

EARLY MODERN TECHNICAL VERSE FROM NLI G 3 (II)

Comhardadh cionnas is cóir¹ represents the second in a series of technical poems being edited for the first time from the fourteenth-century manuscript NLI G 3 (ff. 76vb1-77vb5).² It gives an account of the rules of rhyme in terms of consonant classes and vowels. The technical terms used (*cláenaidh*, *brísidh*) indicate that the author is concerned with the metrical faults known as *cláen comharuidh* and *brisiudh/brúilingeacht*, which are dealt with in IGT V (§§2, 4, 5).³ These faults arise when rhyming consonants are not of the same quality or of the same class respectively. The metrical ornament known as consonance (*uaitne*) is also mentioned and the piece is accordingly concerned with a further fault, termed in IGT V (§3) *cláen uaitne*, occurring where the quality of the final consonant or consonants in consonating end-words is not identical. Additional items of terminology employed include: (1) the phrases *téid i n-ísle/ji n-airde* (*lit.* goes downwards/upwards) which advert to palatal and velar vowels (14*d*, 15*ab*) as do the adjectives *íseall* ‘low’ (17*b*, 19*f*) and, probably also, *comhard* ‘equally high’ (13*d*, 20*d*). This is a usage which I have not encountered elsewhere;⁴ (2) the adjective *teann* ‘strong’ in the sense ‘unlenited’ (4*c* and *n.*, 6*b*) and not restricted in use to the fortis consonants (class *ll*). Further instances of this usage are attested in IGT V and the poem discussed in the next paragraph. See also notes on the terms *snaidhm gaídhilge agus a glas* (1*c*), *coll comhlán* (6*b*), *ruis rogharbh* (7*b*), *comhthrom* (7*d*), *coimhtheann* (7*d*), *séimhidhe* (8*a*),

¹ I am grateful to Professor Pádraig A. Breatnach and an anonymous reader for comments on this article.

² For the first in the series, including an account of the manuscript and conventions followed in the transcription, see Ó Riain (2008a); here the end of a line in the manuscript is indicated by ‘//’. A copy of the present poem in TCD H 1. 15 (1289) 623-4 has no independent value. Verse 4 was published with translation in Ó Cuív (1983a) 10; vv. 14-19 were printed without translation, but with some suggested emendations, in Armstrong (1981) 708 n. 7. The piece has also been transcribed in McManus and Ó Raghallaigh (2010) no. 113 where the following misreadings occur: *dho* for *dhó* (3*b*), [Da?] for *Tri* (11*a*), ‘e’ for ‘c.’ (11*c*), *mad* for *ínad* (13*d*), ‘C.’ omitted (13*d*), *inlan* for *imlan* (15*b*), *Iifin* for *ifin* (16*e*), *emancholl* for *hemancholl* (19*f*); 16*a-d* appear in the following form owing to misplacement of a run-on (n. k in transcription below): ‘Ailm. fen .onn. u. ebhadh leo/uillin[n] [sic] ua ifin nemo/ebad ea is ifin .iu./fa [aen?]reim’; letters which are presented in square brackets and, in all but one instance, are accompanied by a question mark at 2*b*, 2*c*, 3*c*, 4*c*, 5*b*, 10*c*, 16*d* are fully legible in the manuscript; in addition, lenition marks are either added or not reproduced at 1*b*, 3*d*, 6*c*, 9*d*, 12*a*.

³ The verb *brísidh* (1*d*, 2*c*) appears to be used in the sense of causing imperfect rhyme by not employing corresponding consonant classes and is accordingly equivalent to the term *comhardadh briste* used in GGBM 2587-91, 3574-81. However, in IGT V, the term *brisiudh* is specifically concerned with a single consonant rhyming with a consonant cluster, whereas imperfect rhyme is denoted by the term *brúilingeacht*. Forms of *briseadh* appear to be used in both senses in the poem beginning *Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh*, see Breatnach 1941, 37 q. 2*c* and 46 q. 50.

⁴ Elsewhere the adjectives *íseal* and *ard* are applied to plurals of nouns ending in a vowel which may either be identical to the nom. sing. (*íseal*), e.g. *bogha dhearga* ‘red bows’, or take dental inflection (*ard*), e.g. *boghadha dearga*, see IGT I §§18, 84 and GGBM 834-53.

comhard (13d), *cur fá seach* (14a) and *ionad, car* and *port* (13d, 14c, 15c) below.

Comhardadh cionnas is cóir may be compared to a longer composition on rhyme beginning *Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh* which was edited by R. A. Breatnach in *Éigse* 3 and which is found only in late copies (RIA 23 N 12 (488), 108-12; Maynooth M 49, 192-7).⁵ An attribution is lacking in the older copy, 23 N 12, but in M 49 the poem is attributed, perhaps questionably, to ‘Gofraídh Fionn Mac an Bháird’.⁶ The initial section of that poem (qq. 3-7) treats of the same subject as verses 4-12 of *Comhardadh cionnas is cóir* and in both the consonants are listed according to their classes. However, the remainder of *Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh* deals with consonant clusters and the effects of adjacent consonants on one another. None of this finds mention in *Comhardadh cionnas is cóir*, the remainder of which is instead concerned with vowels.⁷ *Comhardadh cionnas is cóir* has, in fact, fared unfavourably in a comparison between it and *Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh* made by Brian Ó Cuív who criticised it for being superficial.⁸ It may be presumed that both poems were composed with a pedagogical purpose in mind. However, we cannot know what stage of instruction the intended recipient of our poem had attained to and the ‘superficial’ nature of the piece, if it is to be regarded as such, may therefore have been intentional.

Comhardadh cionnas is cóir concludes with an internal attribution to Tadhg Ó hUiginn (v. 20). Since the manuscript was penned in the first half of the fourteenth century, he may be identified as one or other of two poets of that name with an obit in the fourteenth century. The first died in 1315 and is described in the Annals of Connacht as ‘a general master of all arts connected with poetry’ (*sai chotchend cech cerdi da mbenand re filidecht*).⁹ He may be taken to be one and the same as Tadhg Mór Ó hUiginn, author of two poems on Brian Mág Shamhradháin (d. 1298) and one each in praise of

⁵ Ed. Breatnach (1941); cf. also a copy in RIA 12 O 7 (1258), 23-6 (John O’Daly). The copy in Maynooth M 49 was not known to the editor. RIA 23 N 12 was written by Mícheál (mac Peadair) Ó Longáin around 1763 and Maynooth M 49 was written primarily by Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin between 1818 and 1820, *RIA Cat.* Fasc. 11, 1313-19 and Ó Fiannachta (1965) 95-7. Note that 23 N 12 was ‘in Mícheál Óg’s possession at least as late as 1817’ (*RIA Cat.* 1314) and contains a note by him dated to 1833.

⁶ Other ascriptions to a Gofraídh Fionn Mac an Bháird will be found in: (1) RIA 3 B 9 (73), 273 (*Diombáidh triall ó thulchaibh Fáil*, ed. Murphy 1948, 11-13), (2) RIA F VI 2 (253), 208 (*Éisidh, a éigse Bhanbha, re hiomráidh na healadhna*, Ó Raghallaigh 1938, 12-19) and (3) NLI G 127 (Richard Tipper), 316 (*Fán ráith imrid aicme Ír*), cf. also RIA 23 Q 1 (570) (Edward O’Reilly). (1) and (2) were penned by Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin and these poems are attributed to different authors in other MSS (see Murphy, 10 and *RIA Cat.* Index Vol. I, 230 and 262); (3) is given to Gofraídh Mac an Bháird in RIA E IV 3 (11), 59 and Gofraídh mac Briain Meic an Bháird in Stonyhurst A ii 20 (Vol. II), 89; cf. *AithdD.* Vol. I p. xxix.

⁷ Although vowels are not discussed in *Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh*, the term *claoín* [sic] is mentioned in the final quatrain: *Gibé do leanfadh air sin, / a gclaoín (clain MS) is a mbrisde i nduanaibh, / tearc doná[ch] cobhair cheana’ sa leath-so ghabhaid feadha.* ‘Whoever would pursue that [enquiry], the incorrectness and breaking of rimes in poems, few there are who would not be helped ...’ (Breatnach 1941, 47 q. 53).

⁸ Ó Cuív (1983a) 10.

⁹ AC s.a. 1315.22.

Fionnghuala inghean Í Chonchobhair (d. 1310) and Maghnas Ó Conchobhair (d. 1293); the latter piece is quoted from in IGT V.¹⁰ The alternative is Tadhg (mac Giolla Cholúim) Ó hUiginn, ‘a worthy ollav and a charitable’ (*ollam dingbala re dan 7 re daennacht*), who passed away in 1391 and is possibly to be identified as the author of a eulogy in honour of Niall Mág Shamhradháin (d. 1362) beginning *Fadógh ar gríosaigh gnaoi Néill*.¹¹ The present piece ranks, therefore, among the earliest datable grammatical material from the classical period and reveals an early involvement of the Ó hUiginn family with such material.

