox.”  
correct in the same way<sup>30</sup>
- (e) “The Goill overseas are held in strait by him; no land which he united has ever split or separated [from him].”

to the citations. For a study of *dúnadh* in Bardic poetry, see Ní Dhomhnaill (1981).

<sup>25</sup> That is, every stressed word in short *-oi-*.

<sup>26</sup> For the *amharchuill* (graphs in *a-*), see Ó Riain (2013, 71–6).

<sup>27</sup> The metre is *séadnadh*. This is the second couplet of a quatrain. Here *rudhrach* would presumably be caused by the presence of *ghoir* in the first line of the half-quatrain, in addition to the internal rhyme *bfoil* : *thoigh*, were it not for *áoi trasgartha*.

<sup>28</sup> This is presumably the famous poem in *deibhidhe* by Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe (Williams 1980, poem 13) composed c. 1260. This particular half-quatrain is preserved only in *BST* and is edited as quatrain 80cd by Williams (see his note on those lines) with a lacuna at 80ab. While it may seem curious that this half-quatrain is not preserved in any of the eight manuscript copies of the poem itself, it must be remembered that the quatrain from which these lines were excerpted was evidently an *iargcomharc* or supplementary quatrain, and such quatrains, being ancillary to the main poem, were occasionally ignored in copying. Note that the final quatrain of the poem, an *iargcomharc* on Brigit, is preserved in only one copy of the eight manuscripts and omitted in all the others.

The idea here is that due to *áoi trasgartha* the *-oidhe* of *athloidhe* forms a *dúnadh* with *áoidhe*, the first word of the poem.

<sup>29</sup> The finals of lines *a* (here *troigh*) and *c* (here *choin*) should make *uaithe* (consonance) rather than full rhyme in *rannaigheacht mhór*.

<sup>30</sup> The final of the first line of the half-quatrain (*Broin*) should make *uaithe* rather than full rhyme with the final of the second line of the half-quatrain (*doimh*) in *rannaigheacht mhór*.

The poem begins *Goill do chuir fhear d'fhéacain néall*.<sup>31</sup>

Unusually, Lambert McKenna, whose notes to *BST* represent a major contribution to scholarship on Classical Modern Irish, provides little in the way of commentary on *BST* 221.25–222.3 and no definition of *áoi trasgartha* is attempted.

In Bonaventura Ó hEódhasa's treatise on prosody, in a discussion of faults in poetry, there is a passing reference to the doctrine elaborated at greater length in *BST* concerning monosyllables in *-oi-* and *rudhrach*.

*Saoraidh foghar aoi trasgairthe oi gearr aoinshiolla ar rughrach* (GGBC II 2858–9).  
'The sound of *aoi trasgairthe* saves short monosyllabic *oi* from *rudhrach*.'<sup>32</sup>

Earlier in Ó hEódhasa's work, in his treatment of the type of loose rhyme known as *amas* (heterosyllabic rhyme, usually with identity of vowel-sound between two corresponding syllables), we read

*Cuirthear oi s[h]ínidh ghirr 7 ai a n-aghaidh a chéile ar uairibh mar tā 'troigh' 7 'flaith'. Asé do-bheir sin, foghar ai bhíos ag oi annsin. 'Aoi trasgairthi' do-bheirid na seinfhilidh air sin. Gidheadh dob éidir 'ai trasgairthi' dho thabhuirt uirre* (GGBC II 2607–12).

'Sometimes short *oi* and *ai* are paired together [in *amas*-rhyme], as in *troigh* and *flaith*. The reason for this is that *oi* has the sound of *ai* there. The old poets call that *aoi trasgairthe*. However, it can be called *ai trasgairthe*.'

Ó hEódhasa justifies here the occasional pairing of *oi* and *ai* in *amas* rhyme, which requires *foghar ionann do bheith ag na guthaidhibh* 'the vowels having the same sound', with the observation that *-oi-* in *troigh* can have the value of *-ai-*.