The metre is *ógláchas* of *deibhidhe* with perfect end-rhyme throughout. Fifteen couplets are of the type known as *deibide nguillnech* where end-rhyme is between words of the same syllabic length (3*ab*, 5*ab*, 9*ab*, 10*ab*, 11*ab*, 12*ab*, 13*ab*, 14*ab*, 15*cd*, 16*abef*, 17*ab*, 18*ab*, 19*ab*, 20*ab*). In two couplets (4*cd*, 10*cd*) the final word in the second line is more than one syllable longer than that in the first. Alliteration occurs in all but four lines (3*c*, 8*d*, 9*c*, 20*a*).¹² Internal rhyme occurs in 14*cd*; other instances, all but two in opening couplets, may be considered incidental, arising from repetition of the same word (5*ab*, 7*ab*, 14*ab*, 15*ab*, 16*ab*, *cd*, 17*cd*, 18*cd*).¹³ Imperfect rhymes occur in 8*cd*, 11*cd*, 12*cd*, 13*cd* and assonance in 5*cd*, 6*cd* and 7*cd*. Two verses (16, 18) consist of eight and six lines respectively;¹⁴ while v. 16 might have been divided into two quatrains, it is not so divided in the MS and this arrangement has not been altered.

The structure of the poem is most interesting in that it has been divided into two separate sections by means of a *dúnadh*, the first dealing with consonant classes, the second with vowels and diphthongs. The introductory verses (1-3) anticipate the second section, showing that this division is authorial and both the first and second *dúnadh* are indicated in the MS.¹⁵ The order in which the sections are presented, first the consonants, second the vowels, agrees with that suggested by line 1*d* (*créad bhriseas nó créad chláenas*), where *bhriseas* has reference to consonant groups and *chláenas* to consonant quality as indicated

¹⁰ *Mag.* no. 2 and 4 (beg. *D’uaislibh taoiseach Banbha Brian* and *A fhir táinig re tásg mBriain*); *DDána* no. 114 and 98 (beg. *Slán fat fholcadh* and *Gach éan mar a adhbha*). On the identity of the author see *TD* II 320-1 and Simms (1998) 246. For the quotation see Ó Ríain (2008b). Simms (2010) 197 suggests that he may also be the author of the poem beginning *Bean ós mhnáibh cáich Cailleach Dé* (*AithdD.* no. 1). The poem *An deimhin a-nos teacht don tairngire?* for Tadhg Ó Conchobhair (d. 1374) (*AithdD.* no. 4) is attributed to ‘Tadhg Mór’ in IGT II 1163 and ‘Ó hUiginn’ in UCD-OFM A 32, f. 1r, but is given to Seaán Mór Ó Clumháin and Tadhg Mór Ó Cobhthaigh in RIA A IV 3 (743) and RIA 23 H 8 (703) respectively.

¹¹ *AC* s.a. 1391.7. *Mag.* no. 30. See *TD* II 320. Compare also Simms (1998) 249 and 257 n. 90.

¹² In 10*c* alliteration between *fhiodh* and *fhichid* does not conform to the rule that the penultimate word in a line must alliterate, for which see Mhág Craith (1969). Alliteration may be taken to be between *g* and radical *ng* in 11*d*, see Ó Ríain (2008a) 36 n 9.

¹³ The rhyming of a word with itself was, of course, regarded as a fault; see IGT V §8.

¹⁴ Compare Knott (1957) 20.

¹⁵ For other instances of poems arguably divided into sections by a *dúnadh* see: *Madh fiafraidheach budhfeasach*, McKenna (1947) 69 q. 28; *Gach éan mar a adhbha*, *DDána* no. 98 v. 9; *Eire trom trillse Saidhbhe*, *Mag.* no. 16; *Créchtach sin clann chais Chormaic*, O’Grady (1929) 123 v. 37; *Fada mé ar mearughadh sligheadh*, Ó Cuív (1950) 286 l. 24.

by the accompanying vowel. It will be noted, however, that this order is reversed in v. 2 in an instance of chiasmus. The reversed order is reflected in the mention of vowels in v. 3, followed by the section dealing with the consonants (4-12). In the second section, the vowels are listed according to whether or not they are non-palatal (16) or palatal (17-18). The presentation of them represents an instance of double chiasmus in that non-palatal and palatal vowels are mentioned in that order in 14*d* and 15*cd*, but in the reverse order in 15*ab*.

A critical edition, transcription of the MS text, translation, notes and an appendix are presented below. In the normalised text the spelling *ao* has not been adopted for reasons which will be apparent from the discussion of graphs beginning with *a* in the appendix. Vowels in certain unstressed words have not been altered (see 3*c* n.).

EDITION

1. Comhardadh cionnas is cóir?
ceisd is fhiarfaighthe d'oghmóir;
snaidhm gáidhilde agus a glas
créad bhriseas nó créad chláenas.
2. Guthaighe chláenas go cóir
an comhardadh i gcéadóir;
bristear aghaidh i n-aghaidh
comhardadh ag consanaibh.
3. Áenghuthaighe is í fa dhó
is amhlaidh is dligheadh dó,
bidh cláen ach[t] mineb eadh raibh
a dhó aghaidh i n-aghaidh.

1. 'How is rhyme correctly made?' is a question which should be asked of a scholar, what causes the binding of pronunciation and its clasp to be imperfect and what causes it to be incorrect?
2. Fittingly vowels make rhyme incorrect at once; consonants corresponding to one another make rhyme imperfect.
3. The same vowel occurring twice, thus is it (*sc.* rhyme) proper, it will be incorrect unless there are two (*sc.* identical vowels) as counterparts.

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1. Comardudh cindas is// cóir
cesd asfhiarfaigh//thi dogmhoir
snaidhm// gaidhilde agusaglas
craed// briseas nocraed claenas//
 2. Guthaichi chlaenas go// cóir
incomardudh .a.c.oír//
bristear agaidh inaghaid//
comardudh agconsanaibh//
 3. Aenguthaighi isi fadho//
isamlaidh isdligheadh dhó//
bidh cláen ach mine beadh// raibh
adho aghaidh inaghaid

4. Innéasad romham im ro[nn]
riaghail consaineadh gcomhthrom:
 beithe teann, duir theann, gort glan,
 triar ón comhthrom comhardadh.
5. Fearn, tinne go n-uath mar áen,
coll go n-uath an treas re [a] dtáebh;
 ní uil ag soil ach[t] sí féin
 do chomhardadh fá choimhréim.
6. Triúr ag beithe bhogtha bhán
tinne theann is coll comhlán,
 trí feadha nach fríoth go sé
 gan bheith comhthrom re [a] chéile.
7. Muin teann, nion teann, — ní treóir bhalbh —
luis teann, ngéadar, ruis rogharbh,
 cúig consaine ceann i gceann
 i[n] neoch is comhthrom coimhtheann.

4. I will relate below in my quatrain a rule of matching consonants: unlenited *b*, unlenited *d*, clear *g* are three owing to which rhyme is balanced.
5. *F* [and] lenited *t* together, lenited *c* is the third one along with them; *s* has only itself to rhyme with as an equal (*lit.* in the same course).
6. Bright *p*, unlenited *t* and complete *c* have three, three letters which have not as yet been found not to correspond to one another.
7. Unlenited *m*, *nn* – it is no unarticulated guidance – *ll*, *ng*, *rr*: five consonants together which are matching [and] equally strong.

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4. INnesaíd romom imro...//
 ^ariaghail con^a //safnead comtrom
 .b.teand// .d.teand .g.glan
 triar// oncomtrom comardad//
 5. .F.tindi gon.h. maraen//
 .c.gon.h. intreas retaeb//
 ní uíl agsoil ach si fen//
 do comardudh^b facomrem//
 [77ra]
 6. Triur ig.p.bhan
 .t.teand// iscoll comhlan
 tri feadh//a nacfrith gose
 gan// beth comhthrom recele//
 7. .M.teand .n.teann. ní// treoir bhalbh
 .ll.ng.r// rogharbh
 .u.consaine ceann// iceand
 íneoch iscomtrom// comhtheand

^a Written at end of preceding line.

^b Hole between *do* and *comardudh*.

8. Beithe séimhidhe solas,
nion éadrom gan amharas,
agus luis éadrom eile,
duir go n-uath, muin séimhidhe,
9. gort go n-uath, ruis éadrom án,
imar dearbhthar isa[n] dán,
seacht bhfeadha do réir dhlighidh
im[th]igheas ar áeinshlighidh.
10. R[e]anna, uaitneadha ána,
comhardaidh dírghe dána,
dá fhiodh ar fhichid díbh s[o]in
do chobhair ar consanaibh.
11. Trí beithe, dá luis, fearn féin,
soil, dá nion, dá dhuir ba-dhéin,
dá thinne, dá choll gan chol,
dá mhuin, dá ghort i[s] ngéadar.

8. Bright lenited *b*, *n* without a doubt, and another *l*, lenited *d*, lenited *m*,
9. lenited *g*, bright *r*, as is confirmed in poetry, seven letters according to custom which travel on the same course.
10. *Deibhidhe* rhymes, bright consonances, strict fully-stressed rhymes, twenty-two letters of those assist consonants.
11. Three *b*'s, two *l*'s, *f* itself, *s*, two *n*'s, two *d*'s themselves, two *t*'s, two *c*'s without violation, two *m*'s, two *g*'s and *ng*.

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8. .B.semídhí solus
.n.e/^cdrom gan^c// amhthorus
.agus^d.^dedrom elí//
.dh.m.tsemedhe
 9. .G.gun.h.r.edrom an//
^eimar^e// dearbhtar isadan
seacht// feadha dorer dhlighidh//
imicheas araenslighidh//
 10. Randa uaitneada// ana
comhardaidh dir//ghi dana
dhafhidh ar .xx.// dibh sin
docobhair arcom//sanaib
 11. <Tri>.b. da.l.f.fen
soil da// ^f.n.da.d.ba^f[[77rb] dhen
da.t.da.c.gan// col
damhuin.da.g.ang//edor

^c Written at end of preceding line.

^d *agus* appears to have been added after *.l*.

^e Written at end of preceding line.

^f Written at end of preceding line.

12. Dá ruis ma[r] ráidhid filidh
do réir dhána agus dlighidh
uimhir na gconsaineadh gceart
is é sein uile a n-imdheacht.
13. Gebé nach tuigfe an laídh lóir
nocha[n] fhionn[f]a ceart nó cóir
cionnas bhíos éigse glan garg
ná ionad comhthrom comhard. .C.
14. Cionnas is cóir cur fá seach,
cionnas cláentar leath ar leath,
ní bhí ach[t] dá char 'gá gcur dhé:
dul i n-airde 's i n-ísle.
15. I n-ísle théid iodhadh án,
i n-airde téid ailm iomlán,
dá phort ar fhichid gan oil
go n-ailm is go n-iodhadh soin.
12. Two *r*'s as poets say, according to poetry and custom, [this is] the number of correct consonants, all that represents their course.
13. Whoever will not understand this ample lay will not discover correctly how poetry is pure [or] rough or a balanced, matching position.
14. How is correspondence correctly achieved, how is it made incorrect in turn, it makes only two movements: upwards (velarisation) and downwards (palatalisation).
15. Bright *i* causes palatalisation (*lit.* goes downwards), full *a* causes velarisation (*lit.* goes upwards), that is twenty-two places without disgrace with *a* and with that *i*.

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12. Da.r.maraidhíd filid//
ᵍdorerdhanaᵍ// agusdligidh
uimír naconsain//eachd ceart
isesen uili// animdeacht
13. Gebe n ach [sic] thuigfeá ín// ᵇlaidh loírᵇ
nocho finda ceart no// coir
cindas bis eigi glan// garg
naínad comtrom comard.<C.>//
14. C.indas ascoir cur fa// seach
cindas claentar leath//arleath
níbí achdachar ga// cur dhe
dul anairde san// isle
15. Aníslithed idhudh an
an/ᵇairdi ted ailm imᵇ//lan
dafort arfhichead// ganoil
gonailm isgon// idadh soin

ᵍ Written at end of preceding line.

ᵇ Written at end of preceding line.

ᵇ Written at end of preceding line.

16. Ailm féin, onn, úr, éabhadh .eó.,
 éabhadh .ea., [éabhadh .éu.] leó,
 uilleann ua, ifín [.io.] néimh
 is ifín .iu. fá áeinréim,
 ifín .ia. mar fhuaighid baird,
 eamhancholl .áe. aird i n-aird;
 a gcur `ma seach sin mar s[o]in
 ar áenuaitne déag dealbhthair.
17. Eadhadh, iodhadh ceann i gceann
 agus éabhadh .eó. íseall,
 óir, uilleann .uai. gan fhorlann
 is [uilleann .ui.] i n-áenchonghlann.
18. Ifín .iai., ifín .iúi. ann,
 eamhancholl .[a]e. uaigheas rann,
 [eamhancholl] .aí. bun i mbun
 `s [eamhancholl] .ai. ina [fh]arradh.

16. *A* itself, *o*, *u*, *eó*, *ea*, *éu* along with them, *ua*, brilliant *io* and *iu* on the same course, *ia* as bards fashion, *áe* in line, having them correspond like that causes eleven instances of consonance to be formed.
17. *E*, *i* together with palatal *eó*, *oi*, *uai* without oppression and *ui* in the same likeness.
18. *Iai*, *iúi* are in it, *ae* which binds a quatrain, *aí* side by side, and *ai* along with it.

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16. Ailm.fen.onn.u.ebhadh//^keo.
 ebad^j ea.^k// leo
 uilleann ua ifín nem.// [77va]
 is ifín.iu.faaenreim//
 ifín.ia.marfuaiighid.// baird
 eamancoll ae aird ín// aird
 icur maseach sin// marsin
 araenuaitní deg// deg [sic] dealbtaír
17. Edadh idhudh ceand iceand//
^lagusebh^l//adh eo. iseall
 oir uill//eand uaigh ganforlond//
 isifín íu.anaencongland//
18. Ifín iaigh ifín iuigh and//
 .eam.e uaigheas rand//
 .ae.i.bun ambun
 is// ai.a.naarrud//

^j Vertical line between *ebad* and *ea*.

^k Written at end of preceding line.

^l Written at end of preceding line.

19. Cur 'ma seach ar a bhfuil feidhm
 áenuaitne déag agá dheilbh:
 eadhadh, iodhadh, éabhadh, óir,
 dá uilleann mar nach éagóir,
 dá ifín, dá uaitne dhé,
 na trí heamhanchuill ísle.
20. Gebé fhiarfaigheas an duain
 cia ro chum i[s] cia ro fhuaigh,
 Ó hUiginn danadh ainm Tadhg
 ro chum í go cóir comhard. com.ar.d.u.d.

19. A correspondence which carries out a function, eleven instances of consonance are created: *e*, *i*, one trigraph beginning with *e*, *oi*, two graphs beginning with *u* as is not incorrect, two trigraphs beginning with *i*, two instances of consonance are caused thereby, the three palatal graphs beginning with *a*.
20. Whoever enquires who has composed and fashioned the poem: Ó hUiginn whose name is Tadhg composed it correctly [and] in balance.

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19. Cur maseach arafhuil// fe idm^m
 aenuaitní// deg igadhelb
 edhud idh//udh ebadh óir
 dauill//ind mar nach egoir
 da// ifín dauaitne dhe
 na// triheman.choll isle//
20. Gebefiarfaicheas ín// duaín
 cia rocum i// cia rofhuaigh
 ohuig//ind danadh ainm tadhg//
 rochum igocoir comh//ard. com.ar.d.u.d.//

^m A letter appears to have been erased between *e* and *i*.

NOTES

1a The initial consonants of all stressed words in this line are unmutated, resulting in an instance of the fault known as *droichead uama* (for which see GGBM 2859-62 and Ní Dhomhnaill 1972, 266-8). It may be resolved here by reading *chóir*; for lenition following the rel. of pres. ind. cop., see GGBM 2087-91, BST 199.11, IGT I §§90, 52 and 1b here. However, *cóir* has been allowed to stand as other instances of the fault occur in this poem (2d, 5d, 9b), and others (see Ní Dhomhnaill loc. cit.), and as examples of non-mutation are found following the rel. of pres. cop. (see Mac Cárthaigh 2002, 106 q. 4a n.). (Ní Dhomhnaill 267 discounts instances such as those at 2d, 5d and 9b, where only two stressed words occur in a line, suggesting that the necessity for alliteration supercedes the fault. This suggestion is without authority, however.)

b *oghmóir* This term is 'applied to a person learned in the bardic language and vocabulary', Ó Cuív (1965) 162.

c snaidhm gáidhilde agus a glas The specific meanings of these terms in the context is not entirely clear. Presumably *gáidhealg* is used in the sense of ‘pronunciation’ with reference to the phonetic basis of rhyme, cf. Ó Cuív (1965) 150 and IGT I §§3, 54. *Snaidhm* and *glas* could then be expected to refer to consonants and vowels, although if so it is not clear which term refers to which. (Compare the use of *greim* ‘hold’ in *gidh lia ’s fearr greim guthuidheadh* ‘though consonants are the more numerous, vowels have the stronger hold’ McKenna (1947) 70 q. 44d; see also *ga líon aicme na ttrí chonnsuineadh ndég sin iar n-úathadh do ghabháil greama dhíobh* and *Ga háoinfhíodh bog bláthmhar búan, / ... ghabhus greim feadha is forba / chonnsuineadh is táobhomna?* IGT I §§1, 10).

d bhriseas ... chláenas For these technical terms, see Introduction.

nó The conjunction is rendered ‘and’ in the translation as both questions are answered in the course of the poem. For this usage, see *DIL* N 50.79-51.2.

2a cóir ‘correct, fitting’ is here applied as an intensifier to a statement concerned with a fault. In the context, this may be considered a pun. Compare, perhaps, the following assessment of a bad harper: *daoi le’r dearbhadh cóir ’na locht* ‘a fool by whom correctness was declared a fault’ (*MD* I no. 6 l. 2).

c aghaidh i n-aghaidh This expression is used here and in 3d below. The phrase *i n-aghaidh* is also used of rhyme in passages of IGT V, e.g. *Brisde aille agus airne a n-aighid aroile* ‘*áille* and *áirne* as counterparts to one another are imperfect’ (IGT V §4; cf. *ibid.* §142), and GGBM 2509, 2512, 2606, 2608. For *i n-aghaidh* in the sense ‘as an offset to, corresponding to’ see *DIL* s.v. *agad* III (g).