The only attempt to explain *áoi* (or *ai*) *trasgartha* (or *trasgairthe*) known to me is that by John Armstrong (1981, 712–13), who (not unreasonably) believed that the term described some phonological distinction. He suspected that the *oi* subject to *áoi trasgartha* was in some way pronounced differently from standard *oi*.<sup>33</sup> I wish here to propose an alternative explanation of *áoi trasgartha*, which I believe better accounts for the evidence of *BST* and Ó hEódhasa's treatise and does not require any revision of our understanding of the phonology of Classical Modern Irish.

The discussion of this topic in *BST* opens with two examples of words in *oi* which may have *áoi trasgartha*, viz. *coill* 'wood' (Old and Middle Irish *caill*) and *troigh* 'foot' (Old Irish and Middle Irish *traig*). In citation (a), the seemingly excessive rhyme is caused by *goir*, conjunct 3rd sing. present indicative of *goiridh* (earlier *gairid*). In (c) the potential *rudhrach*

<sup>31</sup> Another poem in *rannaigheacht mhór*. The idea is that owing to *áoi trasgartha*, the *-gaoil* of *sgaoil* forms a *dúnadh* with *Goill*.

<sup>32</sup> As indicated by citation (b), *BST* does not confine *áoi trasgartha* to monosyllables, though that instance does not concern *rudhrach*.

<sup>33</sup> Having introduced the evidence of the three passages quoted above, Armstrong, who translates the term *áoi trasgartha* as 'subverted *aoi*', writes:

'All three passages indicate that the vowel in question has a broad onset and a slender offset, and a core that is short, and that is somehow like that of *aoi* (= *ai* or possibly *aéi*), somehow also like that of *oi* (and the last also *ai*, but none [*sic?*] *ui*), yet different from that of ordinary *oi*—or in other words, in all probability, a core that is short, non-high and non-rounded, either, of what is already established in the inventory, *a* as in *ai* or *e* as in *ae*. The last passage obviously identifies it as the former, but this may well be a matter of inaccuracy or misunderstanding.'

Armstrong then goes on to discuss the rhyme *gai* : *sgailt* (*ABP* II 825–8 and notes), which he wrongly takes to be a rhyme between *gai* (*gae*) and *sgoilt* (see fn. 10 above), the latter word having *áoi trasgartha*.

is between *troigh* (earlier *traig*) and *choin*, while in (d) we have *Broin* (earlier *Brain*) : *doimh* (earlier *daim*). In all of three cases of apparent *rudhrach*, an awareness that *oi* in certain monosyllables and the stressed syllable of some polysyllabic words was earlier spelt (and, of course, realised) *ai* explains why the fault of excessive rhyme is avoided. The shift from *ai* to *oi* in stressed syllables in some words was already underway in the Early Irish period;<sup>34</sup> this development is seen not only in Middle Irish spellings such as *oidche* (for earlier *aidche*) but also in rhymes such as *Ailill* : *sobind*, where, despite the conservative orthography, *ai* in the stressed syllable is to be understood as representing *oi* (SNG iii, §3.4). Conservatism in this regard persisted into the Early Modern Irish period, and it is probably not until the fifteenth century, a period in which a more progressive orthographical system firmly established itself, that spelling *ai* for *oi* becomes unusual.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, we should, of course, recall that, in addition to their own conservatism in certain orthographical matters, Early Modern Irish literati were involved in copying and studying Old and Middle Irish literature, and therefore would have had an understanding of the orthographical conventions of the earlier period. In the case of citations (a), (c) and (d) in the passage from *BST* quoted above, we have three words with *áoi* (or *ai*) *trasgartha*, which I would translate as ‘vanquished *ai*’, that is, three words now spelt with *oi* but formerly spelt with *ai*. Following the earlier spelling convention in each instance, *rudhrach* is not visible: *gair* does not appear to rhyme with *foil* and *toigh*, nor does *traig* appear to rhyme with *coin* nor *daim* with *Broin* (or *Brain* with *doimh*). None of the words subject to *áoi trasgartha* is given a variant form in *ai* in *IGT*,<sup>36</sup> and it appears, therefore, that *ai trasgartha* is an issue of orthography and not phonology.