3 The same teaching is found in IGT V §85: *ni [fh]regair guthaichi ar domhun a chele i comardudh na rind acht a macleithed fen agus freagraid guthaicheadha a cheli i n-uitne* ‘No vowel corresponds in fully-stressed rhyme or *deibhidhe* rhyme except to its exact equivalent and vowels correspond to each other in consonance’.

a Áenghuthaighe The noun *guthaighe* is here feminine as indicated by the following pronoun *í*. The form *guthaige* is given as a masc. noun only in *DIL* as opposed to the fem. form *guthaigthe* (*DIL* s.vv. *guthaige*, *guthaigthe*). Perhaps we should read *-ghuthaighthe*.

b dó The noun *comhardadh* is the virtual referent here; virtual subject in 3c.

c bidh ... mineb The spelling of the unstressed vowels in these forms of the copula might have been normalised as *budh* and *munab* but has not been altered given the early date of the MS and the occurrence of similar spellings elsewhere in the MS, e.g. *bidh*, *mine*, *dibadh* IGT V §§9, 5, 17. Note also the spellings *ba-dhéin* (MS *badhen*) and *gebé* (MS *gebe*) at 11b, 13a, 20a below, usually normalised as *budhéin* and *gibé*.

acht (MS *ach*) MS also has the later form *ach* in 5c, 14c. O’Rahilly (1932) 269 states that the spelling *ach* ‘but’ is found ‘in Irish MSS. from the fifteenth century’; these examples are, however, earlier.

eadh The pronoun refers proleptically to the proposition in line *d*. For anticipatory use of the pronoun, see McManus (2000) 87 (23 n.); cf. also *DIL* E 56.45-53 for anaphoric use.

d a dhó Lenition after the particle *a* is unusual but occurs elsewhere in this MS, see Ahlqvist (1987) 11. Further examples will be found in a poem from the Book of Lismore in Ó Cuív (1983b) 103 q. *9d* and GGBM 2291 (v.l. *dó*), 2294.

4a Innéasad (MS INnesaíd) A 1 sing. verbal form is clearly required. A similar reading (indesaíd) occurs on f. 74r of this MS where a 1 sing. form is also necessary, see Ó Riain 2008a, 39 q. *8b*.

c teann This term is most commonly applied to the fortis consonants. Here, however, it refers to unlenited stops and differentiates them from their lenited counterparts, a usage which is also attested in IGT V §142 and *Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh* where the term is used alongside equivalent *lom*, see Breatnach (1941) 50 q. *52a* n. and examples at qq. *17a*, *25a*, *26a*, *28a* and *29b*.

5 The voiceless fricatives are also listed in the same quatrain as *s* in *Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh*, Breatnach (1941) 37 q. 5.

b treas Substantival use of the ordinal numeral is noteworthy.

6b coll comhlán ‘complete *c*’ While the adjective *comhlán* need not be imbued with any deeper meaning than indicating an unlenited *c*, it is conceivable that it is used here to exclude the letter known as *coll cumaisg* ‘mixed *c*’. This arises when the first element of a compound word ends in *sg* and the second begins in *c* as in *fleasgorr* < *fleasg* and *corr*; teaching had it that the *g* of *sg* was first devoiced by the following *c*, only to be voiced again by the *s*, see IGT I §30 and GGBM 2373-7, 3770-6.

c sé For the long vowel supplied in this word and in *dhé* below (14c), see Breatnach (2003) 138, 135.

7b ngéadar For this form of the letter name, more usually *ngéadal*, see Ó Riain (2008a) 41 q. *6a* n.

ruis rogharbh For the term *ruis gharbh*, equivalent to *rr*, see Ó Riain (2008a) 41 q. *6c* n. and idem (2008c) 83.

d in neoch (MS *íneoch*) For the use of *in neoch* as a relative pronoun, see *DIL* s.v. *nech* III. See also *SnaG* IV §7.36 for related forms *n(e)och* and *do neoch*.

comhthrom This adjective may simply be used in a general sense of ‘balanced’, that is to say correctly rhyming, as in *4d*, *13d*. However, in other sources *trom* has a technical meaning when applied to the consonants *rr*, *ll* and *nn* which may be intended here (although not relevant to the full complement of consonants in this class). The term is found applied to these sonorants when they arise at the juncture of a compound word as a result of assimilation and are preceded by a long vowel or diphthong, e.g. *gaolúith* (< *gaol* + *dlúith*); see IGT I §§41, 44 and compare O’Rahilly (1942) 122 and Greene (1952) 214. Ó Cuív (1965) 150-1 states that ‘the term *trom*, literally “heavy” is sometimes used instead of *teann*.’

coimhtheann The term *-teann* is used in the technical sense of fortis consonants here.

8a séimhidhe This adjective is only used with the letters *b* and *m* (*8d*) here as opposed to the phrase *go n-uath* at *5ab*, *8d*, *9a* (*t*, *c*, *d*, *g*). This is also the case in GGBM p. 4 fn. 15 (*séimh*) and *Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh*; instances with *m* and *b* occur at Breatnach (1941) 38, 40, 42, 43, 44 qq. *9d*, *27ac*, *32b* and qq. *6a*, *9b*, *16a*, *37c* (*séimh*) respectively.

c eile ‘another’ This adjective is used as one type of *l* has previously been referred to in *7b*.

d muin séimidhe (MS .m. tsemedhe) The letter *m* is masculine according to IGT I §17. However, it prefixes *t* to *s* here and in the RIA 23 N 12 and Maynooth M 49 texts of *Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh* (fn. 5 above); see Breatnach (1941) 47 q. *4a* n. and examples at 38 q. *9d* (MS m. tseimidhe seagaind), 42 q. *27a* (MS m. tseimide, is muin teann), 42 q. *27c* (MS m. tseimhídhe), 43 q. *32b* (MS in m. tsoluis tseimhídhe). For *ts* in place of *s(h)*, see Ó Cuív (1983a) 12 fn. 28.

9b imar This Middle Irish form of the conjunction, for which see Carney (1983) 199-200 and *DIL* s.v. *immar*, is confirmed by the syllable count. An example is also found in the EModIr text *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*, O’Grady (1929) I 15, transl. II 17: *Cidh tra acht dorighnetar a righmuinnter amar adubairt Donnall* ‘As Donall said, so his people did’. Compare the forms *mar* in *12a* below and *amair* (for *amhail*) at IGT V §130. On the basis of the latter example, an alternative interpretation would be to read *amhair* or *amhail* for MS *imar*.

isa[n] For scribal omission of *n* (including other instances in this MS in another hand), see Carney (1969) 127.

im[th]igheas It would also be possible to read *imdhighneas*.

10a Reanna (MS Randa) Text emended for sense. The three metrical ornaments which depend on consonant class and quality are *deibhidhe* rhyme, consonance and fully-stressed rhyme. Compare q. 7 of *Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh* where the three terms occur together: *Seacht gconnsuine eile sin/éadrom teagmhaid i bhfoclaibh-/ón cóir uaithneadha, reanna,/is comhardaidh choimhtheanna* ‘... seven other consonants (light they occur in words) from which it is correct to form *uaithneadha* [consonances], *deibhidhe* rimes, and equally strong rimes’ (Breatnach 1941, 38). Note that the scribe of G 3 also writes ‘randa’ for ‘reanda’ in IGT V §111: *aig seo na r[e]anda is coir don c[h]aichi reanda*. On the change of *re-* to *ra-*, see *SnaG* III §3.12.

ab The first couplet appears to stand in no direct relationship to the second. Perhaps we are to understand: ‘(in the matter of) *deibhidhe*-rhymes etc., there are twenty-two letters of those to assist consonants’. Alternatively, we might read *dá gcobhair* in line *d* and translate: ‘*Deibhidhe*-rhymes etc. are assisted by means of consonants, twenty-two (letters) of them’.

cd The 3 plur. prep. pron. *díbh* (*c*) is understood as referring to the consonants listed in vv. 4-9 and the couplet as it stands taken to mean that there are twenty-two consonants available in total for the ornamental purposes of rhyme and consonance subject to the relevant rules; on this basis, the consonants are re-enumerated in vv. 11-12. Another possible interpretation might be to take the couplet as indicating that there are twenty-two letters (i.e. vowels)

which ‘assist’ consonants in the production of rhyme. However, this matter is dealt with in v. 15 and the force of *díbh* is unclear in this interpretation, unless it is taken as referring to *feadha* ‘letters’ in general.

d chobhair Breatnach (1941) 50 q. 53c n. suggests that *cobhair* may have a technical meaning in the quatrain cited at fn. 7 above, but does not offer any further explanation. Compare the use of synonymous *cungnamh* to describe the prefixes which may be applied to initial vowels in various circumstances in IGT I §18 (transl. Murphy 1942, 220): *Trí conganta na nguthaidhe ó chonnsuinibh, tinne re treisioghadh, .n. re huirrdhioghadh, .h. re lomadh* ‘Three consonants are used to help vowels, t for strengthening [after the nominative masculine article], n for eclipsing, and h for *lomadh*’. The term also occurs in *roibhríogh na ccongnamh cuirtheas* ‘Let the force of their supporting particles be set forth’ (McKenna 1947, 70 q. 42d) where the editor suggests that the term may refer to ‘the various forms of the article, *an t-, na n-*’ (75). Compare also its use in GGBM 2497-8: *Ní congnamh ná toirmeasg uama iairmbéarla* ‘An unstressed word is neither an aid nor a hindrance to alliteration’.

11a *Trí beithe* The three *bs* are *b*, *bh* and *p* (*beithe bogtha* ‘voiceless *b*’).

ab Rhyme between *féin* and *bu-dhéin/fodhéin* is faulted in the tracts, see BST 232.6/14a.17 and IGT V §109.

d i[s] (MS a) The conjunction *is* ‘and’ is clearly required in the context. Compare other probable examples of *i* for *is* at 20*b* below; NLI G 75v (q. 6c), where ‘*ífhearn*’ should be read as *is fearn*, and *Mag. l. 3618: taoiseach as fhiu airdrígh* (MS *taiseach ifiu airdrigh*).

12d *n-imdheacht* ‘course’ The verbal noun is understood as referring to the rules for consonant groups delineated in vv. 4-9. Compare *im[th]igheas ar áeinshlighidh* (9d) and q. 32 from the poem beginning *Madh fiafraidheach budh feasach* where Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh asks for more information about the ‘six roots governing all speech’ i.e. *feirinsgne, baininsgne*, plural, singular, vowels and consonants (qq. 31, 39): *Dénasa a ndiaigh an tseisir / a n-imdheachta d’innisin; / ar n-indisin a n-imtheacht / innisidh a n-edirheart* ‘After naming these things, show us their processes, and after showing their processes give the distinctions between them’, McKenna (1947) 69, 72.

13b *nocha[n]* The classical practice of employing *nochan* before vowels and *f*, for which see *SnaG IV §3.2 (c)*, has been restored. Absence of *-n* in the MS may suggest that the scribe intended nasalisation after the negative particle (i.e. *nocha bhf.*), for which see Ó Buachalla (1977) 132 fn. 117.

c glan garg It is suggested that these adjectives are used asyndetically and that *garg* refers to the less strict forms of poetry. For the adjective used in connection with a poet, see *ní file fíorgharg*, Stokes (1893) 20 q. 66*b* and *an t-ollamh glan gréasach garg* ‘the famous accomplished violent sage’ (of Athairne), McKenna (1918) no. 28 q. 10*b*.

d ionad comhthrom comhard ‘a balanced, matching position’ This is understood as referring to an instance of correct rhyme; compare the use of *ionadh* in GGBM 2511-14 and 2531-3: *Ní cóir gan consaine dhá aicme féin do bheith i n-aghaidh gach consaine oile dhá mbia san fhocul, achd amháin nac[h] fuil*

feid[h]m ar nÍsa mó iná dhá chonsaine ar gach ttaoibh a n-aoinionadh ‘It is not correct without a consonant of its own class corresponding to every other consonant which is in the word [i.e. the rhyming partner], except that no more than two consonants are of use on either side in any one instance [= one rhyming word]’ and *Ní cóir focul do c[h]omhardadh ris féin muna rabh claochlúdh céille san dara hionadh aige, nó muna rabh breacadh ann* ‘A word should not rhyme with itself unless it has a different meaning in the second instance, or unless there is *breacadh*’. Compare also the use of *port* ‘place’ in 15c below, *-ball* in GGBM 2529 and, perhaps, *inadh uama* in IGT V §9. Possibly, we should read *’na [h]ionad ch. ch.*; transl. ‘how ... poetry is in its balanced, matching position’.

There may be word play in this line based on *ionad* in the sense ‘position or office held by anyone’ (*DIL* s.v. *inad* II), where *comh-* is to be understood as meaning ‘wholly’ (see Murphy 1953, 243 s.v. *comh-*) and *trom* is used in the sense ‘great, vast, powerful, mighty’ (*DIL* T 317.64-76), transl. ‘a fully important office’; the message being that a student or member of the learned orders who does not grasp the rules of rhyme will not attain a very high position in life.

comhard ‘matching’ For the sense ‘even’, see *DIL* s.v.; cf. also *lethard* ‘lit. (high) at one side, hence uneven, unequal’ (*DIL* L 131.32-3). Since the abstract noun *airde* is used in 14d and 15b to describe velarisation, *comhard* is presumably used here and in 20c below in a technical sense, literally meaning ‘equally velar’, that is ‘of matching quality’. On this basis, it may be queried whether *comhthrom* should be understood as referring specifically to consonants, cf. 7d n. above.

14a *cur fá seach* I interpret this phrase to mean ‘placing in turn’, i.e. ‘correspondence (for purposes of rhyme and consonance)’, based on the context here and in 19a. For *fá seach* in the sense ‘in turn’, see *DIL* S 124.84-125.38; the phrase is not connected with *cuirid fo sech* ‘leads astray, upsets’ (*DIL* S 125.39-46). Alternatively, *cur* could be taken as shorthand for *comhardadh do chur* (cf. 3b n. above); however, this suggestion does not seem suitable in 19a.

c char The noun *car* is taken in the sense ‘movement’, for which see *AithdD.* II 279-80 s.v. *cor*. Examples of the phrase *car do chur de* include: *is níor fhéad cor do chur dhi* ‘could not stir it’ *DDána* no. 102 q. 25c (cited with transl. at *DIL* C 470.46-7) and *d’éis gach chuir dar cuireadh dhí* ‘after... all that has happened to Éire’ *AithdD.* no. 28 q. 11b.

15ab *I n-ísle théid / I n-airde téid* Old compound verbs such as *téid* are found lenited and unlenited in relative position in Classical Irish, see *TD* I p. ci, BST p. 271 and Breatnach (1983) 418 fn. 5; for this reason, lenition has not been supplied in *b*. For relative clauses with prepositional phrases as antecedents in bardic poetry, see Ó Riain (2008a) 40 q. 2d.

a iodhadh The form *iodhadh* is confirmed by rhyme with *glan* and *siobhal* in McKenna 1947, 68 q. 21cd and IGT I §17 respectively. The form *idheadh* also occurs: *Mur théid igheadh a n-eaghadh, / an dligheadh da [sic] dheimhnioghadh*, *ibid.* (= McKenna 1947, 70 q. 48cd).

b ailm iomlán The adjective *iomlán* ‘full’ is possibly to be interpreted as excluding the digraphs and trigraphs beginning with *a*.

c phort (MS fort) ‘places’ Understood as referring to the vowels listed in vv. 16-19 with reference to non-palatal (eleven ‘high’ places) and palatal (eleven ‘low’ places) offset. Compare the use of *ionad* and *car* in 13*d* and 14*c*.

fhichid (MS *fhichead*) Noun emended in accordance with IGT II §131.

d The text might also be rendered ‘*gon ailm is ’gon iodhadh-soin* ‘lit. *a* and at that *i*’, however the use of the article with *ailm* would be unusual.

16-18: These verses enumerate the twenty-two vowel graphs which were recognised in bardic teaching, separated into non-palatal (v. 16) and palatal varieties (vv. 17-19); for the order in which they are listed see fn. 17 below. Some items have been omitted by the scribe through homoeoteleuton (16*b*; see n.) or mistakenly rendered through misreading of minims (*iu* for *ui*, 17*d*) and are restored on the basis of lists of the items in question as found in other sources. Textual restoration proves problematic, however, in the case of the four graphs beginning with *a*. The problem is discussed separately below in an appendix where reasons are given for restoring a series *áe*, *ae*, *ái* and *ai*. The correct arrangement of items in v. 18 is not apparent, however, as there are discrepancies in the ordering of letters within the subsets of vowel graphs in the various sources (see fn. 17 below). In editing, the graphs have either been marked long or left short in accordance with the teaching in GGBM 2414-27 that all trigraphs and the digraphs *ao*, *ua*, *eu*, *ia* are long and that the remainder may be long or short or have middle length, with due regard for modern editorial conventions affecting *ua* and *ia* which are not marked long (see further fn. 22 below).

16*b éabhadh éu* Verbal nouns beginning with *é* (*éra*, *élódh*) represent this digraph in an alphabetically ordered list in this manuscript published by Ó Cuív (1966) and are listed immediately after verbal nouns beginning in *ea*. On this basis, the omission of the digraph is taken to result from homoeoteleuton and placed first in the line. The same ordering of the digraphs occurs in IGT I §14 p. 6 l. 20 (Cáoladh .ea. *agus éu*. ag dul a n.e.) and GGBM 44 (*ea*, an *éab[h]aidh ea*; *eu*, an *éub[h]aid[h] éu*), 2295 (*ea*, *eu*) but is inverted *ibid.* at 805-6 (*eu* in *e* <longam>, ut *préumh*, *don fpréimh*; *ea* in *e* <brevem>, ut *sreabh*, *don t[s]reibh*).

bc éu; *io* These digraphs are spelt *é* and *i* in some sources (see fn. 18 below) and might have been restored in these forms. They have, however, the disadvantage of obscuring their identity as digraphs.

gh Literally ‘their placing in turn like that is fashioned on eleven pillars’.

h -uaitne *DIL* cites the term for the metrical ornament known as consonance under 5 *úaitne*. However, it is to be taken as the same word as *I úaitne* ‘prop, pillar’ as indicated by Murphy (1961) 90 s.v. *úaitne*. The older form with *-tn-*, for which see *DIL* s.v. *I ú.* and O’Rahilly (1931) 67, 68 fn. 7, is written by the scribe in this piece and throughout IGT V and is metrically confirmed in the following examples: *DDána* no. 109 5*a* (: *cuairte*), *DMU* l. 2059 (sic leg.) (: *chuirte*; consonating with *dúinte*, *fháilte*), *O’Reilly Poems* 660 (sic leg.) (: *buailte*) and Ó Raghallaigh (2006) 51 q. 17*d* (cf. n.) *uaitmibh*

: *buaitir*, consonating with *éantoil* and *chúirtibh*. The form is, however, not given in IGT II §2 (*úaithe*, *úaidhne* and *úaidne*) and *úaithe* is the form used in IGT I §2.

f aird i n-aird Examples of this phrase are accompanied by the following translations in *DIL* A 182.36-45: ‘in line’, ‘all the way up’, ‘level with’ and ‘opposite’.