This explanation is also supported by citations (b) and (e), which concern *dúnadh*. In (b), *athloidhe* (apparently *ath-* + the verbal noun *loighe*, cleverly rendered ‘repose’ by McKenna), rhyming with *Moire* also forms a *dúnadh* with *áoidhe*. *Loighe* (variants *luighe* and *lighe*)<sup>37</sup> is the Early Modern Irish outcome of Middle Irish *laige*. Prior to the fifteenth century, which saw the introduction of the graph *áoi*, the stressed vowel of *áoidhe* would most commonly be spelt *aí*. The doctrine that *athloidhe* and *áoidhe* can form a *dúnadh* is only explicable if one bears earlier orthographical conventions in mind: the conservative spellings *athlaidhe* and *áidhe* provide a satisfying visual *dúnadh* where the more progressive spellings *athloidhe* and *áoidhe* do not. Similarly, in (e), the *dúnadh* between *Goill* and *sgáoil* is to be explained by reference to the earlier spellings *Gaill* and *sgaíl*. Again *Gaill* is not a permitted variant of the nom. pl. of *Gall* in Classical Modern Irish;<sup>38</sup> we are dealing here with a graphic similarity under an earlier spelling convention and not with any phonological variation. Indeed, the end-rhyme *Moire* : *athloidhe* in (b) proves this point: the *ai trasgartha* of *loidhe* must have been pronounced *oi* here to fulfil the metrical requirements of end-rhyme and

<sup>34</sup> Stressed *a* in Old Irish was occasionally raised to *o* or *u* after a labial or before a dental (for instance *muig*, dat. of *mag*), though *ai* is more usual and this change does not occur at all in some words. The shift of stressed *ai* > *oi* (sometimes *ui*) in these environments later spreads to some other words also. See O’Rahilly (1946, 151–3).

<sup>35</sup> For conservative spellings where *ai* represents *oi* in fourteenth-century manuscripts, see (from Book of Magauran; McKenna 1947) *taige* (for *toighe*) : *ngloine* (poem 1.1), *taighi* : *oili* (1.3), *sair* (for *soir*) (5.8), *chaidhchi* : *aidhchi* (for *choidche* : *oidhche*) (26.4), *mintraig* (for *míontroigh*) (30.35); (from the Book of Í Mhaine) *glaine* : *eili* (for *gloine* : *oile*) (ABM 345.71), *aile* (for *oile*) (ABM 13.18, 23), *craidhe* (for *croidhe*) (ABM 345.62), *laige* (for *loighe*) (ABM 445.18); (from *IGT* v) *braisi* : *aite* (for *broise* : *oide*) (§5), and (with *ae* for *ai*) *caelltibh* (§149) (cf. *raebhi* : *baili* in §143 for the use of *ae* for *ai*).

<sup>36</sup> For *coill* and *troigh*, see *IGT* ii §191. For *doimh*, gen. sing. of *damh*, see §74. All finite forms of *goiridh* are in *-oi-* (see *IGT* iii, §59). Note that there are many other words in which we do find variants in *-oi-* and *-ai-* in Bardic poetry, for example *doighre* / *daighre* (*IGT* ii, §2), *coibhthe* / *caibhthe* (§3), *goibhneadh* / *gaibhneadh* (§11), etc.

<sup>37</sup> *IGT* ii, §2 and iii, §74.

<sup>38</sup> *IGT* ii, §74.