17c *uai* (MS *uaigh*) The scribe has attached *-gh/-dh* to a vowel graph here, in 18a (*iaigh*, *iuigh*) and at NLI G 3, ff. 72v-73r (*eoidh*, *úidh*, *iaid(h)*, *íuidh*) (= Ó Cuív 1966, 287). Compare also *uillind uidh* in BST 1bb.46, *eamhancholl aigh* in BST 14b.10, *emarcholl aigh* [sic leg.] in IGT III §97 and *amhurchall áidh* in IGT I §14 and BST 1bb.46-7 (for the correct reading of the latter passage, see Armstrong 1981, 639); further instances will be found in the Black Book of Clanranald, see Gillies (2005) 68 §2, where they clearly represent the names of the graphs (*pace* Gillies, 75). Rhyming examples of various vowel graphs serve to illustrate that these consonants are superfluous, namely *.eó*: *leó* (16ab above), *.íu*: *-chiú* (IGT I §17), *iu*: *neimhfhiu*; *ia*: *cia*; *ua*: *ronua/ranua*, *ea*: *bhfuiighthea* (McKenna 1947, 68 qq. 20ab, 20cd, 21ab, 71 q. 49ab, 68 q. 22ab). The superfluous consonant is explicable as a reflex of the loss of *dh* and *gh* in this position, see *SnaG* IV §2.11 (2), (3). It is, nevertheless, noteworthy that these spellings occur in a number of sources.

d i n-áenchonghlann ‘in the same likeness’ For the sense ‘likeness’, see *DIL* s.v. *conchlann* (b). The meaning ‘pair’, *DIL* s.v. (a), seems unsuitable in the context as more than one graph is intended. Compare, however, the use of the singular poss. adj. in 18d.

18a *ann* Refers to *-chonghlann* (17d).

b eamhancholl ae (MS *.eam.e*) The MS reading *e* may be a mistake for *ae*; note that there is evidence for the pronunciation of *áe* as *é* as early as the twelfth-century (*SnaG* IV §2.7) and compare *craed* for *créad* at 1d above.

uaigheas rann ‘which binds a quatrain’ This phrase presumably alludes to consonance (*uaitne*) in the context.

c eamhancholl aí (MS *.ae.i.*) It is perhaps conceivable that ‘i.’ is a correction of the preceding *e*. Alternatively, the MS reading may reflect the fact that *aei* and *aí* are sometimes used interchangeably in spelling, e.g. *Mag.* (MS) 3690 *baeis* (: *ro iarmais*), 3812 *shaeir* (: *ro dhiansgail*), 4209 *taeir* (: *achraibh*) as against *ibid.* 385 *shair* (: *taibh*), 857, 2426, 2428 *bais*; see also fn. 31 below.

bun i mbun McKenna suggested that this phrase meant ‘probably the same as *ceann i gceann*’, *Mag.* 402 (210 n.), and translated it as ‘side by side’ (*ibid.* p. 295 q. 36).

d .ai. ina fharradh (MS *ai.a. na arrud*) The *a* in the MS has tentatively been taken as part of the following combination of preposition *i* and possessive adjective in spite of scribal word division and punctuation. Note the use of the singular possessive adjective which refers only to the preceding graph, although the point applies equally well to all the graphs listed in this and the previous quatrain.

19d *uilleann* (MS *uillind*) The gender and stem class of this letter name have not been established to my knowledge; see *DIL* s.v. 2 *uillenn*. However, it may be identified as a masculine noun on the basis of the following example from Gillies (2005) 68 §2: *Ur [sic] ar tús gach uillinn uill (: amharchuill)*. (The nom. plural form is *uilleanna* e.g. IGT I §12.) On this basis, the MS spelling *-ind* is understood as representing *-iond*, rather than a fem. dual form.

e dhé For the prepositional pronoun in the sense ‘thereby’, see *DIL* s.v. 1 *de, di* (152.18-20). It apparently refers only generally to the foregoing statement as we would expect a third plural form if it had direct reference to *dá ifin*, although instances of the singular referring to the dual occasionally occur, see *SnaG* IV §7.30.

f trí heamhanchuill (MS *triheman.choll*) A plural form of the graph name is required. This is attested (in variant form) in IGT I §12 (*na ceithre hamharchuill*).

20a *Gebé* All examples to hand of *gebé, gibé, gidh bé* etc. involve alliteration with words beginning with *b*. See *Mag.* ll. 1461, 3760; *DDé* no. 9 q. 8a; *DDána* no. 40 q. 1b, 65 q. 1c, no. 86 q. 29c, no. 108 q. 16a; *AithdD.* no. 69 q. 21a; *IBP* no. 14 q. 9a, no. 31 q. 3a; *TD* no. 1 q. 22a, no. 3 q. 4a, no. 11 q. 5a, no. 16 q. 2a, no. 26 q. 35a; *O’Hara* ll. 1278, 3657 and *TD* I p. lxxvii.

b cia Compare the following example where *cia* is stressed and alliterates with *glú*: *a cclú cidh cia do mhinfhégh / lia cinél clú ’nar ccuilén* ‘he who has studied their repute sees many more kinds of fame in the whelp of whom I speak’ (*DMU* ll. 2016-17).

i[s] (MS *i*) Alternatively, read *í*, referring to *duain*.

APPENDIX: *Na ceithre hamharchuill*

This note aims at identifying the four graphs beginning with *a* which were recognised in bardic teaching prior to the fifteenth century. This matter has previously been the subject of consideration by Brian Ó Cuív and John Armstrong, but as part of wider discussions. It is, therefore, appropriate to provide a comprehensive treatment here.

1. According to bardic teaching, there were twenty-two vowel graphs, consisting of five simple vowels and a set of seventeen digraphs and trigraphs known as *foirfheadha* ‘additional letters’.¹⁶ The seventeen digraphs and trigraphs were divided into sets according to their initial letter and known respectively as *na ceithre hébha*, *na trí huilleanna*, *na ceithre hamharchuill*, *na cúig ifine* and *óir*.¹⁷ These graphs are listed in IGT I; in Seán Ó Cearnaigh’s *Aibidil Gaoidheilge & Caiticiosma*; in Nugent’s Irish primer for Elizabeth I; in Giolla Brighde Ó hEódhasa’s *Rudimenta grammaticae*

¹⁶ See Ó Cuív (1966) 288 and idem (1994) 161-3.

¹⁷ There are discrepancies in the ordering of the graph names and also within the subsets of graphs in the various sources. The above list is taken from IGT I §12. The order of the graph names given in IGT I §4, namely *eubhadh, óir, uilleann, ifin, amharchall*, and reflected in the material in NLI G 3 discussed below appears to be standard and is also found in earlier sources, for which see Sims-Williams (1992) 31-5.

Hiberniae; in a tract preserved in the Black Book of Clanranald, and in an unpublished text immediately following the section on faults in the *Rudimenta* in TCD D.4.35 (1431), 173-7.¹⁸ These sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources provide the following list of vowel graphs: *a o u e i*; *ao aoi ai ae*; *ea eo eoi eu*; *ua uai ui*; *ia iai iu iui io*; *oi*.¹⁹ The *foirfheadha* represent both diphthongs and monophthongs, the scheme being 'based on orthographic forms'.²⁰ No consideration is given to vowel length, so that the number of sounds represented by simple vowels and by the *foirfheadha* is not identical to the number of orthographic forms; *a* and *io*, for example, represent both short and long vowels: *a* and *á*, *io* and *ío*.²¹ In this context, attention may be drawn to Giolla Brighde Ó hÉódhasa's teaching that all trigraphs and the digraphs *ao*, *ua*, *eu*, *ia* are long and that the remainder of the vowels may be long or short or have middle length.²²

2. The teaching regarding the *foirfheadha* is also represented in material preserved in the fourteenth-century manuscript NLI G 3, the importance of which as the earliest source to preserve bardic doctrine on this matter need not be stressed. It occurs in vv. 16-19 of the poem on rhyme, beginning *Comhardadh cionnas is cóir*, edited above and in a list of verbal nouns found

¹⁸ IGT I §§12, 14; Ó Cuív (1994) 64-5; Primer f. 9r (held in Farnleigh House and digitised at www.isos.dias.ie; for an account of the text, see Ó Macháin 2012, 132-7); GGBM 40-50, 2291-7; Gillies (2005) 68 §2; for the tract in D.4.35, see GGBM p. xxi. There is also a discussion of digraphs and trigraphs in Tadhg Óg (son of Tadhg Dall) Ó hUiginn's grammar (GGBM 2948-57). They are not given in the form of a list, rather words containing the graphs are cited as illustrative examples but do not make up the complete set, *io*, *éu* and *eo* being omitted. The *foirfheadha* are not fully listed in IGT, but all seventeen are mentioned in §14. In Gillies, *éabhadh eo* has been omitted through a copying error. (Two further points concerning the list in this source arise: (1) the graphs beginning with *e* are printed as follows: '.ea. eabha[dh]; .eu. ebhadh (é[.]); .eoi. ebhad (eóigh)'. The MS text, the pattern of the other graphs (e.g. .ua. uillenn uath, where *uath* represents the graph, for which see 17c n. above) in addition to a similar pattern in GGBM 40-50 (e.g. *eo*, an *éab[h]aid[h] eo*; *ia*, *ifin ia*) indicate that they should, in fact, be printed in the following way: '.ea. éabhadh [e]a; .eu. éabhadh .é.; [.]eoi. éabhadh eóigh (MS .ea. eabhadha .eu. ebhadh .é. eoi. ebhadh. eóigh.)'; for *é* representing *éu* see the list of verbal nouns below and compare .io. *ifin í* (MS) in Gillies loc. cit. and §3.vii (3) below; (2) with reference to '.ei. eabhadh', Gillies (75) is correct in taking the MS reading '(ei) eaghadh' as representing *eadhadh*, but incorrect in emending to *eabhadh* [sic] and suggesting that the letter 'has been misplaced and classified as an *e*-vowel ... instead of an *e*-diphthong' (see Ó Cuív 1966, 288 and fn. 36 below).)

¹⁹ The date of the text in TCD D 4. 35 has not been established. The list above follows the order of the *Aibidil* and of Nugent's Primer which agree. Note, however, that the position of *oi* in the latter source is not certain as it has been placed between two columns.

²⁰ Ó Cuív (1994) 162.

²¹ Note the use of the adjectives *fada* and *gearr* with the letters *i*, *ea*, *oi* to specify vowel quantity in BST 191.8-11 (ighadh fhada; ébhadh ea fhada), 210.24 (ea ghearr éinshiolla), 71b.31-2 (ebh(adh) ea fada), IGT III §97 (a n-óir girr) and IGT I §14 (.ea. gearr éinshiolla) and compare also such terms as *gearradh* and *shínidh fhada/ghirr*, loc. cit. The suggestion is made in Ó Cuív (1994) 163 that the graph *éu* indicates that vowel quantity was taken into account in one case; see, however, fn. 33 below.

²² GGBM 2414-27 (this passage is phrased differently in TCD D 4. 35 (D) where the trigraphs *iai* and *eoi* are omitted, *ibid.* fn. 6-8); 2 sing. verbal endings are mentioned as instances of short *ae* and long *ea*. See also *ibid.* 40-50 where at l. 49 the reading of MS A, viz. *eu*, should be adopted for *eo* on the basis of ll. 2414-27. This allows Ó Cuív's suggestion, based solely on ll. 49-50, that Ó hÉódhasa has 'overlooked the fact that *eo* is short in such forms as *deoch* and *eoch*' to be dispensed with, Ó Cuív (1994) 163; cf. Armstrong (1981) 710.

on ff. 72v-73r published by Brian Ó Cuív in *Éigse* 11 (reproduced as Text A below).²³ In both cases, however, the material presents certain problems owing to faulty copying. As the teaching in question is known from later sources, the texts may be restored on the basis of their testimony; nevertheless, a difficulty arises in the case of the four graphs beginning with *a* (*na ceithre hamharchuill*). The reason for this is that the spelling *ao(i)* is first encountered in the fifteenth century and the modern convention of rendering the earlier spellings *áe(i)* and *aí* as *ao(i)*, already reflected in the lists mentioned in §1 above, blurs the contrast between them to a certain extent.²⁴ The list of verbal nouns may be presented at this point and discussed before assessing the case of the *ceithre hamharchuill*.

(A) List of verbal nouns

Persanda a lan d'fhoclaibh and seo sis

Breth, breth, brudh, búdh, lochrughudh, faisgin, fasdodh, fagbail, femdechtain, fedachtain, fis, feas, snim, snam, nochtadh, níamadh, denam, dul, teacht, tabairt, togbail, tegmail, tairsi, tairgsi, cnam, crudh, clodh, caí, maithium, moradh, guin, gabhail, radh, rochtain, rígsin, agallaimh, anacul, anamhain, adhnadh, oslugudh, ordughudh, urmaisi, usgardadh, erghi, esdecht, indisi, indeagudh, easgar, eadram [leg. eadráin], eagur, era, elodh, oirdearcudh, oirbeartudh, uaisleghudh, uaithighudh, iaghadh, iarraidh, indsaighidh, indtod, imcur, aithceodh, athrughudh, aithi, áentughadh, aeradh.

Do rer uird aibidreach ata seo .i. persa no dho ar gach fidh do radh. agus ní hi seo uimhir na pearsand, óir ní roich aireamh orro. Ataid oct foireadha gan persanna do ainmnighud uathó annseo .i. e. eoidh, uilleand úidh, uilleann ua, ifin iaíd, ifin iaídh, ifin iu, ifin iuidh, eamancoll ai.

'This is in alphabetical order, that is, a verbal noun or two mentioned for each letter. And this is not the [total] number of verbal nouns, for they are innumerable. There are eight compound letters for which verbal nouns are not named here, they are [*eoí, úí, ua, iaí, iai, iu, iui, aí*].'²⁵

Commentary: Commencing with *easgar*, examples of verbal nouns beginning in the graphs *ea, é* (*sc. éu*),²⁶ *oi, uai, ia, io, ai* and *áe* are cited and these are followed by an inventory of the graphs not enumerated in the list, namely *eoí, uí, ua, iaí* (*bis*), *iu, iui, aí*. There are, however, some difficulties in this text which have been noted and discussed by Ó Cuív:²⁷ (1) The form *athrughadh* (fourth from end), which begins with a simple vowel, occurs

²³ Ó Cuív (1966) with further discussion in *idem* (1994) 162-3.

²⁴ For the date of the spelling, see *SnaG* IV §2.7; for remarks on the contrast, see Armstrong (1981) 711 n. 8 and Ó Cuív (1994) 163 and compare, for example, the forms *méd an láe, méd an laí, na láe, na laí* etc. in IGT II §82.

²⁵ Text and transl. Ó Cuív 1966 and *idem* 1994, 163. The manuscript has 'fes' for 'feas', 'ursgardadh' for 'usgardadh', 'eadrain' for 'eadram' and 'uaithighudh' for 'uaithighudh'.

²⁶ Regarding *é* as representing *éu* see fn. 18 above and fn. 33 below. Note, however, the recommendation that *éa* be written as *é* to avoid confusion with short *ea* in IGT I §11.

²⁷ See Ó Cuív 1966; *idem*, 1994, 163.

among verbal nouns beginning with digraphs and trigraphs. Ó Cuív noted that it ‘seems quite out of place in the list and should be in the preceding series of five vowels where the words show broad vowels before a broad consonant or slender vowels before a slender consonant’. The problem is, however, easily resolved by reading the variant form *aithreaghadh* and retaining the position of the verbal noun in the list.²⁸ (2) The inventory of eight graphs or compound letters which are not exemplified is incomplete as one item (*iai*) is listed twice in error and, excluding this duplicate entry, the total number of vowels mentioned amounts only to fifteen. Ó Cuív suggested that the number of letters that do not occur is mistakenly given as eight and should in fact be nine, the missing items being *ao* and *eo*. His solution to the problem is slightly flawed, however, in that he introduces the later spelling *ao* into material from NLI G 3; given the date of the manuscript, this can in fact only represent *áe* which is already listed.²⁹ In accordance with the discussion below, the missing items may be taken to be *eo* and *ae*.

3. Having presented the evidence of G 3 and of the later texts, the following observations may be made:

(i) Six distinct normalised spellings of graphs beginning with *a* may be identified prior to the fifteenth century, namely *ae*, *áe*, *aei*, *ai*, *ái*, and *ái*.³⁰ In practice, the use of the length mark will be limited so that the modern distinction in spelling between *ái*, *ai* and *ái*, for example, will not be adhered to. The employment of the superfluous glide vowel in *aei* will also be unstable; for example, this spelling occurs only once in IGT V (NLI G 3) and nine times in the Book of Magauran (NLI G 1200).³¹

(ii) Only four graphs beginning in *a* were recognised in bardic tradition as indicated by the designation *na ceithre hamharchuill* and the number of twenty-two vowel graphs.

(iii) Vowel length was not distinguished, so that *ai* and *ái* can be taken to represent a single graph without difficulty.

(iv) Three of the graphs were followed by palatalisation based on the evidence of *Comhardadh cionnas is cóir* (*na trí heamhanchuill ísle*, v. 19f).