(through the license of *ai trasgartha*) to form a *dúnadh* with the first word of the poem.<sup>39</sup> It could, of course, be countered that Bonaventura Ó hEódhasa's use of the word *foghar* 'sound' or 'sound-value' in reference to *ai trasgartha* suggests a genuine phonological distinction. The evidence of the metrical examples in *BST* would suggest that Ó hEódhasa's use of *foghar* is not to be taken literally: in a word subject to *ai trasgartha* such as *troigh*, *oi* was felt to have the sound-value of *ai* though it was in fact realised as *oi*.<sup>40</sup>

It is important to note that *ai trasgartha* appears only to apply to words earlier spelt with *ai* despite the ambiguous wording of *BST* (*Gach focal gearr bhías a n-óir* 'every short stressed word in *oi*'). There is no evidence that *coin* (Old Irish and Middle Irish *coin*) (see citations (c) and (d)), for instance, was subject to *ai trasgartha*. No doubt the examples which immediately follow the introduction of the term *ai trasgartha* in *BST* (*coill* < *caill* and *troigh* < *traig*) were intended to confine the discussion to words which had undergone the shift *ai* > *oi* and did not retain variants in both *-ai-* and *-oi-* but only forms in *-oi-*. The point at hand would probably have been clear to the intended readers of *BST*.

I would suggest that the original term for this phenomenon was *ai trasgartha* (or *trasgairthe*), where *amharcholl ai* was understood to stand for a historical short stressed *ai* which had become *oi* and also for *aí* (later spelt *áoi*). This concept was created by Classical Modern Irish prosodists, perhaps in the fifteenth century (the period to which most of the grammatical tracts in their current form can be dated) to account for apparent examples of *rudhrach* and obscure instances of *dúnadh* in the work of earlier master-poets such as the thirteenth-century poet Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe, and the strange-seeming rule that *ai* and *oi* could sometimes correspond in *amas*. These divergences from expected usage in the work of earlier masters were brought about by developments in Early Modern Irish orthography (the general acceptance of progressive spellings such as *troigh* for earlier *traig* and the innovative graph *áoi* for earlier *aí*), developments which had to be taken into account in manuals of Classical Modern Irish language and prosody, the elucidation of which was based on assiduous study of the work of earlier generations of master-poets (see McManus 2004).

#### 4 A RHYMING EXAMPLE OF NOM. PL. *DEE* 'GODS' IN CLASSICAL MODERN IRISH

Carey (2012, 40 n. 43) lists examples of nom./acc. pl. *dee* and gen. pl. *deeadh* in Classical Modern Irish poetry. Syllable-count is sufficient to confirm hiatus in all these instances. Two of the examples listed are in rhyming position. Of course, rhyming examples are of particular importance in establishing with certainty the form of a given word. In Ó Donnchadha (1931, poem 23.18 (*deibhidhe* metre, *dán díreach*)), we have the *rinn airdrinn*-rhyme *Bregh : ndéeadh*; in gen. pl. *déeadh* only the gen. pl. ending *-eadh* participates in the rhyme. In McKenna 1939–40, poem 57.7 (*aoi fhreislighe* metre, in which looser end-rhymes are the norm), nom. pl. *dée* appears to rhyme with *aéar* 'air'.

*AoinDia uile cumhachtach,  
an triúrsa is ní trí dée;  
air nír cheisd a gcruthachadh*

<sup>39</sup> The first vowel in *luighe* has probably not been reduced to a schwa in this new compound and is rather under secondary stress (see Armstrong 1981). One could, of course, read *Muire : athluighe* for end-rhyme, but *ai trasgartha* only applies to *oi* and not to *ui*. Reading *athluighe* would spoil the *dúnadh*. Such well-chosen examples are indicative of the care taken in the compilation of the Classical Modern Irish grammatical and metrical tracts.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. similar issues of phonology and orthography arise in the case of *-ll-* (< *-ln-*). Damian McManus (2014, 215–16) draws attention, for example, to a citation in *IGT* §61 in which *áilne*, which rhymes as *áille*, nonetheless forms a *dúnadh* (with *Neart*) as *áilne*; for the purpose of rhyme, *áilne* scans as *áille*, but is read as *áilne* for closure.

*an talamh 's an t-a-éur.*

While loose end-rhymes will suffice in a poem in this metre, 7b *dée* : 7d *a-éur* does not fulfil the most basic requirement of even broken rhyme between homosyllabic rhyming words, namely, identity in vowel-length in corresponding syllables. As the rhyme stands, the short second vowel of *dée* corresponds to the long second vowel of *a-éur*. For broken rhyme, we would expect *dée* to be paired with a disyllabic word in which both syllables are short,<sup>41</sup> but *aéur* has no such variant form (see *IGT* ii, §§35 and 42). If this rhyme is genuine, we must posit the extraordinary form nom. pl. \**deé*.<sup>42</sup>

The quatrain in question and that immediately following are connected by the idea of the creation of the four elements: air, earth, fire and water.<sup>43</sup>

*AoinDia uile cumhachtach,  
an triúrsa is ní trí dée;  
air nír cheisd a gcruthachadh  
an talamh 's an t-a-éur.*

*Níor cheist ort, a Dhúilimhse,  
dealbh ai-eoir agus uisge;  
do na ceithre dúilibhse  
do-róine tusa duine.*

‘These three are all one powerful God,<sup>44</sup> not three gods; ’twas easy for Him to create the earth and the Heavens.’

‘Easy for Thee, O Creator,<sup>45</sup> to form the air and the water; of those four elements Thou madest man.’

It will be noted that the poet has only mentioned three of the four elements—air (7d, 8b), earth (7d) and water (8b). Air is mentioned twice and fire not at all. I suggest that 7d *an t-aéur* is a mistake for *an teine* ‘fire’. The corruption in the sole MS witness (‘An Leabhar Breac’, RIA MS 23 P 16, 200) is easily explicable: both *an teine* and *an talamh* begin *ant-* as presented in MS orthography, and *an t-aéur* might seem the more natural candidate to be paired with *an talamh* ‘the earth’. Reading *an teine* in 7d gives us a satisfactory broken rhyme with 7b *dée* and has the added advantage (though this is not obligatory in this metre) of providing alliteration, as well as supplying the missing element.

MÍCHEÁL HOYNE

<sup>41</sup> Though the first vowel is often marked long in MSS, *é* will regularly be shortened when followed by another vowel in hiatus in Classical Modern Irish.

<sup>42</sup> Carey (2012, 40–1) registers the spellings *dée*, *dee* and *deé* in Bedell’s Old Testament. No significance can be attached to the spelling *deé* here as the placement of length-marks over vowels in printed Irish literature in this period is unreliable (see Ó Cuív 1994, 19–23).

<sup>43</sup> For the four elements, see *DIL* s.v. 1 *dúil* (b). See also *Teine agus cré, uisge is aieor* in McKenna (1931, poem 1.38). My thanks to Damian McManus for this example.

<sup>44</sup> McKenna’s translation is somewhat awkward here. Read ‘they are one all-powerful God’. That *uile* is not compounded to *cumhachtach* is clear from syllable-count, but adverbial *uile* may probably precede *cumhachtach* without forming a compound with it (see *GOI* §384, McLaughlin 2010, 77 and McLaughlin 2012, 172).

<sup>45</sup> One could perhaps translate ‘O dear Creator’ to capture the sense of the proximal demonstrative suffix here (*SNG* iv, §9.4).

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ABP	E. Mac Cárthaigh, <i>The art of Bardic Poetry: a new edition of Irish Grammatical Tracts I</i> (Dublin 2014).
BST	L. McKenna, <i>Bardic Syntactical Tracts</i> (Dublin, 1944).
GGBM	P. Mac Aogáin, <i>Graiméir Ghaeilge na mBráthar Mionúr</i> (Dublin 1968).

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