²⁸ The form *aithreachadh* is listed in IGT III §106; for *aithreaghadh* (: *leanamh*) see the poem beginning *Uasal fearantas Fearghail* (Ó Raghallaigh 1938, 51 q. 36*ab*) and for the variation *-ch/-gh-* in verbal nouns see GGBM 911-13.

²⁹ Ó Cuív (1966) 288. That the missing items were *ao* and *eo* was reiterated by him in 1994 (‘those missing being *eo* and *ao*’, 163). Having stated this, however, he went on to say: ‘[T]he spellings *áentughadh* and *aeradh* must be regarded as variants of *aontughadh* and *aoradh*, in which case *ao* is not missing. However, in order to make up the full complement of seventeen *foireadha* we must include *ae* as being distinct from *aoi* [sic].’ It is possible that this addendum represents a revised solution where *aoi* may be intended to represent *ái*.

³⁰ Note, for example, the spellings *caech*, *taebhrem*, *tae(i)bhremi* and *caichi* in IGT V §111. Short *ae* is illustrated, for example, in IGT II §80 (*mac an ghillae*, *na gillae*); see also Armstrong (1981) 644 and *SnaG* IV §2.3.

³¹ IGT V §111 (example at §144, namely *thaeir* for *thair* (?), has been excluded); *Mag.* 99, 1531, 1575, 1584, 1641, p. 112 (*dúnadh*), 3690, 3812, 4209 (examples at 1548, 4333, 4347, namely *diaeidh* for *diaidh* and *craeid(h)i* for *craidhe* (= *croidhe*), have been excluded). Compare also instances where *ae* is written without a glide vowel and the same word is spelt with *ai* elsewhere, e.g. *Mag.* 20 (*taebhsheang*), 965 (*clanchlecht*) and 963 (*taibhglan*), 1001 (*clain*).

(v) The fourth was therefore followed by a velar consonant and can only be identified as *áe*, as for example in *áentughadh*.

(vi) By recognising three palatal graphs, *Comhardadh cionnas is cóir* further illustrates that *ae/áe* which was followed by a palatal consonant, e.g. *láethibh*, is distinct from the vowel in point (v).³² The distinction between long *áe* (*áentughadh*) on the one hand and short and long *ae* on the other would then be one of velarisation/palatalisation.³³

(vii) It is suggested here that the spellings *ae*, *áe* and *aei* (all followed by a palatal consonant) were reckoned as a single graph. Taking *ae* and *áe* as representing a single graph is unproblematic as in the case of point (iii) above. For *aei* to be included, it may be suggested that the glide vowel *i* in *aei* was ignored and that the internal spelling was considered to be *áe*, which might, however, be realised as *aei* in practice as in *láe(i)thibh* (IGT II §82).³⁴ This suggestion finds support in the the following points:

(1) The term *eamhancholl ae* is found in IGT III §97 with reference to the spelling *aei* (raeinneam H).³⁵

(2) The letter-name *eadhadh* represents *e* followed by a palatal consonant (or *e* in final position), that is both *e* and *ei*, the latter not being included among the digraphs but understood as a realisation of *e* under certain circumstances.³⁶

(3) The comparable form *ifín* (*h**i*) (for *ifín io*) where the glide vowel is omitted occurs in BST 1bb.48, 22a.1, 68a.37 and Gillies 68 §2; in the second instance, a corresponding passage at BST 236.15 has *io* (without *ifín*).

The foregoing implies that the superfluous glide vowel *i* was ignored and that *aei* was not considered to be a separate graph. The only possible objections to this are the occurrence of ‘ae.i.’ in the MS text of the poem edited above and the form *eamhancoll aei trasgartha* in BST 12b.28-9 (RIA C ii 3). Possible solutions to the former have been presented above (18c n.). The reading of BST in corresponding passages in other MSS (RIA C i 3; 24 P 8) are: *amurcoll ai trascurtha* (BST 42b.14) and *amharcholl áoi trasgartha* (BST 221.25-6). Leaving aside the question of whether *ae* or *aí* is best suited to the context, it may be assumed that *aei* is either written for *ae* in the same way that *ifín io* is written for *ifín i* or may reflect the occasional interchange of *aí* with

³² Compare also IGT II §81: *ga gáe* (*gai* v.l.), *inann ghabhaid acht uathadh lethan agin gha* (*aigi so ga* v.l.) ‘*ga gáe* are declined in the same way except that *ga* is non-palatal in the singular’.

³³ Armstrong 1981, 711 n. 8 takes the core vowel in both *áe* (*áentughadh*) and *áei* to be *é*. The distinction between *eadhadh* and *éabhadh éu* also appears to be one of palatalisation as opposed to velarisation; see (vii) (2) below. The additional distinction between *éabhadh ea* on the one hand and *éabhadh éu* on the other is one of core vowel (*a* in the first instance and *e* in the second; for which see Armstrong 1981, 711 n. 9).

³⁴ For remarks on ‘fluctuation in the matter of glide vowels’, see Ó Cuív (1994) 162.

³⁵ Compare also IGT III §1 where the term *emarcholl ae* is used of certain endings of the second plural future and passive conditional (with the v.l. *aoi* in the case of the conditional).

³⁶ See, for example, the paradigm of *días* (gen. sg. *déisi*) in IGT II §165 where the following comment is made: *Días, sgían, deoch, mean, eadh, ceall, cearc, inann íad acht dá tháobhréim úathaidhe an dá chéadainm a n-eadhadh ‘Días, sgían... they are the same [as the headword] except that the genitive singular forms of the first two nouns becomes ei’*; further examples will be found in IGT V §§3, 114, IGT I §14 and BST 210.17-19. See McManus (1991) 183 n. 40 for the distinction made between *edad* and *ébad* (also *idad* and *iphín*) in earlier sources.

aei in writing. Accordingly, the set of four graphs beginning with *a* which may be identified is: *áe* [before a velar consonant], *ae/áe/aei* [before a palatal consonant], *ai/ái* and *ái*.³⁷

ABBREVIATIONS

- AC* *Annála Connacht. The annals of Connacht.* Ed. A. Martin Freeman. Dublin 1944.
- AithdD.* Lambert McKenna, *Aithdioghluim dána.* 2 vols (ITS 37, 40). Dublin 1939-40.
- BST* Lambert McKenna, *Bardic Syntactical Tracts.* Dublin 1944.
- DDána* Láimhbheartach Mac Cionnaith, *Dioghluim Dána.* Baile Átha Cliath 1938.
- DDé* Lambert McKenna, *Dán Dé.* Dublin [1922].
- DIL* *Dictionary of the Irish Language: based mainly on Old and Middle Irish materials.* Dublin 1913-76.
- DMU* David Greene, *Duanaire Mhéig Uidhir.* Dublin 1972.
- GGBM* Parthalán Mac Aogáin, *Graiméir Ghaeilge na mBráthar Mionúr.* Baile Átha Cliath 1968.
- IBP* Osborn Bergin, *Irish bardic poetry.* Dublin 1970.
- IGT* Osborn Bergin, *Irish Grammatical Tracts I-V, Supplement to Ériu* 8-10, 14, 17 (1916-55).
- Mag.* Lambert McKenna, *The Book of Magauran. Leabhar Méig Shamhradháin.* Dublin 1947.
- MD* T. F. O'Rahilly, *Measgra dánta.* 2 vols. Dublin and Cork 1927.
- O'Hara* Lambert McKenna, *The Book of O'Hara. Leabhar Uí Eadhra.* Dublin 1951.
- O'Reilly poems* James Carney, *Poems on the O'Reillys.* Dublin 1950.
- RIA Cat.* *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy.* Dublin 1926-70.
- SnaG* Kim McCone, Damian McManus, Cathal Ó Háinle, Nicholas Williams, Liam Breatnach (eag.), *Stair na Gaeilge.* Maigh Nuad 1994.
- TD* Eleanor Knott, *The bardic poems of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn.* 2 vols (ITS 22, 23). London 1922-26.

³⁷ This follows Armstrong (1981) 709 who, in suggesting emendations to *Comhardadh cionnas is cóir*, supplied *ae(i)* to be distinguished from *ai/ái* and *ái* as a separate graph: 'Ífín iaigh, ífín iuigh and/eamhancholl *ae(i)* uaigneas rand/eamhancholl *ái* bun a mbun/is eamhancholl áigh [or a(i)] 'na arrud'. The position is not clearly articulated or fully discussed by him. However, he does mention earlier and later spellings in passing and refers to the list of vowel graphs in GGBM 35-50 as 'eclectic' and 'somewhat anachronistic'; *ae(i)* is explained as '*aéi* internally and *ae* finally' and the graphs *ae(i)* and *ái* used in his article 'in the interests of clarity' as 'better representing the cores', *ibid.* 710. See also fn. 29 above. An alternative solution to that presented above would be to take the set of four graphs beginning with *a* as: *áe*, *ae/áe*, *aei*, *ai/ái/ái* with the graph *ai* representing *ai*, *ái* and *ái* as it often does in MSS. The difficulty in this case is that the core vowel in *ái* differs from that in *ai/ái*. A further obstacle may be the fact that *ai* is listed twice (presumably for *ai* and *ái* respectively) in Text A above and that the examples of *eamhancholl ai* to hand refer to *ai* only (see IGT II §138 [sic leg.] and BST 14b.10).

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